

(Note: Resource for message: Skip Moen, *The Lucky Life*.)

**Introduction:**

- *“One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them. “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.” (Matthew 5:1-6, NLT)*
- First beatitude we looked at was blessed are the poor. Two words for poor. The first word is the description of a person who is surviving. They have enough for today, almost. The second word is poor as in homeless. They know they are not surviving. They are dying. And unless they lose their pride and begin begging they shall surely die. That is the picture of the person who realize just how poor/bad off they are without Christ. They are not surviving...they are dying. So they lose their pride and cry out to God for mercy. When they do...The Kingdom of Heaven is Theirs!
- The second beatitude, blessed are those who mourn. Sets us up at the grave side of death where life leave us most vulnerable, weak, and surrounded by grief, despair and helplessness. Jesus calls them lucky! Whats He saying? The man who faces God and realize he, himself, is spiritually dead suddenly sees how vulnerable he is, weak, and distraught. He grieves, despairs, and finds himself helpless. He therefore gives up the delusion of control, power and protection mourning overtakes him and he is comforted by God.
- These are the lessons...the introductory comments to Jesus' sermon on the mount. Which is all on the theme found in Mt 5:20 *unless your righteousness is better than the teachers of the law you will not be getting into heaven.*

**I. You must have the key to the “B”**

- A. Once again the the key to understanding the nine beatitudes is knowing:
  1. Each one of the 'beatitudes' begins with an adjective describing the state of a person already having received something.
    - a) It is not a verb! Verbs inform us that we must do something. The “B” describes people.
    - b) The key to the beatitudes is knowing that Jesus starts each beatitude with a description of a man who has already received something from God.
- B. Second key to understanding the beatitudes is: The power of paradox is shocking. They are like 'brain teasers.' IE. “Less is more.” “Spend money to make it.” They are contrary to expectations and perceived opinions. Each of the beatitudes is stated in such a way that it is a paradoxical presentation. Jesus does this to shock His hearers into listen carefully for the purpose of thinking and of discovering truth.
  1. These paradoxes carry a message which no one wants to look for. Ie. *Blessed are you when you are persecuted...* who is going to seek after that! *Blessed are those who mourn.*
  2. The beatitudes are not a manual or handbook that teach us how to receive blessings rather they are about the state of/description of an individual that has come into relationship with God.
  3. The paradox leads the listener to the place where they experience Zoe (Life) in the midst of life no matter how it comes.

- C. Understanding the key word, or recognizing the key of the "B".
1. The Word 'blessed' that Jesus uses is makarioi /μακαριοι. It is an adjective not an action word.
  2. Makarioi - means to live in the state of blessedness, to be free from all cares and worries. Fullness of life. To live in the place of divine fortune/favor...luck! It is unforeseen success! It is like you getting the call that you have won the lottery with a ticket you never bought. You are not lucky... because you did not win. But you are living a lucky life because of the favor you have received.
  3. Makarioi became little sayings like proverbs that carry wisdom which results in this blessed state/ favor or state of constant luck. This unforeseen success.
  4. This inner happiness is based on those whose actions express the character of God. They describe the 'kind of person' who experiences something about God's character as they realize something about themselves.

