

PART 1 - July 3, 2013

WELCOME

- Hand out hand-outs

SETTING THE STAGE

We start in Matthew 4: In the original text of Scripture, there were no chapter divisions. So, when we are studying through a passage, we ought to read it as the authors **ORIGINALLY** intended it, not as the translators arranged it.

So in Matthew 4, preparation was made for Jesus **MINISTRY**:

- Jesus fasted and prayed for 40 days
- was tempted of Satan in the wilderness
- calls Peter and Andrew to be fishers of men, and then James and John (the “Sons of Thunder”). When Jesus calls them, “And they **IMMEDIATELY** left the ship and their father, and followed him.” (Matthew 4:22)

Matthew 4:16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light: and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

Jesus is beginning His ministry here.

Matthew 4:23-25 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of diseases and all manner of disease among the people.

And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.

You thought there was **BEIBER FEVER**...Galilee had **JESUS FEVER**! If there was Twitter back then, the server would have crashed. Jesus would have been trending over everything else! #JESUS #HEALER #MIRACLE #MESSIAH Can you imagine the following if someone today started healing people like Jesus was here?

It's going to happen!

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; **and greater works than these shall he do**; because I go unto my Father.

And whatsoever ye ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Matthew 16:15-17 And he said unto them, **Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

And these signs **SHALL** follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

The Word is forever settled in heaven, so it WILL happen no matter how much doubt I may have in my spirit. Whatever doubt I have in me, I need to cry out to God like the father in Mark 9: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

So, it is in this setting (miracles, signs, & wonders) that we begin Matthew 5:

Matthew 5:1-2 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

TIME OUT: Before we go any further, I want to jump forward in time to Matthew 16.

Story of trip to Israel in 2011. Erez Berkovitz explaining the Jewish perspective of Jesus' ministry - understanding the audience.

Matthew 16:13-19 When Jesus came into the coasts of **Caesarea Philippi**, he asked his disciples, saying, **Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?**

- Jesus takes His disciples out of their comfort zone, out of Jewish "territory" and leads them into the regional center of Roman religion
 - they were surrounded by grand monuments and temples to Romans gods like: Jupiter (God of War), ...
 - IT IS IN THE MIDDLE OF ROMAN RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE, SURROUNDED BY IDOLS AND MONUMENTS TO FALSE GODS - THAT JESUS CHOOSES TO REVEAL WHO HE REALLY IS, THE ONE TRUE GOD, FOR THE FIRST TIME!

¹⁴And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

¹⁵He saith unto them, **But whom say ye that I am?**

¹⁶And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷And Jesus answered and said unto him, **Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.**

¹⁸And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

¹⁹And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

FOCUS: V.14 - "Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias; and other, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

- it's important to understand the Jewish perspective when Jesus ascends the mountain and begins to teach a new law to the people - who did they see when Jesus did that?
 - MOSES - who ascended the Mount Sinai and received the law of the Old Testament which he taught to the people.

FIRST BLANK: JESUS stood up, like Moses in the Old Testament, and started giving a new, greater law, more difficult because it addresses our THOUGHTS, and not just our actions

- this is Mount Sinai version 2.0

And so Jesus begins to teach the most famous Sunday School lesson ever:

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

It is important to note that when we talk about the law, Jesus did not ANUL, or MAKE IRRELEVANT the Old Testament law; he FULFILLED the ceremonial law by providing an atonement for sin - and he also upped the stakes from the Old Testament. ("ye have heard it said, BUT I SAY UNTO YOU...")

"The Sermon on the Mount" actually runs through Matthew 5, 6, and 7, and it is at the end of this message that Jesus clearly defines the stakes at hand.

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

If we live how He has just instructed us to live, anchor our lives to the words of Jesus Christ, then we will have a firm foundation through the good and bad times of life. We can be "stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord..." (I Corinthians 15:58).

I want to live life His way.

THE BEATITUDES: The beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the **POOR IN SPIRIT**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Point of Interest: The Latin word for "BLESSED" is **beatus**, and this is where we get "Beatitudes".

In Jesus' day, the Pharisees were the main teachers of spiritual things and their focus was on APPEARANCE, and OUTWARD righteousness. If you obeyed the rules then you could be righteous before God, and disobedience meant judgement - so imagine the attention that Jesus draws by beginning his message with the word "BLESSED"

So Jesus begins this lesson, this greater law, by shifting the focus of the people. The law of Moses was a list of DOs and DON'Ts which turned out to be impossible to for mankind to keep. So, instead of focusing on what we CAN and CAN'T do, Jesus does something very encouraging - he focuses on the BENEFIT of following this law - BLESSING.

SECOND BLANK: Jesus does not focus on DOs and DON'Ts; He focuses on the benefit of following this law – BLESSING.

