TWENTY FIFTH ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHP, 2017

Bible Beatitudes

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"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

(Luke 10:2)

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TWENTY FIFTH ANNUAL
"LABOURERS TOGETHER WITH GOD"
LECTURESHP

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THEME:

BIBLE
BEATITUDES

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ATTITUDES THAT MUST BE

Jeff Dates

1. Every individual accountable to God must make a spiritual decision: blessing or cursing, eternal joy or eternal sorrow, spiritual life or spiritual death. Deut. 30:19
2. We desire blessing, joy, and life, but the majority of people will receive cursing, sorrow, and death. Matt. 7:13-14
3. God instructs us to choose. Because Jesus Christ gave himself on the cross of Calvary that my sins may be forgiven, my salvation is in my own hands, and is dependent upon the choices that I make. Rom. 6:16
   a. The fact that most are following the way to destruction is not a failure on God’s part. Matt. 7:13-14
   b. God has done all that is necessary for man’s eternal salvation. John 3:16
   c. Individuals are making the wrong choices.
4. How do I choose blessing, joy, eternal life?

DISCUSSION:

I. I MUST CHOOSE NOT TO DO THOSE THINGS THAT GOD IN HIS WORD HAS COMMANDED, “THOU SHALT NOT.”
   A. It is sin to transgress God’s law. 1 John 3:4
   B. Every transgression and disobedience has consequences. Heb. 2:2
      1. Death reigns as a consequence of transgressing God’s law. Rom. 5:14
      2. Spiritual death, one’s soul being separated from God, is a consequence of sin. Isaiah 59:1-2
   C. Ignorance of God’s law will not keep one from suffering the consequences of transgression. Rom. 10:3
   D. Being deceived will not keep one from suffering the consequences of transgression. 1 Tim. 2:14; Heb. 3:13

II. I MUST CHOOSE TO DO ALL OF THOSE THINGS THAT GOD IN HIS WORD EXPECTS OF HIS CHILDREN.
   A. Failure to do the things that God instructs me to do is sin. James 4:17
   B. Obeying some of the things, or even most of the things that God expects me to do is not enough. James 2:8-13
   C. Society does not determine right and wrong.
      1. God warns us not to “follow the crowd.” Exod. 23:2
      2. If the majority is following the “broad way” that leads through the “wide gate” into destruction, why would I follow them? Matt. 7:13-14
3. I must choose to strictly follow God’s way without compromise.

D. God will not accept “lip service.” Matt. 15:7-8
   “Actions speak louder than words.”

III. I MUST CHOOSE TO BE THE PERSON THAT GOD EXPECTS OF HIS CHILDREN.
   A. My heart must be the heart of a true Christian. Matt. 15:7-8
      3. My heart controls my attitude.
   B. I must choose to have the proper attitude toward God.
      1. I must love God with all of my heart. Matt. 22:37
      2. My love for God must be superior to my love for others.
         Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26
      3. No love for the things of the world. 1 John 2:15-17
   C. I must choose to have the proper attitude toward God’s word.
      1. I must have the utmost respect for the Bible. Neh. 8:5
      2. My heart must be receptive to His will. Matt. 13:16-17
         a. Most harden their hearts to God’s will. Matt. 13:15;
            Rom. 2:5
      3. His word must prick my heart, convicting me of my sin.
         Acts 2:37
         a. Most are “cut to the heart” by the word of God. Acts 5:33; 7:54
      4. I must keep God’s word from my heart. Eph. 6:6
         a. The allegiance of my heart must not be divided.
            “singleness of heart” Acts 2:46; Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22
         b. I must keep God’s word with an honest and good heart. Luke 8:15
   D. I must choose to have the proper attitudes toward the lost,
      my brothers and sisters in Christ, and toward life itself.
      1. The “beatitudes” of the Bible emphasize this point.
      2. These attitudes are not optional, but expected of God’s children, and will determine where I will be eternally.
      3. They must be learned and practiced.

CONCLUSION:
1. Have I chosen blessing, joy, and life?
2. The choice begins with the attitude that I choose to have, and then radiates from my speech, from my actions, and through the person that I choose to be.
3. Wrong choices from the past can be changed, but must be changed immediately.
4. Will you be the person God expects of you?
Blessed Is The Man That Walketh Not
Psalm 1:1-6
Ken Burleson

1. The book of Psalms is read by the majority of people more than any other book.

2. The word Blessed is translated from a Hebrew word that means happy and it is plural, might react "the blessedness of the man."

3. The Book of Psalms is dearly loved.
   a. There are Psalms of Prayer and Oh, how we need these.
   b. There are Psalms of Messianic Promise and how dear are those to us as we read the fulfillment in the New Testament. Some of these are: Psa. 2:7; 22:1; 16:8-11.
   c. It is a book of Confession and Penitence for those who need to confess and repent.
   d. Psalms is a book of comfort to those who need to be comforted.
   e. How beautiful are the many promises made in the Psalms.

4. Brother Perry B. Cotham referred to the first Psalm as the preface Psalm.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE BLESSED MAN.
   A. A description of the things he will not do.
      1. He will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly. 1:1
         a) He takes wise counsel as how to walk. Psa. 119:105, 130; Psa. 73:24; Jer. 20:23.
         b) He is not guided by foolish counsel who would have you to walk with the wicked.
         c) The Blessed man will not accept false teaching.
         d) He does not follow their designs.
         e) He does not cast his lot with the wicked nor does he get involved in their projects or designs.
      2. Does not stand in the way of sinners. 1:1
         a) They do not have the same class of association, they are different.
         b) Sinners love evil. 1 John 2:15-17; Rom. 8:1-7
         c) The blessed man will avoid evil. Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 5:22.
         d) Moses warned the children of Israel, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil..." Ex. 23:2
         e) Paul said, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. 15:33.
         f) Sinners are not the ones we need to make our bosom buddies.
g) The blessed man does not take part in their actions. He does not have the same morals.

3. The Blessed man sitteth not in the seat of the scornful.
   a) He will not sit down in fellowship with these people.
   b) Involved in their activities are the mockery of God, sin, hell, heaven, and Christian life.
   c) “Fools make a mock of sin.” Prov. 14:9
   d) The devil was the first scouter.
   e) This seat may seem lofty to the world, however, this seat is next to the gate of hell.
   f) The verbs in this passage show the progressiveness of sin.

II. THE BLESSED MAN’S CHARACTER IS DESCRIBED IN A POSITIVE WAY. v.2
   A. There are two points to this description.
      1. His delight is in the law of the Lord.
         a) Some people could not care less for the law of God.
         b) One can say, his pleasure, his delight is in the law of the Lord.
         c) This man is a doer of the law and not just a hearer. James 1:22
         d) He is a lover of God and his will. Matt. 22:37
         e) The Word of God is key dear to him.
         f) He loves the law of God because it is his guide. Jer. 10:23; Psa. 119:105, 110, 113, 130.
      2. In His law doth he mediate day and night.
         a) Some meditate more on.
            1) The daily news paper
            2) This involves study. 2 Tim. 2:15
            3) The importance of Scripture. 2 Thess. 3:16,17
            4) The Word of God needs to be read. “Read” does not mean just the calling of the words, but reading to understand and to make application to one’s life.
            5) Filling one’s heart/mind with God’s word will allow that person to think right. Prov. 3:3, 5; 4:23; Mark 7:21-23.
            6) Things to think upon. Phil. 4:8

III. THIS BLESSED MAN IS DESCRIBED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY, BECAUSE: He did not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, Did not stand in the way of sinners nor did he sit in the seat of the scornful; but rather he delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated upon the Law of the Lord day and night. A. “Shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water.”
   1. Not a dead tree.
2. Planted intentional, not volunteer; purposefully planted; it was not a wild tree.

3. By the rivers of water.
   a) Life giving, where the roots can drink up the water.
   b) So the roots can get to the nutrients that the waters bring.
   c) Death of the roots means death to the tree.
   d) We must be rooted and grounded so we may do the same for our children.

B. “That bringeth forth his fruit in his season.”
   1. Not like the fig tree. Mk. 11:11-14
      a) The Lord does not condone hypocrisy. Matt. 23:5-15
      b) Christianity is not “stage playing.”

2. The fruit is there when expected. The fig tree had no fruit.
   a) Fruit bearing is a great part of living the Christian life.
   b) Must bear fruit. John 15:1-8

C. His leaf also shall not wither.
   1. This man lives a good faithful life. He lives a good, obedient life, God blesses a man like this.

2. The leaf depends upon the roots of the tree. Withered leaves withered life. Heb. 5:12-14

D. And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
   1. The faithful man is one that does the things of God in God’s way. Micah 6:8; Matt. 7:21; James 1:22-25. This man is nourished by the blessings of God.

2. Two examples of prospering.
   a) Joseph
   b) Solomon

IV. THE UNGODLY ARE NOT SO. v.4

A. They are not as the godly man because they walk in the counsel of the wicked, and stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the seat of the scornful.

B. Also, the ungodly man does not delight in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth not meditate day and night.
   1. He does not study. 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:13, 16
   2. He is ignorant of God’s commands.

C. They are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
   1. I recall when I was a youngster how my dad would winnow the peas and beans.

2. As the wheat was winnowed. Matt. 3:12; 25:41-46

3. This man is worthless to all the purposes for which God made man.

4. There is no beauty, fruit, hope, joy, or real success in the ungodly man.
D. The ungodly shall not stand. v.5
   1. They are like the chaff of the wheat.
   2. Driven about by every wind of doctrine. Eph. 4:14
   3. These will not stand in the Day of Judgment.
   4. Righteous people are often vexed by evil people. Example: Lot (Gen. 19:1-26; 2 Peter 2:7,8. This will not happen in heaven. Rev. 21:27; 22:15

E. Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
   1. Those who dwell in the tabernacle of God. Psa. 15:1-5
   2. Therefore, the very ones opposite of this will not dwell in the tabernacle of God today, the church, and heaven.
   3. Imagine how out of place they would feel in heaven?
   4. They are not like the tree planted by the waters, they do not have the beautiful green leaves, not the tasty fruit. Therefore, they are not spiritually alive, so not productive.

V. THE LORD KNOWETH ALL PEOPLE.
A. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.
   1. This is why the wicked will not stand with the righteous. Many in the day will be told by the Lord, I do not know you. Matt. 7:21-23
   2. The Lord understands the character of the righteous, and the righteous will stand because only those that God loves and approves they are His friends.
   3. “The way” of the righteous, denotes the whole of life the manner of living.
   4. The righteous are truly blessed.
   5. The Blessing of God’s eternal love.

B. But the way of the ungodly shall perish.
   1. They have determined to walk in their own chosen path that leads to hell. Ezek. 18:20; Acts 10:34, 35
   2. Sinners have no part in the congregation of the righteous. 1 Peter 4:17, 18
   3. The separation day will come. Matt. 24:40-41
   4. The way they live will ruin their hopes, purposes, and plans. Their path leads to destruction.
   5. None of their plans shall prosper.
   6. The ungodly stand in strong contrast to the righteous.

CONCLUSION:
1. God watches over his children.
2. When you have heartaches, disappointments, grief and failures, go to God in sincere prayer, pour your heart out to Him.
3. God knows all, so he knows you and will help you.
4. To have happiness, obey this Gospel and live a good, faithful and clean life.
Blessed Are All They That Put Their Trust In Him

Psalm 2:12; 34:8
Brooks Boyd, Jr.

1. This general message underlies the entirety of the Bible.
2. Let us consider two specific passages where these words are found.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT DOES THIS STATEMENT MEAN?

A. Consider the word “Blessed.”
   1. Just as in the New Testament, this word in the Old Testa-
   ment carries the thought of happiness relative to God’s approval.
   2. Asher was given that name because Leah reasoned, “Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher” (Gen. 30:13).
   3. “To be ‘blessed’ (ashre), man has to do something. Usually this is something positive” (Harris, p.80).

B. Next, notice the phrase “Put their trust.”
   1. Regarding the original word, we find this: “chacah, to flee for protection ... āto confide in: – have hope, make refuge, (put) trust” (Strong’s).
   2. It is what Boaz said Ruth had done: “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust” (Ruth 2:12, KJV); “...to take refuge” (ASV).

C. Then, consider the words “In Him.”
   1. This is a simple yet crucial prepositional phrase. (cf. Col. 2:9,10)
   2. The Lord alone is deserving of complete trust. (cf. Prov. 3:5; Isa. 42:17)

II. HOW IS IT USED IN PSALM 34?

A. This Psalm is from a time when David was in “survival mode” [v.1 (title)].
   1. His appreciation for God’s blessings was likely height-
   ened.
   2. He wanted all who were of “like faith” to join him in praising God (vs.1-3).

B. The Psalm considers, in acrostic form, the manifold mercies of God.
   1. “This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles” (v.6).
C. Verse eight presents a challenge to the unconvinced: "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."
   1. David was living proof that running to God for refuge brought blessings.
   2. He was qualified on several levels to teach this truth to willing listeners (v.11).
D. Peter quoted at least verses 12-16 to suffering Christians (1 Peter 3:10-12).
   1. God's providential blessings validate and reinforce our trust in Him.
E. His divine superintendence of our circumstances is applied in part to Jesus.
   1. "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken" (v.20; cf., John 19:36).
F. The concluding verse has words of great patience and comfort (Rom. 15:4).
   1. "The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate" (v.22). [See "Bring Christ Your Broken Life," v.3]

III. HOW IS IT USED IN PSALM 2?
A. It is the concluding thought of a powerful Messianic Psalm.
   1. However, this Psalm is in response to those who would reject Jesus (vs.1-3).
B. Notice the necessarily Messianic elements it contains:
   1. "The Lord and his anointed...their bands" (vs.2,3).
   2. The One who sits in the heavens (v.4) said, "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion" (v.6).
   3. "The LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee" (v.7).
   4. "A rod of iron" (v.9) is used to describe Jesus (Rev. 12:5; 19:15).
   5. "Kiss the Son" (v.12) suggests an element of worship not to be bestowed on mere men. (See Acts 10:25,26).
C. When the disciples first suffered persecution, they reflected on this Psalm. Acts 4:23
D. Consider Paul's custom. Acts 17:1-3
   1. See an example of how he did that for all willing hearers.
      Acts 13:14-16
   2. Notice a special explanation attributed to the "second psalm" (Acts 13:32,33).
E. Because the second Psalm has been fulfilled, we know about the first coming of Christ.
   1. Consequently, we may better understand His second coming.
F. No right thinking individual wants to experience the personal fulfillment of verse 4.
   1. Felix trembled at the thought. Acts 24:25

CONCLUSION:
1. Being blessed of God requires being where God blesses. Eph. 1:3

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BLESSED IS HE WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN
Psalm 32:1
John DeBerry

If one word would be used to convey the message and temper of the book of Psalms, that word would be Praises. Each of these sacred songs and writings extend praise, reverence and adoration of God for his love and consideration.

David, who had many difficult and disappointing moments in his life, most certainly understood more than most the kindness, mercy, and long suffering of God. Therefore, one of the Psalms authored by this great, but flawed man, is considered one of the Psalms of Thanksgiving, Psalm 32.

This great Psalm of David well expressed the comfort, assurance and thankfulness David experienced, knowing that God loved him enough to forgive and uphold him. David knew that he had been profoundly blessed only because God knew his heart and heard his lament of repentance.

BLESSED AND FORGIVEN
We know from the inspired history of David that he was a driven and complex man. God examined and approved his heart as he sought a New King for Israel; “And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord’s anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the Lord chosen this” (1 Sam. 16: 6-8).
• God was not concerned about Samuel’s opinion or Jesse’s pride in the sons that they both thought had the charisma of kings.
• God made it clear that his choice, unlike Saul’s, would be made by what he demanded and not what the people desired.
“So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he” (1 Sam. 16:12).

DISCUSSION:
I. SIN IS TRANSGRESSION.
The word transgression has a clear meaning in both the Old and New Testaments (Hebrew and Greek).
Old Testament Hebrew “pesha” transgression is “Rebellion” (Joshua 24:19; Lev. 16:16; Psa. 32:5; Isa. 57:4). Jeremiah prophesied that the people would be punished because of “perverse-ness”, or transgression; “because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased” (Jer. 5:6). Solomon said “The wicked are snared by the transgression of his lips; but the just shall come out of trouble” (Prov. 12:13). Ezekiel warned idolaters of judgment because their “transgression had polluted them” (Ezek. 14:11).

New Testament, Greek, Transgression is Lawlessness or Trespass, anomos, parabasis (Luke 22:37; Heb. 2:2; James 2:9; 2 John 3:4). Paul teaches that it is law which determines the existence of transgression (Rom. 4:14). To teach and not do according to Paul is transgression (Gal. 2:18). By transgression and sin, man has violated God’s justice, love, and mercy since the beginning. While God has always acknowledged the existence of man’s transgressions and even prepared for it before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4, 1 Pet. 1:2); He has never accepted the necessity of man’s sins. To God, sin, is rebellion; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; John 8:44.

II. BLESSED ARE THE FORGIVEN OF THEIR TRANSGRESSION.
David was a man whose wounds were many and self-inflicted. He had defiled his soul with lust, dishonesty and ungodliness. David knew that the very core of his being had been violated and that the God he loved so dearly was displeased.

David knew he had to acknowledge his sin and make peace with God so that God would “blot out his transgressions” (Psa. 51:1). “For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me” (Psa. 51:3).

This Psalm was evidently written after that terrible saga with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:3,4). David was thankful that God had extended him mercy even though he had failed to extend mercy to Bathsheba and Uriah.
Like no other of the Psalms, Psalm 32 beautifully voices the joy and appreciation of being forgiven. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psa. 32:1).

In five versus David tells how his sins were covered.

Renews his spirit by removing the notation of his sin “Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity” (Psa. 32:2). A FORGIVEN PERSON IS A HAPPY PERSON.

When sins are accepted as personal failure it removes the load of guilt. “When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long” (Psa. 32:3). A FORGIVEN PERSON HAS MADE PEACE WITH GOD.

God wants us to be responsible and trust him to forgive. “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him” (Psa. 32:5,6). A FORGIVEN PERSON HAS REMEDIED HIS SIN.

If we are to restore joy after transgression, we must find the joy of the covering or removal of those transgressions.

• Don't deny your sin.
• Don't ignore your sin.
• Don't justify your sin.
• Don't camouflage your sin.
• Ask the Lord to forgive your sin. “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart” (Psa. 32:10,11).

**Blessed Is The Nation Whose God Is The Lord**

**Psalm 33:12**

*Barry Gilreath, III*

1. A well-known beatitude is found in the middle of the 33rd psalm.
2. “Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, The people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psalm 33:12, ASV).
DISCUSSION:
I. LET ALL THE EARTH FEAR THE LORD (PSALM 33).
   A. The purpose of the 33rd Psalm is to bring to mind the many wondrous workings of the Lord: the uprightness of his word (Psa. 33:4), the faithfulness of his work (Psa. 33:4), the love he has for righteousness and justice (Psa. 33:5), the extent of his lovingkindness (Psa. 33:5), the power of his creation (Psa. 33:6-9), and the reach of his deliverance (Psa. 33:18-19).
   B. In view of such, the Lord should be praised in song by the righteous (Psa. 33:1-3).
   C. Yet, the psalmist understands that no one is exempt from honoring God, so he calls upon “all the earth” to fear Jehovah and stand in awe of him (Psa. 33:8).
   D. All the people of the earth should live in consideration of the fact that the Lord sees all the works of men (Psa. 33:13-15).
   E. One thing which is apparent to God is the futility of men (Psa. 33:16-17).
      1. Their plans of safety, security, and prosperity do not come to fruition.
      2. It is God who brings to nothing their counsel and has made their thoughts of no effect (Psa. 33:10). By contrast, the Lord’s counsel stands forever (Psa. 33:11)!
   F. The Psalm concludes with a prayer of the righteous for God’s lovingkindness to be upon his people (Psa. 33:22).

