

Message One – Expectations and overall introduction of the Beatitudes

I. Expectations-logistics 10:00

- A. Expectations mine vs yours
 - 1. Head knowledge
 - 2. Heart knowledge
- B. Format of each week
 - 1. Teaching with ‘shoe leather’ through two beatitudes each week
 - 2. Horizontal applications-reference the cross
 - 3. Vertical applications

Principle: Our expectations for these studies are individually different but the results should all be the same.

II. Overview – The Beatitudes

- A. Where are they found? 10:05
 - 1. The first discourse in a larger sermon in the mount by Christ himself. Recorded in Matt 5:1-12, a few in Luke 6:20-22 (along with some woes), Luke 6:38, 6:43, 6:27, 6:23
- B. What was going on then? – Chronological text in Luke vs Matthew’s message of order 10:07
 - 1. Setting of the stage
 - a. Christ’s baptism and ‘confirmation by 2’-fulfillment of the law-Matt 3:11-17
 - b. Actions came next...and not so many words-see Luke 4,5,6
 - 2. Setting of the message (Luke 6:17-26)
 - a. Physical environment-their own turf, after some miracles had been performed
 - b. Spiritual environment-their world was beginning to tilt-Things were about to change

Principle: When we study God’s word in it’s true context and setting, it meets us where we are at, but also challenges us to change.

Application: Do people hear me yap and then look for evidence of God or do they see the power of God in me and then want to hear about it? How is my acting lining up with my yapping?

C. The Message-Matthew 5:1-12 10:17

- 1. Key details
 - a. Beatitudes-Latin word ‘beatitudo’ meaning ‘happy’; ‘be’-attitudes; beautiful attitudes
 - b. The words that Christ could have been justified in saying vs what He does say here
 - c. The qualities focus is on the promises that follow. God’s time, not ours.
 - d. The definition of ‘Blessed’-fortunate, well off, supremely blessed, ‘valued by God’
 - e. The use of ‘are’-the present tense vs other available tenses
- 2. Quick working definitions of each of the eight 10:22
 - a. Blessed –Poor in spirit-‘beggars of the Holy Spirit’;-recognition of the need of a savior
 - b. Mourn-‘grieve for they are called near, invited to receive consolation’ – profound grief over sin
 - c. Meek-‘mild’ - recognition that I am not in charge here
 - d. Hunger and thirst for righteousness-‘craving for justification’ - desire for new life like it was food to a starving man.
 - e. Merciful-‘compassionate’ - patience w/others because you haven’t forgotten what you deserve
 - f. Pure in heart-‘clean in thoughts and feelings’ – clean hands and a pure heart
 - g. Peacemakers-‘those who seek peace’ -seeking peace but not sacrificing the truth
 - h. Persecuted for righteousness because of Him—‘pursued, followed after or given to suffering because of justification’ - not ‘if’, it is ‘when’

3. The 'snapshot of a believer' concept-this is not old country buffet Christianity
 - a. First four are more internal passive, second four are more active and others oriented
 - b. Inner qualities of a believer (vs 3-6)
 - c. Relational qualities of a believer (vs 7-12)
 - f. The eight qualities flow from salvation, not to salvation...they are qualities of a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven.

4. The Gospel in the Beatitudes

Principle: God's word was arranged by Him and for us to return back to Him. God does have expectations for his followers and we should desire to please Him because we are saved, and not to be saved.

Application: What drives you to be whom you are when no one else is looking? Are you grateful to be on God's team, or are you more of the mind that He is just pretty glad you're on His?

10:40

CONCLUSION: The Velveteen Rabbit The following is a discussion between two toys in the story of the velveteen rabbit that are discussing the concept of a toy becoming real. I think there is a very adult lesson here that ties into our study of the beatitudes.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before nana came to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?" "Real isn't how you are made" said the skin horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real." "Does it hurt?" asked Rabbit. "Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real, you don't mind being hurt." "Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?" "It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

In the story of the velveteen rabbit, the toys were not created to be toys, but to someday be Real. And the toys that understood this process, like the Skin Horse, knew that their only hope of becoming Real lay in their being loved by someone else already Real. This person had to love them so much that their love would wear off their look of being a toy, and change them into something different altogether. This love would hurt sometimes, but it would be unconditional and sacrificial. This love would have to be a type of Christ's love for us. A love that would be shown in His coming here to offer us a way to be reconciled with His Father and made Real. This love would be so powerful that it would change those that were made Real slowly into images of the Son that was sent to die for us all. I look forward to studying through the beatitudes over the next four weeks with you and my prayer is that at the end of it, we are all more Real than when we started.