What does it mean to be BLESSED?

BLESSING was not a new concept for the Jewish people.

Deuteronomy 28:1-9 And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

- As God's PHYSICAL people, the blessing of God was indicated by OUTWARD circumstances and goods
- in this passage alone there are over 10 OUTWARD INDICATORS of the blessing of God

But, in Matthew 5:

- "Blessed" comes from the Greek word "*makarios*" and it also can be translated as "happy"
- **Society ties HAPPINESS with EMOTION.**
 - Happiness is a huge buzzword in society - "do whatever makes you "happy" - "just follow your heart."
 - The problem is this:

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; WHO CAN KNOW IT?

- our heart will trick us, telling us relationships/sports/popularity/drugs/sex/pornography/career/friends (SIN!!) will make us happy - but it only leads to death, despair, and shame.

THIRD BLANK: What does it mean to be BLESSED? INWARD happiness that exists regardless of circumstance!

THIS HAPPINESS Jesus talks about is: “Divine joy and perfect happiness” (Wiersbe)

- “**implied an INNER satisfaction and sufficiency that did not depend on OUTWARD circumstances!**” (Wiersbe)
- It’s a more COMPLETE blessing – BETTER

True happiness comes from God and if we live the way HE wants us and created us to live, only then will we truly be HAPPY and BLESSED. Not just when things are going well, but it is a happiness that exists INDEPENDENT of circumstance!

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the **POOR IN SPIRIT**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

NEXT BLANK:

- POOR:
 1. reduced to beggary, begging, asking alms
 2. destitute of wealth, influence, position, honour
 - a. lowly, afflicted
 - b. helpless, powerless to accomplish an end
 - c. poor, needy
- SPIRIT: i.e. the vital principal by which the body is animated
 - a. the rational spirit, the power by which the human being feels, thinks, decides
 - b. the soul

Jesus is saying that in order for us to be truly happy, we need to throw our pride out the door and slam it shut behind it. “Pride goeth before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18), and when we feel like we are strong and sufficient IN OUR OWN STRENGTH & HUMANITY, we are in perilous territory. Before you can come to God, you must first admit that you need Him.

This is the very foundation of repentance: realizing that I am “reduced to beggary, destitute, lowly and helpless” without God.

- why does God allow evil? Could it be that he already knows we’re hopeless without Him, and as much as He’d love to stop evil from entering our lives, He knows that if He did, we would become more and more confident in OUR OWN SELVES?
- So, He allows man to make choices of FREE WILL and commit unthinkable evil in the hope that when we finally realize we’re “helpless” without Him, that we will turn to him in repentance?

NEXT BLANK: When we come to the realization that we're in NEED, and we ACT upon that realization, then the blessing of God sweeps into our lives.

NEXT BLANK: How do we act upon this realization? REPENTANCE!

Revelation 3 - God speaks to the Laodicean church and shows them the contrasting perspectives

Revelation 3:17, 19 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

...As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, **and repent.**

We need Jesus. That's #1. If we don't live our lives like we need Him, we cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven; but if we do, we will be blessed and inherit eternal life!

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Natural follow-up to verse 3 - our NEED of God should lead us to MOURN.

NEXT BLANK:

- MOURN
 - mourn for, lament, wail - speaks to extreme emotional distress
- COMFORTED
 - to call to one's side

When you are at the end of your rope, you're BLESSED because that's when Jesus comes RUNNING to your side!

II Corinthians 7:9-11 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye **sorrowed to repentance**: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For **godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

For those who are called to mourning over loss, over sin, over a void in their lives, here is the promise of God:

Psalms 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Hebrews 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for **he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**

Those who don't know Jesus Christ have nowhere to turn when life brings them to mourning. But if you've turned your life over to God, He will be your peace and hope and strength. That is how you can be BLESSED even when you MOURN.

NEXT BLANK: No matter how dark your day is, or how deep your sin is, there is a God who will come RUNNING to your side when your turn to Him!

Prodigal Son - as far away as could be in sin. The Father welcomed him back.

Genesis 39:2 And the LORD was with Joseph...[in the pit, in Potiphar's house, in the prison, in Pharaoh's mansion - in despair, in fear, in hurt and pain...the Lord is with YOU!

Matthew 28:20 ...I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Part 2 - July 10, 2013

WELCOME

- Hand out hand-outs

Matthew 5-7: SERMON ON THE MOUNT

As the multitudes followed and His disciples drew near, JESUS stood up, like Moses in the Old Testament, and started giving a new, greater law, more difficult because it addresses our THOUGHTS, and not just our actions

- this is Mount Sinai version 2.0

We need to pay attention to the Sermon on the Mount.

FIRST BLANK: We can't just READ the words in red, we must DO what Jesus said. WHY?

Matthew 7:24-27 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

If we live how He has just instructed us to live, anchor our lives to the words of Jesus Christ, then we will have a firm foundation through the good and bad times of life, when winds of doctrine blow through - whatever the circumstance Christ must be our foundation! "Chief cornerstone"!

Last week we looked at the first couple of scriptures:

Matthew 5:3 Blessed are the **POOR IN SPIRIT**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

REMEMBER: "Blessed" comes from the Greek word "*makarios*" and it also can be translated as "happy".

You're BLESSED when you acknowledge that you NEED God, and you ACT on that realization - REPENTANCE.

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Our NEED of God will lead us to MOURN. Godly sorrow will lead you to repentance.

Also, when we are called to MOURN, through loss, job change, relocation, etc. Whatever the cause of you mourning, the promise of God - and the reason you can be

BLESSED - is that you will be COMFORTED. Jesus Christ will be right there by your side!

Matthew 28:20 ...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Tonight, we continue the BEATITUDES:

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

REMEMBER: "BLESSED" MEANS "HAPPY" - JESUS IS TELLING US HOW WE CAN TRULY BE HAPPY - not just when circumstances are good, but this HAPPINESS comes from a source INDEPENDENT of our circumstance!

SECOND BLANK

MEEK:

- treating people with kindness, humility and CONSIDERATION.

This is more than just a good concept - it is a "**fruit of the Spirit**" mention in Galatians

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

THIRD BLANK: Humanity is naturally SELFISH - but true blessing comes from being SELFLESS.

Here we find the concept of "loving thy neighbor as thyself". Blessing - HAPPINESS - will come to people who prefer others before themselves.

Matthew 22:35-40 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**

- anyone feel good after doing good for someone else?

Thomas Jefferson - "I believe that every human mind feels pleasure in doing good to another."

Put others first, and you just might find that you also are BLESSED.

Scripture is full of this principle:

Job 42:10 And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, **when he prayed for his friends:** also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

- not only did Job's BLESSING return to him in his meekness, it DOUBLED! That's the power of MEEKNESS!

Psalm 22:26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied : they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

Psalm 25:9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Psalm 147:6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Psalm 149:4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

In Matthew 11, Jesus tells us to learn of Him, because He is MEEK and lowly in heart. Peter tells us that meekness is "in the sight of God of great price."

When we choose to consider others before ourselves, Jesus said that we are BLESSED and we will "inherit the earth". He is actually referencing the Psalms here:

Psalm 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

WHAT IS MEEKNESS NOT?

Matthew Henry Commentary:

"...Yet there is a natural quietness arising from love of ease, and want of firmness, which must not be mistaken for gospel meekness. It is timid, easily deterred from good, and persuaded to evil. Divine grace operates in rendering timid men more firm and active, as it renders those of an opposite temper more easy and quiet."

- meekness is NOT wimpyness!
- meekness is NOT weakness! You do NOT allow people just to walk all over you, take advantage of you, and run you ragged!
- **you are aware of others and prefer them, showing God's love to them** - yes, sometimes people will take advantage of you - but we keep on loving, investing in people and we will see results

Numbers 12:3 describes Moses as the MEEKEST man on the earth. One of the greatest men in scripture was also the meekest...

PRACTICAL THOUGHT: If you put others first, most people are going to appreciate it and you will be a more effective ambassador for Jesus Christ!

I Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with *meekness* and fear:

II Timothy 2:24-25 And the servant of the Lord must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, *patient*, **In meekness** instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

FOURTH BLANK: MEEKNESS is a necessity in soul-winning.

- we must consider others: their condition, their eternal destination, their needs, and INCONVENIENCE OURSELVES in order to reach out to others in need

Our purpose as a church is to see souls saved (repentance, baptism in Jesus' Name, infilling of the Holy Ghost). Individually and corporately, and in order to see that happen we must learn and practice MEEKNESS.

What does this look like?

- intentionally connecting with a visitor before/after church **INSTEAD OF** chatting with the same friends you've spoken with a million times before
- SMILING!!! ...AND NOT JUST WHEN YOU'RE IN CHURCH!!!**
- go the extra mile - offer to do something for the sole purpose of helping someone else
 - sometimes we volunteer for selfish reasons - we witness in order to soothe our own conscience - **RARELY/NEVER PRODUCTIVE!**
 - constant internal examination of motives and attitudes
- and on, and on, and on we could go....

The consistent message of Scripture:

In business communications, consistent messaging is very important. Organizations often will designate one spokesperson to speak publicly on behalf of an entire corporation. The reason for this is so that there will be ZERO confusion as to the purpose and intent of that organization.

Jesus is the spokesperson for His Kingdom. I find it so interesting that throughout His ministry, Jesus communicated - and modeled - a consistent, clear message over and over again: God first, then others...over and over again.

- Ten Commandments: God first, then governed how you treated one another
- Rich young ruler - had the "others" part, didn't have the "God first" part.

In this LAW that Jesus is laying out here in Matthew 5 - the message is exactly the same: GOD FIRST, THEN OTHERS. If you get that right, the rest falls into place so much easier! **"On these TWO commandments hang ALL the law and the prophets."**

If you don't have God first and love your neighbor as you love yourself, don't go any further. Jesus ministered out of COMPASSION, and so must we.

INHERIT THE EARTH

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

What is an inheritance? It is usually passed down from the father to children.

Psalm 24:1 *The earth is the LORD's*, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Phillippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Human doubt may creep in and ask, "Who's going to look after ME?"

"Our Father, which art in heaven" owns it ALL. So when you are MEEK, His supply becomes your supply. That is how you can be HAPPY when you consider OTHERS before YOURSELF.

So, Jesus continues on:

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Anyone ever felt filled with overwhelming joy when you were hungry? NO! Usually, I'm happiest when I'm stuffing my face! I'm completely miserable when I'm hungry! Yet another instance where Jesus takes our human logic and flips it on its head. The more you study theWord, the more you realize the truth found in Isaiah:

Isaiah 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.

NEWS FLASH: God is smarter than me! Whenever God says something that you can't quite figure out, just believe and obey.

So, in order for me to be HAPPY, I need to be HUNGRY! Check....let's move on... :-)

FIFTH BLANK: What is hunger? A PHYSICAL manifestation of a need for FOOD. I FEEL when I am hungry because my stomach begins to ache and if I ignore that sign, then my stomach will begin to make some very aggressive noises to let me know that I am hungry!

SIXTH BLANK: What is thirst? **A PHYSICAL manifestation of a need for WATER.**

When I get thirsty, my mouth dries out, I get a headache sometimes, my stomach feels weird. Dehydration can also lead to more extreme muscle pain (cramping) and even death if taken to the extreme. We are 90% water, and without that substance our bodies shut down.

THIS HUNGER AND THIRST IS SPIRITUAL - THE OBJECT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS.

SEVENTH BLANK: RIGHTEOUSNESS: Living in agreement with God's standards; being in proper relationship with God.

You will make mistakes. We still fight our human weakness every day. But, if you will hunger and thirst - truly desire - after God's righteousness, you will truly be blessed and you WILL get what you seek.

In journeying through the Beatitudes, I've found a progression occurring that naturally occurs in maturing in our walk with God.

1. I've got to be right with God: Poor in Spirit, Mourning
2. I've got to be right with my fellow man: Meekness
3. I've got to turn my natural tendencies over to God (sanctification): Hunger & Thirst for righteousness

Matthew Henry Commentary:

"Hunger and thirst are appetites that return frequently; so these holy desires are carried out towards renewed pardons, and daily, fresh supplies of grace. **The quickened soul calls for constant supplies of righteousness; grace to do the work of every day in its day, as duly as the living body calls for food.**"

The Psalmist expressed this hunger:

Psalm 42:1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

Psalm 61:1-2 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: **my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;**

To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

"My natural desire is for carnal things...WHAT DO I DO?!"

Psalm 37:4-6 Delight thyself also in the LORD: **and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.** Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

The Psalmist is not saying: "God is my personal vending machine. Whatever I desire, I get as long as I serve God."

The Psalmist IS saying: "If I make myself delight in the things of God, over time my desires will change as God replaces my carnal desires with His desires." He puts His righteousness in me!

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

If we seek God's face, we will surely be within reach of His hand. I'm hungry for His righteousness...I'm hungry for His holiness. I want to be more and more like Jesus every single day.

Jesus said:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, **and his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you.

You don't have to worry about tomorrow, God is already there. Just hunger and thirst for righteousness - and you SHALL be filled, and find HAPPINESS that could only come from the One who made you.

Part 3 - July 17, 2013

WELCOME

- Hand out hand-outs

Matthew 5-7: SERMON ON THE MOUNT

As the multitudes followed and His disciples drew near, JESUS stood up, like Moses in the Old Testament, and started giving a new, greater law, more difficult because it addresses our THOUGHTS, and not just our actions.

We need to pay attention to the Sermon on the Mount.