II. NOW, CONSIDER THE PSALM’S BEATITUDE.
A. “Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah,” (Psa. 33:12a, ASV).
   1. There exists a continual state of joyous celebration among the nation whose God is Jehovah, and their happiness has been manifested by their trust in him.
   2. The Hebrew word translated as “nation” (gowy) is a word which, depending on the context, can either refer to God’s people (Gen. 12:2; Psa. 106:5-6) or the heathen Gentile nations (Psa. 2:1).
   3. So, is this beatitude applicable to the nation of Israel or the heathen nations around them? Keep reading.
B. “The people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psa. 33:12b).
   1. The latter clause undeniably refers to the nation of Israel. For, Israel, was his chosen nation (Deut. 7:6; Isa. 44:1) and his inheritance (Jer. 10:16; Psa. 78:71).
   2. The King James Version translators supplied the conjunction, “and,” between the two clauses; yet, it is not in
the original text. This is not ideal, because it changes how one might understand the first part of the verse.

a. By supplying the "and," the translators made the two clauses seem independent from one another. They are not.

b. True to its original context, one must understand that Israel is "the nation" of this often quoted, yet often misapplied, beatitude.

III. HOW MIGHT ONE FITTINGLY APPLY THE BEATITUDE TODAY?

A. The United States of America, nor any earthly nation for that matter, is not God's chosen nation and heritage.

B. Today, the beatitude rings true for a spiritual nation: the church of Christ.

1. The church of Christ is a holy nation (1 Pet. 2:9).
2. The church of Christ is God's chosen people (1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Cor. 6:16).
3. The church of Christ loves and serves the Lord their God (Luke 10:27).
4. The church of Christ, by new creation, is the Israel of God (Gal. 6:15-16).
5. The church of Christ is God's kingdom which will never be destroyed (Dan. 7:14).
6. The church of Christ is God's heritage and will receive his inheritance (1 Pet. 5:3; Col. 1:12).

IV. IN VIEW OF THIS BEATITUDE, THE CHURCH MUST REMEMBER THESE TIMELESS TRUTHS:

A. God rules in the kingdoms of men (Dan. 4:17).
B. God exerts his will among the kingdoms of men (Dan. 2:21).
C. Righteousness exalts a nation (Prov. 14:34; Deut. 28:1-2).
D. Sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34; Deut. 28:15; Prov. 16:12).
E. The hope of any nation is Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1:1).
F. God's people, the church, must shine forth hope among the nations (Matt. 5:16; 28:19; 1 Pet. 3:15).

CONCLUSION:

1. For America's sake, the Lord Jehovah must be its God. It must repent of its national wickedness (Acts 2:38; 3:19).
2. Yet, even if America continues to distance itself further away from God (2 Tim. 3:12), this should not lessen the Christian's resolve to continue in his pursuit of a better country, a heavenly one (Heb. 11:13-16).
BLESSED IS HE WHO CONSIDERETH THE POOR
Psalm 41:1
Tom House

1. The Lord spoke to His disciples shortly before His death while visiting with Simon the leper in Bethany. Matt. 26:6
   a. While there, a woman took a very precious ointment and poured it on the Lord’s head, much to the dismay of the disciples.
   b. Although costly, Jesus told them that the woman had ‘wrought a good work’ on Him. v.10
   c. He would then reference a text from Deuteronomy 15:11, in telling them that the poor would always be with them. Matt. 26:11

2. Regardless of the period of time in which one might live, there have always been those who find themselves in desperate situations.

3. It must be noted, that the word ‘poor’ in the English translations does not always mean physically destitute.
   a. There are several different words in the Biblical text which are translated ‘poor.’
   b. The term Jesus used in Matthew 26 was ‘ptochoς,’ which in relation to the words in Deuteronomy 15, Thayer will define as ‘helpless, powerless to accomplish an end.’
   c. There are two words used in the text of Deuteronomy 15; ‘ebhoνε,’ meaning ‘in the sense of want, destitute;’ and ‘αυνεζ,’ which is defined as ‘depressed in mind or circumstance, afflicted, humble.’
   d. Hence, a complete picture is provided by the use of the term ‘ptochoς;’ being comprehensive, so that it covers physical want and physical or emotional need.

4. The text of Psalm 41:1 contains the Hebrew word ‘daleh,’ defined as ‘dangling, implying weak or thin;’ and this precisely fits David’s situation.

5. It will be the purpose of this lesson to examine the Bible’s teaching on the proper disposition one should have in respect of benevolence, but to specifically consider David’s situation as stated in Psalm 41 in order to understand his need.

DISCUSSION:
I. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF PSALM 41.
   A. It has been determined by scholars that the book of Psalms is divided into five sections or books.
1. The 41st Psalm is considered to be the last portion of the first 'book.'
2. Psalm 41 fits within the context of the three previous chapters, and obviously provides the reader with an insight to David's personal situation; i.e. his sickness in addition to the subjection of serious vindictiveness by his enemies led by his son Absalom.

B. Psalm 40 closes with David noting that he was 'poor and needy.' v.17
1. It is rather difficult to conceive of a king being in such a desperate condition; and it seems certain that he was not in want of sustenance.
2. Regardless of his position, however, he confesses to being in a dire situation.

C. It would seem fitting to attach the concept of mercy to Psalm 41 as being its' theme. v.4
1. David is pleading to God for mercy which was certainly not forthcoming from his enemies; consequently, he turns to the one source upon which he knows he can depend for such a need.
2. His weak position is exacerbated by the fact that he is very sick, and therefore is unable to meet the threats against him and his throne with any hope of success without God's assistance.

II. THE PLOIGHT OF DAVID.
A. David's past continues to haunt him while he is still king.
B. As a king, he would normally have the power to execute judgments against those who might conspire against him.
C. But against those who were presently exercising the conspiracy, the threat of hypocrisy prevents him from now acting as he should regarding those who have wronged him.
1. The Law of Moses made provision for the death penalty for the actions which Amnon had taken in respect of his half-sister, Tamar. 2 Sam. 13
2. While Absalom dealt with the matter, David would have found it difficult to do so, considering his sexual sin with Bathsheba.
3. Furthermore, justice would have David call for the death of Absalom for killing Amnon, but how could he when he had been responsible for the death of Uriah?
D. These dilemmas may provide some insight as to why David finds himself in emotional distress, which may be contributing to his physical illness.
E. David's sickness was serious and debilitating.
1. The text does not reveal the nature of the disease, but his detractors referred to it as 'an evil disease.' Psa. 41:8
a. The word ‘evil’ is from ‘beliyal,’ meaning ‘worthless, wickedness;’ and is obviously connected with the devil, as it construes ‘naughtiness’ and ‘ungodliness.’ (Strong)
b. The word ‘disease’ comes from ‘dabar,’ which indicates ‘a thing’ or ‘a cause.’
c. Consequently, the appraisal of David’s plight, as seen by his enemies, is somewhat similar to that of Job, considering his ‘friends’ perception that Job’s plight must have been God’s judgment against his sin.
   1) In Job’s case, however, there was no sin determined to be the cause of his condition.
   2) In David’s case, he acknowledges his sin, and recognizes that God has allowed the affliction.

2. The sickness was such that it had:
   a. Incapacitated his ability to fulfill his royal duties, and thus rendered him a weak leader.
   b. There were those who perceived that he would not recover. vs.5,8

F. David knows his enemies are contemplating the possibility of his death. v.5
   1. It seems likely that he is referring to Absalom and his followers. v.6
      a. David intimates that when his son comes to visit, he speaks in platitudes in order to ingratiate himself to the king.
      b. David reluctantly assesses there is a sinister motive, in that his visitor is seeking information about the king’s condition which he might pass on to his colleagues. vs.6-8

   2. Another friend is also referenced in the text as well. v.9
      a. Ahithophel was one of David’s counselors, whose advice was highly esteemed, and considered by some to be advice from an inspired oracle. 2 Sam. 16:23; 2 Sam. 15:12
      b. The connection between David and Ahithophel was family related, seeing that Ahithophel was Bathsheba’s grandfather. 2 Sam. 11:3; 23:34
      c. This may explain the reasoning behind Ahithophel’s betrayal of David; as he could be taking advantage of the situation to enact vengeance against the king for his behavior toward his granddaughter, and for the murder of Uriah.

II. COMPASSION IS CONSIDERED.
   A. God has persistently demanded that man manifest a benevolent disposition to his fellowman.
B. The Lord reminded Israel of their time of poverty and weakness while in Egypt, and instructs them with specific admonitions about how to assist those who were less fortunate. Lev. 19:9-10
C. Job serves as an appropriate example of one who possessed a compassionate spirit, and clearly typifies the statement David makes in Psalm 41:1. [Job 29:12-16]
   1. He delivered the poor from the brink of starvation.
   2. He assisted the orphans and those otherwise who could not help themselves.
   3. He led the blind, and lifted the lame.
   4. He firmly acknowledges that he was a ‘father’ to the poor.
D. David will clearly affirm God’s regard for those who are in desperate situations. Psa. 140:12
E. Solomon will likely have learned significant lessons from his father’s plight; and with the knowledge that those who take advantage of the weak, he emphatically states that God will take note. Prov. 17:15
F. As poverty is to be met with compassion, it should be noted that poverty must be measured comprehensively.
   1. As noted, physical poverty demands compassionate hearts to help alleviate the sense of desperation possessed by those in need. Rom. 15:1; 1 Pet. 3:8
      a. Jesus admonishes his disciples to recognize the reality of the poor, for they will always exist; thereby, demanding that there will always be the need for the exercise of compassion.
      b. The Lord’s admonitions were not without example; for when the multitude had been following Him for three days, His compassion for them compelled Him to feed them in their time of weakness. Matt. 15:32
      c. In fact, the compassion for those in need should be such that the effort to supply the need for the weak should be without regard to recompense. Lk. 14:12-14
      d. The apostle Paul tells the Ephesian elders that they had the responsibility as leaders to ‘support the weak.’ [Acts 20:35]. (weak, astheneo, feeble, diseased, impotent, sick).
      e. James correlates the benevolent spirit with the manifestation of a working faith. James 2:14-17
   2. Notice as well, the comparisons between spiritual and physical poverty with spiritual and physical wealth.
      a. As known in the present culture, many who are physically afflicted cannot afford sufficient medical treatment.
b. Conversely, compare with those who are materially wealthy, but are spiritually destitute.

c. Some, like the brethren at Laodicea, confused material wealth with spiritual wealth. Rev. 3:17

d. In the Lord's day, most of those who were rich had greater access to the Law of Moses, and the poor were usually spiritually disadvantaged.

e. The people in Jesus' time were surely hungering and thirsting after spiritual direction.
   1) When the Lord visited Nazareth, He noted that one of the primary reasons for His coming to earth was to 'preach' to 'the poor,' Luke 4:18
   2) The Lord's compassion on the multitude was in respect of their spiritual plight. Matt. 9:36
   3) When John the Baptist sent inquiry as to whether Jesus was the Messiah, the Lord sent a response that connected the physical needs of the weak along with the spiritual needs. Luke 7:22

f. There was evidence of the spiritual weakness in the church at Corinth.
   1) The brethren were misusing the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. 11
   2) As a consequence, Paul stated there were many there who were 'weak and sickly' among them. 1 Cor. 11:30
   3) Paul's compassion for the souls of the Corinthian brethren results in the letter being sent to them to rectify the problems.
   4) The principle of benevolence is noted in a comprehensive point to the Corinthians in the second epistle. 2 Cor. 6:10
   5) Paul would note the example of the sacrifice of Christ to establish the means by which spiritual poverty might be eliminated. 2 Cor. 8:9

g. As the Lord has always frowned upon those who show no compassion on the physically desperate. He will illustrate His displeasure with two accounts:

h. The apostle John will also affirm that a Christian who shows no compassion is void of the love of God. 1 John 3:17

CONCLUSION:
1. David had known the full measure of God's blessings.
   a. He had been blessed of God to become king of Israel.
b. He enjoyed a time of strong support from God and the people of Israel.
2. However, at the time of the writing of Psalm 41, he is in a desperate condition, and knows that without God's help he could lose his kingdom, his life, or both.
3. Some close to David have turned on him.
4. David knows that the Lord is merciful and compassionate.
5. To emulate the disposition possessed by the Lord, i.e. to show compassion on the weak, is to be as the Lord.
6. Consequently, to lack compassion, is antithetical to the Lord's character.

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BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DWELL IN THY HOUSE
Psalm 84:4
Joel Wheeler

1. There are many "Beatitudes" found within the pages of the Scriptures that give us insight to everyday life and spiritual fellowship with God.
2. Most often the inspired writers are shining a light into a dark world.
3. The word BLESSED is found over 300 times in the Scriptures which often reflect the results of keeping God's instructions.
4. We examine the statement of the Psalmist that wrote:
   a. Psa. 84:4, "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee."
   b. The Psalm is attributed to the Sons of Korah, a family of the Levites that tended to the Tabernacle and later the Temple.
   c. The sons of Korah were the priests who served in the Tabernacle and Temple. Their "job" was to care for the sacrifices, incense, shewbread, inside furniture including bearing the Ark of the Covenant.
5. King David established 24 courses for the priests to serve two weeks out of the year (1 Chron. 23:6).
6. After Solomon's Temple was built, the priest that served would stay in the outer rooms.

DISCUSSION:
I. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DWELL IN THY HOUSE.
   A. The word "blessed" is often translated as "happy" or "happiness."
      1. A man is blessed by God's providential care.
2. The results from a life of service to God is a Blessed life.
3. True happiness comes from God (James 1:17).
4. The happiness that comes from the world will soon turn to sorrow.
5. Many believe that money will solve all their problems and make them very happy.
6. Love of money ruins friendships, family, and faithfulness to God (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

B. The greater blessing of being in the presence of spiritual things.
   1. Psa. 84:10, “For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”
   2. The lowest job in the House of the Lord is greater than a life of luxury in the house of the wicked.
   3. One must look beyond the material things and look to the spiritual things for happiness.
   4. Helen Keller, born blind, deaf and unable to speak was asked what is worse than being born blind and her answer was, being born with sight and having no vision.
   5. If we can't see the blessing in being a child of God, we are lost.

B. David spoke of the results from dwelling in the house of the Lord.
   1. Psa. 23:6, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”
   2. Nothing evil can come from dwelling in the House of the Lord. David knew the goodness of God and his infinite mercy.
   3. David had many enemies, but God blessed him and kept him safe.

II. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DWELL IN THY HOUSE.
A. The word “Dwell” literally means to abide for a long period of time or to take up residence.
   1. At the age of three months, Moses was taken to be raised in Pharaoh's house (Exod. 2).
   2. By the world's standards, Moses made the foolish choice to leave all the riches of Egypt (Heb. 11:24-25).
   3. To Dwell in God’s house means one denies the world and is a friend of God (James 4:4).
   4. Psa. 27:4, “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.
B. To Dwell in the tents of men means to oppose God and love the world (1 John 2:15-16).
   1. Hosea the prophet married a woman that would not abide in his house. Israel as a nation was like a wife that would not stay at home, she was running away constantly. (i.e. Hosea 1-4).
   2. Israel served “other gods” that would never stay home to serve God. They often worshiped the gods of the Gentiles. (1 Kings 18)

III. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DWELL IN THY HOUSE.
   A. The House that is under consideration belongs to the Lord.
      1. God’s house is far superior to anything man is able to build.
      2. 1 Cor. 3:19, “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.”

B. God’s house under the Law of Moses.
   1. The Tabernacle was God’s House beginning at Mt. Sinai in the Wilderness wandering of the Israelites.
   2. God’s presence was demonstrated by a pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night over the Tabernacle (Exod. 33:9-10).
   3. The Tabernacle was a tent that could be moved but more importantly it was a place of worship.
   4. The Temple was a permanent structure that was prepared by David and built by Solomon intended for a resting place for the Ark of the Covenant.
   5. 1 Kings 8:12-13, “Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in forever.”
   6. Both the Tabernacle and the Temple were where God required blood sacrifices by His standards (Heb. 10:1-4).

C. The House of God in the Christian dispensation.
   1. The House of God in the Christian age is the church (ekklesia) of God/Christ. Matt. 16:16-18
   2. The church which Jesus built is the “House of God.” 1 Tim. 3:15, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
   3. A high price was paid for that House (Acts 20:28).
   4. It is the House that was built by sacrifice (Heb. 10:10; 1 Peter 2:24)
D. The House of God after the resurrection and judgment.
   1. It is a house built by God that will stand for eternity (Heb. 11:10).
   2. Rev. 21:3, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”
   3. It is a house of eternal rest (Rev. 14:13).
   4. It is a house without pain, tears and death (21:4).
   5. It is a house of righteous (2 Peter 3:13).
   6. It is a house of service (Rev. 22:3).

CONCLUSION:
1. The House of the Lord/God is a place of worship and service.
2. The New Testament church is the House that God purposed to save by the blood of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10-11).
3. Those who dwell in God’s house on earth are those who will dwell in God’s house in Heaven.

CHOICES, AND HOW THEY AFFECT OTHERS
Maxine Knoll

1. Choices we make not only affect ourselves, but have a great impact on friends, family, brothers and sisters in Christ, and complete strangers.
2. Environment and education play a part in our choices.
3. All choices have consequences.
4. We should make choices which value God’s eternal promises over immediate pleasure.

DISCUSSION:
I. WE ARE ALL PRODUCTS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT. IF WE LEAVE THINGS TO CHANCE, WE WILL FAIL MORE TIMES THAN NOT.
   A. Being a Christian is a deliberate decision (choice).
      1. We have within us the power to be all that God intended.
      2. Occasionally, man must hit rock bottom before he chooses to follow God.
         b. Consider David at the loss of his son in 2 Samuel 12.
   B. Change is brought about by the knowledge and study of God’s word.
1. The proper knowledge brings the correct changes. 2 Tim. 2:15
2. Ruth decides to follow Naomi. Ruth 1:16
3. People watch how we, as Christians, handle situations.
   C. Bring up your children so they will want to do what is right.
      1. Hannah prayed for a child. 1 Samuel 1:22
      2. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he
         is old, he will not depart from it.” Prov. 22:6

II. WE MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR PART IN
   THE CHOICES WE MAKE AND THE CHOICES OTHERS
   MAKE.
   A. We are Christian examples and need to take our positions
      seriously.
      1. God’s command in Hebrews 10:25 to not forsake the
         assembly is for our own good.
      2. Our apparel speaks volumes about our choices. 1 Tim 2:9
      3. We must contribute to a good family environment and
         have our home as a safe haven for family and friends.
         a. “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
            Joshua 24:15
         b. “It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop.”
            Prov. 21:9; 25:24
         c. “She looketh well to the ways of her household, and
            eateth not the bread of idleness.” Prov. 31:27
      4. A woman yields power in her home.
         a. Our example as a Christian wife can be destroyed
            with our influence.
         b. Prayer should be an important part of our daily
            routine. 1 Thess 5:17
   B. Even if we are faced with a tempting situation, the choice
      to turn away and avoid its consequences is still available,
      thus rendering our actions inexcusable.
      1. Aaron tried to justify his poor choice at Mt. Sinai. Exod.
         32
      2. Moses hit the rock when God told him to talk to it.
         Numbers 20:7-13
   C. Sin is all about choices.
      1. “Blessed is the man who endures temptation” James 1:12
      2. God does not tempt man. James 1:13
         a. We are either for or against the Lord. Matt. 12:30
         b. We are bought with a price. 1 Cor 6:20
      3. “God...will not suffer you to be tempted above...” 1 Cor.
         10:13

III. WE MUST SEEK GOD’S HELP IN MAKING CHOICES.
   A. We need to simply say NO! as hard as that sounds!!!
1. “Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thess. 5:22
2. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” James 4:7
3. We are told to “Flee fornication.” 1 Cor. 6:18
4. We are commanded to “Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.” Rom. 12:9
5. We must choose to avoid sin, “Neither give place to the devil.” Eph. 4:27

B. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge” Prov. 1:7
C. “For the Lord giveth wisdom.” Prov. 2:6
D. People are watching us and our teaching.
   1. “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” 1 Cor. 6:20
   2. “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” Matt. 6:33
   3. “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15
E. Choose your words wisely.
   1. “A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.” Prov. 15:1
   2. “The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.” Prov. 15:2
   3. “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” James 1:19
   4. “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Eph. 4:26
F. Be careful about what you say or post on social media.
   1. Words on Facebook can be perceived differently from when said face to face.
   2. If you are trying to teach modesty, it isn’t wise to post indecent apparel.
   3. Some of the pages you comment on or share are laced with profanity.
G. Make sure others see you use your God given talents.
   1. Use your time wisely. Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5
   2. Use it or lose it. Matt. 25:29
   3. Be kind and helpful. Eph. 4:32
   4. Trust in the Lord. Prov. 3:5-6

IV. OUR CHOICES WILL DETERMINE OUR ETERNAL DESTINY.
A. We must put fellowship with God above the approval of the world in all our choices.
B. Make choices which value God’s eternal promises over immediate pleasure.
   1. We must not lose our fellowship with God or our ability to stand out in the world.
a. Jesus was the friend of sinners, but he was never tainted by their sin because he always strove to do His Father’s will and not follow the world.
b. Jesus was here to glorify the Father and to seek and to save the lost.
2. We choose whether we want to be like Abraham rather than Lot.
C. We are Christians on this earth to glorify God in EVERYTHING we do and say.
D. We should be ready any time the Lord chooses to come. Matt. 25:13
E. We all have a choice in who we accept and obey. We must ask ourselves:
1. Do I have all the facts to make a good choice?
2. Will my choices bring joy and happiness or pain and sorrow?
3. Have I honestly assessed my motives in my choice?
4. Are there warning signs about my choice?
5. How does my background affect my choice?
6. Ultimately, will my choice bring me closer to God?
F. THINK about your choices; are they True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind?

CONCLUSION:
1. Be honest in your business, family, and spiritual life.
2. Be faithful to yourself, your spouse and your children.
3. Control your mind, eyes, and tongue.
4. Give thanks to God in all things; pray without ceasing.
5. Humble yourself and obey God’s commands.
6. Don’t take anything in life for granted.
7. Don’t assume you have tomorrow.
8. Everything you do in life is a choice and everything you do will determine your destiny.

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN THEE
Psalm 84:5
Jimmy Bates

1. Psalm 84:5-7, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.
"They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God."

2. Brief Analysis of the context, Psalm 84.
   a. The title given to this Psalm (in my Bible) is "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house", which is one of three beatitudes mentioned (vs.4,5,12). It is described as "a psalm for the sons of Korah."
   b. The Psalmist, as he journeys to the house of God, is contemplating how beautiful and wonderful it is to enter the courts of the Lord. With all of his heart and soul, he is longing for the privilege to come into the presence of the living God.
   c. No matter what difficulties he may encounter in his journey, he knows his strength is in the Almighty God who will help him. So, with increasing strength he pushes forward until he reaches his blessed destiny!

3. If we would be blessed with success in our journey to heaven, we must understand that our strength to do so is not in ourselves, but in the Lord.

4. Our study will focus on the three most important words or components in our subject: blessed, strength, In Thee (God):

DISCUSSION:

I. BLESSED IS THE MAN...
   A. Meaning of the word "blessed:"
      1. Heb. eh' sher – "happiness; only in masculine plural construction as interjection, how happy!: blessed, happy" (Strong).
      2. Related to Asher the son of Jacob born to Leah's maid Zilpah of which Leah said, "...Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher." Gen. 30:13
      3. In the N.T. the Gr. makarismos is used in the beatitudes in Matt. 5 and Luke 6... "the Lord indicates not only the characters that are blessed, but the nature of that which is the highest good." (Strong)
      4. "Holy, sacred, consecrated, happiness, blissful, of or in eternal bliss..." (New World Dictionary).
   B. The source of this blessed happiness is God:
      1. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help..." (Deut. 33:29).
      2. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5:17).
      3. "Happy is that people, that is in such a case: yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 144:15).
      4. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God" (Psalm 146:5).
5. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (Prov. 16:20).
6. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you" (1 Pet. 4:14)

II. BLESSED IS THE MAN (the person, male or female) WHOSE STRENGTH...
A. Meaning of the word "strength."
1. Heb. אוּז, oze – "strength in various applications (force, security, majesty, praise): boldness, loud, might, power, strength." (Strong)
2. In the N.T. 1. Gr. δύναμις – rendered "strength", "power" 2. ἰσχύς – ability, strength, might. 3. κράτος – force, might, strength, power. (Strong)
3. "1. The state or quality of being strong; force; power; vigor, 2. the power to resist strain, stress, etc.; toughness; durability 3. the power to resist attack; 4. legal, moral, or intellectual force or effectiveness" (New World Dictionary).

B. Different kinds of strength: Physical, Mental, Spiritual...
1. The focus of our study is spiritual strength.
2. That inner strength, which to a degree includes mental strength or toughness.
3. It includes moral strength (virtue); the strength and courage to do right in the midst of the fiery darts of Satan and the wicked.
4. Synonyms of strength: courage, durability, power, backbone, might, soundness.
5. Antonyms of strength: cowardice, idleness, inactivity, weakness.

III. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN THEE (God).
A. God has infinite power and strength.
1. "Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee." (Jer. 32:11)
2. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Rom. 1:20)
3. God, through his power and strength, provides for and sustains his creation. (Heb. 1:3; Acts 17:24-28).

B. God provides strength for his people. (Psa. 29:11; 68:35)
1. He provides the power of salvation. (Eph. 1:19, 20; Rom. 1:16, 17; John 1:12)
2. He provides the power and strength that enables the Christian to withstand the devil and his temptations. (Eph. 6:10-12; 1 Cor. 10:13)
3. He provides help with the burdens of life. (Psa. 54:4; 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:6,7)
4. He provides the necessities of life. (Psa. 37:25; Matt. 6:33)
5. He provides all spiritual blessings. (Eph. 1:3; Psm. 84:11; James 1:17)
6. He provides refuge and strength. (Psa. 46:1,2)
7. He provides eternal victory. (1 Cor. 15:57)

C. Courageous individuals whose strength was in God.
1. Moses...
a. Had seen the mighty hand of God in Egypt.
b. Reminds Israel of the strength of the hand of God. (Exod. 13:3,14,16).
c. See the salvation of the Lord. (Exod.14:13, 14)
d. Lord is my strength and song. (Exod. 15:1,2)
e. Just prior to Moses’ death he challenged Joshua and children of Israel. (Deut. 31:6-8; 33:27-29)

2. Joshua...
a. God assured Joshua as the new leader of the Israelites. (Josh. 1:5-7)
b. Joshua assured the people. (Josh. 4:21-24; 24:14,15)
c. Joshua and Caleb. (Num. 14:6-9)

3. David...
a. When David faced Galiath, he said to Saul, "...The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine...” (1 Sam. 17:37)
b. He said to Galiath, "...Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied...all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord’s and he will give you into our hands.” (1 Sam. 17:45, 47)
c. Later, King David, after further victories over the Philistines, and the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of his enemies and out of the hand of Saul, he said, "...The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence....God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.” (2 Sam.22:1-3, 33)
d. In many of the Psalms, David acknowledges God as his strength. (Psalm 27:1; 28:7,8;138:3; 140:7)
e. David’s charge to Solomon. (1 Chron. 28:20)

4. Paul...
   a. Declared, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” (Phil. 4:13)
   b. A synonym of strength is courage. Paul demonstrated tremendous courage in the face of the many trials and difficulties he faced in preaching the Gospel.
   c. When the brethren came to meet Paul in Acts 28:15, he “...thanked God and took courage.”
   d. It was God who made his courage possible, just as he makes possible the courage we need today to proclaim the Gospel and faithfully overcome the trials and difficulties of the Christian life.
   e. “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb. 13:6). Because the Lord has promised, “... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).
   f. If we understand, as did Paul, that our strength is in the Lord, we can face whatever trial or difficulty without fear and in total confidence. We can say with Paul, “...If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Rom.8:31)
   g. God will never forsake his people!

D. How do we access the strength of God?

1. Develop and maintain strong faith in God and his strength and power by:
   a. Growing in Bible knowledge through regular Bible study. (Prov. 24:5; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:15; Rom. 1:16, 17; 10:17; Heb. 4:12)
   b. Faithful attendance of all assemblies of the church, including Bible classes, etc. (Heb. 10:24-25)
   c. Seeking first the Lord’s church and righteousness. (Matt. 6:33; Titus 2:11-14)

2. Genuinely trust in God. (Psa. 40:4; 71:1,5; Prov. 29:25; 2 Cor. 1:9; 1 Tim. 6:17)

3. Regular prayer. (Luke 18:1; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17; 1 Pet. 3:12; 1 John 3:22)

CONCLUSION:

1. “And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid” (Matt. 14:26, 27).
   a. Being of “good cheer” (courageous) is the opposite of being weak and afraid.
   b. The very presence of the Lord gave his disciples good cheer (courage, strength).
2. In Jesus’ farewell message to his disciples he promised, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).
   a. These words of comfort and encouragement extend to every faithful Christian today, and teach us to look to our Lord for the power and strength to overcome the world and gain victory in heaven (1 John 5:4).
   b. Blessed is the one whose strength is in the Lord!

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**Blessed Is The Man Whom Thou Chastenest**

Psalm 94:12

*Paul Sain*

Appreciation is expressed to the Milestone congregation, her leadership, the director of the school and many diligent workers who make this series of lessons possible. To God be the glory for all we do that is right.

**CONTEXT OF THESE WORDS**

Let us notice the words of Psalm 94: 1“O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. 2Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud. 3LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? 4How long shall they utter and speak hard things? and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves? 5They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage. 6They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless. 7Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. 8Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? 9He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? 10He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? 11The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity. 12Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law; 13That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked. 14For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance. 15But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it ... 22But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge. 23And he shall bring
upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off."

Key thoughts regarding our text include the acknowledgment that Jehovah is the judge, the one who will execute vengeance. The text spoke of how some wondered how long God would tolerate actions contrary to His will without punishment, while even saying that God will not see this or punish us for doing this. The fact simply is: The Lord knows the thoughts, intents, actions of all mankind. The Psalmist stated that the Lord will teach all out of His law (the one that James calls the "perfect law of liberty" [James 1:21-25]). Regardless of the conditions that prevail around God's people, our Father will never cast us off, forsake us (Deut. 4:31; 1 Kings 8:57; Heb. 13:5-6).

With confidence let us declare (as those of old) that God is our defense, the rock of our refuge and that He will one day render vengeance to those who abide in evil and reject to submit to His authority and will.

**DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

Let us notice a couple of key words in our text, Psalm 94:12:

"Blessed" — Webster states that "blessed" refers to "of or enjoying happiness; bringing pleasure, contentment or good fortune." Blessed is derived from the Greek word makarios which means to be happy or blissful. None can doubt how rich, blessed and happy God's people must be in view of our Father's mercy and grace offered to us while yet we were in sin (Rom. 5:8-9).

"Chasteneth" — Websters defines the word as "to correct by punishment or suffering...to cause to be more humble or restrained." Dictionary.com adds "to inflict suffering upon for purposes of moral improvement; to restrain, subdue." Cambridge Dictionary further states, "to make someone aware of failure or having done something wrong."

All have sinned and fall short of God's desire or expectation (Rom. 3:10,23). While God desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4) and since nothing sinful or that defileth can enter heaven (Rev. 21:27), then our loving, gracious, merciful Father chastens us when we do that which is wrong for the purpose of ultimately saving us.

**ADDITIONAL PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE REGARDING CHASTISEMENT**

The word "chastise" is found ten times in the KJV of the Bible. "Chastisement" is found five times. "Chastening" six times, "chastised" another six times and "chasten" yet another six times.

Often in Holy Writ we hear the inspired writers speak of God's anger, wrath, and displeasure with the actions of mankind. In
Hebrews 12:6-7 we learn, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?”

Further in that same chapter we read, “For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Heb. 12:10-11).

Note that chastening is “for our profit” and the reason is clearly stated, “that we might be partakers of his holiness.” While chastening may be grievous, “afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” Simply stated, a child lovingly corrected, nurtured in the Lord, shown the right way to act and talk according to THE guidebook (God’s inspired Word), will grow up to be a kind and loving adult who respects authority and wants to serve God.

THE BLESSING/BENEFIT OF CHASTISEMENT (CORRECTION)

A child disobeys a parent. The loving response of the parent is to punish the child in one of many forms. It may be withholding a favorite toy or book. It could be sending them to bed early or making them sit in a chair without toys. Or it may be a spanking. Likely, many of us have been spanked and our parents said, “This hurts me more than it hurts you.” Fact: I heard my father say that, but I did not believe him. I knew how it hurt me! But with the passing of time, now a Dad and a Papa (to seven grandchildren), I truly understand what my father said and meant.

A WORLD WITHOUT CHASTISEMENT

The world of the twenty-first century is one without restraints and doing whatever feels good or one desires. There seemingly are no guidelines of morality to which man yields. Corruption, greed, sexual exploitation, within and without the church prevails! Compare how the world was at the time of Noah, when God was sorry He had created the world and pronounced He would destroy everything (until Noah found grace in His sight). Compare how wicked were the people of Corinth (in the first century). There are many prevailing conditions that exist today that are very similar to the time of Noah or in evil Corinth.

When children are left to rule, without restraint, chaos prevails. Recall in the days of Eli and his failure to control his sons (1 Sam. 3:13). It is so sad to see families who allow the children to dictate their whims and desires and are not chastened (controlled) regarding that which is wrong.
RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY ESSENTIAL

From the beginning of time, the matter of respect for what God says has been an ongoing problem. Eve failed to respect and submit to the commands of Jehovah. Nadab and Abihu flaunted the will (commands) of God and did whatever they desired (Lev. 10:1-12). Moses did not respect the power and authority of God and because of his unbelief was punished (Heb. 3:19).

Today, in the general population of the world, there is tragically an attitude of disregard, disrespect, and downright refusal to hear and obey the Almighty Father who created all things (Col. 1:16-17). Most do not even desire to hear the message of the Saviour who wants them to be saved eternally. They (even as those of the long ago) want to “do what is right in their own sight” (Judg. 17:6).

Further, and even more tragically, in the church, an attitude has developed and actions have exploded in no longer following the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16), the “old Jerusalem gospel” (Acts 2), the one “way” of Christ (John 14:6), the “narrow way” that leads to eternal life (Matt. 7:13-14). So many who have served the Lord faithfully for years have now turned to the ways of denominational groups. They have incorporated instrumental music, women in leadership roles, disregard for the authority established in Scripture regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage, etc. Supposedly this is being done to grow churches, increase in numbers and nickels – but it is “zeal without knowledge” (Rom. 10:2).

THANKFUL FOR GOD’S CHASTISEMENT

May we be ever so thankful for our Almighty Father who loves us even when we are unlovable, who blesses us when we do not deserve blessings, who desires for us to live forever with Him in eternal bliss even though we have failed to live as His faithful servants all the time.

May we also be so thankful for the correction found in God’s Holy Word. Note the words of Paul to his son-in-the-faith Timothy: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Word of God challenges us, corrects and reprimands us, nudges us toward leaving the “babe” stage and becoming a spiritual person of “full age” (1 Peter 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14). It helps us to no longer be a child tossed to and fro (Eph. 4:14), but one who is stable and secure in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:12).

CONCLUSION:

One begins as a babe in his service to Jesus Christ. He must not remain a babe, but rather grow up in grace and in knowledge
(2 Peter 3:18). As we mature, develop and grow spiritually, there will be times of correction, nurturing by the instructions within the pages of God’s Word. For the sake of our soul and our eternal destiny — may we be ever so thankful for chastening.

**Blessed Are The Meek**

Matthew 5:5

*Victor M. Eskew*

1. Two men are referred to as being meek men.
   a. Moses (Num. 12:3)
   b. Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:29; 21:5; 2 Cor. 10:1)

2. We have been told to follow in the steps of these great men and be meek also (Matt. 5:5; James 3:13; Gal. 5:22-23).

3. Meekness is difficult to define and apply. We will attempt to do this in our lesson tonight.

**DISCUSSION:**

I. THE DEFINITION OF MEEKNESS.

A. When we think of meekness, weakness is often associated with the word.
   1. Some see meekness as a feeble old man who quietly takes his place in the corner of a room never bothering anyone.
   2. Others will often define it using the term “humility.”

B. What meekness is not:
   1. Although closely associated with humility, it is not humility (Col. 3:12).
   2. It is not the complete absence of anger (Matt. 21:12-13).
   3. It does not involve overlooking or compromising with error (Matt. 15:1-3).

C. How is meekness defined?
   1. One who is willing to submit to the authority of a superior.
   2. One who is inwardly strong and confident.
   3. Tender strength under control (like a stallion that has been tamed).

D. Meekness is displayed in our relationships with both God and man.

E. Humility comes before meekness.
   1. Humility involves the proper view of self.
   2. It is the opposite of PRIDE that has “T” right in the center of things (Rom. 12:3).
3. Meekness springs from humility. Without humility, one cannot be meek.
4. Both of the persons who are called meek in the Bible were also humble: Moses (Exo. 3:11), Jesus (Phil. 2:5-8).

II. THE DEMONSTRATION OF MEEKNESS.
A. We have noted that Moses and Jesus were said to be meek. Surely we can see meekness demonstrated in their lives.
B. One willing to submit to the authority of another.
   1. When Moses was called, he heeded the command to return to Egypt as Israel's deliverer (Exod. 4:19-20).
   2. Jesus always sought to do the will of God (John 6:38).
C. One who is inwardly strong and confident.
   1. Moses displayed this constantly in the wilderness.
   2. Jesus displayed this during His trials and crucifixion.
D. Tender strength under control.
   1. When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai, the children of Israel were involved in heinous sins. Moses' "anger waxed hot" and he broke the two tables "beneath the mount" (Exod. 32:19). Yet, he also prayed for the people's forgiveness (Exod. 32:32).
   2. Jesus cleansed the temple, rebuked those in error, but He did not hurt anyone in the process.

III. THE DISPLAY OF MEEKNESS.
A. In order to be right with God, we must be meek. Psa. 25:9
   1. To receive the Word of God, we must be meek (James 1:21).
   2. A look at the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-6).
      a. Poor in spirit – proper view of self.
      b. Mourn – audible weeping over spiritual condition.
      c. Meek – a submissive spirit.
      d. Seek righteousness – one must obey God's plan of salvation.
B. We must display meekness toward others.
   1. Several verses set forth the time when meekness should be manifested.
      a. When restoring the erring (Gal. 6:2).
      b. In our endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:1-3).
      c. When teaching others the Gospel (2 Tim. 2:24-25).
      d. A believing wife's life before her husband (1 Pet. 3:4).
      e. When we give an answer to another when asked about our precious hope (1 Pet. 3:15).
   2. Each of these situations can be pressure-filled. The sinners and unbelievers can demonstrate actions that truly challenge the child of God. We must practice meek-
ness. We must be inwardly strong and confident, but outwardly display strength under control.
  a. Harsh versus gentle
  b. Lashing out versus patient
  c. Coercion versus persuasion
  d. Rudeness versus kindness
  e. Offensive versus thoughtful
  f. Disdain versus respect


CONCLUSION:
1. Meekness also has dividends:
   a. The meek shall eat and be satisfied (Psa. 22:26).
   b. The meek shall inherit the earth (Psa. 37:11; Matt. 5:5).
   c. The Lord lifteth up the meek (Psa. 147:6).
2. Zephaniah 2:3

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**BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD**

*Psalm 112:1*

*Jared Knoll*

1. Blessed: How wonderful it is to preach about that which produces true happiness for the hearers; to speak of that which will produce true prosperity!

2. Preliminary matters pertaining to Psalm 112.
   a. This Psalm is with a group of “Hallelujah Psalms” (111-118). Psalms that focus on the worthiness of God to be praised.
   b. This Psalm is particularly companion to Psalm 111.
      1. Psalm 111 and 112 are both acrostics in style. They are each composed of 22 lines of poetry which each begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
      2. God’s power, providence and righteousness is poetically lauded in Psalm 111, their blessings to mankind is magnified in Psalm 112.
      3. Psalm 111 concludes that the necessary response to the character of God will be the entrance of wisdom, while Psalm 112 expounds on the benefit to the man who will give forth the necessary response. Thus, “Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.”

