

Getting the Scoop on Happy

Beatitudes: Introduction – Part 2 Matthew 5:1-12

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’”
Matthew 5:1-3

“Happiness is in the heart, not in the circumstances.” - Author Unknown

There is a big difference between the world’s perspective on happiness and Jesus’ perspective on happiness. With that said, there is also a difference in understanding the passage in our time and understanding it in the time of Christ.

What are some things that did not exist in Christ’s day, which you just couldn’t do without? Example: Cell phone

Jesus was a revolutionary. He often went against the flow. He did not fit the Messianic mold of the Jews or the religious mold of the Pharisees. He turned from the modernistic mold of the Sadducees and political mold of the Zealots. He could often be found pushing the envelope and thinking outside the box. He was a revolutionary.

What road blocks do you think Jesus would have faced in our society?

Let’s just consider the political and religious context that Jesus was preaching in.

The Jews were looking for a Messiah, but Jesus didn’t fit the bill. Now before you start screaming heresy, understand that Jesus is the one true Messiah, but the Jews did not believe it because they were looking for the wrong Messiah. They were looking for a man that would overthrow the Roman tyrants and lead the Jews to a new and glorious kingdom on earth. They wanted a political leader to reinstate the throne of David. They were looking for government to save them – yeah right!

The Sermon on the Mount flies in the face of the political answers.

There were also those religious leaders that had a hard time getting along with each other. The Pharisees believed that happiness could be found in legalism and the Sadducees thought happiness came from methodology. There were the Essenes who thought the happiness came from separation from the world. Finally, there were the Zealots who resorted to political takeover or violence to find happiness.

Are you guilty of trying to find happiness through religion, modern materials, meditation, or by force? How did it turn out?

We may think that times were better back then, but in many ways they were no different than what we face today. In our time, we have those who see government as the source of happiness. They believe that happiness will come through laws and the right people in the right places. Although it is a help, it is not the source of true happiness. There are those who want happiness through religion. Happiness is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ, not a religion. Happiness does not come through modern or monastery living. Finally, happiness never comes through force.

The Sermon on the Mount had a message for each of these groups of people – “You are wrong!”

So far it has been about whom it was against, now we want to take note at who it was for.

Matthew 5:1-2 explains who Jesus was teaching; “his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth, and taught them.” Jesus was teaching those who were devoted to him. It was not a message intended for the world, but for believers. This is a further indication that true happiness cannot be found apart from a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

There were others there on the mount. Matthew tells us that Jesus took notice of the crowd. This was not uncommon, as we find Jesus having compassion on the multitudes and feeding the thousands. He was attentive to the needs of the body, and here he allows the body to sit in on the teaching. We know the crowds were listening because Matthew provides their response at the end of the sermon. They were “amazed at His teaching.”

When was the last time you were amazed at the teaching of Scripture? What impression did it leave?

Matthew also tells us that Jesus sat down. Most of us would think nothing of this, but schooling was much different in these times. Now we come to a classroom and sit to hear the teacher. The teacher then sends us home to do homework. The model during Jesus’ time was much more involved. A teacher or rabbi would have people follow him around. It was lifestyle schooling. When a rabbi sat down to speak, it was acknowledged that what was about to be said was official. Jesus spoke from his own authority (Matthew 7:29).

Try to see the picture of what is taking place. Large crowds are following after Jesus as He is going about healing and preaching. His fame is growing and they are coming from all over. Jesus, at some point while walking, looks behind him to see the crowd. He then walked away to a mountainside and sat down. His disciples followed after Him and sat with him to listen. Jesus, through this sermon, laid out what it means to be a part of His Kingdom. He then taught a revolutionary message.

Why was it so revolutionary?

- It shows the absolute necessity of a relationship with Jesus.
- It shows the absolute centrality of Jesus.

“...for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”
Matthew 7:29

- It shows the only way to true happiness.
- It shows the best example of being a living testimony.
- It shows the clear way to please God.

The Sermon on the Mount is Christ's description of kingdom living and the beatitudes are a key to true happiness in that kingdom. Having seen the big picture, it is time to look at each key to true happiness. Oswald Chambers explains it best:

The teachings of Jesus are all out of proportion when compared to our natural way of looking at things, and they come to us initially with astonishing discomfort. We gradually have to conform our walk and conversation to the precepts of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit applies them to our circumstances. The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations— it is a picture of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His unhindered way with us.

Are you ready for a revolution?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