Points to Remember:

- “Blessed” comes from the Greek word “*makarios*” and it also can be translated as “happy” - happiness independent of circumstances
- those who hears the words of Jesus, and DOES them, is like the man who built his house on the ROCK. If you HEAR, but don’t DO, you’re like the guy who built his house on the SAND. (Matthew 7)

If we live how He has just instructed us to live, anchor our lives to the words of Jesus Christ, then we will have a firm foundation through the good and bad times of life, when winds of doctrine blow through - whatever the circumstance Christ must be our foundation! “Chief cornerstone”!

Up to this point, we’ve examined the first 4 “Blessed be’s” of Matthew 5:

In journeying through the Beatitudes, I’ve found a progression occurring that naturally occurs in maturing in our walk with God.

1. I’ve got to be right with God: Poor in Spirit, Mourning
2. I’ve got to prefer my fellow man: Meekness
3. I’ve got to turn my natural tendencies over to God (sanctification): Hunger & Thirst for righteousness

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Also, when we are called to MOURN, through loss, job change, relocation, etc. Whatever the cause of you mourning, the promise of God - and the reason you can be BLESSED - is that you will be COMFORTED. Jesus Christ will be right there by your side!

Matthew 28:20 ...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

True BLESSING comes when you prefer and consider OTHERS before YOURSELF. And when you consider others before yourself, God will take care of YOU!

Meekness is not weakness. The word "meek" was used by the Greeks to describe a horse that had been broken. It is POWER under CONTROL. You may have the POWER to hurt another, or ignore, or just to benefit self - but when you use your POWER and STRENGTH to CARRY ANOTHER (like a horse carries its rider), you have the blessing from the Lord.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew Henry Commentary:

"Hunger and thirst are appetites that return frequently; so these holy desires are carried out towards renewed pardons, and daily, fresh supplies of grace. **The quickened soul calls for constant supplies of righteousness; grace to do the work of every day in its day, as duly as the living body calls for food.**"

- constant desire for God's character in us

Tonight:

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

FIRST BLANK: MERCIFUL/MERCY: showing compassion to those in need.

NEXT BLANK: How does this look in real life?

Forgive those who hurt you - whether they deserve it, or ask for it - FORGIVE.

•you could hold their feet to the fire - but you don't have to - show MERCY to those who need it.

WHY?

Ephesians 2:1-7 ¹And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. **4But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,** ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: ⁷That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Having received His mercy, we must extend it to others. FORGIVE!

How do I forgive?

NEXT BLANK: Forgiveness is to RELEASE the other party from all debt. They do not owe me anything, I have no expectations of repayment.

Three people we MUST forgive! (David Shatwell - "Tragedy of a Wounded Spirit")

- Matthew 22:35-46 - First and second commandment: Love God, Love your neighbor, Love yourself
- My neighbor, myself, and God Himself (3 MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIPS)

NEXT BLANK: Forgive others who wounded you

- Matthew 5:23-24
 - stop your worship/sacrifice and get right with your brother!
 - describe in detail the cause of the hurt
 - the hurt will come to the surface and begin to hurt again
 - say: "For what that person did/said, as of this moment I forgive them and I give this hurt and resentment into Your hands right now."
 - LIBERTY!!
 - **Ask yourself: *Who I need to forgive?***
 - **Ask God to forgive them**
 - Acts 7:59 - "And they stoned Stephen..."
 - Acts 7:60 - "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."
 - Stephen said: "Lord, I ask YOU to forgive THEM, and never make them pay for the wrong that they have done."
 - **you've forgiven them, now ask GOD to forgive them!**
 - sometimes this is harder than step 1
 - no longer do I want to see them suffer for what they've done
 - Jesus: "Father, forgive them..."
 - If God needed a witness in judgement against them, you would refuse to testify

- even if they're not alive today, it's not about them! It's about your freedom/future!

NEXT BLANK: Forgive yourself

- sometimes, when you consider what you have done you begin to hurt - how you may have hurt others, regret for actions you've taken
- release the resentment that you hold against YOURSELF
- **how can you fulfill the second commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself" when you HATE yourself for what you've done?!**
- For the lives that I've destroyed, I release Mike Hennessey, and all the resentment that I hold against myself.
 - even those times when I feel like I've hurt MYSELF, I forgive MYSELF!
- *For the times that I hurt myself, for the times that I have hurt others, I forgive and release ME from that guilt*

NEXT BLANK: Forgive God

- How is this an issue?
- broken homes, abuse victims, God could have stopped it and He did not...you can hold that against Him...FORGIVE HIM!
- tragic events can result in blaming God
- release resentment towards God
- *For allowing me to walk through this valley, when He could have stepped in and made it all better...His ways are above my ways, so I forgive and release God*

HOW IMPORTANT IS MERCY?