3. Now, let us examine this Psalm for the source, the description, the stated blessing and the embittering effect which Psalm 112 expounds.
DISCUSSION:
I. THE SOURCE — PRAISE YE THE LORD!
   A. Let it be understood that in the Psalmist’s purpose, the Psalm is focused on God not the man.
      1. Whatever we may say about the righteous man being blessed it is only because of God and who He is.
      2. Being made in His image, we are truly His workmanship.
   B. “By the grace of God, I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10).
   C. God is to be praised...
      1. That we even have occasion to become righteous.
      2. That the righteous man even exists.
      3. This praise is not just adulation but is worshipful and practical. Consider how Paul ended the aforementioned verse, “and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”
   D. Consider also: 1 Cor. 4:7; Rom. 11:5-6; Eph. 3:7-8; 1 Tim. 1:15-16; 2 Cor.. 10:12-16; 2 Cor. 3:5; Phil. 2:13

II. THE DESCRIPTION — IDENTIFYING THE MAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD.
   A. He Fears (v.1)
      1. Not a slavish fear borne out of fright and dread of a cruel master (i.e. Exod. 1:13-14; Micah 3:1-4). This kind of fear is cast out by love (1 John 4:18).
      2. This is filial as children to a loving father. This kind of fear is reverential and respectful developed by knowledge of God’s character (Consider Heb. 12:5-11).
      3. This creates a delightful desire to: please God (Psa. 147:11); to be accepted of God (Acts 10:35); and to depart from evil (Prov. 16:6).
   B. He Delights (v.2)
      1. Delight means to take pleasure in or to be pleased with.
      2. Same word as “pleasure” in Psa. 111:2. Here, the delight is in God’s commands.
      3. It is the sentiment of 1 John 5:3 (Consider also Psa. 1:2; 40:8; 119:16, 35, 47-48; Rom. 8:6)
   C. He is Gracious, Compassionate and Righteous (v.4)
      1. Within the context of this Psalm it will be observed that these terms apply to his concern in helping others. His benevolent thoughts and actions (see vs. 5a and 9a).
      2. This is said of God in Psalm 111:4,5, thus we are to be because He is (1 John 3:16-18).
D. He has *discretion* (v.5)
1. The word translated discretion means properly “a verdict pronounced judicially.”
2. The application can be made in terms of the stewardship of his goods as well as his carefulness to harm none in the transacting of business. A synonym would be *prudence*.
3. Consider: Eph. 5:15-17; Rom. 16:19; Col. 4:5-6; Prov. 2:11; 13:16; 14:15; 18:15; 22:3

E. His *heart is fixed* (v.7)
1. Fixed means steadfast, firmly placed, fastened and ordered.
2. The particular application in this Psalm is that he is unmoved by “bad news” or changing circumstance.
3. Consider: 1 Cor. 15:58; Acts 20:24; 21:13; Daniel 3:16 (“careful” indicates no anxiety or trepidation for answer was not necessary. God would secure them).

III. THE STATED BLESSING — THE REWARD GIVEN TO THE MAN THAT FEARS GOD.
A. Concerning his *seed* (v.2)
1. Perhaps the importance of having descendants is not as well-marked as it was to the Israelites (i.e. 1 Samuel 1:1-28), yet still today there is great importance.
2. This, with that which follows, must be viewed in the spiritual prism, more so than the physical. What joy to see children walk in faith (3 John 4) and to know that our children have the ear of God so as to influence through their petitions because of faithfulness.

B. Concerning his *prosperity* (v.3)
1. This, like that before, is not a specific promise to everyone, for not all faithful would physically prosper though righteous behavior can generally contribute to such (1 Tim. 4:8).
3. Do realize that true prosperity is found in spiritual riches of which the man that fears God will have in store abundantly (Eph. 1:3; 3:8; 2 Cor. 8:9; Rom. 8:32; James 2:5; Rev. 3:18).

C. Concerning his *relief* (v.4)
1. Darkness in this verse is reference to trouble, turmoil, sickness, pain, persecution, trial and the like.
2. Thus, light is used symbolically of prosperity or relief from that darkness.
3. Consider: Psa. 27:1; 18:28; Job 29:3; Micah 7:7-8; Malachi 4:2; John 8:12; Rev. 22:5
D. Concerning his foundation (v.6)
1. Being rooted in faith, he will not be moved. With trust in God, nothing can shake his faith (1 Cor. 15:58).
2. No one wants to be forgotten and the Psalmist assures the righteous are remembered.
3. Consider: Heb. 11:1-40; 6:10
E. Concerning his exultation (v.9)
1. The horn, a metaphor taken from the wild ox tossing his head with confidence and consciousness of vigor having a power to repel his enemies.
2. We will have strength to do what God would have us to do (Phil. 4:13).
3. True honor comes from the Lord (Rom. 2:7; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 10:18; 1 Peter 1:7). Thus, live in the fear of the Lord that you can have assurance of His praise.

IV. THE EMBITTERING EFFECT — THE WICKED ARE NOT SO!
A. The perception. The wicked will see the happiness of the righteous, but will be powerless to prevent it.
B. The grief. The wicked will be sorely disappointed and angrily malevolent because the righteousness of the righteous man exposes their wickedness (John 3:19-21).
C. The envy that rots. His hatred will corrupt him and destroy from within.
D. The unfulfilled desire. Unlike the exalted righteous man, the wicked man’s desires come to naught and satisfaction eludes them forever.

CONCLUSION:
1. We are nothing without God, and everything we are because of Him!
2. There is great reason to fear the Lord and great reward if we do!
3. Let us humbly and faithfully implement these principles in our lives that we can be blessed and honored by God!
BLESSED ARE THE UNDEFILED IN THE WAY
Psalm 119:1
Charles Blair

1. In this year’s theme we discuss attitudes which bring men to happiness.
   a. My assignment concerns the righteous man which is defined by the wording of being “undefiled.”
   b. My efforts will center in two specific areas. One, what brings happiness and the second, how do we achieve this.
   c. Jesus came that men might have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).
      1) Man already possess human life (Gen. 2:7).
      2) Therefore, when Jesus came, He came to bring me something different than physical life.
      3) The danger of our time, or any time, is that men focus on moral conduct thinking this is what brings about happiness.

2. My task is to prove there is no real happiness apart from Jesus the Christ.

I. THE 119TH PSALM IS BROKEN DOWN INTO SECTIONS OF 8 VERSES. EACH SECTION BEGINS WITH THE LETTER OF THE HEBREW ALPHABET. MY ASSIGNED TOPIC IS FROM VERSE 1. I WILL THEREFORE LOOK INTO THE FIRST EIGHT VERSES DESIGNATED ALEPH.

A. The key words in this first section are as follows.
   1. Verse 1 law of the Lord; v.2 testimonies; v.3 His ways; v.4 precepts; v.5 statutes; v.6 commandments; v.7 judgments; and finally in v.8, statutes.
   2. As we look at these words, I want to focus our attention on how each of these things draws the mind of the sincere student of the Word of God as being the source of man’s quest for happiness.

B. God is the origin of all life and we are driven to the conclusion that it is to Him we must turn to find the essences of what Jesus meant by “abundance of life.”
   1. Jesus called on men in His day to search the Scriptures (John 5:39).
   2. The Scriptures at that time were the Old Testament.
   3. This statement from Jesus was a call for men to make the effort to find the source of their understanding about God.
   4. Nature can reveal so much about God, but it cannot tell us “Who” God is.
5. The source, then, for happiness is what God has said.

II. I STRIVE NOW TO PROVE THE POINT BY CONSIDERING THE MEANING OF KEY WORDS IN THESE FIRST EIGHT VERSES.

A. We begin with the word *undefiled* in verse 1.
   1. A reasonable conclusion is happiness is connected to truth itself.
   2. The Bible was revealed slowly, by God. The writings then of Psalm 119 would have blessed those of that era but its real blessings are to those of us who live under the sphere of total revelation (the whole New Testament).

B. Also in verse one is the word *law*.
   1. In this context it is the Decalogue, that is, the first five books of Moses in the Old Testament.
   2. Israel, Egypt, slavery, deliverance, law at Mount Sinai, wilderness wanderings and the law to the new generation which grew up during the wilderness wanderings.
   3. Through all five books, man is taught that a relationship with God is based on what God has said.

C. *Testimonies*.
   1. Here the idea would be of law as a witness.
   2. Living the way God wanted them to live led to happiness.
   3. We look to ourselves as beneficiaries of complete revelation.
   4. The Spirit, through the Word bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Rom. 8:16

D. His *ways*.
   1. God separates Himself from mankind in order for man to know that God has the answers and not man.
   2. God explains that He does not think or act as we do (Isa. 55:8,9).
   3. The access to God is only through Jesus the Christ (John 14:6).
   4. The enemies of Jesus brought to Him a woman caught in the very act of adultery (John 8).
      a. They say to Jesus, "...what sayeth Thou" (John 8:5).
      b. Jesus replied by forcing them to apply Deut. 17:7 and the issue of witnesses.
   5. On another occasion the Pharisees came to Jesus about the issue of being able to put away their wives for every cause (Matt. 19:3).
      a. Jesus reply was, "... have ye not read..." (Matt. 19:4).

E. *Precepts*.
   1. Mandate, that is an authoritative command.
F. Statues.
   1. Several similar meaning words but one of which was a commandment

G. Judgments.
   1. A verdict pronounced judicially, a formal decree, divine law.

H. Sincere hearts would have a hard time to overlook the hand of God in the writing of these words and their connection to God, Himself.

III. THESE 8 VERSES SPEAK ABOUT DIRECTION IN LIFE; THAT IS, HOW DO WE LIVE OUR LIVES IN ORDER TO FIND AND ENJOY HAPPINESS?

A. Paul writes to Timothy about the value of exercise.
   1. On one hand we might say that exercise and good eating habits may help our bodies but it cannot prolong the soul (1 Tim. 4:8).
   2. However, Paul shows the superiority of godliness that is the exercise of the soul.
   3. It has two distinct values.
   4. One is the promise of the life “that now is”, and the second is the life “which is to come.”

B. This brings us to the context of verse 12.
   1. Paul desires for Timothy to be an example to the unbeliever.
   2. He cites several areas for this to take place. One of which was the word “conversation.” In the KJV the word means “manner of life” – how you live life.

C. We draw on Jeremiah’s words that it is not in man to direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23).
   1. Man, separated from the law of God cannot know how to live his life.
   2. He may achieve moral goodness in his own eyes but happiness is tied to God and what He has said.

D. Note the righteous man’s conduct.
   1. He walks (v.1); he seeks (v.2); he walks in His ways (v.3); his ways are directed to keep the statues.

E. What about our lives under the banner of complete revelation?
   1. “If we are risen with Christ,” two things should be true.
      a. We seek (look for) the things which are above.
      b. We set our affections on things above (Col. 3:1,2).
   2. How will we be judged? Answer, according to the law of liberty (James 2:12).
   3. How does that law work? The example found in James 2:14-17 shows that if faith does not work, then faith is dead.
IV. WE WOULD KNOW THAT GOD IS THE SOURCE BUT HOW DO WE ACT ON WHAT GOD HAS REVEALED?
A. Verse 2 uses the wording of “…the whole heart.”
B. To the generation growing up during the forty years of wilderness wanderings, they were told to walk in His ways, love and serve Him.
C. How? With all their heart and soul, nothing held back (Deut. 10:12).
D. Micah asks, what does God require of thee? “To do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with thy God” (Micah 6:8).
E. Caleb followed God fully with all his heart (Num. 14:24).
F. How did Jesus answer the question about which command was the greatest? His answer was to love God with all of one’s heart, soul and mind (Matt. 22:37).
G. In each of these there is a pulling of the Word of God upon the reins of a man’s heart.
1. Do we really want to follow Jesus?
2. Surely we can see, it is with all of our heart, soul and mind being engaged.

V. THE BLESSINGS FROM MAKING “GODLINESS” THE PURSUIT OF OUR LIVES.
A. Peace (Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7).
B. God’s presence (Heb. 13:5).
C. God’s assurance (Jude 24).
D. God’s power through His Word (Acts 20:32).

VI. THE SUMMATION OF ALL OF THIS SPEAKS TO EACH OF US AND HOW WE SHOULD REACT TO WHAT GOD HAS SAID:
A. Responsibility to seek for and find God (Acts 17:27).
B. I must allow God’s Word to have an effect in my heart (John 14:1).
C. I must permit it to work to bring about the happiness I desire (Col. 3:16).

CONCLUSION:
1. This is about me and making up my mind, what I want out of life.
2. It is the call of God, through His Word, for me to decide if God is right or not.
3. God is right and there is no happiness apart from Him.
BLESSED ARE ALL THEY THAT WAIT FOR HIM

Isaiah 30:18

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

1. It is always a distinct pleasure to participate in this good, great and grand lectureship. I am grateful for the invitation to participate in the one for 2017.
2. Since our assigned text is derived from the Old Testament it is well to keep in mind Romans 15:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:11.
   a. Romans 15:4 states, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
   b. 1 Corinthians 10:11, "Now all these things happened to them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
3. Our assigned text reads in the KJV, "And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him" (Isa. 30:18).
4. This verse portrays a waiting God and a waiting people.
5. The attitude of waiting is one that must be developed. We are not born with it for a surety.

I. SOME GREAT PASSAGES INCLUSATING WAITING.
   A. Psalm 25:3, "Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed."
   B. Psalm 52:9, "I will wait on thy name: for it is good before thy saints."
   C. In Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathaea "waited for the Kingdom of God."
   D. In Luke 12:36 Jesus admonished His disciples to be "like men that wait for their Lord."
   E. In Romans 8:23 Paul stated forcefully, "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."
   F. In Galatians 5:5 Paul wrote, "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."
   G. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 we learn in their conversion the Thessalonians "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

II. HOW: ARE WE TO WAIT ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE?
   A. We are wait patiently.
1. The Psalmist did. "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him" (Psa. 37:7).
2. Jesus told his disciples, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).
3. In James 5:11 James reminded his readers "of the patience of Job."
4. Paul told his Hebrew readers, "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).

B. We are to wait longingly for the Lord's second coming.
1. The wise five in Matthew 25 did.

C. We are to wait assuredly.
1. John 14:1-6 is filled with divine assurance from Jesus.
2. God never lies in what He has promised us (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2).
3. Blessed assurance comes from the Father, the Son, the Spirit and faithful apostles such as Paul, Peter and John.

D. We are to wait courageously on the Lord.
1. Moses did in Egypt and the wilderness.
2. Joshua did in the book that bears his name.
3. David did in meeting Goliath in 1 Samuel 17.
4. Daniel and his three friends did in Daniel 1,3,6.
5. John the Baptist did in Mark 6 and Matthew 14.

E. We are to wait obediently.
1. King Saul should have waited obediently for Samuel to make the sacrifice in 1 Samuel 13 but he failed to do so.
2. In 1 Samuel 15, Saul again failed to obey and it cost him a continuing dynasty.

F. We are to wait continually.
1. Hosea taught his peers in the Northern Kingdom "to wait on thy God continually" (Hosea 12:6).
2. Those in John 6 who turned back and walked no more with Jesus lost sight of the intense importance of a permanent walk with the Lord.
3. What Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 exhibits fully and beautifully Paul's continuing in the faith to the very end of his life.
4. Each stalwart saint in Smyrna is urged to "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee as crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). This meant to be faithful even to the point of dying for the Lord and His holy cause.
5. Those eminent worthies in Hebrews 11 were faithful to the end.
7. Deeply persecuted Christians in Revelation who held out against Rome and the Caesars were of this high order.

G. We are to wait triumphantly.
   1. Those in Matthew 25:21,23 did.
   2. Those in Matthew 25:34 did.

H. We are to wait prayerfully.
   1. This is what Christ taught in Luke 18:1.
   2. This is what Paul taught in Rom. 12: Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2 and 1 Thess. 5:17-18.

CONCLUSION:
1. There Are Four Important Words Each Beginning With The Letter “W.”
   a. Watch (1 Cor.16:13-14; 1 Peter 5:8).
   b. Work (1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 3:1,8,14; Phil. 2:12).
   d. Wait (Luke 12:3-6).

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**LET IT GO**

*Ann White*

1. In the Disney movie “Frozen,” a popular song was created. The song title is “Let It Go.”
   a. There are attitudes that Christians need to let go of.
2. What are we holding on to? Luke 9:62

DISCUSSION:

I. LET GO OF THE PAST.
   A. It is hard to forgive ourselves and “Let It Go.”
   B. Saul tortured Christians — associated with “threatening and slaughter.” In the word of God, we read of Saul making havoc in the Lord’s church. Acts 8:3
   C. Someone has said “forgiveness is the gift you give yourself.”
   D. Forgiving is not about forgetting, it is about moving forward.

II. LET GO OF CONFLICT.
   A. Phil. 4:2, Conflict between two Christian women: Euodias and Syntyche.
   B. Conflicts are petty and can be devastating to others.
C. How we live in unity? Read Phil 3:16; Rom. 12:18,10
D. In 1 Peter 3:8-11 we find the formula for peace.

III. LET GO OF BITTERNESS AND ANGER.
A. Eph. 4:31
B. Bitterness leads to anger. Anger may cause us to be harsh in our words with one another.
C. Col. 3:13-14
D. Paul tells us to let go of the past and reach to the future. Phil. 3:13,14

IV. LET GO OF SELF.
A. Living for Christ calls us to let go of self. 2 Cor. 5:15-17; Gal. 2:20
B. When we let go of self, we begin to make important changes in our lives.
C. As sisters in Christ we are concerned for each other’s souls. We are a part of a family. Eph. 2:19
D. Luke 1, we read of a wonderful relationship between Mary and Elizabeth.

V. THINGS WE NEED TO GRAB HOLD ONTO.
A. Contentment. Phil. 4:11
   1. Contentment is not to be searched for and found. Contentment is an attitude of the heart.
B. Gratitude.
   1. Begins in the heart.
   2. William Ward, "Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgiving, turn routine jobs into joy and change ordinary into blessings."
   3. As Christians, we should be very grateful for the plan that cost Jesus His life. Phil. 2:5-8
C. Grab hold of joy.
   1. Jesus had joy.
      a. Abounding joy. "That your joy might be full." 1 John 1:4
      b. Abiding joy. "That my joy might remain in you." John 15:11
   2. How do we have the kind of joy Jesus had?
      a. We find the answer in John 15:1-11, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can
ye, except ye abide in me. 5I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. 7If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”

B. How do we abide in the vine?
   1. Surrender. John 15:4, a branch only exists for the vine.
   3. Obey. John 15:10, Jesus kept the commandments of the Father.

C. Joy is found only in Jesus.
   1. Without joy, our lives become meaningless.
   2. Become Christ-like to experience joy at all times.

CONCLUSION:
1. Let go of anything that hinders us from becoming Christ-like.
2. Grab hold of opportunities to be contented.
3. Grab hold of opportunities to show our gratitude to our Father in heaven and to others.
4. Most importantly grab hold of Christ's joy.
5. May you be blessed in all that you endeavor to do for our Heavenly Father.

**Blessed Are The Poor In Spirit**
Matthew 5:3  
*Kyle Lemon*

1. The context of Matthew 5:3 is the sermon on the mount (5-7).
2. Jesus is correcting misconceptions about proper behavior, preparing the hearts and minds of the people for the kingdom which was to come.
3. He begins with what we commonly call the Beatitudes: pronouncing people with certain characteristics or attitudes “blessed.”

4. The first of these calls out those who are “poor in spirit; for theirs in the kingdom of heaven.”

I. THEIR’S IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

A. The kingdom of heaven is the church Jesus promised to build (Matt. 16:18).
   1. Jesus promised that some of those alive at that time would see the kingdom come with power (Mark 9:1).
   2. Jesus promised the apostles they would receive power in Acts 1:8.
   3. Promise fulfilled in Acts 2, and at the end of this chapter, we read about the Lord adding to the church daily.

B. The blessing here is not being in heaven, with its many benefits, but rather being in the kingdom or the church.

C. Why would it be a blessing to be in the kingdom of heaven?
   1. The Jews had been waiting for a promised kingdom.
      a. This kingdom was promised in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, which Daniel described and interpreted (Dan. 2:44).
      b. Its ruler was described by Isaiah and Zechariah, among other prophets.
      c. They looked for a Messiah who would deliver them from Roman oppression and restore the physical kingdom of Israel to the glory it experienced under David and Solomon.
   2. In reality, the blessings of this kingdom are spiritual in nature (Eph. 1:3ff).
      a. Some of these blessings may be found in Matt. 5:4-9.
      b. Another list is in Eph. 1 (Chosen, holy and without blame, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, grace, know the mystery, inheritance...).
      c. Chiefly, the forgiveness of sins and salvation from the second death are benefits of being in the kingdom (church).
      d. The promise of heaven is only to the faithful in the church (Eph. 5:23).

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT?

A. You may well know what this phrase means, but can you explain why? A word study can deepen our understanding of the scriptures.
   1. “Poor” comes from the Greek ptochos, meaning poor or destitute [Strong].
a. The verb from which it originates means "to crouch or cower like a beggar."

b. *Ptochos* refers to the pauper, the deeply destitute, rather than just the poor [HELPS Word Studies].

c. Thayer says that its meaning extended to be "lacking in anything" within a context. This structure is only used in the New Testament here and in James 2:5, which mentions the "poor of this world."