## II. Happy are the Humbled

- A. *""What blessing comes to you when gentleness lives in you! For you will inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:5, TPT- The Passion Translation)*
- B. IE. Taming something wild. Have you ever tamed something wild?
1. When we first moved to Florida and began to start the church. I went to a pet store and saw a wonderful gray cockatiel. So, I had a contest for the kids. The prize was a cockatiel. But it was young and I had five weeks to train it. That bird bit me, and bit me, and bit me. Until it finally realized that I would not hurt it and that I was its friend. It had to be tamed.
  2. I was at someones house as a kid and they had a pet cat. This cat was a cat from the wild and so it was a little scared of people. It was scared of me. So I gave it snacks. It got closer and closer and finally started climbing on my lap and purring. I was so happy and full of love I wanted to give it a hug. IT was not ready for a hug! And IT scratched, clawed and bit me to get away. And you ask why I do not like cats. {I am emotionally scarred, rejected and full of anger to this towards cats.}
  3. We have all seen wonderful stories of wild animals being tamed. That which is wild is forced into submission. Sometimes being inflicted with pain for punishment.
- C. Matthew chooses to use the word meek to describe the Happy people who will inherit the earth.
1. At first this word really sounds wonderful to us English readers: humble, meek, gentle...all are translations of the Greek word praus/πραυς.
  2. These are accurate translations but they do not capture the deeper meaning of the word. Praus means - the mild of things, the tame of animals, the gentle of people. But originally it meant the taming of a wild animal. It meant to convert raw unbridled animalistic power into obedience. When applied to men, this becomes a virtue! But you must be tamed!
  3. David uses the Hebrew word anaw from Ps 37:11. The verse could easily be what Jesus was speaking from vs. 5. The interesting thing about the word anaw is that its root form carries the sense of being forced into submission, or inflicted with pain for punishment or behavioral adjustment. When used as an adjective it is almost always in reference to pain.
    - a) In using Ps 37:11 Jesus want to connect His crowd to recall their history of affliction.
    - b) We do not like affliction. "Happy are the humbled!" Paradox! Shocking! Jesus is saying to them, "You are so lucky! You will inherit the earth!" The tamed of spirit inherit the earth!

4. The Hebrew understanding of the word is what makes this verse make sense to us. Those who are humble experience the condition of happy, blessed, lucky, because they have submitted to God's control/been tamed. Life is full of troubles. But when you submit to God you find yourself in His hand like a wild cat being hugged. Trouble is what God uses to shape us. That is why you can rejoice!
  5. That presents a question: Are afflictions and suffering good? Of course not!!! God is good! What Jesus presents is that God is in control, we can only submit to Him in the midst of our pain. God turns evil into good or for His purposes.
    - a) IE. Jesus comes peacefully into Jerusalem in contrast to the zealots. And the cross is the supreme example! And folks, it is not fair!
    - b) But we know through the cross that evil does not triumph though it may appear to be doing so.
    - c) How we respond to this 'forced submission' is our only choice. And each time we do, we get a small taste of the Garden of Gethsemane.
  6. David was known as a rejoicer in affliction because he knew God's will will prevail and that the righteous judge will bring peace and justice. Praus is not about mild and timid responses to life it is about heroic transformation in the midst of what life throws at us! That is what Jesus is saying to his crowd.
- D. Unforeseen success to those afflicted for they shall inherit! What does this mean?
1. Inherit means allotment or portion.
  2. The same God who brought you into submission is the same God who guarantees your allotment, your portion, you 'fair share.' Good news to one who has been afflicted.
  3. Submission means my fair share is certain. That I will be judged on the basis of inherited righteousness.
  4. His kingdom is not divided and given to us...it is His Kingdom that we share!
  5. Jesus knew that life would beat us up at times. Jesus knew that life was not fair. But he tells us that if we are willing to be tamed and brought into submission we will receive our fair share of the earth/God's kingdom.

### **III. Happy are the Hungry** - the fourth beatitude is one of the richest and complicated.

#### A. Misconceptions

1. Jesus is not talking to those who literally hunger and thirst, though there would obviously be those that fit that description in the crowd. In fact many would be hungry and thirsty under the Roman occupation. But their hunger and thirst are not the focus.
2. Jesus is not telling us that those who strive after righteousness will be filled/satisfied. This is how most preachers preach this passage. (I have done that.)
3. Jesus is not giving us an exhortation to change/adjust our attitude to that of seeking righteousness. It is true that those who seek will find but it is not what Jesus is teaching.
4. Remember, the makarioi. Jesus is announcing a paradox where something that is a negative becomes the pathway to discovery of a hidden Kingdom value. He is making us think backwards in the beatitudes.

