

Sermon Notes for September 19, 1999

**The Sermon on the Mount
The Be-Attitudes
Jesus' Recipe for Happiness
"Our Attitude Toward God"
Matthew 5:1-8**

A. Man's Diligent Search For Happiness

1. Some 400 billion dollars spent on recreation this year alone.
2. The goal of most of my generation, the Baby Boomer.
3. It is almost REQUIRED of us by the Declaration of Independence.
 - a. **"We hold these truths to be self evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."**
 - b. But when Benjamin Franklin was approached by a man about the pursuit of happiness, Franklin said, "You have to catch up with it yourself."
 - c. Well, although we have the right to "pursue" happiness; is this the way that we are to "attain" happiness?
 1. Has anyone ever run after happiness and caught it?
 2. In fact, it seems that the more we focus on finding happiness, the more illusive it becomes.
 3. Think of these people:
 - a. Go and ask **the happiest person** you know how much time they have spent looking and working for happiness.
 - b. And then go to **the most miserable person** you know and ask them how much time they have spent trying to be happy.

B. Man Is Searching In The Wrong Place For Happiness.

1. **Genesis 1:1** - "In the beginning, **God** created the heavens and the earth.
 - a. IF it is true that God made this earth and us
 - b. then if God is not in the equation for happiness, then we are looking in the wrong place.
2. **Let's admit it:**
 - a. We all have spent a lot of time and money trying to find happiness.
 - b. Why don't we look at God's answer to happiness. Maybe He might know something that we don't?

C. Review of the Beatitudes

1. There should NOT be a "chance" for happiness.

- a. Happiness is based on the word “hap”
 - 1. A hap is a happen-chance
 - 2. As long as we are lucky or fortunate, we will be happy.
 - 3. If you are part of the fortunate few that have only blessings and success in this life, then you will be hap-py.
 - 4. But if you are like the “most of us” - you are setting yourself up for a fall.
- b. It doesn't seem to be too smart to rest your happiness on “chance.”
- 2. It is instead a “state of blessedness”
 - a. Jesus is teaching His disciples that happiness and blessedness are a regular and constant state of mind.
 - b. That this state of mind rests on a Godly formula -
 - 1. The **First** Beatitude -
 - a. We come before a holy and perfect God and recognize our sin.
 - b. We thus are broken and ashamed.
 - 2. The **Second** Beatitude -
 - We grieve that we are so far from being who we need to be before this holy God.
 - 3. The **Third** Beatitude -
 - And we are changed.
 - a. From being the arrogant, prideful people that we are
 - b. Ready to be redirected toward true blessedness.

I. **Happy Are The HUNGRY**

Vs. 6 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled.”

A. **What Was Hunger and Thirst HISTORICALLY?**

1. **Hunger**

- a. In Jesus' day, a working man's wages were very meager; almost 16 cents a day.
 - 1. No man ever got fat on that wage.
 - 2. On this wage, the typical working man in Palestine ate meat only once a week.
 - 3. In a sense, these people were only a few days away from starvation.
- b. Most of us have never known hunger.
 - 1. But the audience of Jesus fully understood the burning in the stomach because of a lack of food.
 - 2. This burning is what Jesus is talking about:
 - a. Not a physical burning, but a spiritual burning.
 - b. A quest for food.

2. **Thirst**

- a. There were no portable sources of water except that which was kept in containers.
 - 1. They couldn't walk up to a sink, turn on the tap, and get water.
 - 2. Water was a precious commodity.
- b. Also, these people lived in a very arid environment.
 - 1. A man might be on a journey and be found in the middle of a brutal sand storm.
 - 2. There would be nothing for him to do but cover his head and turn his back on the wind and wait; while the swirly wind filled his nostrils and his throat until he felt that he would suffocate.
- c. Barclay - **“So, these are hungers which this beatitude describes is no genteel hunger which could be satisfied with a mid-morning snack; the thirst of which it speaks is no thirst which could be slaked with a cup of coffee or an iced drink. It is the hunger of the man who is starving for food and the thirst of this man who will die unless he drinks.”**