2. "Spirit" is the Greek word *pneuma*, the same commonly used for spirit.

   a. Spirit refers to that which is inside man; "the inward man," as Paul says (2 Cor. 4:16).

   b. Spirit is used of the disposition (attitude) of man as well [Thayer].

3. Together in this structure, "poor in spirit" indicates one who is destitute in attitude or disposition. In what way is this meant?

B. Other passages in the Bible help us to understand the meaning of this phrase.

1. Prov. 16:19 speaks favorably of the humble (or low) spirit.

2. Prov. 29:23 says honor upholds the humble (lowly) in spirit.

3. Isa. 66:2 pictures one who is "poor in Spirit" as fearing God and lacking sinful pride.

4. In His invitation to the world, Jesus called Himself "lowly in heart," a phrase which is parallel to "poor in spirit" (Matt. 11:29).

C. What does all of this add up to? What does it mean to be "poor in spirit?"

1. Crouching, cowering speaks of making oneself low, bending over. Such is not only the action of the beggar, but also of the humble.

2. Jesus is not speaking of one who is low in society, but who esteems himself low. (This is not to be mistaken with poor self-esteem, wherein people think worse of themselves than they ought, believing themselves to be worthless.)

3. "Poor in spirit" speaks of humility, as that of Jesus.

4. Note the degree of *ptochos* — deeply destitute, the paupers, the poorest.

5. Those who will be blessed are the most humble, who esteem others better than themselves. Most importantly, they esteem God and His Word above themselves.

III. BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT?

A. Romans 12:10 and 1 Cor. 10:24 speak of the need to put others first.
B. Philippians 2:1-8 is an excellent passage admonishing the Christian to have the humble mind of our Savior.

C. Jesus gave His apostles an example while on the earth, in John 13:1-17.

D. Some practical applications of humility:
   1. First and foremost, humility recognizes our need for God’s grace and mercy.
      a. It recognizes His supreme power and authority (Psa. 8:3-4).
      b. It recognizes that without Christ, we can do nothing (John 15:5).
      d. It is the attitude summarized by Paul in Gal. 2:20.
   2. Humility is being willing to serve one another and put others before ourselves.
   3. It means never being “too good” to help someone with anything.
   4. It means not having a respect of persons, realizing we are all equal to God.
   5. Humility means recognizing that we sin, and not shunning or shaming other Christians when they are overtaken in a fault, but doing as Gal. 6:1 commands.
   6. It means not thinking that we have nothing to learn from someone else.
   7. It means realizing we are all trying to get to Heaven – and we all need help.
   8. It means removing pride from our lives and living as humble servants – of Christ, and of one another.

CONCLUSION:
   1. The first of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 gets straight to the heart of man, calling on us to remove pride from our lives and be humble.
   2. To be faithful citizens of the kingdom (members of the church), we must be humble – not merely professing humility, but truly putting self aside to serve others.
   3. The blessings of being in the kingdom far outweigh what we can gain in this life through selfish pride.
BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN

Matthew 5:4
Phil Sanders

1. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to hear Jesus speak in person? In 2006, I visited the site near the Sea of Galilee where Jesus supposedly delivered the Sermon on the Mount. The crowds gathered to the mountain to hear Him speak. They hung on every word. The people knew about Jesus’ power to heal, His godly teaching and kind ways.

2. How would you begin your signature sermon? The beginning statement of a sermon is usually what catches people’s attention. Jesus spoke about the people God considered blessed, but it was a surprise! The people God considers blessed are not necessarily the ones that human wisdom would suggest!

3. Perhaps you have heard this passage “Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4), spoken at a funeral in an effort to comfort someone who has lost a loved one.
   a. The person thought this passage or promise and blessing was meant to deal with our sorrows and grieving over a physical death.
   b. We must ask, however, if this passage is really addressing the heartache of mourners like Mary or Martha at Lazarus’ tomb?

4. Could it be that the grief and morning spoken about in this passage is not so much mourning over physical death as it is over mourning spiritual death?
   a. The context of this passage is speaking about spiritual matters, not physical ones.
   b. The “poor in spirit” in verse 3 are those who are spiritually destitute and realize their utter need and reliance upon God for salvation and blessing.
   c. The “meek” in verse 5 are those who are gentle and humble, not filled with selfish ambition or arrogance.
   d. A person who mourns his sin realizes that he is “poor in spirit” and will be “meek” and humble.

5. It is only when a person has these traits, “poor in spirit,” mourning sin, and “meek,” that God can use them for his cause. He calls them blessed!

I. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BLESSED.

A. The word “blessed” means more than merely being “happy.” Happiness is merely an emotion, often dependent upon outward circumstances. To be blessed here refers to the ultimate well-being of a person who has lasting spiritual joy arising from his relationship with God. The beatitudes are not simple statements, they are exclamations! They are
saying these are the kinds of people God sees as having the ultimate in well-being.

B. God does not see things the way people see things.

1. “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8-9).

2. For instance, the Lord Jesus taught, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God” (Lk. 16:13-15).

a. Many people think if they only had enough money, they would be happy and blessed; they could finally enjoy life.

b. “He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; Nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity. When goods increase, They increase who eat them; So what profit have the owners Except to see them with their eyes? The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep” (Eccl. 5:10-12).

c. “But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

d. Instead of blessing our lives, sometimes the abundance of “things” destroys us and takes our focus off of God.

3. Moses warned the people, “So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant...when you have eaten and are full...then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deut. 6:10-12).
a. Moses worried the people’s “heart” might be “lifted up,” and they become proud and arrogant, forgetting what God had done and thinking they had earned it by their own “power” (Deut. 3:11-17).

b. There is no true and lasting prosperity without God. There is no blessing and honor without God.

c. True prosperity comes from clinging to the Lord and keeping His commandments. Hezekiah did this, and the result was, “The...Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went” (2 Kings 18:6-7).

d. One can be truly blessed and spiritually prosperous even when the whole world seems to be crashing down around you (Lamentations 3:21-24; Habakkuk 3:17-19).

II. WHAT IT MEANS TO MOURN SPIRITUALLY.

A. James described the need for spiritual mourning for those who had divided their loyalties between God and the world in James 4. Because of their friendship with the world, they had made themselves enemies of God (4:4). Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?”

1. James urges them to “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:7-10).

2. Mourning our sins and realizing the goodness of God causes us to make changes in our lives.

a. Romans 2:4 reminds us the “goodness of God” leads to repentance.

b. After Paul had rebuked the Corinthians for tolerating a man’s sin, the brethren at Corinth were sorrowful.

c. “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Cor. 7:8-11).

d. When mourning for sin leads people to be zealous and repent, then one can the blessed condition of such godly sorrow. Though it is painful, what it produces is godliness and righteousness.
B. An example of mourning for sin can be found in Ezra when he learned of the unfaithfulness of the people of Israel, who failed to separate themselves but intermarried with the idolatrous people of the lands surrounding them.
1. “So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice” (Ezra 9:3-4).
2. “And I said: O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens” (Ezra 9:6).
3. “Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.” (Ezra 10:1, NKJV)
4. “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” (Luke 18:13)
5. Peter wept bitterly after denying the Lord three times (Luke 22:60-62). Too often we see dry-eyed repentance and dry-eyed conversion.

III. THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.
A. When people repent and change their hearts, they find the marvelous comfort of forgiveness. Forgiveness means that trespasses are no longer counted against us, and this opens the door to reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-19).
1. Psalm 32:1-5 reveals how David found forgiveness and comfort from the ruin of guilt and sin.
2. Psalm 51:7-12 reveals the joy David experienced in forgiveness and in knowing that he was right with God.
B. Until we see how utterly wicked and destructive our sins truly are, we will never comprehend the beauty and grandeur of God's grace and forgiveness.

CONCLUSION:
1. We ought to mourn spiritually for sin. Sin is the great destroyer of life, of joy, and of our relationship with God and Christ. Sin has brought mankind every misery and heartache imaginable.
2. But the Lord Jesus has brought an answer to this sorrow. Jesus “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we,
having died to sins, might live for righteousness...by whose stripes you were healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

a. “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

b. “But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.” (Malachi 4:2)

**BLESSED ARE THEY THAT KEEP JUDGMENT**

Psalm 106:3

*Cliff Goodwin*

1. Too often the Biblical concept of “blessedness” is oversimplified as being “happy.”
2. Indeed, Biblical “blessedness” involves “happiness,” but the full meaning goes much deeper than this.
3. Biblical blessedness might be described as the “fulfillment, contentment, happiness that comes only from the richness of a right relationship with God.”
4. Each beatitude in Scripture expresses and emphasizes a specific facet of one’s maintaining the proper relationship with the God of heaven.
5. Psalm 106:3 emphasizes the necessity of doing what is just and right, observing and performing that which is in accordance with God’s law.
   a. This must be done corporately, that is, by God’s people as a whole: “Blessed are they that keep justice...” (ASV)
   b. It also must be done individually, that is, by each one of God’s children: “...And he that doeth righteousness at all times.” (ASV)

**DISCUSSION:**

I. THE REQUIREMENT OF THIS BEATITUDE IS CONNECTED TO THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

A. Psalm 106 begins with the expression of God’s goodness and His mercy (v.1).
   1. Throughout this psalm, God’s faithfulness is contrasted with Israel’s unfaithfulness and rebellion.
a. “We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.” (Psa. 106:6)
b. “They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.” (Psa. 106:13-14)
c. “They forgot God their savior, which had done great things in Egypt.” (Psa. 106:21)
d. “Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.” (Psa. 106:24-25)
e. “They joined themselves also unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead. Thus they provoked him to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.” (Psa. 106:28-29)

2. God remained faithful to His covenant and merciful to the penitent (Psa. 106:43-46).

B. God’s holiness is such that He cannot accept unrighteousness and injustice (Psa. 5:4; Hab. 1:13; 1 John 1:5).
1. The nation of Israel had learned the wicked works of the heathen nations, sinning against both God and man (Psa. 106:34-39).
2. Such violation of God’s holiness stirred His holy wrath (Psa. 106:40-42).

C. God’s holy character requires certain things of man and his character. The prophet Micah stated succinctly what God requires if man is to enjoy a blessed relationship with Him (Micah 6:8).

II. WE NEED NOT LEARN THE TRUTH OF THIS BEATITUDE THE “HARD WAY.”

A. Some date the writing of Psalm 106 to the time of David, but the closing verses seem to indicate it was written after the Babylonian exile...perhaps in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah (Psa. 106:46-47).

B. No doubt, this psalm was written from an inspired perspective that looked back on the history of Israel as a nation and noted the hardship and heartache caused by sin.
1. “The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.” (Psa. 106:17-18)
2. “Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.” (Psa. 106:26-27)
3. "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood." (Psa. 106:37-38)

C. The people of Israel suffered because they did not practice righteousness and keep justice...the very content of this beatitude (Psa. 106:3; cf. Prov. 13:15b).

D. The psalmist now sees the vital importance of upholding God’s law. After pronouncing the beatitude of verse three, he goes on to entreat God for the favor and blessings promised to God’s covenant people (Psa. 106:4-5).

III. THIS BEATITUDE INVOLVES DIFFICULTY AND EFFORT, BUT IT PROVES WORTHWHILE.

A. "Keeping justice" is not always easy. Strong describes the root of the word “keep” as “to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard.”

1. “Justice” (Psa. 106:3, ASV) is defined by Gesenius as “right, that which is just, lawful, according to law.”

2. “Keeping justice,” therefore, would involve not only practicing God’s law oneself, but also insisting and influencing others to keep it as well. In this way, one is “guarding,” keeping, and upholding that which is lawful and just.

3. Again, there is a corporate, collective, aspect to “keeping justice.” All of God’s people need to be concerned with the keeping of God’s law. Such an environment should be fostered and maintained among God’s people.

4. The church today “guards” the justice of God through the exercise of proper discipline (cf. 1 Cor. 5:11-13).

B. “Doing righteousness” also requires effort and constant attention. It involves a person’s overall way of life.

1. Gesenius describes “righteousness” in individuals as “righteousness, piety, virtue.” It includes doing what is right before both God and man.

2. “Doeth” is from a Hebrew root which properly means “to labor, to work about any thing” (Gesenius). It takes attention and effort to do God’s righteousness. Strong adds that the word can mean “to accomplish or advance” (as in God’s purpose or God’s cause).

3. In this very psalm, Phinehas stands as an example of one who did righteousness, even when it wasn’t pleasant or easy (Psa. 106:30-31).

C. The concluding words of this beatitude are very significant: “at all times.” Blessed is the man whose principles do not vary with circumstance or consequence!
1. One must stand for what is right, even when there are many adversaries (cf. 1 Cor. 16:9).
2. One must do what is right, even when there are negative repercussions for himself (cf. Psa. 15:4)

CONCLUSION:
1. We serve a righteous and holy God, and He requires that we live righteous and holy lives.
2. The blessedness that comes from a right relationship with Him will surely be worth any difficulties we encounter and any sacrifices we make.

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD
Revelation 14:13
Sidney White

1. This was a time of severe persecution, Rev.2:10b.
2. “Beatitude of martyrs” (Foy Wallace).
3. It “contains greatest advantage ever announced to mankind in the event of death” (W.S. Thompson).
4. It offers words of encouragement to disheartened saints.
5. It can still offer comfort today.
6. Note the phrase, “Voice from heaven”; it is not the angel of v.6.
7. “Blessed” is used 7 times in Revelation, and indicates:
   a. The characters that are blessed, but also;
   b. The nature of that which is the highest good.
8. Let us then notice who these are in our text.

DISCUSSION:
I. “BLESSED ARE THE DEAD.”
   A. Not just any dead is being considered in this verse.
   B. Notice references to the wicked dead.
      Psa. 7:11; 9:17; Prov. 15:9; 2 Thess.1:7-9; Matt.25:41-46a

II. “DIE IN THE LORD.”
   A. The emphasis here is on WHERE one dies, it does matter.
   B. The phrase “In the Lord” is used 169 times in Paul’s writing alone.
   C. One can’t die “in the Lord” without being in the Lord before death.
   D. Rom. 6:1-4, 17-18; Gal. 3:26-27; 2 Cor. 5:14, 17
      1. One must come into the Lord.
3. Such gives courage to continue. I Pet. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 4:6-8; Psa. 116:15

III. “REST.”
A. There is work to be done.
B. We sing, “I Want To Be A Worker” and “We’ll Work Til Jesus Comes.”
C. Faith and Works go together. James 2:14,17,19,20,24,26
D. There is a rest. Heb. 4:9; 2 Thess. 1:7
E. Matt. 11:28-30 – “come”, “take”, “learn”, “rest”

IV. “REST FROM THEIR LABORS.”
A. There will be no more striving, toils amidst cares and heartaches – it is finished!
B. There is rest from travail of persecution, living the Christian life and struggling against persecution. 2 Tim.3:12
C. There are also good works. Eph. 2:8-10; and works of righteousness; Titus 2:14; Titus 3:1; 1 Cor. 15:58
E. Two reasons (motives) for faithfulness even in spite of the burdens the of Christian life listed here:
   1. There is the reward.
   2. There is also the rest.

V. “WORKS FOLLOW THEM.”
A. 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-40
B. Keep going to encourage the living. cf. Heb. 11:4 “dead, yet speaketh”
C. Not gossip, not complaining that preacher preaches too long, not warming a bench, etc.
D. Indicates memory of those works done for the Lord and His cause.

CONCLUSION:
1. What more encouragement do we need to keep on keeping on?
2. We have that same promise of being “blessed”, same hope of rest, same hope of reward.
BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

Matthew 5:7
Tom Snyder

1. Mercy is a virtue of far-reaching consequences.
   a. Notice how God is described, 2 Cor 1:3, “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.”
   b. If we were asked to show examples of the mercy of God from the whole Bible what would you put on this list?
   c. The analytical mind might start with Genesis – maybe with Noah, then to the Israelites many times over; maybe some Gentiles would be in this list, such as Nineveh and Jonah’s reluctant mercy.
   d. But we couldn’t wait to get past all the history and prophets and discuss Christ Jesus and the mercy shown to all mankind through the Gospel.
   e. It is good to identify and understand this mercy, not only to appreciate the mercy extended to us for our redemption, but
   f. As mercy has been extended to us, we then have the responsibility to be merciful to others.

2. So great is this virtue exemplified by God that we are told: “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Mat 5:8).

3. Two definitions:
   a. “Blessed” – ‘enjoying special advantage’, blessed, privileged, fortunate, happy (in the sense of being in a special condition and thereby realizing happiness) (Danker Greek Lexicon).
   c. If being merciful makes us a privileged people we ought to know what mercy is and learn to practice it!

I. EXAMPLES OF MERCY.
   A. The case of Lot, Genesis 19:12-17
      1. Consider the mercy given to Lot and his family when Sodom was to be destroyed.
         a. The extension of mercy, v.12.
            1) It was obvious that the residents of Sodom could not be appealed to.
            2) But righteous Lot (2 Peter 2:7,8) is given an opportunity of salvation with his family.
            1) Restitution for their wickedness was coming in the form of destruction from God.
            2) Those who will remain will face death.
            1) Lot has sons-in-law that had married his daughters and they were also invited to live.
2) However, they did not take him seriously.

d. Exit quickly: the urgency of mercy, v.15.
   1) The delay of grace can be devastating.
   2) Too often there are only two choices:
      a) “Almost thou persuadest me...” Acts 26:28

e. The expression of mercy: the Lord’s hand of pity, v.16
   1) Amidst the fear, anguish and threat of destruction there seems to be a delay.
   2) The hand of God, through these men/angels, brought them forth.
   3) These were literally snatched out of the fire (Jude 23).
   4) Are we not the hands of God as we practice the great commission, Mark 16:15,16?

   1) God had provided the warning, the help and the means of their salvation.
   2) Their responsibility was to follow this plan:
      a) Don’t look back,
      b) Don’t stay in the plain,
      c) Go to the mountain.
   3) This is the very likeness of our salvation.

g. The eschewing of mercy, v.26.
   1) Lot fully recognized the grace of Jehovah, v.19
   2) But Lot’s wife will be forever remembered (Luke 17:32) as the one who fell from grace.
   3) God said don’t look back. She looked back.

   1. In this story we have three men two were on lookers doing nothing, one showed mercy.
   2. Why were the priest and Levite without mercy to the stranger? We are not given the reason, but we know some of the reasons used today.
      a. Many are merciful unto family but not to neighbors.
      b. If the wounded man had been a son or daughter, would the priest or Levite have stopped to help?
   3. The mercy we are our to show must go beyond our comfortable borders.

II. GOD EXEMPLIFIES MERCIES.
   A. The greatest example of mercy is the mercy God has extended to mankind.
   1. Rom 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”
2. 2 Cor 1:3, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."
3. Luke 15:20, "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him."
4. James 5:11, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

B. Christ exemplified mercy in a number of ways.
1. His coming to die for our sins is an act of compassion, Luke 15:1-7; Matt. 9:36.
2. He had compassion on the sick, Matt. 14:14.
3. He had compassion on the hungry, Matt. 15:32.
4. He had compassion on the blind, Matt. 20:33,34.
5. He had compassion over the death of others, Luke 7:11-14.
6. He had compassion for those in sin, John 8:11; Luke 23:34.

III. "YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME."
A. The mercy we show to others is the mercy we would show unto the Lord, Matt. 25:34-40.
D. Paul exemplified mercy, Gal. 2:10; 6:10.

IV. SOME THINGS PERTAINING TO MERCY.
A. To whom do we show mercy? Luke 10:29,37
B. Is there a limit to pity? Matt. 18:21,22,33
C. Why do we show pity? Matt. 18:33; Matt. 5:7; 1 John 3:16,17
D. Do compassion, mercy, pity equal approval?
   2. God's mercy provided a way of salvation.
   3. We have compassion and help the lost, sick, and hurting, but this cannot equal approval of sins.
   4. There is no compassion in allowing sin to continue when we could stop it.
   5. Compassion demands the appropriate action to take away the hurt as much as is possible, James 2:16.
E. This virtue makes better people. For example:
   1. It makes better fathers.
      a. Can we imagine a heavenly Father without mercy and compassion?
      b. A father without mercy will do great harm to his children.
2. It makes better mothers.
   a. One of the best ways to produce a generation of compassionless people is for parents, especially mothers, to forgo compassion.
   b. We should fear the “day care” system where children are often viewed as just objects of interference.

