

A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR A NEW KINGDOM

Matthew 5 : 3 – The Supreme Bliss of Paupers in Spirit
Scriptures: Isaiah 66:1-2; Ezekiel 16:1-14; Luke 18:9-14.

The Beatitudes

Jesus is not simply asking for us to reform our lives – to get rid of a few bad things and introduce a few good things (we tend to think we are basically good people though we sometimes do bad things. The Sermon has taught us we are basically bad people though we often do good things):

Matthew 21:44

⁴⁴And whoever falls on this Stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom It falls will be crushed to powder [and It will winnow him, scattering him like dust].

John 12:22

²⁴I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains [just one grain; it never becomes more but lives] by itself alone. But if it dies, it produces many others and yields a rich harvest.

²⁵Anyone who loves his life loses it, but anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. [Whoever has no love for, no concern for, no regard for his life here on earth, but despises it, preserves his life forever and ever.]

²⁶If anyone serves Me, he must continue to follow Me [^ato cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying] and wherever I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Isaiah 61:1-3

¹THE SPIRIT of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed and qualified me to preach the Gospel of good tidings to the meek, the poor, and afflicted; He has sent me to bind up and heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound.

²To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord [the year of His favor] and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,

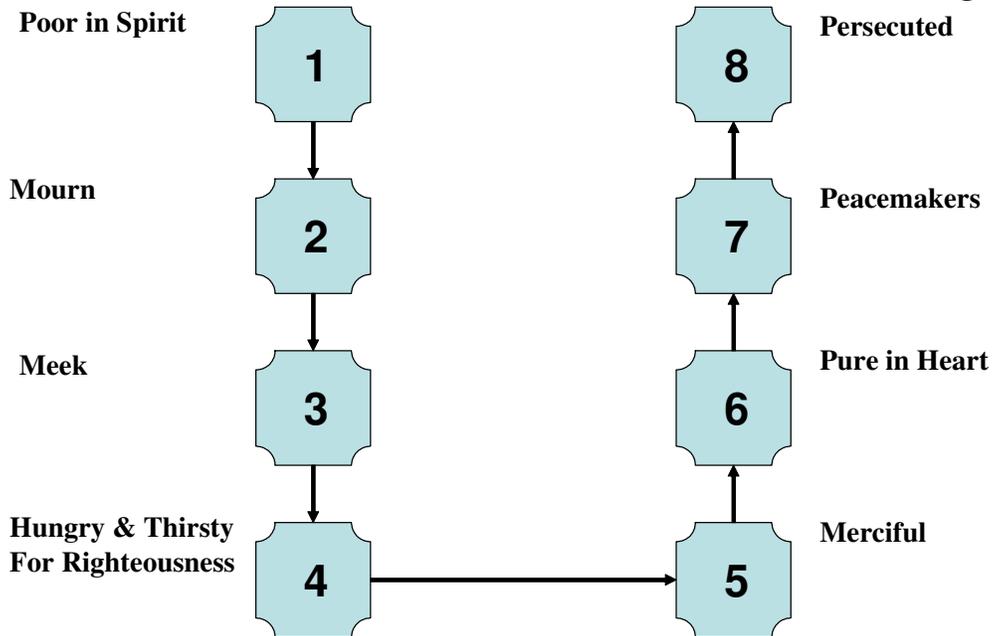
³To grant [consolation and joy] to those who mourn in Zion--to give them an ornament (a garland or diadem) of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment [expressive] of praise instead of a heavy, burdened, and failing spirit--that they may be called oaks of righteousness [lofty, strong, and magnificent, distinguished for uprightness, justice, and right standing with God], the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.

Theirs (and only theirs) Kingdom of Heaven

Why is this a Supreme Blessing?

Romans 14:17; Colossians 1 :21-22

8 Pillars in God's Stadium of Blessing



The Beatitudes force us to confront our hearts, which are evil. As “sinaholics” we have to reach the bottom for a true search after God.

The Gospel is essentially offensive.

“Antarctica is a mirror. It throws back an image of yourself that you might not want to see. If you spend the winter there, it’s quite a dark mirror. You tend to dwell on your thoughts.

‘No man remains quite what he was when he recognizes himself,’ wrote Thomas Mann.

It turned out that a lot of things I believed I was – a cheerful guy, a boon companion, a natural-born leader – I actually wasn’t. My psychological crutches became apparent. There are no strangers like married strangers, and I found myself around our big plywood table thinking, *who is this person next to me?*”

P 95 Robert Swan, Antarctica 2041, Broadway Books, 2009

1 Only Paupers in Spirit can be Saved

2 The Truly Saved remain Paupers in Spirit

2.1 The effect in prayer

2.2 The effect on witnessing (Living)

Conclusions

Rebelliousness is a sign of ignorance of:

1. God's splendid majesty
2. Your own wretched sinfulness

Even your growth in holiness is insufficient - keep looking to Christ whenever you are overwhelmed with misery.

The Church in Laodicea was poor, but had no insight. The Angel of the Church underscores the Church's poverty. Then Jesus shoulders him out of the way and says "Behold! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him." (Revelation 3:14-23). That is why it is a supreme blessing.

Personalise the Beatitude:

- I freely acknowledge I am far from perfect
- I am open to explore my blind spots
- I will take an honest moral inventory of my life from time to time
- I welcome constructive criticism and want to learn from it
- I take responsibility for my life
- I will not blame circumstances or others
- I resign the right to whine and complain

REFLECTIONS

MONDAY: *Psalm 34:1-22*

Reflect on v 6 and v 18. Now read the psalm again and relate all the afflictions in your life (v 2 and v 4) as well as each and every one of the promises (throughout the Psalm) to the pivotal thoughts of v 6 and v 18.

