

Sermon notes for September 12, 1999

**The Sermon on the Mount
The Be-Attitudes
Jesus' Recipe For Happiness
"Our Attitude Toward Self"
Matthew 5:1-5**

Introduction

A. Oh, The Spiritual Deadness That Existed When Jesus Began His Ministry!

1. At the end of the book of Malachi, God ceased to speak to his people for 400 years.
 - a. This was called the 400 silent years; the years of the Macabbean revolt
 - b. This would be a time in which God was not speaking to His people through His Prophets, Priests or Kings.
2. The next voice that you would hear would be the last "Old Testament Prophet", John the Baptist.
 - a. In which God "reengages" Himself by telling of the coming of his Son Jesus
 - b. And then His Son, Jesus would begin His ministry.
3. However, during this 400 years of silence, there was birthed a religious movement to fill the vacuum of God's Spirit.
 - a. The religious movement would come to be known as the Pharisees
 1. And whereas there was the Mosaic law and the 10 Commandments
 2. This religious group thought that these laws were not enough, so they added their own
 - a. Instead of Holy Torah only, they added the Talmud
 1. 250 added commandments
 2. And 365 prohibitions
 - b. So that when Jesus began His ministry, the people were religiously ruled by the judgements of the Pharisees AND THEIR LAWS!
 - b. The control of the Pharisees would be stifling and controlling
In some ways, the same religious expectations exist today.
Swindoll - All this reminds me of a funny story I heard recently about a man at Los Angeles International Airport who was worried about missing his plane. He had no wrist watch and could not locate a clock, so he hurried up to a total stranger and said, "**Scuse me . . . could you give me the time, please?**"
The stranger smiled and said, "Sure." He set down the two large suitcases he was carrying and looked at the watch on his wrist. **"It is exactly 5:09. The temperature outside is 73 degrees, and it is supposed to rain tonight. In London the sky is clear and the temperature is 38 degrees Celsius. The barometer reading there is 29.14 and falling. And, let's see, in Singapore the sun is shining brightly. Oh, by the way, the moon should be full tonight here in Los Angeles, and—"**

“Your watch tells you all that?, the man interrupted. “Oh, yes . . . and much more. You see, I invented this watch, and I can assure you there is no other timepiece like it in the world.” “I want to buy that watch! I’ll pay you two thousand dollars for it right now.” “No, it’s not for sale,” said the stranger as he reached down to pick up his suitcases. “Wait! Four thousand. I’ll pay you *four* thousand dollars, cash,” offered the man, reaching for his wallet. “No, I can’t sell it. You see, I plan to give it to my son for his twenty-first birthday. I invented it for him to enjoy.” **“Okay, listen . . . I’ll give you *ten* thousand dollars. I’ve got the money right here.”** The stranger paused. “Ten thousand? Well, okay. It’s yours for ten thousand even.” The man was absolutely elated. He paid the stranger, took the watch, snapped it on his wrist with glee, and said “Thanks” as he turned to leave. **“Wait,” said the stranger. With a big smile he handed the two heavy suitcases to the man and added, “Don’t forget the *batteries*.”**

B. But Oh, What A Splash Jesus Made In This Religious World

1. I guess that’s one of the reasons that I love Jesus so much—HE WAS SUCH A REBEL!
 - a. Not rebelling simply to rebel, but rebelling to overthrow something that was bad and ungodly
 - b. THAT’S what the Sermon on the Mount is all about
 1. Jesus began His ministry by straightening out some of the bad teachings of the Pharisees; because this bad teaching was pervasive - even with His disciples
 2. For as they defined spirituality by external regulations, Jesus defined spirituality by an internal relationship
 3. This is why Jesus said that our righteousness must “surpass” that of the Pharisees to teach all of us about TRUE SPIRITUALITY
 - a. Notice that there is “no mentioning” politics, meetings, schedules, buildings, or regulations
 - b. Instead, He will teach us of a relationship with God that comes from the heart
2. I love to identify with that kind of rebel.