Matthew 6:14-15 ¹⁴For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 18:23-35 ²³Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. ²⁴And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. ²⁷Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, **and forgave him the debt.** ²⁸But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. ²⁹And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. ³⁰And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. ³¹So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. ³²Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: ³³Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? ³⁴**And his lord was wroth**, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should

pay all that was due unto him. ³⁵So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

- nobody deserves the forgiveness God gives us
- then when someone hurts us, and we refuse to forgive them, the debt that we have been forgiven of is returned upon us
- my unforgiveness can result in re-instated debt - all the sin that has been buried in baptism is brought back up before His face IF I DON'T FORGIVE!!
- **before you choose not to forgive, look at your own failures and weaknesses lest you incur re-instated debt**
- v. 35 - **“from your heart”**
 - it's got to come from the heart, or you're in trouble with God
- sometimes we keep them in a prison in our minds and replay scenarios and hurts of our past - open the door and release those memories to Him!

July 8, 1741: Jonathan Edwards preached a heart-rending message called “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”. Reportedly, the imagery of hell caused Edwards to be interrupted numerous times by people moaning and crying out, “What shall I do to be saved?” **However, sometimes I think we need to hear another sermon: “Saints in the Hands of an Angry God.”** When you refuse to extend forgiveness, God isn't just a little bit miffed...HE IS WROTH!

That word WROTH means: “to be angry, ENRAGED, to feel and express strong displeasure and hostility; righteous anger of God toward sinful disobedience.” God feels the same way about the UNMERCIFUL as He does about SIN.

The reality is that EVERYONE is going to be wounded at some point. Especially if you live they way Jesus called us to live. The question is not IF we will be wounded, but WHAT we will do in response? FORGIVE! It was Jesus' response from the cross, and if we take up our cross then we must do the same.

NEXT BLANK: Unforgiveness is the most damaging of all sins (Matthew 18:21-35)

- It removes the mercy of God from my past sins
- God will not answer my prayers (Mark 11:24)
- Gives Satan advantage over you (II Corinthians 2:11-12)
 - Warps my self-image, and perception of others

But when you extend mercy, mercy will be extended unto you. **No wound is worth going to hell over. FORGIVE, RELEASE THEM FROM THE DEBT...and you will be BLESSED and a weight will be lifted off of you.**

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

NEXT BLANK: PURE: Innocent, clean, clear of responsibility

NEXT BLANK: HEART: Mind, the seat of thought and emotion

- also “soul”

Our conscience is a powerful thing.

- prompts us to recognize sin (could conscience be the result of what man ate in the Garden?)
- you cannot see God while your conscience is weighted down with SIN.

NEXT BLANK: You will not see God if there is sin in your life.

- Genesis 3: Adam and Eve's sin SEPARATED God from humanity
- since then, no man has seen God

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

1 John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

- Jesus came and mankind finally got a veiled glimpse of the Almighty God
- humanity was RECONCILED to God

Colossians 1:12-22 ¹²Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵**Who is the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; ²⁰**And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.** ²¹**And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled** ²²**In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:**

- we didn't have a hope, but Christ RECONCILED humanity back into relationship with Almighty God!

This is how we can be truly BLESSED, when we live free from sin and reconciled to God.

- SALVATION - repentance, baptism in Jesus' Name, Holy Ghost infilling

After we are saved, we must still live free from sin.

1 John 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God **sinneth** not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

1 John 2:1-6 ¹My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. **And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:** ²And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world. ³And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁶He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

Psalm 24:1-5 ¹The earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. ²For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. ³Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴**He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;** who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. ⁵**He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.**

NEXT BLANK: Sometimes our conscience can also be weighed down with condemnation.

CONDEMNATION: Feels like conviction, but drives you AWAY FROM GOD.

- keeps you at a distance - link to UNFORGIVENESS of SELF
- most CHRISTIANS live in condemnation!!
- “You’ll never be that; you’ll never do that; look what you’ve done in your past, God can’t use you now!”
- accusations; guilt-focus

Revelation 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.**

Romans 8:1 ¹**There is therefore now no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

- when you were saved your eternal destination changed, and your perspective also should have changed
- no longer do you need to listen to that old fox, the devil, who accuses you day and night - you can SHUT HIM UP with your actions!!!
- turn CONDEMNATION into CONVICTION

CONVICTION: feels just like condemnation, but it drives you CLOSER TO GOD.

- when something in your life is challenged, don’t recoil from it, welcome it
- ACT on the correction of the Word
- as you walk in obedience to the Word, you’ll be able to look back a few years down the road

- that old fox that accused you, and may still accuse you from time to time, when you look back on where God brought you from you can look the devil face to face and tell him your testimony!
- APPLICATION: get in the altar - don't let the Word pass you by
 - LIVE OUT what is POURED IN to you.

NEXT BLANK: When you live your life free from SIN, you will see God OVER THERE (HEAVEN).

I Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

NEXT BLANK: When you live your life free of condemnation, you will see God at work DOWN HERE (EARTH).

- the two go hand-in-hand

Part 4 - July 24, 2013

WELCOME

- Hand out hand-outs

Matthew 5-7: SERMON ON THE MOUNT

As the multitudes followed and His disciples drew near, JESUS stood up, like Moses in the Old Testament, and started giving a new, greater law, more difficult because it addresses our THOUGHTS, and not just our actions

We need to pay attention to the Sermon on the Mount.

Points to Remember:

- "Blessed" comes from the Greek word "*makarios*" and it also can be translated as "happy" - happiness independent of circumstances

•those who hears the words of Jesus, and DOES them, is like the man who built his house on the ROCK. If you HEAR, but don't DO, you're like the guy who built his house on the SAND. (Matthew 7)

If we live how He has just instructed us to live, anchor our lives to the words of Jesus Christ, then we will have a firm foundation through the good and bad times of life, when winds of doctrine blow through - whatever the circumstance Christ must be our foundation! "Chief cornerstone"!

Recap:

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

Matthew 5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

The Beatitudes can be looked at as Stepping Stones to Spiritual Maturity. Level upon level of life applications make us more like Jesus Christ.

1. I NEED GOD
2. I CALL ON GOD AND HE RESPONDS
3. I BEGIN TO PRODUCE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
4. I LEARN TO TAME MY FLESH - hunger and thirst after the right things
 - here I would put in "learn to walk - grow into adolescence"
5. I FORGIVE - this becomes a lifestyle
6. I MAKE SURE MY MOTIVES AND CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR
7. **(FIRST BLANK) I PURSUE PEACE**
8. **(SECOND BLANK) I ENDURE PERSECUTION**

Today, we're going to examine these last two stepping stones.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Now, some seniors may want to take out an 'e' here, but this verse does NOT say "blessed are the PACEMAKERS". :-)

PEACEMAKERS: The only time this word occurs in scripture

- one who restores peace and reconciliation between persons, and even nations.

NEXT BLANK: A PEACEMAKER mends relationships.

Please don't misunderstand: **This is not a license to get in everyone's business!** We have enough Facebook-counsellors, Twitter-sages, Instagram-enablers...we're going overboard with getting our noses in everyone else's business!!

NEWS FLASH: I DON'T CARE IF YOU HAVE A COLD TODAY, OR IF YOU'RE BORED, OR IF YOU'VE JUST FINISHED DOING YOUR LAUNDRY!! (one of a host of reasons I quit Facebook)

While we aren't called to stick our noses where we don't belong, we also must ACTIVELY pursue PEACE with others. I've got to make every effort to make sure that I am at peace with those in my life.

II Timothy 2:22 Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Hebrews 12:14-15 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

- ALL MEN!! Not just the ones you like!! EVEN THE JERKS!
- PEACE + HOLINESS = HEAVEN
- we sometimes over-emphasize outward holiness and antagonize those who don't hold to our "standards" when we need BOTH: Peace AND Holiness!
 - BALANCE needed, BOTH ARE NECESSARY!!
 - you won't help anyone walk in holiness if you're constantly antagonizing them and telling them what they are doing wrong! THAT'S THE PASTORS' JOB, NOT YOURS!!
 - over and above our Pastors, IT'S GOD'S JOB to lead people into all truth, NOT YOURS!

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

- TRUST HIM - MODEL TRUTH - FOLLOW PEACE - LIVE HOLY

NEXT BLANK: It does the CHURCH BODY harm when one member criticizes the other.

Romans 14 is probably the most direct teaching on this topic. There was a dispute in the church in Rome between the Jewish and Gentile believers. The Jews had grown up eating "kosher" - meaning they didn't eat meat offered to idols, or pork. The Old Testament law mandated these eating habits, which is why Peter refused to eat when God Himself told him to in Acts 10. These Jewish Christians were trying to force the Gentiles to adopt these same eating restrictions. So, there was a little spat in Rome over this - the Gentiles would eat pork freely in front of the Jews, and the Jews would

get mad and try and force them to eat like them. This caused a division in the church that Paul had to address.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

Paul told these people to SMARTEN UP! The Kingdom of God “is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (v. 17). If you feel like you shouldn't eat meat, then don't eat meat! However, don't enforce that PERSONAL VIEW that was based on your upbringing on others who have a vastly different background. What did Jesus say?

Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

There was nothing wrong with the Jews holding to their traditions, but trying to FORCE everyone else to follow them crossed the line.

PERSONAL CONVICTIONS: Something that God has spoken to YOU, that is not necessarily mandated in scripture - LISTEN TO IT as God is setting up boundaries and guardrails in your life, BUT DON'T FORCE IT ON OTHERS! Don't cast a stumblingblock before men.

