

Lent 2019 - Isaiah: Preparing the Way, Part 5

“#Blessed”

Isaiah 40:9; 52:7; 61:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12

April 7th, 2019

I. The CONTEXT around the BEATITUDES. (Mt. 5:1-12)

- A. An ANCIENT LONGING. (Isaiah 40:9; 52:7; 61:1-3)
- B. The specific OCCASION and AUDIENCE. (Mt. 4:17-25)
- C. Less a PATHWAY “to” and more a REALITY “of”. (Mt. 5:1-12)

The beatitudes are one of the most familiar of Jesus’ teachings. Most people have at the very least heard the phrasing referenced at some point in their lives. But often those things that are the most familiar to us are the things that we gloss over. Sometimes reconnecting with the context helps us to better engage these words as they were intended.

1. Kid’s question: When have you had to wait for something that you really wanted? What as that like for you?
2. What have you waited for (or maybe are still waiting for) that has created a deep sense of longing within you?
3. How have you seen the beatitudes in the past? As a pathway to blessing or an acknowledgment of who is blessed?

II. The RADICAL nature of the BEATITUDES. (Mt. 5:1-12)

- A. Those who have NOTHING, have EVERYTHING. (v.3)
- B. DESCRIBING their (our?) SITUATION. (v.4-6)
- C. The THINGS we can DO. (v.7-9)
- D. The IMPACT of the KINGDOM. (v.10-12)

Hopefully reconnecting to the context around the beatitudes has helped you to better understand the radical nature of these words of Jesus. They turn the basic social order of His day on its head, blessing and welcoming into the Kingdom those who felt there was little hope that God had any interest in them or their situation.

4. Which of the 9 statements of blessing resonates the most deeply with you? Why might that be?
5. What has your experience of mourning been like? How has it shaped you?

III. Lent: Good NEWS for DARK places. (Is. 61:3)

- A. WELCOMING our own REALITY. (Mt. 5:3; Lk 5:8; Is. 6:5)
- B. AVOIDING the temptation to DISTRACTION. (Mt. 5:4-6; Lk. 10:40)
- C. Showing MERCY, making PEACE. (Mt. 5:7-9; Mic. 6:8)

This good news coming to people living in dark places is a welcome addition to our own journey through Lent. We have been reflecting on our own lives and what God is exposing within our hearts, and the reminder that despite what we see there we are welcome in the Kingdom of God is great news...news worth sharing and living.

6. What is the difference between realizing our reality and welcoming our reality? Which one are you currently doing? How would life be different if you moved from realizing your need to welcoming your need?
7. What things do you use to distract you from the feelings and emotions that come along with living in a broken world?
8. Where is one place that you could show mercy or seek to make peace this week? What will you do to start that process?