#### B. Looking back reveals the way forward.

1. Hunger and thirst in Jewish history was always associated with God's wrath poured out on disobedient people. They saw God do this to their enemies and to they themselves. (Lam 5:10; Neh 5:3; Is 65:13) Therefore to hunger and thirst meant to be condemned by God. It was not a social condition that could be changed with a change of mind, welfare, or feeding program.
    - a) It was about obedience.
    - b) It was about holiness.
  2. With that in mind, religious leaders taught that hunger and thirst become two forms of punishment:
    - a) Hunger and thirst were either discipline for purpose of teaching and purifying
    - b) or they were suffering due to disobedience.
  3. The Jewish audience was also aware of the promise connected to hunger and thirst. (Is 55) Here Isaiah speaks of a future time where God would restore Israel and none would be hungry or thirsty. Therefore, my current hunger and thirst should help me to realize that only God is my source of my sustenance. If I am hungry, I should realize God is my source and the world will never be able to satisfy me or provide me with what life needs.
  4. What does this 'looking back produce?' Personal worth is based on my hunger or thirst. (lie)
    - a) Here is how people say it today when something bad happens: "I must have done something wrong."
    - b) Or. If I am successful I must be doing something right.
    - c) "What goes around comes around." "They got what they deserved."
    - d) This belief is the LAW OF JUST REWARDS. It is exactly what Jesus is overturning!
- C. Now let's look at the Greek understanding.
1. There are two Gr words for hunger:
    - a) limos - hunger related to famine...it is a fatal need
    - b) peinao - chronic lack of nourishment.
    - c) Both words refer to lack of sustenance. But Jesus uses the later, peinao. He is speaking about a chronic state of deficiency. \*\*\*These people are being deprived of something. They are like innocent bystanders in this situation. They are experiencing that something vital to living has been taken from them. \*\*\*What they need to live is missing from their lives and they are now dying without it!
    - d) Who are these 'lucky' 'happy' people? They are the ones who are now keenly aware of the need for something essential. They know that they are missing something in life that only God can supply.
  2. What do these people hunger for? Not bread, not water. They lack/hunger God's righteousness.
    - a) God's righteousness is not based on how well we keep the rules/laws.
    - b) God is holy. And we can never be holy based on our own efforts. But, in spite of our unworthiness, He counts righteous those who recognize their unrighteousness and seek His help.
      - (1) Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets all knew their unworthiness and yet God established them as righteous!

- (2) You receive grace and then seek to live by Gods word. You do not seek to live the word in order to receive the grace.
3. Let me illustrate: IE. You are in an underwater submersible exploring a reef along a wall. You sub fails. And you go over the wall to an uneasily reached depth. You know help is coming but your oxygen is limited and each breath brings you closer to death. You cannot stop breathing and oxygen is now the most important thing in your life! Jesus is speaking to those who now realize that their lack of righteousness is by far the most important thing of their lives.
- a) Jesus shocks his listeners by declaring that those people who appear to be under the judgement of God are really in a state of pure luck!
- (1) They supposed you were being punished.
- (2) They supposed that if you were well fed you were worthy.
- b) Jesus turns this all over by saying if you are aware of your chronic helplessness, you are lucky because your need was going to be taken care of, your lack will be satisfied!
- c) "O how lucky those of you who know that you cannot provide what you need by yourselves, who know that life is not giving you what you must have, who know that you are dying without what only God can provide. JUMP FOR JOY! Your day has arrived." Skip Moen pp. 66, *The Lucky Life*.  
GOD IS FOR THOSE WHO KNOW THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE A PRAYER!!! Not those who are trying to earn their provision, help themselves.
4. The Promise: You shall be filled.
- a) Gr. chortazo - Filled is not quite the right point. Rather "to be fed" is.
- b) When you realize that you have no righteousness that you can come up with, then and only then will you be 'fed' the righteousness of God! IE. Starving child who can feed himself. Realizes that unless someone feeds him, he is to tired/weak to eat.
- c) This beatitude is about your total inability to meet your most basic need before God, (righteousness). Only when you realize that can God do something about it. The ones who will be blessed are only those who have nothing to show for themselves except their need.

**Conclusion:**

- Happy are those who realize their depth of pain and know that only God can fill it. For He will tame your heart and let you share in His Kingdom.
- Happy are you who know that you can do nothing to supply your most basic need before God, righteousness. For that is exactly what He will give you.

"The focus is on the principle of reversal of fortunes rather than on a specific "inheritance." France, R. T. (2007). [The Gospel of Matthew](#) (p. 167). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.