C. Jesus Begins His Godly Ministry With His Disciples

vs. 1-2, “Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:

1. He went **aside**
 - a. He knows, that the impact they will make will be dependent upon their personal time with Him
 - b. He must teach them THE TRUTH
 - c. You might call this “An Orientation Address to the Twelve”
2. He went up on **a mountainside**
 - a. There is no building, no classrooms
 - b. He is seated on the side of a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee
 - c. Joseph Parker; **He went up into a mountain, into a pulpit not made with hands. He did not go in conventional methods: we wait till the church is**

built: he said the church was not made with hands: wherever there is a sky there is a roof, wherever there is a floor there is a platform, wherever there is a man there is a congregation, wherever there is a human heart there is an opportunity of preaching the kingdom of heaven.

3. He **sat down**
 - a. Commonly done by rabbis when there is serious teaching to be done; it showed their absolute authority
 - b. Walking and pacing were seen as less serious and more relaxed
 - c. When:
 1. The Pope speaks ex cathedra - he sits to speak
 2. At a college or university, a professor has a “chair” of a department
4. He **opened his mouth**
 - a. Greek used is a solemn, grave and dignified utterance
 - b. A natural preface for a most weighty saying
5. He **taught** them this sermon
 - a. True Righteousness - Chapter 5
 - b. True Worship - Chapter 6
 - c. True Judgement - Chapter 7
6. And He **taught** them these Beattitudes
 - a. An enormous CONTRAST about the way that the Pharisees and the world saw true spirituality
 - b. But it is the way that Jesus sees it
 - c. Today we will see Jesus teach us about true happiness and what view we should have toward ourselves

D. Jesus Teaches His Disciples About True Happiness

1. When I said that Jesus was a rebel, I wasn't just kidding
 - a. For the world's view and Jesus' view of happiness are VERY DIFFERENT
 - b. The view of the world:
 1. **Happiness is found in personal fulfillment**
 - a. 400 Billion was spent on personal recreation last year.
 - b. Seneca, the 1st century Roman philosopher who tutored Nero, said “What is more shameful than to equate the rational soul's good with that which is irrational?”
 2. **Happiness is found in personal achievement**
 3. **Happiness is found in psychological balance**
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
 - a. physiological needs
 - b. safety needs
 - c. belonging needs
 - d. esteem needs
 - e. self-actualization needs
 4. **Happiness is found in personal selfishness**
From an unknown source comes an article titled, “**How To Be Miserable.**” It says, “Think about yourself. Talk about yourself. Use “I” as often as possible. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others.

Listen greedily to what people say about you. Expect to be appreciated. Be suspicious. Be jealous and envious. Be sensitive to slights. Never forgive a criticism. Trust nobody but yourself. Insist on consideration and respect. Demand agreement with your own views on everything. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown them. Never forget a service you have rendered. Shirk your duties if you can. Do as little as possible for others.”

2. Let's look at what JESUS thinks of happiness
 - a. What does Jesus mean by happiness?
 1. First of all, Jesus does not use the word happiness
 - a. Happiness comes from the English root “hap” -
 1. happen chance
 2. it speaks of one's happiness DEPENDENT upon how your life is going
 - b. Jesus uses the Greek word makarios - blessed
 1. There is no verb “are” here
 2. He simply says O the blessed or the blessedness
 3. Blessing being very different
 - a. it speaks of the Greek gods who were NOT dependent upon the circumstances of life
 - b. but RULED over them
 4. Jesus' view of blessedness is NOT dependent upon the past or the future - IT IS A STATE OF BLESSEDNESS INDEPENDENT OF CIRCUMSTANCES!
 2. Secondly, Jesus does not use the typical means that one would think happiness would come from
Quarterback cum ESPN commentator Joe Theismann, allegedly explaining to his soon-to-be-ex second wife why he had an affair: “God wants Joe Theismann to be happy.”
 - b. Let's just see what Jesus means by happiness

I. **The FIRST STEP Toward Happiness** “Happy Are The Broken”

Vs. 3 - “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

A. **WHO Are The Poor In Spirit?**

1. **Is it physical poverty?**

- a. Jesus uses the strongest word that he can use regarding poverty
 1. Penes - describes a man who has to work for a living
 - a. He doesn't have much, but he has something and he can work
 - b. This word is used of the widow with the two mites. Although she is poor, at least she has two mites.
 2. Ptochos - describes a man who has nothing
 - a. He is reduced to begging
 - b. He is a man who has been beaten to his knees BECAUSE HE HAS NOTHING AT ALL