TUESDAY: *Psalm 51:1-19*

This is an excellent help in approaching God when you are feeling the burden of sin. It is the prayer of a pauper in spirit. Ask specifically for a steadfast spirit (v 10) and a willing spirit (v 12) and a broken spirit (v 17)

WEDNESDAY: *Isaiah 57:1-21*

Read vv 3 –13 with this question in mind: "Am I guilty of any of these things in my walk with the Lord?" If so, confess and then read vv 14-19a. Receive the promises and praise Him for the healing.

THURSDAY: *Isaiah 66:1-16*

Reflect on God's majesty in vv 1-2. Then see vv in 3-4 that our holiest actions are offensive to Him. Consider the attitude of those in whom He is well pleased in v2 and v5. Now claim the promises of vv 12-14 for yourself and for our church.

FRIDAY: *Philippians 3:1-16*

A pauper in spirit understands that all human pedigrees and attainments (vv 4-6) are rubbish to God (v 8). We need one thing: to know Christ (v 10). To know Christ will mean fellowship in His sufferings and conformity to His death. What do these things mean?

SATURDAY: *Galatians 2:11-21*

A pauper can state v 20 as true of himself. Scrutinize your life to see if you manifest a crucified life. By God's grace, determine to live by faith (in union with) in Christ and so demonstrate His life.

1
O the bitter shame and sorrow,
That a time could ever be,
When I let the Savior's pity
Plead in vain, and proudly answered,
"All of self, and none of Thee!"
2
Yet He found me; I beheld Him
Bleeding on th'accursèd tree,
Heard Him pray, "Forgive them, Father!"
And my wistful heart said faintly,
"Some of self, and some of Thee!"
(Theodore Monod 1874)

3
Day by day His tender mercy, That a time That
Healing, helping, full and free,
Sweet and strong, and ah! so patient,
Brought me lower, while I whispered,
"Less of self, and more of Thee!"
4
Higher than the highest heavens,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered:
Grant me now my supplication,
"None of self, and all of Thee!"

" 'Know thyself?' If I knew myself I'd run away." Heine

Heinrich Himmler was put in charge of Hitler's Final Solution. Under his "supervision the work of the killing centers reached the peak of efficiency by the fall of 1943." Yet he clung to what he considered a decent approach. "The SS commander must be hard but not hardened," he instructed one Sturmbannfuhrer. "If, during your work, you come across cases in which some commander exceeds his duty or shows signs that his restraint is becoming blurred, intervene at once." This butcher passed down a judgement in regard to unauthorized shooting of Jews. "If the motive is selfish, sadistic or sexual, judicial punishment should be imposed for murder or manslaughter as the case may be." He imbued the SS with the virtues of loyalty, comradeship, duty, truth, diligence, honesty and knighthood. He lectured his men on good manners and good breeding. He was particularly fussy about hygiene: "I do not want to see a single white vest with the slightest spot of dirt." Furthermore the SS must drink like gentlemen "or you will be sent a pistol and asked to put an end to it." Those who profited from the Final Solution were "to die without mercy. We had the moral right . . . to destroy this people. But we do not have the right to enrich ourselves with as much as a . . . cigarette . . . In the final analysis, however, we can say that we have fulfilled this most difficult duty for the love of our people. And our spirit, our soul, our character have not suffered injury from it." ¹

This grisly and macabre irony illustrates the way most hardened criminals tend to see themselves: decent folk who should not be reviled, who are only doing the right thing, and are actually accepting a noble responsibility by doing something so distasteful.

Lord Moran knew Winston Churchill intimately, since as his personal physician he travelled extensively with him. He records this about the great man: "He had to school himself not to think about things when they had gone wrong, for he found he could not live with his mistakes and keep his balance. This urge to obliterate had, in course of time, grown into a cast of mind in which he seemed incapable of seeing that he had been at fault." ²

In one of the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto, preserved in a little bottle and concealed amongst the heaps of charred stone and human bones, the following testament was found... It pains my heart to hear the criminals who are now masters of Europe likened to (the animals of the forest). It is not true that there is something of the animal in Hitler. He is – I am convinced of it – a typical child of modern man. Mankind has borne him and raised him and he is the direct, unfeigned expression of mankind's innermost, deepest-hidden urges. ³

Judge Learned Hand reached this conclusion toward the end of his career on the Bench: "Here I am, an old man in a long black nightgown, sitting up here making muffled noises at a man who may be no worse than I." ⁴ The Director of Federal Prisons for nearly three decades, James V. Bennett set a goal of improving conditions in Federal Prisons. This was partly the motivation: "My associates and I would now try to show that there was no essential difference between men in prison and men on the outside." ⁵

It is reported that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, once played a practical joke along the following lines: he chose 12 public figures in London at random and sent each one the following cable: "All is known." The story has it that all twelve were on the boat to France that very evening! There is far more in the closet than we would care to disclose.

It may be apocryphal, but this story fits the delightfully irascible character of Sir Bernard Shaw. He was once seated next to a pretty young woman at a dinner table. He enquired if she would go to bed with him for ten thousand pounds. She blushed, but was evidently willing. "Would you do it for ten pounds?" he is reputed to have asked. Her face went red with indignant anger: "What do you take me for?" she snapped. To which he replied: "We've already established that, what we are doing now is haggling over the price."

1. John Toland; "Adolf Hitler"; Ballantine Books; 1976 pp 1048 - 1051

2. Churchill taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran; Houghton Mifflin Company; 1966; p 195

3 P4 Yosl Rakover Talks to God Zvi Kolitz Vintage Random House, London

4. I Chose Prison; James V. Bennett; Readers Digest Condensed Books; 1970; p 449

5. I Chose Prison; Readers Digest Condensed Books; 1970; p 450