

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

Introduction:

- *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."* (Matthew 5:9-10, NKJV)
- *In 1965, during the Rolling Stones fourth tour of the United States, guitarist Keith Richards suddenly sat up in bed one night at the Harrison Hotel in Clearwater, Florida, turned on a tape recorder, and played what Newsweek magazine would later call, "five notes that changed the world." (Play song intro) It's the introduction to what would become the band's first number one hit in the United States and eventually land as the #1 song on VH1's "100 Greatest Rock and Roll Songs of All Time" list. "I Can't Get No Satisfaction." Interestingly enough, the lyrics were written as a commentary on American society. **APPLICATION** Keith Richards and Mick Jagger - international icons of excess - were so struck by the sheer volume of American marketing that they felt compelled to write a song about it. We are the single most consumer centered culture of all time - We are absolutely insatiable. But Jesus promises that we will be satisfied...when we are hungry and thirsty for the right reason...a relationship with God.*
- Let's look at the last two beatitudes:

- I. The Key to the "B!"** Once again, the the key to understanding the eight beatitudes is knowing:
- A. Each one of the 'beatitudes' begins with an adjective describing the state of a person already having received something.
 1. It is not a verb! Verbs inform us that we must do something. The "B" describes people.
 2. 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: Each one has a paradox. 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. 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.
 2. The paradox leads the listener to the place where they experience Zoe (Life) in the midst of life no matter what is happening in life.
 - C. Third is understanding the key word, 'blessed/happy'.
 1. The Word 'blessed', the "B", 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 and you don't deserve it. 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 their faith in God. They describe the 'kind of person' who experiences something about God's character as they realize something about themselves.

II. Blessed Are The Peacemakers

- A. *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God."* (Matthew 5:9, NKJV) IE. We all would like 'break' from the busy lives we live. No more arguments with the kids. Peace in the work place. No financial pressures. Please, just give me life as a vacation! The truth is: Jesus is not going to do that. In fact, *****this macarism is not for those who want peace but those who make peace.** And you can't make peace unless you are in conflict and ready to put yourself at risk. Let's look at the word 'peacemaker'.
1. εἰρηνοποιῶσ/ eirēnopoios - peacemaker. Comes from two words. eirene - peace. And poieo - to make or do.
 2. This beatitude differs from the rest in this - it requires a necessary action from the subject. The one who is 'blessed here' must make peace.
 3. *"this word does not mean merely those who are peaceable or peace loving, but rather those who are 'the active heroic promoters of peace in a world of alienation'"*. Expositors Greek NT, Robertson Nicoll. p100. The ones that God is calling His sons are those who come between contending parties to make peace.
 4. It seems as if this beatitude does not comply with our pattern of macarism that we have seen each reflect. Where is the paradox? It seems like we have to do something to earn this.
 5. But lets look closer:
 - a) The context is a Jewish nation that has Greek, Roman, and Jewish influence all mixed together. All three affect the understanding of peace.
 - b) For the Greek, peace was a negative concept. It was 'brake' between real life events. It was not about relationships! To the Hebrew this was the exact opposite. Eirene is translated from the Hebrew word Shalom but the Hebrew concept of peace was all about relationships between people. They actually greet each other with Shalom. And to the Hebrew peace was always contained within the frame work of God. His gift to man! Ps 85, David says that righteousness and peace have kissed—it was an outflow of God's loving kindness.
 - c) Shalom meant three things: 1. well-being between people. 2. It was not just a gift to men from God, but a description between men and God. The only access to it was by keeping the law. Obey and you have peace. Disobey and you have pain. 3. Rome reminded the Jews of the lack of peace they had. Therefore they longed for peace! The Greek understanding seems to include everyone. But when looking at Jews contradictions arise.
 - (1) The common person in the crowd thought of their own well being. They might greet each other with shalom but they did not experience its blessing.

- (2) The political activist would have thought of peace as in no conflict or war.
 - (3) The rabbis would have thought of peace with God. Since peace was connected to the law they lived in constant fear that God would find fault in them.
 - (4) No Jew would have missed the connection to the prophecies of Messiah who would usher in peace. Yet this guy, Jesus, avoids military violence, rebukes religious leaders and lives isolated from the main stream.
- d) Given all this information we have the same thing today: Peace is just not available. So, where is the paradox?
- B. The paradox is found in the understanding of eirene as it is used in the rest of the NT. It is almost always used in the deeper sense of salvation. But rarely used to describe the relationship between God and man. It was the end of strife with God, as a present condition. The NT understands peace as the end of hostility with God through salvation in Christ Jesus. Peace describes the state of the believer assured of salvation. It is directly related to righteousness, love, and grace.
1. "God's peace is independent of outside conditions and is the fruit of an objective, real salvation with God." Zodhiates, Complete Word Study Dictionary: p 520.
 2. Peace then is a word that summarizes the life of those who are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.
 3. ***The paradox is not that the crowd wished for peace but they did not experience peace. The paradox is connected to the combination of the 'peace' and the 'maker'. The paradox is that only those who are presently giving up this hoped-for reality reflect God's character and God's peace.
 4. Let's me say it another way. Everyone wants peace except the peacemaker. He gives up personal harmony and tranquility in order to put himself at risk for the state of peace. IE. In the Old West there was a 45 caliber revolver/six shooter called the Peacemaker, made by colt. The only way the Peacemaker could bring peace was to enter into conflict.
 - a) There is your paradox. You can't be a peace maker without stepping into conflict.
 - b) The peacemaker enters harms way to attempt to bring someone else's conflict to an end.
 - c) IE. The Prince of Peace - entered harms way in order to bring us peace.
 - d) Peace makers are active. You can't wait for it to get better. You can't 'watch and see.'
 - e) Peace makers are in and of themselves a paradox! The very thing they long for is what they give up. IE. Jesus.
 5. "Lucky those who give up their peace for the sake of someone else peace. They look like God's family.
- C. A look backwards:
1. We start with "sons of God". Those who are designate God's children. They have family resemblance.
 2. Sons of God step into conflict in order to bring peace. We mirror Jesus. The One who told us of the bliss, happiness, blessedness of the peacemaker is the Peacemaker we killed.
 3. The ones who jumps for joy know they are face to face with the One who showed us peacemaking.
 4. kletheontai - 'called' should read - 'are regarded or accounted'. It is not something they earned it is a description of who they are by some else. They did not earn the title of sons of God