V. HOW MIGHT I SHOW MERCY?
   A. Mercy is not just a feeling we might feel pity; but mercy is an action word, James 2:15-17.
   B. All of us will have different applications because of varying circumstances and opportunities.
   C. There are many ways we might apply the virtue of “mercy:”
      1. Working with the sick.
         a. They are in need of our compassion.
         b. As individuals and the church this is a great responsibility.
      2. Working with the fatherless and widows.
         a. This says we care.
         b. The way we care for those who cannot care for themselves says much about the individual, the church, or nation.
      3. Working with the lost.
         a. Many will be lost because we have no mercy.
         b. We ought to show mercy because we were shown mercy.
      4. Working with the needy.
         a. God has given us a responsibility in this.
         b. We will not obey it, however, without mercy.
      5. Working with our family.
         a. This can be a much-neglected area.
         b. Those closest to us must also be the object of our compassion.
      6. Working with your enemy.
         a. This can be the hardest.
         b. We need to look to the greatest example, Jesus.

CONCLUSION:
1. This is a virtue that has been extended to us by God.
2. This is a virtue that could be very important in that it could well be extended to us by another.
3. Let us learn to practice it that we might be better children of God.
BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART
Matthew 5:8
Garland M. Robinson

1. In Matthew 5, Jesus speaks of attitudes and attributes of those who are truly blessed — those who would be happy and exhibit the peace of God that passeth all understanding (cf. Phil. 4:7).
   a. He speaks of the “poor in spirit” and “they that mourn.” vs.3,4
   b. He mentions “the meek” and those “who hunger and thirst after righteousness.” vs.5,6
   c. He speaks of “the merciful” and “pure in heart.” vs.7,8
   d. He talks of “the peacemakers” and those who are “persecuted for righteousness sake.” vs.9,10
2. This lesson is drawn from what he said in verse 8: “Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”
3. Where can you find a man/woman who is “pure in heart?”
   a. Have you looked? Can such be found in the world today?
   b. Yea, verily. The lives of faithful children of God around the world answer that question in the affirmative.

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE “PURE IN HEART?”
   A. You’ve heard it said that someone has a “good heart.”
      1. This is generally a personal judgment made by men passed upon another.
      2. It may or may not be so. It’s said by someone who wants to think the best about a friend or loved one.
   B. What exactly is a pure heart?
      1. How do you know if you have a pure heart?
      2. How do you go about making sure your heart is pure?
   C. What is God’s definition? He’s the one that counts.
      1. Pure: clean, clear, genuine, blameless, innocent, unstained, free from corrupt desire, free from what is false.
      2. Heart: not in our chest, it’s our mind — the seat of thoughts and feelings — where we consider, think, reason, decide, develop.
      3. A pure heart combines the two. Our thoughts, decisions and actions are motivated by that which is good, clean, pure, unstained, innocent.
      4. The opposite of evil, mean, vile, sinister, harmful, sinful.
   D. Which of the two had you rather be around? One who has a “pure heart” or one who has an “impure, defiled heart?”
      1. Where would you feel most comfortable?
      2. To whom would you entrust the care of your children?
         1 Cor. 6:9, “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effemi-
nate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

II. THE BIBLE HAS A LOT TO SAY ABOUT BEING PURE.
A. James 4:8, “...purify [your] hearts, [ye] double minded.”
Psa. 24:3-4, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”
Psa. 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”
1 Chron. 28:9, “...Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.”
Isa. 1:16-18, “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”
Isa. 55:7, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”
2 Cor. 7:1, “...Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
Titus 2:14, “Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”
Heb. 10:22, “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”
B. To be pure on the outside, one must first be pure on the inside.
1. That’s the significance of a “pure heart.”
2. That does not come from simply drawing breath.
   a. Being pure is a deliberate decision made in our mind.
   b. Have YOU made that decision?
   c. Are you working to make it happen?
III. GOD LOOKS UPON THE HEART.
   A. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.
      1 Sam. 16:7, "...[the LORD seeth] not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."
      Isa. 55:8-9, "For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
      Matt. 23:25-29, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. [Thou] blind Pharisee, cleanse first that [which is] within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whitened sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead [men's] bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."
   B. God knows a man's heart! There's no escaping His all seeing eye. You may fool others but you will not fool God!
      Prov. 21:2, "Every way of a man [is] right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts."
      Psa. 44:21, "Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart."
      Acts 1:24 "...Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all [men]...."
      Acts 15:8, "And God, which knoweth the hearts...."

IV. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A PURE HEART?
   A. To do those things God wants us to do — to be like him.
      John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
      1 Tim. 1:5, "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and [of] a good conscience, and [of] faith unfeigned."
   B. One who desires his mind, motive, intentions and principles be pure. It's a heart that hates, loathes and refuses every vile or sinful thing.
      Phil. 4:8, "...Whatsoever things are true...honest...just...pure...lovely...of good report; if [there be] any virtue, and if [there be] any praise, think on these things."
   C. To acknowledge sin. Deceit only adds evil on top of evil.
      David said, "I have sinned" (2 Sam. 12:13; 24:10).
   D. To have no hidden motive — no selfish interest.
CONCLUSION:
1. God's promise is that those who have a pure heart will see God.
   a. These are the ones who will go to heaven.
   b. Having a pure heart is essential!
2. The heart that is acceptable to God is the soul who has obeyed the Gospel.
   a. One's soul is made pure by obeying the Lord's will.
      1 Peter 1:22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently:"
   b. Consequently, our heart is made pure "by faith." Acts 15:9
3. Faith is trust, confidence, reliance upon the Lord.
   a. It's alive, not dead. James 2:17, 20, 24, 26
   b. Faith motivates one to obey: Repent (Acts 2:38), Confess (Acts 8:37), be Baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16), Live Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58).

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ATTITUDES AND APPTITUDES OF A CHRISTIAN WOMAN
Irene C. Taylor

1. A definition of terms seems an appropriate manner to begin our study.
2. By attitude we mean "a manner of acting, feeling or thinking that shows one's disposition or mental state."¹
3. One's altitude reflects "natural ability or talent; quickness to learn or understand."

I. THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF A CHRISTIAN IS VITAL IF ONE HOPES TO SERVE SUCCESSFULLY.
   A. One must have a willingness to serve (1 Sam. 3:4-10; Isa. 6:8; Matt. 20:26-27). As in the words of the beautiful song, "Here am I. send me."
   B. One must be willing to "keep the main thing the main thing."
      1. What is the "main thing?"
         a. See Matthew 6:33.
         b. Does first mean first before everything?
   C. One must be willing to be obedient.
      1. Note Mary's instructions at the marriage feast at Cana (John 2:5).
2. Note other passages on obedience (1 Sam 15:22; Acts 5:29; Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 1:22).

D. Consider other attitudes one needs.
1. Be watchful (1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8; 2 Tim. 4:5).
2. Be steadfast and strong (Gal. 5:1; Phil 1:27; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 John 2:14; Eph. 6:10; 2 Tim. 2:1).

II. ONE'S APITUDE REFLECTS A READINESS TO SERVE.
A. Each of us has a God-given ability or talent.
1. How we prepare to use it reflects a love for service (Matt. 25:14-30).
2. How does one prepare to utilize these talents?
   a. See 2 Timothy 2:15.
   b. When a knowledge of God’s Word is acquired, it must be used to teach others.

B. One must have a love for others.
1. Consider passages depicting real love. John 13:35; 15:12; Rom. 13:8,10; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Gal. 5:22.

C. One must be watchful for opportunity for service.
1. List passages (1 Thess. 5:6; 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8).
2. We must ask ourselves, “Am I really willing to serve when the opportunity presents itself?”

3. Consider areas of service open to women.
   a. We can teach women and children both publicly and privately.
   b. We can assist a teacher, especially those teaching children.
   c. Prepare food for the sick and needy.
   d. We can encourage our fellow Christians.
   e. We can befriend a young person struggling through to stay faithful in the face of peer pressure.
   f. Offer needed support to one facing problems and sickness.
   g. Encourage elders and preachers.
   h. Send cards to brighten another's day.
   i. Call absentees to see if help is needed. Let them know they are missed.

D. Be an example of one busy for the Lord.
1. When we see a need volunteer to provide the answer to that need.
2. Avoid seeing work for someone else to do. Think “I can do that!”
CONCLUSION
1. Strong, busy Christians make strong, working congregations.
2. Strong Christians raise not only the temperature of the church but of the world as well.
3. Proper attitude plus aptitude raises the altitude of life.

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BLESSED ARE THE PEACE MAKERS
Matthew 5:9
Glen Hovee

1. As Christians We Strive To Be Peace Makers.
   a. Rom. 12:18, Live peaceably with all men. Paul's teaching is that we should strive to live peaceably but there are circumstances under which a Christian cannot agree to be at peace with all men.
   b. Psa. 34:14 Seek peace and pursue it.
2. Man has not been at peace since sin entered the world.
   a. Gen. 4, Cain and Able, Brothers not at peace.
   b. Gen. 6, The whole world not at peace.
   c. Gen. 13, Abraham and Lots herdsman did not have peace.
3. The peace which Christ was wanting for the whole world is a greater peace than any physical or secular peace.

I. PEACE MAKERS SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD.
   A. Not all peace makers are children of God.
   B. To be a child of God one must be willing:
      1. To receive Christ and believe on his name. John 1:12
      2. To be righteous. John 1:12
      3. To be born into the family of God. John 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:22-23
      4. To be baptized into Christ. Gal. 3:26-27
   C. Many who work for peace have not obeyed the commandments of Christ to be a child of God. Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21

II. THE PEACE CHRIST GIVES.
   A. Christ gives his children a peace that the world cannot give. John 14:27
   B. The world does not know the way of true peace. Rom. 3:17
C. Christ hast the power to give to all.
   1. Broken down the middle wall. Eph. 2:14
   2. Abolished in the flesh. Eph. 2:15
D. The Peace Christ provides gives comfort. John 14:1

III. HOW DO WE OBTAIN THE PEACE CHRIST GIVES?
A. We must seek peace and ensue it. 1 Peter 3:10-11; Rom. 14:19
B. Unto us a son is given. Isa. 9:6-7
   1. His name shall be called the prince of peace.
   2. His peace would have no end.
   3. John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ. Luke 1:79
   4. We hear a heavenly host saying; peace good will toward all men.
   5. Peace for the Jew and the Gentile. Isa. 57:19
C. There is only one Gospel that can give peace. Gal 1:6-10
   1. We cannot add to or take from the Bible. Josh. 1:7; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19
   2. Preach the word. 2 Tim. 4:2

IV. BEING FOUND IN PEACE.
A. We must be found in Christ, in peace, without spot and blameless. 2 Peter 3:14
B. We can have peace through the blood of Christ. Col. 1:20
C. Atonement for our sins was made by the blood of Christ. Eph. 2:12-19
   1. In times past we were without Christ, Having no hope, without God. Now, in Christ, by his blood we have hope.
   2. The law was the partition, the enmity that Christ Abolished in the flesh. Making Peace between Jew and Gentile, God and man.

V. JUSTIFICATION GIVES PEACE.
A. “Therefore be justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5:1
B. “If we walk in the light as he is in the light the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John.1:7-9
C. As a child of God, the Lord will give us strength and bless us with peace. Psa. 29:11

VI. WHO ARE THE PEACE MAKERS?
A. One who preaches the Gospel of peace. Rom. 10:15-17
B. One who has obeys the Gospel and became a child of God.
   Gal. 3:26-27
C. One who is spiritually minded. Rom. 8:6; Gal. 5:20
D. Are you a peace maker or a peace breaker?
CONCLUSION:
1. Paul opens 13 of his books by saying, "Grace be unto you and peace from God our father and Lord Jesus Christ."
2. God is a God of Peace. Rom. 15: 33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; Col. 3:15
3. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Phil. 4:7

**BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED**

Matthew 5:10-12

Brandon Baggett

1. We live in a world where human suffering is possible, but more than just this, we live in a world where human suffering is a reality because of the entrance of sin.
   a. James began his epistle on practical Christian living by reminding his audience that human suffering is a reality we all must face. (James 1:2-4)
   b. Job spoke of the ever present reality of human suffering in life. (Job 14:1-2)
2. However, there is a type of suffering which is unique, because this type of suffering is reserved for a certain group of people—those who are righteous, or godly.
   a. The Bible says it is possible to not only suffer as a human being, but we can suffer as Christians. (1 Peter 4:12-19)
   b. What are we to do when we suffer for the sake of righteousness? How are we to respond when we suffer because we stand up for what is right? What are we to do when we suffer because we are faithful Christians?
3. In Matthew 5:10-12, Jesus summarized our response to Christian suffering with five things when He spoke a comforting beatitude regarding Christian suffering.

DISCUSSION

I. DON'T BE SURPRISED.
   A. Jesus tells that when we find ourselves suffering as a Christian, we don't need to be surprised, because it is a matter of "when" instead of "if".
      1. Jesus endured great suffering, and His followers will too. (John 15:18-21)
         a. Jesus Christ was "despised and rejected of men" (Isa. 53:3), and He was a man who "came to his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).
b. Therefore, if we choose to follow a despised and rejected Savior, it should be no surprise that we will suffer too.

2. Jesus never painted an inaccurate picture of what it will require to be his follower. In fact, He often spoke of the difficulties we will face as His followers. (Matt. 5:10-12; 10:32-39; Mark 10:29-30; 2 Tim. 3:12)

B. When we find ourselves being mocked, ridiculed, rejected, or oppressed because we are following Jesus, we don’t need to be surprised. Such is a natural consequence of faithfully following Him.

II. DON’T THINK YOU AREN’T BLESSED.

A. We may be tempted to think, “I am living the Christian life, but I am suffering for doing what is right. Therefore, I must not be doing something right, and I must not have the favor of God.”

1. The opposite is true! We are blessed when we suffer for righteousness’ sake. (1 Peter 3:14; 4:14)
   a. We are not blessed when we suffer for the cause of Christ because it is physically or emotionally pleasant.
   b. Instead, we are blessed when we suffer for the cause of Christ because we become like the Savior and we bear the trademark of being His faithful follower.

2. It doesn’t matter what anybody says about us or what anybody does to us, we are still extremely blessed despite the suffering we may endure as Christians. (Rom. 8:35-39)

B. In the face of Christian suffering, may we never think we are not infinitely blessed!

III. DON’T LET SUFFERING DEPLETE YOUR JOY.

A. Too many people have their joy tied to the wrong things:
   1. They are joyous if they are in good health.
   2. They are happy if they have a lot of friends.
   3. They can be cheerful if they have a lot of possessions.

B. The problem with this view of joy is that it is not Biblical, and if our joy is attached to physical things, it is prone to change in times of Christian suffering.

1. Christian suffering could potentially affect many things in our life:
   a. We could lose our job if we stood up for what is right.
   b. We could lose a “friend” if we remained faithful to Christ.
   c. We could potentially lose our health, freedom, and even our very life.
2. However, Jesus tells says we can “rejoice and be exceeding glad” in the face of Christian persecution. (Matt. 5:12)
   a. This is because our joy is attached to being in a right relationship with God!
   b. We may lose our job, lose money, lose our freedom, health, and even lose our life, but we can still have joy if we are in a right relationship with God.
3. Consider the example of the Macedonians. (2 Cor. 8:1-2)
   a. The churches of Macedonia had experienced several disasters which led to their poverty, but these Christians had been reduced to even more poverty by persecution.
   b. In the midst of this “great trial” and “deep poverty”, they still had “the abundance of joy.”
   C. In the face of Christian suffering, we must not allow Satan to deplete us of true joy, but we must remain joyous as a God-approved man or woman.

IV. DON’T ASK WHY.

A. When we face Christian suffering, there is a far better question to ask, and the better question is this – why not?
   1. Why should we not suffer when they “persecuted the prophets” (Matt. 5:12; cf. Heb. 11:36-40)
      a. The prophets endured a host of different challenges: loneliness, imprisonment, hunger, thirst, beatings, false accusations, hatred, threats, and even death.
      b. They suffered greatly for the cause of God, but they faithfully endured.
         1) What makes us so special to serve the same God, defend the same cause, and preach the same word without difficulty?
         2) Why should we be able to escape what every faithful servant of God has had to endure?
   2. The truth is, when we are suffering for the cause of God, we are in some of the very best company!
B. Why not? If the prophets had to suffer, why should I get to live for the Lord and remain untouched by Christian suffering?

V. DON’T FORGET ABOUT YOUR REWARD.

A. Jesus reminds, “great is your reward in heaven” (Matt. 5:12)
   1. All of the suffering we can endure in this life will not take away that reward.
      a. Suppose you became a Christian at age 18. At that point in time, you were abandoned by your family
because of that decision. You then faced never ending ridicule, harassment, and mocking from your friends, co-workers, and neighbors for this decision. Then, you eventually lost your life because of your decision to faithfully follow Jesus Christ.

b. You have lived a life full of Christian suffering, but all of the suffering you would have endured would mean absolutely nothing in the end, because we have a great reward in heaven!

2. Our reward will make all of the suffering of this life meaningless! (2 Cor. 4:16-19)

B. Don't ever forget about your heavenly reward, and don't ever let suffering cause you to give up on serving the Lord and lose your reward.

CONCLUSION:
1. Christian suffering is not new. In fact, it has been a trademark of every faithful follower of God.
2. May we never forget that even though we will suffer for following Christ, the Christian life is still the best life to live.
3. The Christian life is the abundant life (John 10:10), and it gives way to eternal life hereafter (1 Peter 1:3-9).

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BLESSED IS HE WHOSOEVER SHALL NOT BE OFFENDED IN ME
Matthew 11:2-6
Ronnie Whittemore

1. In Romans 8:35, Paul asked, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”
   a. “Shall tribulation or distress?”
   b. “Shall persecution, famine or nakedness?”
   c. “Shall peril or sword?”
2. What would it take for you to forsake the Lord or leave the church?
3. In Matthew 11:2-6, John, the prophet was in prison and sent his disciples to Jesus.
   a. John heard the works of Jesus.
   b. John sent a question to Jesus: “Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”
      1) Some people speculate that John asked this question for the sake of his disciples.
2) Others speculate that John was discouraged and doubted God’s plan with Jesus.

I. THE CONTEXT IS BRIEFLY EXPLAINED.
   A. The context teaches about expectations and reality.
      1. Jesus answered John’s question with a description of His work (identification marks).
      2. He stated, “Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see” (Acts 1:1).
         a. The blind see.
         b. The lame walk.
         c. The lepers are cleansed.
         d. The deaf hear.
         e. The dead are raised.
         f. The gospel is preached to the poor.
   B. Jesus then said, “And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”
      1. There are blessings associated with defending and supporting the Lord.
         a. Some blessings are temporary as they relate to earthly blessings (better choices, wise choices, lead to better homes, personal life, void of many worldly pitfalls).
         b. Other blessings are permanent or heavenly (eternal rest; heavenly home; void of despair and sorrows.
      2. There is a subtle warning about rejecting the Lord.
         a. If one rejects the Lord, what is his course? (John 12:48)
         b. One would be subject to his own wisdom and not the wisdom of God.

II. THE CONTEXT OF THE BROADER TEXT IS EXPOUNDED.
   A. There is a parallel with Naaman (2 Kings 5).
   B. Naaman was offended when the prophet’s instructions did not meet his expectations.
      1. Elisha was not the king whom Naaman approached.
      2. Elisha stayed in the house and did not come out.
      3. Elisha did not wave his hand over him in some public display.
      4. He was told to dip seven times in Jordan River, not rivers of Damascus.
      5. Elisha refused Naaman’s gifts for payment.
   C. The Jews expectations of the Jews revealed their fickleness (Matt. 11:7-19).
      1. Jesus questioned the crowd’s expectation of John (Matt. 11:7-18).
a. Were they looking for a prophet with “no spine” or without courage?
b. Were they looking for a prophet dressed in royal apparel?
c. John was the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy. He was genuine.
d. John came neither eating nor drinking and he was rejected.

2. Jesus questioned the crowd’s expectation of Him (Matt. 11:19).
a. Jesus came eating and drinking and He was rejected.
b. He healed a man on the Sabbath and was criticized for His timing, not His mercy!

3. What did the Jews expect? For whom were they looking?

III. THE APPLICATION OF THE TEXT IS EXPANDED.
A. When expectations do not meet reality, people are offended. Why are people offended by Christ?
1. His Kingdom is not what they expected.
a. They desired an earthly kingdom with all of the earthly power and grandeur of other earthly kingdoms (Acts 1:8).
b. They desired a King to sit on an earthly throne who would rule with an iron fist.
c. They desired the “glorious days” of David or even greater.
d. When the kingdom turned out to be spiritual, not carnal; began small, not big; the King rule on a heavenly throne, not earthly throne, the people rejected Jesus.

2. The King is not what they expected.
a. People reinvent the Jesus of the Bible and the God of the Bible.
b. They do not see Jesus or the Father as they are revealed in the Scriptures; they see a different Jesus and Father (Lamb, not a Lion; Savior, not a Judge).

3. The Church is the Kingdom, but men are offended at that idea so they reject the church.
a. In their minds, the church is a substitute; a temporary entity until Jesus establishes His earthly kingdom. It is not considered that important (Acts 20:28).
b. In their minds, Jesus’ church should be “like other churches” and possess different qualities.
1) The use of mechanical instructions of music, not singing, is preferred by the masses (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16).

2) Worship as God desires is too boring so they want to change it something appealing to men (John 4:23-24).

3) The doctrine is too strict or too narrow so they loosen the doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2-4).

4) The name has a bad connotation so they change it (Rom. 16:16).

5) The organization is changed because its design is not a business model or like other religious institutions (Phil. 1:1).

4. The code of conduct taught in the Bible is too restrictive so people are offended.
   a. They reject the teachings of the Bible on morality and live by their feelings (1 Kings 17:6; 21:25).
   b. They reject the “golden rule” (Matt. 7:12) so they live by the “silver rule” or “brass rule” or “iron rule.”
   c. They reject Christianity and adopt the values of humanism. Man is the center of the universe, not God (Matt. 5:16; Eph. 1:3; 3:21).

CONCLUSION:
1. John introduced Jesus as the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29).
   a. He did not doubt the identity of the Savior.
   b. He sent his disciples with a question for Jesus based on what John heard.
   c. Jesus responded that what John heard was really true and was seen by others including John’s disciples (Matt. 11:4-5).
   d. The marvelous works of Jesus testified of His trueness and greatness (John 20:30-31).

2. People rob themselves of the marvelous blessings of Christianity when they reject Jesus.
   a. The world expects something different; they are fickle; they reject Christ.
   b. The wise will perceive Jesus as He is, as He has been promised, and will rejoice in the rich blessings, both temporal and spiritual.

3. What do you expect from Christ and His church? Will you follow Him (Matt. 16:24)?
Blessed Are They That Hear and Keep
Luke 11:28; Revelation 1:3
Jeff Grimes

1. As I prepare this outline, the presidential election and the race for the White House is in full swing. Each candidate is busy getting their “message out.”
   a. One candidate wants to “Make America Great Again.” The other candidate has the slogan of “Stronger Together.”
   b. While I understand the intent of these slogans by each candidate, I also understand that America’s greatness and strength will not come from the two political parties these slogans represent. (Psa. 9:17; 33:12-22; 144:15; Prov. 14:34)

2. What then will produce greatness and strength? Our text for discussion will answer this question. It will embrace the message of the Gospel of Christ.

3. We need to be busy getting “our message out” — the only message that will produce true greatness and strength in the life of an individual or a nation.

Background:
1. The scribes and Pharisees were usually present in the audience where Jesus taught. It was not that they were interested in the truth of His message, but rather they were watching for any utterance or deed which they might use to accuse Him.
   a. The context of Jesus’ statement in Luke 11:28 is no exception. Jesus is facing opposition from the Pharisees. As always they sought to limit His influence by defaming His reputation.
   b. They witnessed first hand Jesus exercising his divine power by casting out a demonic spirit from a mute. After Jesus performed this miracle the mute person speaks, and “the people wondered” (Luke 11:14).
   c. There was no doubt that “the finger of God” was responsible for this miracle (Luke 11:20; cf. Exodus 8:19; 31:18; Psa. 8:3).
   e. It is a general rule that those who can’t deal with the truth presented in the message will try to discredit the messenger (2 Cor. 10:10; 11:6).

I. A VOICE FROM THE CROWD.

A. As Jesus was teaching, "a certain woman" in the crowd "lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked" (Luke 11:27).

B. This unnamed woman, in an emotional outburst from the crowd, pronounces a blessing upon Mary, His mother. In other words, "Blessed is the woman who gave birth to someone like you!"

C. "But he [Jesus] said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28).

D. The word blessed: "supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off, blessed, happy." (Strong's Greek & Hebrew, "Power Bible CD")

E. I especially like the word "fortunate." If we were to paraphrase Luke 11:28, it might read like this: "Jesus said, on the contrary, fortunate is everyone who hears and understands the word of God, and puts it into practice."

1. Have you ever heard the expressions, "It is easier to talk the talk, than it is to walk the walk," or "It is easier said than done," and "Talk is cheap, but actions are costly?"

2. I am not sure who came up with these expressions, but they embrace a vital Bible principle.


4. One's "talk" and "walk" must match. Love for God does not pick and choose which of His commands to obey, and which to neglect. Neither does it express doubts or raise objections, regardless of the consequences.

5. Love for God obeys His commands without question or quibble. The principle taught in the words of Mary to the servants at the marriage feast in Cana applies to all; "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (John 2:5).

F. The response Jesus gave to this woman's emotional outburst is interesting.

1. Jesus did not reprimand this woman for her emotional feeling, but He did redirect her thought process. He simply said, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." In essence, Jesus was saying, "As great as it is for Mary to be my mother, that is nothing in comparison to those who hear the Word of God and keep it."

2. Note: "But he answered and said...Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother
and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matt. 12:48-50; Mark 3:33-35).

3. Jesus exalted one’s spiritual relationship above earthly, fleshly relationships. Human ties are temporal, but spiritual kinship is eternal.

4. What a marvelous thought...doing the will of God makes us kin to Jesus! “He is not ashamed to call [us, JRG] brethren” (Heb. 2:11).

G. It is true that we need to be excited and enthusiastic about serving the Lord, but at the same time we need to be sure that our feelings do not become the standard for our work and worship in God’s Kingdom.

1. The world would have us to be guided by our emotions...if it feels good do it. The world does not want you to have any standard, except the one you create for yourself. It is the “live and let live” philosophy. You just do your own thing, and I will do mine.

2. God has never accepted the subjective standard of human wisdom in man’s approach unto Him (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:8-9; Col. 2:23; Numbers 10:1-3).

3. Only the objective standard of the “everlasting Gospel” and man’s obedience thereto will procure the blessings God has to offer (Rev. 14:6; 1 Peter 4:11; Isa. 8:20, etc.)

4. Every doctrine to which a person might subscribe is to be measured by the divine standard of God’s word; not the emotions of the heart.

5. So, let us make sure that “whatsoever we do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Col. 3:17).

II. A VOICE FROM HEAVEN.

A. Jesus is that voice (Heb. 1:1-2). He speaks to us through the Gospel message (John 12:48). To refuse His message is equal to refusing Him.

1. Regardless of what the “progressives” say, no one can have the “Man” without the “Plan.”

2. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven” (Heb. 12:25).

3. Question: What is the difference between a Jew who denies the deity of Christ, and a moral religious person who denies the teaching of Christ? (John 12:48)

4. “And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear [ye] him” (Luke 9:35; Matt. 17:5).
B. Moses spoke of Jesus as the special Prophet that would come into the world (Deut. 18:15).
   1. God said to Moses, “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:18-19).
   2. Notice: 1) He would be from among his brethren (seed of Abraham); 2) He would be like unto Moses, with whom God spoke “mouth to mouth” (Num. 12:8); 3) The words which he would speak, would be words commanded by the Lord (a lawgiver), “I will put my words in his mouth;” 4) If one failed to here and obey those words, it would bring a “sorer punishment” upon him (Heb. 10:28-29).

C. Approximately 1,500 years after Moses wrote Deuteronomy, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1), came preaching, “Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:1-2).
   1. The preaching of John caused many of the Jews to remember the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15, and think perhaps John was that prophet of whom Moses wrote.
   2. They “sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him [John], Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou THAT PROPHET? (Emp. JRG) And he answered, No” (John 1:19-21; 6:14; Acts 3:23).
   3. No one was a greater person than John (Matt. 11:11), but he was not the promised prophet.

D. The apostle Peter, in a sermon on Solomon’s porch quoted the words of Moses in Deut. 18:15, and applies them to Jesus (Acts 3:22-23). Jesus is THAT PROPHET of Deut. 18!

CONCLUSION:
1. “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to BLESS YOU, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26).
   a. Knowing Bible facts about Jesus is not enough. There is no inherent blessing in simply knowing what the Bible teaches; the blessing comes by putting knowledge into practice.
   b. “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written
therein" (Rev. 1:3). This teaches us that knowledge, understanding, and obedience are required.

c. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).

2. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16).

3. Please read and meditate on the principles of blessing and cursing found in Deuteronomy 30:15-20.
   a. The Bible is filled with examples of those who were blessed by knowing and doing.
   b. The Bible is also filled with examples of those who were cursed by knowing and not doing.

4. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

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**Blessed Is The Man That Endureth Temptation**

James 1:12  
*Edward White*

1. Enduring temptations is one of the great challenges that the Christian has to face.
   a. It is a great challenge because of the ever presence of the devil, 1 Peter 5:8.
   b. The devil will temp the Christian in various ways.


3. Jesus told his disciples they would face trials and/or temptations, Matt. 5:10-12; 26:41; cf. also Luke 8:13.

4. The apostle Peter warned of temptations, 1 Peter 4:12-16.

5. Paul wrote of temptations, 1 Tim. 6:9; Rom. 5:3-5.

**DISCUSSION:**

I. **A LOOK AT VARIOUS WORDS IN THE TEXT:**

A. "Blessed" (Gk. word *makarios*) is the same word found in Matthew 5:3-11.
   1. It describes one who has that inner peace because of having endured and overcome the temptations of the devil.
   2. Thus, the true blessedness comes from God to the child of God who endures the various trials of life, cf. Jas. 5:11
3. Enduring trials brings blessings or happiness to the Christian.
4. Enduring trials makes one purer, stronger and more like God, who is characterized as “blessed.” cf. 1 Tim. 1:11
B. “Endureth” (Gk. word *hupomeno*) means “to abide under, to bear up courageously (from suffering)” according to Vines Expository Dictionary of New Testament words. cf. also Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Rom 12:12; 1 Cor. 13:7; 2 Tim 2:10; Heb. 10:32; James 5:11; 1 Peter 2:20
1. The Christian is blessed and/or happy for a number of reasons.
2. He understands that temptations and/or trials are common to all and must be endured.
3. The Christian understands that when one successfully endures or holds up through temptations/trials he will be blessed while waiting the words “well done.” Matt. 25:21
4. Thus, the idea of enduring temptations is that one bears the temptations or trials while at the same time remaining faithful to God.
5. Let’s never forget that the devil never gives up (1 Pet. 5:8) and man has the choice of giving in to the devil or holding out or enduring whatever comes his way.
C. “Temptation” refers to the outward troubles, persecutions, trials and/or hardships attending the Christian’s life here on this side of eternity.
1. At the time James wrote, there was the temptation to the Christian to go back into Judaism or that from which he had been delivered, cf. Col. 1:13.
2. These Christians were surrounded by persecutions from their own countrymen, unjust treatment by the rich (James 5:1-3) and all types of physical afflictions.

II. WHO ARE THE RECIPIENTS OF THE MESSAGE?
A. The “twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” James 1:1.
B. Most likely, the recipients were Christians who had been converted from Judaism.
C. They had been scattered because of persecution, cf. Acts 8:4; Acts 12.
D. On Pentecost, there were Jews gathered “out of every nation under heaven,” Acts 2:5.
2. James is writing to these scattered Christians to encourage them to endure, hold on, don’t give in, and remain faithful during times of persecution, cf. Rev. 2:10b.
3. Of course, the message applies to ALL Christians.

III. WHO ARE THOSE WHO WILL BE BLESSED?
   A. James says "the man that ENDURETH temptations." James 1:12. (emp. mine, E.W.)
   B. It is not only the man who suffers that is blessed, but the one who endures, who with patience, remains strong and faithful to the Lord through the various trials which confronts him, cf. James 1:2-3.
   C. It is the man who understands that he has God on his side so long as he is faithful to Him, cf. Rom. 8:31-39.
   D. It is that person who looks forward to the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away, cf. 1 Peter 5:4; 14; cf. also 2 Tim. 4:8.
   E. It is that person who continually looks unto Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith..." (Heb. 12:2), for help in dealing with temptations.
   F. It is the one who has a strong faith in the promises of God, cf. Heb. 13:5.
   G. It is the one who understands that the trials of this life are short-lived, cf. 2 Cor. 4:17.

IV. WHO IS THE ONE WHO DOES THE BLESSING?
   A. It is the same God who blessed Abraham when he, because of his great faith in God's promise, left his homeland not knowing where he was going, cf. Heb. 11:8-10.
   B. It is the same God who blessed Moses when he endured his trials and temptations down in Egypt, Heb. 11:24-26.
   C. It is the same God who blessed Daniel when his faith caused him to defy the decree signed by king Darius, Dan. 6:10-28.
   D. It is the same God who blessed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when their faith led them to defy the decree of Nebuchadnezzar to bow down and worship the golden image, Daniel 3 & 4.
   E. It the same God who delivered the apostle Peter from prison, taking care of him, Acts 12.
   F. It is the same God who was with Paul during all his trials and temptations, cf. Acts 16:22-28; 2 Cor. 11:24-33; Phil. 3:1-7.

V. WHAT IS THE REWARD FOR ENDURING TEMPTATIONS?
   A. James says, "the crown of life," James 1:12.
   B. Peter says, "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and that fadeth not away," 1 Peter 1:4.
1. Peter also refers to “a crown of glory that fadeth not way,” 1 Peter 5:4.
2. The reward will be an entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” 2 Peter 1:11.

CONCLUSION:
1. Trials, temptations & afflictions may come to all Christians.
2. However, if we endure and don’t give in to our trials, we can expect approval of God and look forward to the glorious crown which never fades away!
3. We only endure temptations for a while, but we shall wear the heavenly crown forever!

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE CALLED
Revelation 19:6-9
Bill Boyd

1. The marriage feast is used repeatedly in the Scriptures to illustrate various spiritual teachings. The specific teachings for each use is dependent on the immediate context of that use, however there are things associated with various references to this ancient custom that can help us appreciate the specific applications for a particular use. We will be looking at these marriage feast references as we unfold its specific application in Revelation 19:6-9.

2. Tom Holland was to speak on this topic, so I asked him for his thoughts on the text. He said it was the marriage of the LAMB; that the LAMB is mentioned 28 times in Revelation; that John beholding Jesus said, “Behold the lamb of God” (John 1:36). This is the triumphant LAMB receiving the bride for which he died. She is the church (Eph. 5:25). This is not the millennial reign of a worldly kingdom.

3. We may not always know what the symbols of Revelation mean, but we know they do not mean something that clashes with what the Bible teaches elsewhere. We know this is not a worldly reign (John 18:36), nor a same-sex marriage (Matt. 19:4), nor an adulterous marriage of any kind (Matt. 19:9). Neither is it the establishment of the church in AD 70, because the church was already established (Acts 2) and the bride was already the Lamb’s wife (Rom. 7:1-4; Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:7).
DISCUSSION:

I. THE IMAGERY.

A. The Lamb and his wife have already been identified as Christ and his church. The 45th Psalm is about the warrior King receiving his bride and with her a confirmation of his kingdom. It establishes a prophetic precedent for this vision in Revelation.

B. The marriage feast is the celebration of their relationship. Jesus approved the custom of a marriage feast by his attendance at the one in Cana of Galilee where he supplied the best (sweetest) wine (John 2:1-11). The custom was for the groom and his bride to be considered as legally married at their betrothal, and to later celebrate the marriage at a feast (Matt. 25:1-13). Hence, the bride was already considered to be the wife of the groom (Matt. 1:18-20). In context, this imagery in Revelation is the presentation of the faithful church (Rev. 21:2) to Christ after she overcame those things “which must shortly come to pass.” (Rev. 1:1)

C. Her garments of fine linen, clean and white, are identified in the text as “the righteousness of the saints” (Rev. 19:8); hence she “hath made herself ready” (Rev. 21:2), and she is the “glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” but “holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:27).

D. The called are the saints invited to the feast. In the flexible and dynamic visions, Revelation should not be hard to understand the wife as the church and the guest as the saints. These are they who had responded to the Gospel call (2 Thess. 2:14).

II. HOW THE CALLED ARE BLESSED.

A. They are blessed with honor. It is an honor to be invited to a wedding. It acknowledges a valued relationship between the wedding party and the wedding guest. You are called because someone loves you who wants you to be part of the special occasion. You are called by the Gospel because God loves you (John 3:16), and it is a blessing to be loved by God (Rom. 8:35-39).

B. They are blessed with glory. A wedding is a glorious occasion. The groom appears gallant and the bride is always lovely. God has called us to “glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3), to be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), “that we may be also glorified together” (Rom. 8:17), for “whom he called, them he justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Rom. 8:30). It is a blessing to be called to glory.

C. They are blessed by the feast itself. A spiritual feast is an apt illustration of the “spiritual blessings in heavenly places
in Christ” (Eph. 1:3). He is “the bread of life” (John 6:35); he is the “living water” (John 7:38); he is “the meat that endureth unto everlasting live” (John 6:27). “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

D. They are blessed by the fellowship. In 1 Cor. 5:8 Paul said, “Let us keep the feast.” It was not the Jewish Passover itself because the old law had been done away. It was not the Lord’s Supper itself because that is not in this immediate context. This is a spiritual feast of “sincerity and truth.” It is the fellowship of the saints that is without “the leaven of malice, or wickedness” and specifically, here, without “fornication.” That is why the next verse says “not to keep company with fornicators” (1 Cor. 5:9). One of the great blessings of the Gospel call is the fellowship of the saints.

CONCLUSION:

1. You do not want to miss the Gospel call!
2. In Matthew 22:1-14 Jesus told the “parables” of the wedding feast.
   a. In the first part of these “parables” (Matt.22:1-7) the king sent his servants to invite guests to the wedding of his son, “but they would not come.” However, the king is longsuffering, and he sent other servants with the same invitation. But they “made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.” So in his wrath the king “sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” (That is the Jews’ rejection of the Gospel)
   b. In the second part of these “parables” (Matt. 22:9-10), the servants were sent into the highways “and gathered together all as many as they found.” (That is the Gospel going to the Gentiles.)
   c. In the third part of these “parables” (Matt. 22:11-13), the king found a guest without his wedding garment and said to the servants, “Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (That is what happens when you do not make the proper response to the Gospel call)
   d. At the end of these “parables” Jesus said, “Many are called, but few are chosen” (Matt. 22:14). The call is for all (Acts 2:39), but the chosen are those who accept the invitation and come to the feast in proper attire. They have their robes washed in the blood of the lamb (Rev. 7:14), and they put off the old man and put on the new (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10).
(That is being “buried with him by baptism” and being “raised” to “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4).

2. Rev. 22:17 says, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” This is your call. Come to the feast!

**WEIGHT LOSS FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN**

Heb. 12:1-2

*Laura Boyd*

1. Physically: From the American Family Physician, June 1, 2001
   a. “The basic treatment of overweight and obese patients requires a comprehensive approach involving diet and nutrition, regular physical activity, and behavioral change, with an emphasis on long-term weight management rather than short-term, extreme weight reduction.”
   b. “An estimated 300,000 preventable deaths occur each year in the United States because of unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, which are known contributors to obesity.”

2. Spiritually:
   a. We all have sinned and need forgiveness. Rom. 3:23
   b. The majority of people who die each year will be lost because of failure to obey God’s requirements for salvation. Matt. 7:13-14
   c. Christians must “eat” a healthy spiritual diet, exercise their faith, maintain behavioral changes, and remain faithful till death. Matt. 5:6; James 2:20; Luke 9:62; Rev 2:10

**DISCUSSION:**

I. UNBIASED AND THOROUGH ASSESSMENTS ARE NECESSARY.

A. Physically, it is important to be assessed by a qualified professional.
   1. Health risks and limitations will be addressed.
   2. A personalized plan for optimum health can then be presented.

B. Spiritually, the “great Physician,” Christ, will assess our condition.
   1. The Bible helps us see our sins and shortcomings. James 1:25
   2. God has provided a written manual for our optimum spiritual health. John 6:63, Heb. 4:12; Amos 7:8
II. ONE MUST ADMIT THE NEED TO IMPROVE.
   A. Physically, being overweight or obese has become prevalent
      in our nation.
      1. Changes in society have contributed to this trend.
      2. Changes in thinking and behavior have also contributed
         to obesity.
   B. Spiritually, it is necessary to admit sin in our lives and to
      realize the need for forgiveness.
      1. Society has adopted the false idea that there is no
         absolute right or wrong. Judges 17:6; Prov 12:15
      2. We must believe there is only one answer to our sin
         problem and only one way to heaven. Eph. 4:4-6; John
         14:6

III. A COMMITMENT TO START IS IMPORTANT.
   A. Physically, choose a start date.
      1. Writing it down and being mentally prepared before
         starting will help you to stick with the plan.
      2. Don’t procrastinate. Why would one choose to remain in
         an unhealthy state?
   B. Spiritually, life is short and time is not promised. 2 Cor.
      6:12; James 4:14
      1. Why would one choose to remain lost another day? Acts
         26:28
      2. Spiritual blessings can only be found IN Christ. Eph. 1:3

IV. EQUIP YOURSELF WITH THE PROPER TOOLS TO
    HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL.
   A. Physically, a planned menu and shopping list will enable
      you to buy foods wisely.
      1. A written list and eating before going to the store will
         help prevent impulse buying.
      2. Use nutritional references. Remind yourself “you are
         what you eat.” Don’t be fast, cheap and greasy!
      3. Use kitchen scales or measuring cups to ensure accurate
         portions.
   B. Spiritually, a good study Bible, dictionary and concordance
      are a must.
      1. Take advantage of online study tools: WVBS, GBN, and
         other sound sites.
      2. Be in attendance for all Bible classes, and attend extra
         learning opportunities when possible. Heb. 10:25

V. EXERCISE ADDS STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE.
   A. Physically, exercise tones the body as weight is lost.
      1. Exercise increases cardiopulmonary fitness.
      2. Exercise can help maintain weight loss.
B. Spiritually, exercise involves teaching others.
   1. We become stronger as Christians when we teach others. Rom. 2:21
   2. No one can “exercise” for us. Teaching is commanded for all Christians. 2 Tim 2:2; John 15:8; Heb 5:12

VI. PERIODIC EVALUATIONS ARE NECESSARY FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS.
   A. Physically, have a set goal and a time frame for reaching that goal.
      1. Weigh yourself weekly and record on a chart.
      2. Break larger goals down into smaller, more manageable goals to keep from becoming discouraged.
   B. Spiritually, Christians are commanded to grow! Heb 6:1-2; Eph 4:15
      1. As Christians, our lives are never static. We are either growing or declining. 2 Peter 1:9
      2. Evaluating spiritual growth will help identify areas of weakness and possibly prevent larger problems in the future. 2 Peter 2:5-8; 2 Cor. 13:5

VII. DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF OR OTHERS TO SABOTAGE YOUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE.
   A. Physically, most overweight people tend to be their own worst enemy when it comes to weight loss.
      1. Stop repeating negative remarks such as “You will never make your goal.”
      2. Don’t use success on the scales as an excuse to celebrate with food!
      3. Surround yourself with people who will encourage you to reach your goal.
      4. Determine to make healthy eating and exercise a lifestyle and not a “diet.”
   B. Spiritually, many times we become overwhelmed with the cares of the world and want to give up on living the Christian life.
      1. Make your best friends with other Christians who will encourage you to remain strong during the hard times. 1 Cor. 15:33
      2. Keep your prayer life constant. 1 Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6
      3. Don’t use past spiritual activities as an excuse to “slack off” as you age.
      4. Let Matthew 6:33 be seen in your life, even when family try to influence you to do differently.
      5. Determine to persevere till death in order to receive the crown. Rev. 2:10, 2 Tim 4:7
CONCLUSION:
1. Physically, there will be days when you slip up. The key is to get back on your plan the next meal. Don’t let the “cheat” days become a habit.
2. Spiritually, we all have sinned and will continue to sin occasionally. But as Christians, sin is no longer our way of life. When we are “overtaken in a fault” (Gal. 6:1) we restore our fellowship with God and our brethren by repentance, confession, and prayer. James 5:16; 1 John 7:9
3. God wants us to succeed in our Christian life. He has given everything we need to accomplish that goal and to be rewarded with the final goal — eternity in heaven with Him!

BLESSED IS HE THAT WATCHETH
Revelation 16:15
Wade Phillips

1. The context of this parenthetical warning by Jesus, as is the case with all things scriptural, is very important.
   a. The warning comes immediately before the last of the seven vials are opened against the enemies of God.
   b. It was written to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4), not present-day religious folks.
   c. As is true with any other part of the letter, this too would “shortly come to pass” (Rev. 1:1).
   d. It is also true that much of the letter was written in symbolic language.
   e. Expecting these plagues as things yet to come is unwise at best.
   f. Believing they were physical plagues that were literal, as described, is just as unwise.
   g. The initial addressees of the Revelation letter would have understood, but anyone who may have intercepted a copy of it would have not, by design.
2. With that said, application is most certainly to be found in the warning for us today.
   a. Throughout history, Jehovah God has provided the instructions as to how His people should please Him, along with promises of blessings if obeyed and dire consequences if not.
   b. Oftentimes these dealt with carnal blessings and consequences but this time, especially as applied to us, the blessings or consequences are spiritual and eternal.
DISCUSSION:
I. WARNING: "I COME AS A THIEF."
A. This was not the first time Jesus used this sort of comparison.
   1. He used it while teaching His disciples in Luke 12:35-40.
   2. Rev. 3:3, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee."
      a. This was in the address to the church at Sardis.
      b. So the text for our present consideration, Revelation 16:15, was still within this context and ought to have been fresh in their thoughts.
B. It was not the last time He used such language.
   1. Rev. 22:12, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
   2. Rev. 22:20, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
C. Paul used the same thought as well.
   1. In 1 Thess. 4:13-17, he gave words of comfort to the Thessalonian Christians by describing the second coming of Christ.
   2. Immediately after that, in 5:2, he told them that you "know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night."
D. Right after exhorting his readers to repentance, Peter also used the simile comparing Jesus’ coming to that of a thief. (2 Pet. 3:10)
E. The churches of Asia would not know the time of the return of Christ.
   1. Jesus himself did not know while He was on earth. (Matt. 24:36)
   2. No one on earth knew the time after He ascended to heaven, nor does anyone know now.

II. BLESSING.
A. Jesus offers a promise of hope in a treacherous time.
   1. This promise comes in the midst of a series of seven plagues of wrath which would be "poured out" against the enemies of God.
   2. Jesus is reminding the recipients of the letter to hold on and remain steadfast.
   3. "Blessed" is a word which is very complex to define.
      a. "Happy" simply does not always do it justice.
b. In this particular context, I believe this to be a fair treatment of it: “The state of happiness, or contentment, knowing that a heavenly home is guaranteed to you.” (WP)

B. “Watcheth” and “keepeth” are both present active participles.
1. The basic idea is that we (should) have been watching and keeping, are watching and keeping, and will continue to watch and keep.
2. The idea of having watched once and that keeping us safe is terribly wrong.

C. Blessing stipulation #1: “Blessed is he that watcheth”
1. Christians must actively follow their faith.
   a. Phil. 2:12, “Wherefore, my beloved... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
   b. Luke 11:9-10, “And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”
   c. James asked: “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” (James 2:14), and the answer is obviously in the negative.
   d. Jude 3 exhorts that we “should earnestly contend for the faith.”

2. Christians must be vigilant.
   a. We must continue to, at least as long as we have breath and use of our mental faculties, be mindful of the coming day of the Lord.
   b. We must remain on guard against the devil and all others who would like for us to fail. (1 Pet. 5:8)
   c. Jesus had told His disciples in Luke 12:37, “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.”

D. Blessing stipulation #2: “[Blessed is he that] keepeth his garments.”
1. We can see a similar thought to the parable Jesus taught of the wedding feast, Matt. 22: 2-14, when in verse 11 the king saw “a man which had not on a wedding garment.”
2. Isaiah 61:10 gives us a beautiful picture of the garments we should be wearing.

E. One must keep his garment by remaining vigilant and not let it to be taken away.
III. CONSEQUENCES.
A. Consequence #1: “Lest he walk naked.”
   1. It is obvious what happens when garments are taken.
      (Rev. 3:4, 17-18)
   2. This seems to refer to the Jewish temple guards.
      a. The guard were not allowed to sleep on duty.
      b. If the captain of the temple guard found one of the
         guards asleep at his post, he had the authority to
         burn their garments.
B. Consequence #2: “[Lest] they see his shame.”
   1. This is the same consequence as one who begins to build
      but does not count the costs. (Luke 14:28)
   2. In the case of the temple guard, he would be forced to
      walk home naked and in shame.

CONCLUSION:
1. The placement of this verse needs to be taken by us as a clear
   statement that if we do not watch and keep our garments, we
   too will be considered among the enemies of God.
2. We know that if we do not watch and keep them, then the con-
   sequence is much worse than the shame of being naked.
3. Let us be sure to be among those who are “blessed” according to
   Revelation 16:15.

BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO
HUNGER AND THIRST
Matthew 5:6
Don Blackwell

1. Matt. 5:6, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after
   righteousness: for they shall be filled.”
2. There’s an old saying, “You are what you eat.”
   a. This is certainly true with regard to our physical bodies.
      1) One who fills himself with fatty unhealthy food will have
         a body that reflects such.
      2) One who eats vegetables and proper food group quantities
         will have a body that reflects this.
      3) We take in liquid and drink water, and our bodies are
         about 60% water.
   b. “We are what we eat” also holds true in the spiritual realm.
      1) The things which we take into our hearts/minds
         determine who we are.
      2) Prov. 23:7, “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”
a) If a man feeds his mind on filth, it will be reflected in his life.

b) If a man fills his heart with profanity, or pornography, or worldly philosophies, or filth, it will shape him spiritually.

3) If a man, however, meditates on Scripture, fellowships with Christians, spends hours in prayer and counting his blessings, such will be reflected in his character. Psa. 119:11.

3. Each of us needs to have ask, “What have I been feeding myself?”

DISCUSSION:

I. FOR WHAT ARE YOU HUNGRY?

A. Notice the question is not “Are you hungry?” All of us are hungry for something.

B. The question is “For what are you hungry?” What motivates you? What drives you? For what are you living?

C. There are two potential answers to this question: Heavenly things or Worldly things.

D. Hunger for Heavenly Things.
   1. Matt. 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger for righteousness.”
   2. The Greek word for ‘righteousness’ is dikaiosune.
      a. Thayer’s Greek Lexicon defines it as “The virtue or quality or state of one who is dikaios.”
      b. Dikaios = righteous. “One who is such as he ought to be. Upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the command of God.”
      c. A righteous person is one who is such as he ought to be. He is an upright person, one who keeps the commands of God.
      d. Righteousness = the state of one who is such as he ought to be.
      e. Thayer says righteousness is “the condition acceptable to God.”

3. One who is “hungering and thirsting for righteousness” is one who deeply desires to be right with God. He yearns for faithfulness.

E. Hunger for Worldly Things.
   1. Worldly hunger is a longing/yearning for possessions, earthly comforts and world achievements (1 John 2:15-16).
   2. Our modern society is consumed with pleasure.
   3. The need for constant entertainment: satellite TV, DVRs, Netflix, Roku, XM Radio, Smart phone obsession. These are things that many people hunger after.
4. Elvis Presley was a man who many would think achieved greatness.
   a. His biography reveals that his life was a pitiful pursuit of materialism and sensuality of all kinds. In his first two years of stardom he had an overturn of $100 million dollars. He had three jets, two Cadillacs, a Rolls-Royce, a Lincoln Continental, a Buick and a Chrysler station wagon, a Jeep, a dune buggy, a converted bus and three motorbikes. His favorite car was the 1960 Cadillac Limousine model. The top of it was veneered and covered in pearl, literal pearl, white veneer. The body all around it was sprayed with forty coats of special prepared paint that included within it crushed diamonds and fish-scales. Nearly all the metal trimmings around that car were plated in 18-carat gold. Inside the car there were two gold covered telephones; a gold vanity case containing a gold electric razor, gold hair-clippers, electric shoe-buffer; a gold-plated television; a record player; an amplifier; air-conditioning and a refrigerator that was capable of making ice in two minutes solid.

II. HOW HUNGRY ARE YOU?

A. There’s a difference in casual hunger and real hunger.
   1. Americans commonly say, “I’m starving to death.” It will have been four hours since they ate.

B. Jesus did not have casual hunger in mind in Matthew 5.
   1. In the beatitudes, Jesus takes the extremes. Verse 3 mentions the “poor in spirit.” The word for “poor” means “completely destitute.”
   2. Likewise, this is real hunger and real thirst.

C. We have to understand real hunger if we’re going to understand this beatitude.
   1. The prodigal son’s hunger (Luke 15).
   2. In 1908, Sir Ernest Shakleton and three companions decided to travel from their camp in Antarctica to the South Pole. They set out with food and 4 horses. Weeks later, they had exhausted their supply of food. The horses were dead, and they gave up and turned back. In total they traveled 127 days. Shackleton said on the return trek back to their quarters, they spent all their time talking about food – elaborate feasts, gourmet delights, sumptuous menus. As they staggered along, suffering from dysentery, not knowing whether they would survive, every waking hour was occupied with thoughts of eating.
a. That is true hunger. They were consumed with it. Food was constantly in their thoughts. Scarcely did they think of anything else.
b. When we can appreciate that kind of hunger, then we’re ready to appreciate this beatitude.
c. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.”

III. WHY DOES GOD HAVE TO TELL US TO BE HUNGRY?
A. God doesn’t have to tell us to hunger for food. God doesn’t have to tell us to thirst for water.
B. So, why does He have to tell us to hunger for righteousness?
C. There are some key differences in physical and spiritual hunger.
   1. Spiritual hunger can be stifled.
      a. In the parable of the soils, Jesus tells about the seed that fell among the thorns. The text says it was “choked out with the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life.”
      b. This often times happens to spiritual hunger, even for Christians.
   2. Physical hunger comes as easily as breathing, but that is not always true of spiritual hunger.
      a. Often times Christians get out of the habit of regular prayer, regular study, and thinking elevated thoughts.
   3. Many people are starving spiritually and not even aware of it.
      a. We see commercials on television about starving children in Africa. It’s obvious!
      b. But we’re surrounded by people starving spiritually, and they are oblivious to it.
   4. Abundance feeds physical hunger, but often times it causes spiritual hunger.
E. Why does God have to tell us to be hungry? Because sometimes we forget.

IV. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A PERSON WHO HUNGERS AND THIRSTS FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS?
A. He doesn’t see how close he can get to the edge.
   1 Cor. 6:18; Prov. 5:8; Matt. 6:33
B. He does right even when no one else is looking.
   1. One who has real hunger for righteousness is only concerned that God is watching.
C. His will power is strong! Phil. 3:14; Heb. 12:2
D. He understands his purpose in life.
2. Ecclesiastes 4:11

V. WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE LOST THIS HUNGER?

A. Rev. 2:4, Consider those in the church of Ephesus who had the same problem.
B. Rev. 2:5, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works....”
   1. Three things: Remember, Repent, Resume.
      a. Remember how it used to be. Remember the drive you used to have.
      b. Repent. Have a change of mind. Renew your determination.
      c. Resume. Go back to that again.

CONCLUSION:

1. How’s your appetite?
2. We’re not talking about food, but how’s your hunger for righteousness?

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS
Revelation 22:14

Stan Dean

1. Revelation 22:14 is the last of the seven beatitudes recorded by the inspired author, John, in this apocalyptic volume (cf. 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).
2. A beatitude always confers a profound blessing on its adherents (cf. Matt. 5:1-12). Two particular blessings are given here for those who keep Divine commandments:
   a. “They may have right to the tree of life” (v.14a).
   b. “[They] may enter in through the gates into the city” (14b).
3. We live in a day where “commandment keeping” is not a popular religious teaching even to the point of being scorned by some. However, Scripture warned us that this age would come (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3,4; et. al.).
4. Nevertheless, the beatitude under consideration for this study is just as “quick and powerful” as the day it was revealed and still pronounces encouragement and hope for those who love and honor the precious will of God (cf. Psa. 119:165-167).
5. The balance of this study will proceed as follows:
   b. An examination of the nature of commandments.
   c. A look at the purpose of commandments.
   d. A review of some rewards for those who keep the commandments of God.

DISCUSSION:
I. AN ANALYSIS OF REVELATION 22:14:
   A. Like other New Testament beatitudes, this verse begins with the Greek word *makarios*, translated “blessed,” which “refers to that distinctive spiritual joy which is possessed by the Christian due to his relationship with God in Christ.”
   B. “Blessed” is followed by “are they” which would suggest the blessing is specific to the ones who give themselves in full submission to their Maker’s desire.
   C. Obviously, those that “do His commandments” do not regard doing so either as “meriting salvation” nor as a “grievous” task, but know that keeping them from the heart demonstrates an active faith and love for Him who gave them (James 2:14-26; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3).
      1. Some of the newer translations render “wash their robes” rather than “do His commandments,” but the meaning is still the same.
      2. Burton Coffman commented, “Free grace gives the white robes to the sinner, but he must take care of the laundering” (cf. Acts 22:16; Rev. 7:14).
   D. Further, “that they may have right” gives additional emphasis to the response man must make to God’s proffer in order to receive its reward.
   E. Then, the rewards offered in this beatitude are two-fold:
      1. First, there is renewed access to the “tree of life” which was lost after sin entered the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:22-24).
      2. Second is the “right to enter in through the gates into the city” [heaven]. Additionally, it is a “gated” dwelling where no undesirable thing is allowed entrance (Rev. 22:15).

II. AN EXAMINATION OF THE NATURE OF COMMANDMENTS:
   A. Even a cursory reading of the Bible would reveal, among other things, that it is a book of law (cf. Isa. 2:1-3; Jer. 31:31-33; Acts 1:2; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; James 1:25 et. al.)
   B. “Commandments” are referenced 159 times in Scripture (128 times in the Old Testament and 31 times in the New Testament).
C. Biblical commandments are Divine directives that reveal to mankind the unwavering will of heaven (Psa. 119:89; 2 Tim. 3:16,17).

D. God's commandments are tempered by our love for Him and our fellowman (Matt. 12:36-40).

E. There are four inherent truths to keep in mind concerning God's commandments:
   1. They are not mere suggestions, but orders from the Almighty who expects them to be kept (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).
   2. We do not know what is best for ourselves, but God does! (cf. Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23).
   3. In continual keeping of God's commands, not only do we honor Him, we also become more like Him (2 Pet. 1:3,4).

F. In summary, we recall the words of Solomon, "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

III. A LOOK AT THE PURPOSE OF COMMANDMENTS:
   A. While restating God's laws to the Israelites before entering the Promised Land, Moses added, "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always" (Deut. 6:24).
   1. God did not give commands to simply keep them busy.
   2. There is purpose and design behind each one.
   B. Here are a few of the many reasons God gave us commandments:
   1. The first of God's commands is recorded in Genesis 2:16-17 where the intent was to warn. He counseled man that if he broke His words to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he would "surely die" (cf. Psa. 19:7-11).
   2. Soon after the Israelites were delivered from Egyptian slavery, God said that if they would give ear to His commandments He would protect them promising, "I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee" (Exod. 15:26).
   3. The commands God gave to the Israelites concerning the regulations of manna were to test them, or in His words, "prove them, whether they will walk in my laws, or no" (Exod. 16:4).
   4. God also gave his commandments, as our text for this study teaches, to line the path to heaven (Rev. 22:14).
IV. SOME OF THE REWARDS FOR THOSE WHO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS:
   A. God promised to His people who stood at the foot of Sinai that keeping His commandments would secure His mercy (Exod. 20:6).
   B. Further, He promised that walking in all His ways would assure that all would "be well" with them and their children and their days would be prolonged (Deut. 5:33; Eph. 6:2,3).
   C. It is clear that we please God in the 'here and now' by keeping His commandments that are applicable in the Christian age (Eph.2:15; Heb. 1:1,2; 1 Thess. 4:1,2; 1 John 2:3,4; 3:24).
   D. It is also clear that we appropriate our hereafter in heaven by obeying the commandments revealed in His Holy Word (Matt. 19:16,17; Rev. 22:14).

CONCLUSION:
1. When one comes to know the nature and purpose of God's commandments, he then understands the beauty and blessings contained therein.
2. It thrills us to the depths of our being as we anticipate the time when we will hear our savior say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21,23).
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