B. Are We that Hungry SPIRITUALLY?

- 1. Jesus is attempting to help his audience see how much they should PURSUE God.
 - a. It is not a lackadaisical , whimsical or temporary effort.
 - b. It is a devoted, dedicated QUEST!
- 2. Jesus is attempting to describe the desire as their AMBITION.
 - a. This is what their GREATEST NEED IS.
 - b. This is what they live for.
- 3. This is to BE OUR LIFE if we are to know true happiness.
 - a. In Morocco's famed resort city of Marrakech, it is the law that no building can be built taller than the minarets that rises above the city's mosques. No hotel, office building, nothing can stand taller than the symbol of Islam. **Even in their architecture, the Muslim makes a statement about the importance of their faith.**
 - b. **“God wants to be your dwelling place.** He has no interest in being a weekend getaway or a Sunday bungalow or a summer cottage. Don't consider using God as a vacation cabin or an eventual retirement home. He wants you under his roof now and always. He wants to be your mailing address, your point of reference; he wants to be your home.”
 - c. An executive hirer, a “head-hunter” who goes out and hires corporation executives for other firms, once told me, “When I get an executive that I'm trying to hire for some one else, I like to disarm him. I offer him a drink, take my coat off, then my vest, undo my tie, throw up my feet and talk about baseball, football, family, whatever, until he's all relaxed. Then, when I think I've got him relaxed, I lean over, look him square in the

eye and say, “What’s your purpose in life?” It’s amazing how top executives fall apart at that question. “Well, I was interviewing this fellow the other day, had him all disarmed, with my feet up on his desk, talking about football. Then I leaned up and said, ‘**What’s your purpose in life, Bob?**’ And he said, without blinking an eye, ‘**To go to heaven and take as many people with me as I can.**’ For the first time in my career I was speechless.”

- d. Columbia Bible College, “To know this and to make this known”
- e. Larry Crabb - What is your goal in life? Don’t make a goal something you cannot control.

C. What Are We To Hunger and Thirst for PERSONALLY?

1. Hunger and Thirst . . .

- a. Hunger
 - 1. Suggests a deep, deep soul need
 - 2. An inner pain, a drive
 - 3. When the prodigal wanted to eat, he went to the pig - pen; when he wanted to keep from starving, he went to his father.
 - 4. If I want my DEEPEST needs satisfied, I must go to my Father.
- b. Thirst
 - 1. My lips are parched and dry.
 - 2. I MUST have fluids!

2. For RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- a. This hunger and thirst is NOT for my own fulfillment, my own success, my own ambition
- b. This hunger and thirst is to pursue HIM!
 - 1. THIS must be my overarching AMBITION!
 - a. Not to build my world
 - b. but to know His!
 - 2. I must desire to:
 - a. be like Him
 - b. to worship Him
 - c. to live for Him
 - d. to represent Him.
 - 3. **M.L. Jones - “If this verse is to you one of the most blessed statements of the whole Scripture, you can be quite certain that you are a Christian. If it is not, then you had better examine the foundation again.”**

D. What Is The RESULT Of Our Hunger And Thirst?

“You Will Be Filled.”

- 1. An interesting Greek study tells us of our filling
 - a. A Greek rule

1. There is a rule of Greek grammar regarding verbs of hunger and thirst being followed by the genitive case; in English expressed by the word **of**; of the man. Thus it would read: **I hunger for; of bread.** It would be “some” bread that he would desire, not the whole loaf; some water: not all the water in the tank. But in **THIS** beatitude, the accusative case is used. Now when the verbs of hungry and thirsty are used, they hunger and thirst for the **WHOLE LOAF, THE WHOLE THING!**
2. Thus, the Godly man wants to be **TOTALLY** Godly and thus totally filled with God’s blessing and God’s Spirit.
 - b. A Greek word
 1. Definition
 - a. To feed an animal until it is completely satisfied.
 - b. To overfeed
 2. Tense
 - a. Future indicative - it will be done and will continue
 - b. Black-bottom pie
 - c. Psalm 23
2. Our goals indicate our filling.
 - a. Sharon Fanning, head basketball coach for women at the University of Kentucky, tells of a young athlete named **David Moss**. He played basketball for the University of Tennessee and started as a freshman. He got to play a lot of games that year. However, when the season was over, David discovered that he had cancer. His leg had to be amputated. This ended his career in basketball. When the press interviewed him after the operation, someone asked, **“David, if there is anything in life that you could do over, what would it be?”** He simply replied, **“Well, if I had known that was my last game, nobody would have been able to stop me.”**
 - b. If you were a passenger on the **Titanic**, how would you re-

orient your life the last 2 or 3 hours of your life. THINK THAT WAY WITH THE TIME YOU HAVE LEFT.

II. Happy Are The HELPFUL

Vs. 7: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."