because they act as peacemakers. They act as peacemakers because they reflect what it means to live as sons of God.

5. Those jumping for joy are those who know personally that their own peace comes from the Peacemaker who gave up His own peace.
 6. The peacemaker gives up his own peace for the sake of ending strife between men for no other reason than reflecting the character of His Father. The peacemaker knows that God's peace is found in standing in conflict.
- D. Incredibly blessed those deliberately stepping into their Father's shoes in efforts to bring peace between men and God. God considers them symbols of His family

III. Blessed Are The Persecuted

- A. *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*
(Matthew 5:10, NKJV)
1. Our view of persecution is mostly tied to Christians in other countries who are tortured for their faith. But this view create for us a problem. Jesus was speaking mostly to peasants, beggars, believers, religious and outcasts. There are no tortured in this crowd.
 2. This beatitude also presents another thought: It is the only other beatitude in the present tense outside of the first...theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
 3. So if no one is being tortured this day, who is Jesus speaking of? The answer is powerful!
 4. A state of bliss/happiness/blessedness is connected to the διωκω/dioko. Find the meaning of dioko and we find the paradox. Two uses of dioko:
 - a) to set in motion, to impel.
 - b) to persecute. The second is most predominate translation in the NT.
 - c) In Jesus statement, the verb is perfect passive participle.
 - (1) The perfect tense speaks of an action in the past with continuing consequences in the present. This tells us that the persecuted have been persecuted for a long time and the action has not stopped.
 - (2) Secondly the verb is passive. This implies that something is done to the subject. Persecution is put upon them. They did not go looking for it. It was inflicted upon them.
 - (3) It is a participle which means it is a verb that acts like an adjective describing a noun 'those'.
 - (4) This helps us understand who Jesus is talking to. We often feel we deserve some divine reward for being insulted or emotionally injured. God owes us. But note: what Jesus is speaking of is not over. It has not ended. Jesus is talking about those who lives are at this moment are being characterized by oppression and persecution.
 - d) One other understanding of this word dioko is 'to accuse.' Jesus is talking to those present who are being accused and driven out.
 5. Dioko came from the Hebrew word *radaph*. It means to pursue with the intention of revenge or harm. One group flees while the other group chases. One group tries to flee harm while the other seeks to cause harm.
 - a) Jesus qualifies this 'chase' with the phrase (for the sake of righteousness). We have seen righteousness in the forth beatitude.

- b) The Pharisees were meticulous about keeping the law for only in doing so could one be righteous. They were so passionate about it that they laid this impossible legal burden of perfection on their followers. In fact, they considers common people to be below them and God because of their inability to keep the law.
 - c) This attitude of religiousness drove grace away from those who needed it most. All the while Jesus declared that righteousness was a gift not a reward. ***The people who heard Jesus that day knew full well what it meant to be driven away from God by a group who pursued them.***
 - d) The pharisees were inflicting harm on God's message of grace. The ones who were crying out for it were the ones being driven away from God's gift of righteousness by the religiously correct.
- B. Another powerful understanding of dioko is this: It always implies the guilt of the oppressor or that the persecution is not justified! This is the word Jesus is using.
1. Jesus is not only speaking about torture and suffering. He is talking about a group of people who place religious behavior ahead of grace. This makes them the guilty ones!
 2. The persecutors are guilty of: distorting the righteousness of God, of altering God's holy character by filtering it through human demands/requirements. Paul, like Jesus declares in Romans 7:4 that there are no human rules that stand between God and man.
 3. *"They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden."* (Matthew 23:4, NLT) unbearable loads- shipping freight.
 4. Therefore we can either live to lift burdens from people or pile on the freight. Jesus makes it clear that those listening that day were those who had been denied grace because of religious legalism.
- C. This last beatitude brings us full circle. We began with the first beatitude in the present tense sense of desperation now Jesus returns to the present tense persecution.
1. People desperate for God persecuted by the guilty. Anytime we insert requirements between desperation and grace persecution occurs and the persecutor is guilty.
 2. Remember the discovery of the Kingdom of Heaven is not a reward but rather an answer should help us see that Jesus ends where He started.
 3. Jesus is God's answer to our cry for grace. And anyone who finds grace, in spite of the persecutors, can only experience one emotion...sheer happiness! It is not about effort it is all about discovery! Discovering God's righteousness in spite of the legalism that attempts to keep me from discovering. Though I am desperate for God, men will try to drive me away. But God will answer me! And what a blessed man I am!
 4. Anyone interfering with the process of grace is a persecutor!
 5. Happy the persecuted in regard to righteousness, because no human requirement or burden shall remove it.

Conclusion:

- Invitation