

☞ LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

Matthew 5:1-16

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. 13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Last week: Stay the Course. No matter how much the world around us changes, our calling and mission remain the same: let your light shine and go make disciples. We talked about how to shine with good deeds, grace, gentleness and respect. Today, I want to dive deeper into this subject. How do you let your light shine?

--Archbishop Robert Leighton... A holy life is a voice.

--D L Moody... A holy life will produce the deepest impression. Lighthouses blow no horns; they only shine.

v. 14-16 Jesus says, "You are the light of the world... let your light shine..." and he specifically mentions good deeds as evidence of a shining light. Clearly, our actions speak to those around us. If we want people to see Jesus in us, then we must behave as Jesus did. It's the old "WWJD." We should be known as people who do good. But, it's more than that. I believe the Beatitudes described in the first part of this chapter indicate how we can let our light shine in the world around us. Some have said they're called Beatitudes

because they describe Behaviors and Attitudes that the Lord loves. And I would add that these Behaviors and Attitudes are ways in which our light can shine. Let's take a look...

☞ **The Poor in Spirit** receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Poor in Spirit is not talking about monetary poverty. It's talking about a condition of the heart. Biblical scholars agree that this is referring to those who acknowledge their own spiritual bankruptcy. This is about people who understand that their only hope of heaven is found in Christ. This is people who don't think of themselves as better than others, but rather with an understanding of their reliance on God's power and mercy for salvation.

Romans 7:24-25

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!

☞ **"I'm not perfect; just forgiven."** Many times, the world thinks of Christians as those "holier than thou" people and are offended, especially when we don't really live up to that.

☞ **Those who Mourn** shall be comforted.

Many think this refers to natural grief, perhaps at the loss of a loved one. I do believe that God comforts people in times of trouble. But I also think that Jesus is saying more than that here. Again, scholars agree that this is a reference to spiritual mourning rather than simply experiencing grief in this world. The idea is that of a deep grief over our fallen, sinful nature.

☞ **2 Corinthians 7:10**

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret...

These first two Beatitudes are about having a proper perspective on our relationship with God. Many non-Christians perceive Christians as having an air of superiority about them. When we come off as "holier than thou," it's a huge obstacle for many. But when people see a humble Christian, it can be a shining light that attracts them. Let your light shine by your acknowledging your absolute dependence on God.

--Andrew Murray... Absolute dependence upon God is the secret of all power in work. The branch has nothing but what it gets from the vine, and you and I can have nothing but what we get from Jesus. The first thing you need is to come and rest in your Lord Jesus. If

you would be a true branch of Christ, the living Vine, just rest on Him. Let Christ bear the responsibility."

☞ **The Meek** will inherit the earth.

J. Upton Dickson was a fun-loving fellow who said he was writing a book entitled Cower Power. He also founded a group of submissive people. It was called DOORMATS. That stands for "Dependent Organization of Really Meek And Timid Souls -- if there are no objections." Their motto was: "The meek shall inherit the earth -- if that's okay with everybody." Their symbol was the yellow traffic light.

Many, even in the church, think that to be meek is to be weak. But the opposite is true. What the Bible is talking about is a powerful virtue. The slogan "strong enough to be gentle" comes close to defining it. True meekness is best seen in Christ. He was submissive, never resisting or disputing the will of God. His absolute trust in the Father enabled Him to show compassion, courage, and self-sacrifice even in the most hostile situation.

☞ Meekness is not weakness. Rather, meekness is **strength under control**. I think of a hard-working man holding a baby. He is strong, but handles that infant with gentleness. ☞ Also, meekness is **restraining from anger** and wrath. This is difficult in today's culture. So many people are just plain mean and rude, but we are called to remain meek.

Philippians 2:14-16

Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe

Meekness is also a willing submission to authority. What a contrast to pop culture!

☞ Those who **Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness** will be filled.

This is basically a strong **desire for holiness** in yourself and in the world around you. This is an attitude of always wanting to do the right thing. That alone is a testimony.

Ephesians 5:8-10

you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord.

This hunger is not about possessions or power, as so many in the world strive after. Rather, this hunger and thirst is about the presence of God.

☞ **The Merciful** will be shown mercy.

A mother once approached Napoleon seeking a pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "it would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

To be merciful is to not be vengeful and retaliatory. Again, this is difficult in today's culture. So many are harsh if you are not like them, but Christians are called to be ☞ **compassionate and forbearing**, even with those who disagree with us. Forbearing means to put up with. We know this is something we are to do towards each other, but we are also called to be merciful to people who may hate and despise us.

☞ **The Pure in Heart** will see God.

To be pure in heart speaks of **honesty and integrity**. It makes me think of Daniel when his competitors tried to find fault in him, but could not. He was a man of great integrity.

☞ This purity also speaks of a **sincere devotion to God**. It implies an absence of hypocrisy. While the world is often content to be hypocrites themselves, they despise it in believers when they see it. Even Jesus called out religious people when they were hypocrites.

☞ **Peacemakers** will be called Sons of God.

The idea here is to **overcome evil with good**. We understand that you don't fight fire with fire, you fight fire with water. When people are rude and harsh and hateful, we respond with meekness and purity.

☞ This Beatitude is also about the **ministry of reconciliation**.

2 Corinthians 5:19-20

God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

We are to bring peace into difficult and sometimes hostile situations. When people around us are tossing verbal grenades, we remain meek and keep on doing good.

☞ **Those who are Persecuted** receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Persecution has to do with insults and being treated maliciously. It can be even more violent as in many parts of the world and throughout history. Now, let's be clear though:

☞ **this persecution is for Jesus' sake**, not for our own stupidity.

1 Peter 4:15-16

If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name

Sometimes, we bring trouble on ourselves by our behavior. In that case, it is deserved. But if we are simply living holy lives, representing Christ, and the world hates us for it, that kind of persecution is noticed by God. For some in the world, seeing a Christian being persecuted and yet remaining steady with meekness and purity, will be shining beacon of light.

The well-known Bible teacher Keith Brooks had just finished speaking to a large class of businessmen on the Christian's responsibility to be a "light" in the world. He emphasized that believers are to reflect the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus. After the class, one of the members related to him an experience he had in his home which had impressed upon him this same truth. He said that when he went into his basement he made an interesting discovery. Some potatoes had sprouted in the darkest corner of the room. At first, he couldn't figure out how they had gotten enough light to grow. Then he noticed that the cook had hung a copper kettle from the ceiling near a cellar window. She kept it so brightly polished that it reflected the rays of the sun onto the potatoes. The businessman said to Brooks, "When I saw that, I thought, I may not be a preacher or a teacher with ability to expound Scripture, but at least I can be a copper kettle catching the rays of the Son and reflecting His light to someone in a dark corner."

☞ **You are the light of the world... let your light shine... with godly behavior and attitudes.**

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine