

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 5 (January 26-February 1, 2014)

Jesus begins His Sermon on the Mount by using eight beatitudes to teach the entire plan of salvation. We will look at this powerful portion of Scripture in our studies this week.

Sunday -- January 26

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3)

The word “**blessed**” means happy, fortunate, truly well off or to be congratulated. All eight of the beatitudes begin with that word. What is the starting point for this kind of happiness? Jesus says that those who are **poor in spirit** have **already** taken possession of the kingdom of heaven. Those who arrive at this truth realize that salvation is a gift and there is absolutely nothing they can do to earn it or to keep it (see Philippians 1:6). They are literally **bankrupt** in their ability to pay for their heavenly home with their own righteous acts. These fortunate people are **totally dependent** on the righteousness of Jesus to guarantee their place in Heaven. The kingdom of God lives in them through the Holy Spirit (see Luke 17:21).

Monday -- January 27

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)

This verse is often used during funerals, but the meaning goes much deeper than that application. Those who realize that salvation is a gift paid for in full by the death and resurrection of the Lord will also mourn over the fact it was **their sin** that caused Him to give up His life on earth. True salvation will always be accompanied by remorse over sin and a willingness to repent. To those who desire to repent and who mourn over their lost condition without Christ, God provides a Comforter, the blessed Holy Spirit who will abide in them forever (see John 14:16-17). The comfort they receive is not a temporary fix, but rather a permanent dwelling place for His Holy Spirit. Praise His Name for His wonderful plan of salvation offered to the entire world!

Tuesday -- January 28

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

Have you already figured out that the teachings of these beatitudes run contrary to the politically correct thinking of the world? Today’s truth seems ridiculous to the average person, but it is imperative to anyone who is seeking a life filled with happiness and joy. We think of “meek” as a quality of weakness, but in Bible times, the word was used to describe a wild stallion that is broken so that it will serve the master. The animal loses none of the natural majestic beauty, but it becomes useful to the owner. Likewise, a new believer may still be strong in body and mind, but he/she uses that body and mind to serve the One who died for his/her sins. The person who can live like this will still be going strong after the more aggressive persons have burned out. The meek will ultimately be victorious in life because they trust their master to supply all their needs.

Wednesday -- January 29

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)

Have you ever really been hungry or thirsty? Have you gone more than a day or two without food and water? Those of you who have know more about physical hunger and thirst than I do. This is the kind of hunger Jesus wants us to have for the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Those who realize that salvation is beyond their human works (v. 3), who mourn over their sins that caused the Lord to die (v. 4), and who come meekly before Jesus and trust Him for their every need, will also have an appetite for spiritual food and drink. The things of the world will never satisfy the longings of the soul. God promises to fill up to capacity those blessed people who trust Him for their daily necessities. Are you one of those happy people?

Thursday -- January 30

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matthew 5:7)

Today's beatitude teaches a concept similar to Matthew 6:12: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." The word "they" is emphatic in the Greek text and means, "**they, and they alone.**" Jesus uses a parable in Matthew 18:21-35 to teach the same concept. Those who refuse to be merciful to their fellow man cannot ask God to be merciful to them. If we insist on justice from our fellow man, God will be forced to give us justice instead of mercy. None of us can survive the judgment of God if it is based on justice. The choice is simple: Demand justice from men, receive justice from God; display mercy toward men, receive mercy from God. A person who is bankrupt in spirit (v. 3) will surely offer mercy to others on life's highway.

Friday -- January 31

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

A person can be "**pure in heart**" and still struggle with sins in the body. Jesus says, "The spirit is willing, but the body is weak" (Matthew 26:41). The word "**pure**" used here comes from a Latin word that means "wax." Makers of pottery would often use wax to cover up a crack in the finished piece. Only an expert could detect the flaw until it was exposed to the heat. At that time, the whole world would identify the "crackpot." Those who have no artificial covering to hide the cracks in their hearts will experience true happiness and joy. Since God looks at our hearts instead of our outward appearance (see 1 Samuel 16:7), it is impossible to hide our "cracks" from the Holy Inspector. Those who desire and seek heart purity will see God in his/her everyday activities and will also see His face in eternity.

Saturday -- February 1

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)

People who are peacemakers have made personal peace with God through Jesus Christ. They have developed a passion for assisting others who need to know "The Prince of Peace" (see Ephesians 2:14). They will also be at peace with those around them, because they know that they were spiritually bankrupt prior to receiving Jesus Christ into their life. All who come to God by way of the cross will be called "sons of God." Thus, they are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (see Romans 8:17). Could we ask for anything else in this world that He has not already made available to us? What can keep **you** from enjoying and spreading His peace?