- c. When he begs, he extends one hand, but covers his face with his other hand because he is ashamed
 - b. It can't simply be physical poverty
 - 1. Nowhere does Scripture tell us to become poor
 - 2. While Jesus had no place to lay his head, He was not totally destitute, reduced to begging
 - 3. And poor people can still be poor and remain ungodly
 - 4. The monastic becomes "proud of his poverty"
- 2. **Is it spiritual poverty?**
 - a. As we shall see, Jesus, throughout the Sermon on the Mount, is ALWAYS talking about a man's heart.
 - b. **And HERE He starts with a man's heart. He is saying:**
 - 1. That if one is ever to find true happiness, it will NOT be external but internal happiness
 - 2. And Jesus is saying that the FIRST STEP toward happiness is the RECOGNITION that you are totally and fully destitute spiritually
 - a. We must be like:
 - 1. **Isaiah the prophet** who God allowed to come before His throne. When confronted with His holiness, He hid his face and said, woe is me for I am a sinner!
 - 2. **The prodigal son**, who on his return to his father's house, said, make me a servant for I am UNWORTHY to be your son
 - 3. **The tax collector** who couldn't even look at heaven, but said, God have mercy on me a sinner.
 - 4. During construction of Emerson Hall at Harvard University, president **Charles Eliot** invited psychologist and philosopher **William James** to suggest a suitable inscription for the stone lintel over the doors of the new home of the philosophy department. After some reflection, James sent Eliot a line from the Greek philosopher **Protagoras**: "**Man is the measure of all things.**" James never heard back from Eliot, so his curiosity was piqued when he spotted artisans working on a scaffold hidden by a canvas. One morning, the scaffold and canvas were gone. The inscription? "**What is man that thou art mindful of him?**" Eliot had replaced James's suggestion with words from the **Psalmist**. Between these two lines lies the great distance between the God-centered and the human-centered points of view.

- 5. **Rock of Ages**
Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;

**Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Savior, or I die!**

Swindoll, Rock of Ages, Augustus Toplady

- b. THIS ATTITUDE has been true of EVERYONE GOD HAS BLESSED!
 1. Abraham was one meager man whom God used
 2. When Issac gave himself upto be killed, God provided a ram in the thicket
 3. When Jacob gave induring their wrestling match, the angel blessed him
 4. When Moses said "I can't", then God used him to lead His people
 5. Until proud Paul was knocked off of his horse, God could not use him
 6. Me - here in Knoxville
 7. "Lowliness is the beginning of holiness"

B. What Are The RESULTS of Being Poor In Spirit?

"For yours is the Kingdom of Heaven"

1. "God can't fill a man until He empties a man"
2. When Mother Teresa was passing through a crowd in Detroit a woman remarked, "**Her secret is that she is free to be nothing. Therefore God can use her for anything.**"
3. As long as you hang on to your pride and LACK OF NEED of Jesus you will be unhappy - AM I RIGHT?
4. But as soon as you give up, He will save you and fill you with His very kingdom
 - a. Not just a physical kingdom
 1. But eternal life; the life that begins the SECOND you are saved
 2. The unseen kingdom
 3. But you have to die to see. (My story / marbles)

II. The SECOND STEP to Happiness - "Happy Are The Sad"

Vs. 4 - "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

A. WHO Are The Sad?

1. Mourning is something which very few Christians do today
 - a. It is thought by many that the Christian is always to be happy - to give the world a sense that we know Jesus and that all is well
 - b. And that if I can exhibit to the world that I am happy, that they too will want to be saved
 - c. Truthfully, I think that the world thinks that we are quite silly
 1. Out of touch with the real world
 2. When things hurt, things hurt, no matter how saved you are
 3. Do you know that there is no record that Jesus ever laughed
 4. Quote: John Stott; pg. 41

We need, then, to observe that the Christian life, according to Jesus, is not all joy and laughter. Some Christians seem to imagine that, especially if they are filled with the Spirit, they must wear a perpetual grin on their face and be continuously boisterous and bubbly. How unbiblical can one become? No. In Luke's version of the Sermon, Jesus added to this beatitude a solemn woe: "Woe to you that laugh now." The truth is that there are such things as Christian tears, and too few of us ever weep them.

