

Satan's Beatitudes

Blessed are those who are too tired, too busy, too distracted to spend an hour once a week with their fellow Christians in Church ~ they are my best workers.

Blessed are those who wait to be asked and expect to be thanked ~ I can use them in my business.

Blessed are those who are touchy. Soon they will stop going to church ~ verily, they shall be my missionaries.

Blessed are those who sow gossip and trouble ~ they are my beloved children.

Blessed are those who have no time to pray ~ for they MY prey.

Blessed are those who gossip ~ for they are my secret agents.

Blessed are you when you read this and think it has everything to do with other people, and nothing to do with you. ~ I've got room for YOU at my inn.

Some years back after Super Bowl LI was finished New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady's game jersey went missing. It was supposed to be on the equipment truck but someone had been able to sneak in and steal the jersey. Things then got a little silly. Anyone can go online and buy the jersey around \$120. However, suddenly, this used, grass-stained, sweaty jersey was reported to be worth as much as \$ 500,000.00.

The FBI, local Texas authorities and the NFL all began a joint investigation. **In the end**, it became an international incident. The person who reportedly took the jersey worked for a media association in Mexico, and so the Mexican government had to enter into the investigation. Ultimately, the jersey was found along with some other items and they were returned to Brady. Case solved.

It was good that Tom got his jersey back. But a stinky jersey around \$ 120.00 is suddenly worth \$ 500,000. It is to begin to allow the world to distort your thinking. That is what the world does. It puts high values on things that are not valuable.

This morning, it is so vital to remember that our value is not based on what we do, what we have or even **whom** we know. Nevertheless, if we believe that, when we no longer are in the **spotlight**, when we no longer can bring home a great paycheck or when we no longer have a certain title, we will begin to believe that we are no longer worthy. We will begin to think that we are worthless.

The sad truth is that there are billions of people that believe that lie. They think that just because they don't have what other people have, they are worthless. They think that just because they no longer have a title or a position, they are worthless. They think that just because they no longer are making the big bucks, they are no longer valuable.

In our New Testament reading, Jesus doesn't look at life in the way we do. He says that people who experience poverty, hunger, sorrow, and hatred are special to God. Then He says, "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets."

What's Jesus talking about here? We have to know that Jesus says to His disciples. In verse 20 Jesus' sermon begins with the phrase, "Then he lifted up His eyes toward his disciples, and said."

This **verse** clearly indicates that what he has to say is specifically for His disciples. Those who follow Jesus must live under a set of values different from and often opposite of that of the world. Jesus explains that a blessed life is not found in getting anything or from doing anything.

Let us listen to what a blessed life is from Jesus. First, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”

This verse does not mean that there is innately righteousness in being poor, or there is an automatic evil in being rich. Proverbs 30:8-9 says that poverty can either be a curse or a blessing. “give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that I need, or I shall be full, and deny you, and say, “Who is the LORD?” or I shall be poor, and steal, and profane the name of my God.”

Jesus says to disciples who are poor in **a material thing**, but are putting their trust in God. In Luke 18, there is the story of the rich young ruler. His money meant too much to him. When forced with the choice of following Jesus or being rich, he chose to remain rich. Today what if Jesus asks us too, what is our choice? Jesus follows this teaching of blessings on the poor in a few verses with a corresponding woe in verse 24, ““But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.” The word “woe” is an expression of dismay, regret, and compassion rather than a threat. Jesus is expressing disappointment as well as condemnation for the actions and attitudes of those who will not accept the kingdom He offers. A blessed life is to put our trust in God.

Second, “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled.

Jesus' disciples are physically hungry and also hungry for God's help and presence. However, the hunger will not last forever, for they shall be satisfied. God will supply their needs.

In Psalm 42:1-2, the Psalmist declares, As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?" David's imagery is passionate. His soul thirsts.

As hunger and thirst are natural expressions of the basic human desire, hunger and thirst for God **are** at the very root of our being. It's the way God made us. We try to find fulfillment in other areas rather than in seeking God.

Jesus follows this teaching of blessing on the hungry in a few verses with a corresponding woe in verse 25, "Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger," Jesus teaches a blessed life is for those who have **a** hunger for God's help and presence.

Third, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

This statement was not an attack on laughter, Jesus does not mean, "Blessed are grim, cheerless Christians." **Actually**, humor and laughter are good and necessary for the believer. In Proverbs 17:22 Solomon says, "a cheerful heart is **a** good medicine." What Jesus is attacking is the inability to weep at the right things and the ability to laugh at the wrong things.

We are called to weep over lost souls, people who will go into eternal darkness without Christ. We are to weep over the world's misery, over injustice that falls on so many helpless people, over the unfairness that victimizes the weak, child abuse, battered spouses, over marriages destroyed by adultery, over rejection, over those who laugh now but who will suffer apart from God unless they turn to Christ and do justice.

Fourth, “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

The Message translates this last woe in this way, “There’s trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them.” Popularity contests are not truth contest. Your task is to be true, not popular.”

It is easy to get caught up into thinking that when others say you are worth, you are only worth. It is important for us that we understand our value in God's eyes. How the world judges us and what the world says about us is not always the truth especially when it comes to what you are worth in the heart of our God.

This last woe is “beware when all men speak well of you,” and it should be recognized that this usually will not happen to Christian apart from some sacrifice of principle. A person who is persecuted because of Christ is the only one **true** living. There is an old saying, “Even a dead dog can swim with the tide.” To swim against the tide, you have to literally be alive and kicking.

We should not be surprised **by** Jesus’ teaching. Our lives are firmly rooted in Christ and his divine Word. We have to believe that Jesus Christ is the only hope of the world and the only way to God. Listen to Jesus and let us live a blessed life Jesus taught us.