• **Note: If the Bible says it, it is not negotiable...don't use “personal convictions” as a cop-out because you don't want to obey scripture - both of these extreme approaches are wrong - find the middle.**

If you do this, you will be BLESSED! You will also be “called the children of God”. PEACEMAKERS:

NEXT BLANK: Jesus' whole mission was RECONCILIATION, and He has delivered that same ministry unto us (II Corinthians 5)

II Corinthians 5:17-21 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the **ministry of reconciliation**; ¹⁹To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us **the word of reconciliation**. ²⁰Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. ²¹For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

God came to bring peace between Him and humanity. We must also bring PEACE between us and our fellow man; and between man and God. He has

EMPOWERED us by the Holy Ghost to do this (Acts 1:8), and when we do, we are truly BLESSED!

Frustration in your walk with God can stem from many sources, but personally when I am frustrated it is because I have DISCONNECTED FROM HIS PURPOSE, and I need to re-engage in the ministry of RECONCILIATION.

From PEACE, we flip to the other side of the coin:

Matthew 5:10-12

¹⁰Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

¹²Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

NEXT BLANK: PERSECUTED: systematically oppressed as a person/group

- speaks of organized oppression embedded in government and societal institutions

NEXT BLANK: RIGHTEOUSNESS: doing what is in agreement with God's standards - being in proper relationship with God

Verses 11 and 12 can be summed up like this:

"You can be truly HAPPY, even when men REVILE ("heap insults on") you, and PERSECUTE ("systematically oppression") you, and shall SAY ALL MANNER OF EVIL against you DISHONESTLY, because of Me."

I heard one preacher say it this way: "God's original intent for the body of Christ - it was not that we would be LIKE the world; but that we would provoke the world to JEALOUSY."

When you are BLESSED, truly happy, others who don't live the BLESSED life that you do will be jealous of you. You can be just living God's way, not offending anyone, but by simply doing that much, the spirit of bondage in people's hearts will rise up at times against you.

- smirks and sneers at young ladies who dress modestly and respect themselves and live for God whole-heartedly
- alienation of young men who choose not to swear and choose not to put anything else before God
- so, the constant "back and forth" we see here is that on one hand, there will be persecution, and on the other hand we are to pursue PEACE with everybody!

Just like Israel persecuted the prophets of the Old Testament who followed God's Word; and just like the people beat and scourged Jesus Christ, and killed Him - we also will face hardship and persecution.

We also, like Jesus and Stephen, must be able to look on our persecutors and say sincerely, “**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**”. “Lay not this sin against their charge.” They’ve hurt me, wounded me, but God don’t hold them accountable for it!

NEXT BLANK: How do I RESPOND?

I Peter 3:12-17 ¹²For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. ¹³And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? ¹⁴**But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye:** and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: ¹⁶Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. ¹⁷For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

NEXT BLANK: Peter quotes the words of Jesus in Matthew 5, and gives us clues on HOW we can both be BLESSED in persecution, and also be PEACEMAKERS.

1. JESUS IS # 1 - Make sure Jesus Christ is priority in your heart.
2. BE READY ALWAYS - Be ready ALWAYS to give an answer to ANYONE.

You will face adversity in walking with Jesus, but Peter tells us if we follow these steps, we will be able to seek peace, and endure persecution.

Matthew 5:13-16 ¹³**Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.**

¹⁴**Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.**

¹⁵**Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.**

¹⁶**Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**

Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the **preparation of the gospel of peace.**

Matthew 10:14 ¹⁴**And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, **shake off the dust of your feet.****

You will not be able to reach everyone. Salt both HURTS and HEALS the wounded. Some will jerk away from it, others will realize their need of it. Sudden LIGHT will cause some to shield their eyes, while others walk towards it.

Regardless, we cannot allow others' rejection of the gospel to change our gospel. How can some people change the gospel that they preach? I believe there are multiple

factors, but one I believe is this principle - they allowed people's REJECTION to affect their PREPARATION of the gospel.

- "preparation" literally means "readiness"
- we've got to be ready at all times, sensitive to the leading of the Spirit
 - everywhere you go, somebody's crying out for it, BE READY!

"Let's not preach that part - this is the 21st century surely that part was for THEN..."
DANGEROUS TERRITORY!

- don't DUMB IT DOWN to avoid rejection - move on, someone is HUNGRY!

The ultimate PEACEMAKER is the one who helps others find PEACE WITH GOD and shares the good news. We will face persecution, we will face rejection; but through it all God has promised us His BLESSING - TRUE HAPPINESS! Happiness beyond this temporary life and into ETERNITY.

SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE! Nobody else has what you've got, and they want what you have!