5. An Arab proverb says: "All sunshine makes a desert."
6. Jesus was a "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief"
2. But what are we to mourn for?
 - a. In being consistent with dealing with the internal, after the first Beatitude of having a right view of self before God - We then see ourselves standing before a Holy God. **AND WHAT DO WE SEE?**
 - a. **WE CAN'T HELP BUT SEE OUR OWN SIN!**
 1. When the floodlights are turned on, you can't help but see the spots!
 2. And we should stand ashamed, and broken, and grieving
 3. **THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE!**
 4. **David Brainard** in his journal on Oct. 10, 1740 said: "In my morning devotions my soul was exceedingly melted and bitterly mourned over my exceeding sinfulness and vileness. Tears like this are the holy water which God is said to store in His bottle."
 - b. Now, realize this, we **CANNOT SEE OUR SIN UNTIL WE ENTER INTO HIS PRESENCE.**
 1. Isaiah 6
 2. Until then, we will think that we are allright
 - c. Do you have a heaviness over your sin?
 1. **Then you are not spending enough time before the Throne of God!**
 2. **The verb tense for mourn is a present participle**
 - a. Continuous action
 - b. This means that my spirit continually struggles over the sin in my life and I am grieved over it
 - b. We are all supposed to see our sins.
- B. What Are the RESULTS of Mourning Over Your Sin?**

"You will be comforted"

 1. Jesus does not intend for us to stay in a mournful state
 2. In fact, if you stay that way, you have not grasped this second beatitude.
 - a. As broken and grieved over your sin as you may be
 - b. **HE WILL FORGIVE YOU OF EVERYTHING!**
 - c. Mourning and grieving over your sin is appropriate - but **ACCEPTING HIS FORGIVENESS IS TOO!**
 3. The word for comfort is the Greek word parakaleo - from which we get the word Paraclete - The Holy Spirit

- a. Who comes alongside you TO COMFORT YOU
- b. Some of you have NEVER known happiness BECAUSE you have not:
 - 1. Recognized your brokenness
 - 2. Identified and grieved over your sin
 - 3. And ALLOWED His Holy Spirit to comfort you
 - 4. And this grace of God makes us cry even more - because we know we don't deserve it

III. The **THIRD Step Toward Happiness** - "Happy Are The Dependent"

A. **WHO Are the Meek?**

Vs. 5 - "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

1. What meekness is **NOT**
 - a. After hearing the first two beatitudes, you would conclude that a Christian should walk around broken, grieving, and "stoop shouldered"
 - b. However, the word meek does not mean:
 1. timidity
 2. frailness
 3. "gentle Jesus, meek and mild"
2. What meekness **IS**
 - a. It actually refers to power
 1. Power that has been put under control
 2. The word is used of a wild horse that has been broken and can now be ridden
 - a. The horse has been trained to obey the word of command
 - b. The horse will accept "the reins"
 - b. Aristotle defined this word as the balance between excessive anger and excessive angerlessness
 1. Look at Moses who threw down the tablets as he discovered what the people of God had done while he was on Mt. Sinai.
 2. Look at Jesus as He threw out the moneychangers in the Temple
 3. Look at Paul as he went nose to nose with Peter as he showed favoritism
 - c. Meekness, thus, is taking all of your personality, desire, passion and goals and submitting them to Jesus for His use
 1. Me - ministry (1st, a death)
 2. An unbroken horse is useless to ride
 3. It takes **GREAT STRENGTH** to submit all of your will and life to Jesus so that He can use you more effectively
 4. Thus, meekness simply means yieldedness
 - a. And you will never know true happiness until and unless you submit and become totally dependent upon Jesus
 - b. We must give up

B. **What Are The RESULTS of Being Meek?**

"for you will inherit the earth"