A. Mercy DEFINED

1. From the Greek
 - a. A compassionate heart
 - b. A tender heart
 - c. GK- eleemon; eleemosynary - a beneficial or charitable organization
2. From the Hebrew and Aramaic - a somewhat untranslatable word.
 - a. Getting right inside the person and feeling right along with them. A deliberate effort to understand the person and meet his needs. To see things with THEIR own eyes. To think his mind; to feel with his feelings.
 1. A little girl was sent on an errand by her mother. She took much too long in coming back. Mother, therefore, demanded an explanation when she finally did return. The little girl explained that on her way she had met a little friend who was crying because she had broken her doll. **"Oh," said her mother, "then you stopped to help her fix her doll?" "Oh, no," replied the little girl, "I stopped to help her cry."**
 2. A little girl lost a playmate in death and one day reported to her family that she had gone to comfort the sorrowing mother. "What did you say?" asked her father. **"Nothing," she replied, "I just climbed up on her lap and cried with her."**
 3. A story is told about Beethoven, a man not known for social grace. Because of his deafness, he found conversation difficult and humiliating. When he heard of the death of a friend's son, Beethoven hurried to the house, overcome with grief. He had no words of comfort to offer. **But he saw a piano in the room. For the next half hour he played the piano, pouring out his emotions in the most eloquent way he could. When he finished playing, he left. The friend later remarked that no one else's visit had meant so much.**
 4. Queen Victoria was a close friend of Principal and Mrs. Tulloch of St. Andrews. Prince Albert died and Victoria was left alone. Just at the same time Principal Tulloch died and Mrs. Tulloch was left along. All unannounced Queen Victoria came to call on Mrs. Tulloch when she was resting on a couch in her room. When the Queen was announced Mrs. Tulloch

struggled to rise quickly from the couch and to curtsy. The Queen stepped forward: **“My dear,”** she said, **“don’t rise. I am not coming to you today as the queen to a subject, but as one woman who has lost her husband to another.”**

b. To get inside another.

B. Mercy APPLIED

1. I have become CHANGED by Jesus:
 - a. I have been broken by my sin
 - b. I have become a meek man
 - c. I have become filled with Christ inside
2. I CAN’T HELP BUT MINISTER TO HURTING PEOPLE.
 - a. **I must act like Jesus did.**
 1. It has **become** my nature
 2. Before, I was so busy being selfish and focusing on my own happiness
 3. But now Jesus has broken the spell that sin had over me and filled me with His compassion.
 - a. Matthew 9:36: ‘When He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.’
 - b. JESUS IS A MINISTRY MACHINE!
 - c. THIS is the explanation of the Good Samaritan!
 1. Notice that well trained, God fearing Priests and Levites passed the injured man by.
 2. But a Samaritan stopped and:
 - a. bandaged the wounds
 - b. put the man on his horse
 - c. took him to the inn
 - d. and paid for the entire bill!
 - b. **I must look at others as Jesus did.**
 1. I have asked myself how Jesus puts up with so many difficult people.
 - a. I have become convinced that BECAUSE Jesus knows all about our past, our failures, our sins and mistakes, that he TOTALLY understands why we do what we do.
 - b. Jesus has in a sense, crawled inside of our bodies to feel our pain.

- c. And He would say, You would react this same way if you had gone through the same experiences.
- 2. To show mercy as Jesus does is to:
 - a. Attempt to look past what you see before you.
 - b. And to look, like Jesus, into a heart filled with pain.
 - 1. Now pain is not always bad,
 - 2. but a doctor who treats the pain alone and does not treat the CAUSE of the pain is not a good doctor.
 - 3. Mercy allows you to put up with the pain of others - to look and search deeply for the cause of the pain.
 - 4. Only people FILLED with the fullness of God's Spirit can actually do that.

C. Mercy REWARDED

“For They Will Be Shown Mercy”

- 1. That is why the merciful will be shown mercy.
 - a. In their attempt to deal with the pain of others, the one ministering WILL NEED MUCH MERCY HIMSELF.
 - b. So Jesus promises to bless you greatly with much mercy.
 - 1. The gift of mercy
 - 2. What does Jesus say? - “It is more **blessed** to give than to receive.”
 - 3. In fact, you will be TWICE-BLESSED.
 - a. You bless the one to whom you minister.
 - b. You are blessed as you minister.
- 2. Mercy begets more mercy.

III. Blessed Are The HOLY

Vs. 8 - “**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**”

A. Purity in Heart DEFINED

- 1. Purity
 - a. The Greek - Katharos
 - 1. Physically
 - a. to clean soiled clothes
 - b. corn and wheat sifted from the chaff
 - c. used of milk or wine that is unmixed with water
 - d. metal that has no tinge of alloy
 - 2. Medically/Psychologically
 - a. to catharize is to cleanse a wound from filth and bacteria
 - b. a catharsis is used in psychology for a cleansing of the mind and emotions.