1. Isn't this what you want in the first place?
 - a. Don't you want a piece of this world

- b. Well, Jesus says that you will get it
- 2. What does Jesus mean?
 - a. First of all, He promises to take care of your physical needs in the present
 - 1. Matthew 5:33 - "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added as well
 - 2. He will take care of you now
 - b. Secondly, He promises to make you a partaker of the new heaven and new earth
 - 1. That you will rule on this earth forever
 - 2. For those who submit
 - 3. And isn't that what you want after all

Closing

Blessed Are Those Who:

1. Identify their inability to save themselves and come before God, who alone, can save them
2. Grieve over their sin once they come into the light of His holiness
3. And they take all of that drive and emotion and become meek, because for the first time I see myself as I truly am

Are you meek? Or are you proud? No matter what you say its OBVIOUS TO EVERYONE AROUND you if you have truly been with Jesus. Don't tell me you walked an aisle, prayed a prayer - the Bible never points to the past. It speaks to the present. It should be obvious EVERY DAY OF YOUR LIFE! II Corinthians 13:5 - Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith - This is a present tense; a continual testing. Nobody ever entered the Kingdom of Heaven filled with pride.

1. You will "look" like a Christian.

During the Thirty Year's War in Europe (1618-1648), the **King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus**, was slain while his troops were winning the Battle of Lutzen, in what is now Germany. Sweden was thrown into mourning, and government officials met to determine how to replace the king. Some suggested a republic; others thought the crown should go to Adolphus' cousin, the king of Poland. The chancellor of Sweden arose and said, **"Let there be no talk of a republic or of Polish kings, for we have in our midst the heir of the great Gustavus, his little daughter, who is 6 years of age."** Some protested that they had never seen her. The chancellor said, "Wait a minute, and I will show you." He brought in Christina, daughter of the king, and placed her on the throne. One of the representatives who was especially suspicious of the move pressed forward and gazed intently into her face. Then turning to the assembly, he exclaimed, **"Look at her nose, her eyes, her chin! I see in the countenance of this child the features of the great Gustavus. She is the child of our king!"** From all quarters of the room rang the proclamation, "Christina, Queen of Sweden!"

2. You will be "thankful" like a Christian.

In 1982 an 8.2 earthquake almost flattened Armenia, killing over 30,000 people in less than four minutes. It's hard to imagine the anguish, the pain, the suffering that took place

in those brief minutes of time. In the twinkling of an eye worlds were shaken and lives crushed. After the earthquake, in the midst of chaos and destruction, a father rushed to his son's school but instead of a school, he found a shapeless heap of rubble. Imagine what went through his mind? What would have gone through your mind? Perhaps, shock would have crippled you as it did the other parents who were walking around dazed, clutching at their hearts and calling out their child's name. But in the case of this father, the sight of the rubble and ruin only make him spring into action. He ran to the back corner of the building where his son's class used to be and began to dig. Why? What real hope did he have? What were the chances that his son could have survived such destruction? All he knew was that he had once made a promise to always be there for his boy. It was this promise that animated his hands and motivated his heart. As he began to dig, will meaning parents tried to pull him out of the rubble saying: **"It's too late!" "They're dead!" "You can't help!" "Go home!" "There's nothing you can do!"** Then the fire chief also tried to pull him off the rubble by saying, **"Fires and explosions are happening everywhere. You're in danger. Go home!"** Finally, the police came and said, **"You're angry, distraught, but it's over. You're endangering others. Go home. We'll handle it!"** But he continued to dig for **eight hours . . . then 12 hours . . . then 24 hours . . . then 36 hours.** And then, in the **38th hour, he pulled back a boulder and heard his sons' voice. Immediately he screamed, "ARMAND!"** Back came the words, **"Dad!?" I told them! I told the other kids that if you were still alive, you'd save me! You promised me, you'd always be here for me! You did it Dad!"** A determined love, and enduring hope, a promise kept, and a stone rolled away to reveal life and give freedom . . . that is not only the story of Armand and his father . . . that is your story and mine. Buried under the rubble of twisted and broken lives . . . pinned down by sinful attitudes and sinful habits and sinful hearts . . . desperate, scared, hurting, alone, hopeless . . . But there is One who is looking through the rubble . . . tirelessly searching the ruins of broken lives . . . lifting the stones, one by one . . . hour after hour, calling your name . . . reaching out in grace.