- b. The Latin - castus
 - 1. becomes chaste
 - 2. chasten - refers to discipline given in order to cleanse from wrong behavior.
 - c. Purity thus, means unmixed, unadulterated; undivided
2. Heart
- a. The Greek - Kardia
 - 1. Cardiac
 - 2. Used metaphorically to speak of the seat of one's emotions, the inner person, the center of one's personality.
 - b. Scripture
 - 1. It also speaks of one's emotions, feelings
 - 2. The thinking process; Prov. 23:7 - "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

B. Purity of Heart **APPLIED**

1. Jesus has been building the **foundation** for happiness for the believer.
 - a. Broken before God
 - b. We grieve for our sin.
 - c. We are changed from being proud to being meek.
 - d. We want to know more about what we have found out.
 - e. We begin our ministry of mercy.
 - f. Now, Jesus says:
 1. This is all fine and good
 2. But **HOW DO YOU KEEP THIS WAY OF LIFE GOING?**
 - a. Is it enough to learn, to study, to minister?
 - b. **HOW DO I MAINTAIN A CHRISTLIKE ATTITUDE?**
2. Jesus says that Godliness and Holiness is the **ULTIMATE** key to happiness.
 - a. If you expect to be filled with His Spirit - you had better get rid of all of those things that grieve Him.
 - b. You must go through a catharsis.
 1. You must recognize that God cannot bless you as long as you allow sin to rule over your life.
 2. You must get very serious about a holy life.
 3. And you will never be happy, totally filled with blessedness, as long as sin has the upper hand in your life.
3. And this catharsis begins **INTERNALLY** - in your heart.
 - a. Jesus does not speak to your mind, He speaks to your heart.
 - b. You change a man's heart and you change His personality, his emotions, his goals and ambitions.
 - c. Jesus is saying that you cannot have a divided, mixed heart; it must be **TOTALLY** His.

1. The church at Laodica
 - a. Not a message to unbelievers.
 - b. But a message TO THE CHURCH!
2. Paul in Romans 7 - You can't serve God with this mixed mind.
4. This task of cleansing **is God's alone.**
 - a. "My Heart, Christ's Home." The hall closet. Whose job is it to clean this closet?
 - b. David - Imprecatory - Psalm 139

C. Purity of Heart REVEALED

"For You Shall See God."

1. **Ultimately**, eternally we shall see God.
 - a. I Corinthians 13 says that now we see in a mirror dimly, but we shall see Him face to face.
 - b. Revelation 22:4. They (believers) shall see His face.
2. But for now, can we see God?
 - a. I believe so spiritually
 1. **Hebrews 11:1-2 - "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for."**
 2. This is faith
 - a. Although we don't see God, we can sense His presence.
"A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for One whom he has never seen; talks familiarly every day to Someone he cannot see; expects to go to heaven on the virtue of Another; empties himself in order to be full; admits he is wrong so he can be declared right; goes down in order to get up; is strongest when he is weakest,; richest when he is poorest and happiest when he feels the worst. He dies so he can live; forsakes in order to have; gives away so he can keep; sees the invisible hears the inaudible, and knows what which passeth knowledge." A.W. Tozer
 - b. And the purer our hearts are, the more we can sense His presence.
 - c. Once when the Cleveland Symphony was performing The Magic Flute by Mozart, an electrical storm caused the lights to go out. Undaunted by the difficulties, the members of the orchestra knew the music so well that they completed the performance in the dark.

At the end of the performance, the audience burst into thunderous applause, and a stagehand illuminated the orchestra and conductor with a flashlight so that they could take their bows. It is much the same in the spiritual realm. **If you know the Master, you can play His music even in the dark.** You can live a holy life in an unholy realm. When caught between two worlds, the secret is to develop a mind-set that sees beyond the style of this world to the substance of the next.

- b. And this presence of God gives us great courage and encouragement.
- c. Oh, how much we miss because of our lack of holiness in our God.
On June 6, 1981 Doug Whitt and his bride, Sylvia, were escorted to their hotel's fancy bridal suite in the wee hours of the morning. In the suite they saw a sofa, chairs, and table, but where was the bed? Then they discovered the sofa was a hide-a-bed, with a lumpy mattress and sagging springs. They spent a fitful night and woke up in the morning with sore backs. The new husband went to the hotel desk and gave the management a tongue-lashing. **"Did you open the door in the room?"** asked the clerk. Doug went back to the room. **He opened the door they had thought was a closet. There, complete with fruit baskets and chocolates, was a beautiful bedroom! Opening all the doors in a honeymoon suite is like obeying all the words of Jesus. Discipleship is the door to happiness.**