

Signs of Life II

"The more we explore their implications, the more seems to remain unexplored. Their wealth is inexhaustible. We cannot plumb their depths. Truly, we are near heaven here."
John Stott, speaking about the Beatitudes

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. **Matthew 5:6-12***

5 Observations about the Beatitudes

1. Book-ended by "theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."
2. Exclusiveness
3. Interrelatedness
4. Blessed is not happy – Makarios (blessed).
5. Unnatural

Paul's Poverty of Spirit – 20 years after encountering Christ on the road to Damascus:
AD 55 – I am least of the apostles (1 Cor. 15:9)
AD 63 – Unto me least of saints (Eph. 3:8)
AD 66 – Greatest of sinners (Timothy) increasing intensity in Paul's own life. Blessed are you, Paul. Congrats. You lucky bum!

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7
Why is mercy a mark of the gospelized?

What is mercy?

Does our reception of mercy depend on our extension of mercy?

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Matthew 5:8
In what sense do we see God?

What does Jesus mean by pure in heart?

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. Matt. 5:9

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:10

Four observations about the persecuted:

1. Double beatitude.
2. He makes a shift from them to you.
3. He brings himself into the picture for the very first time.
4. Note the reason for persecution

Why was Jesus, the shalom-maker, persecuted?

Resources:

"Living in Sync" (Regent College Seminary Class) by Darrell Johnson (www.regentcollegebookstore.com)
"Sermon on the Mount" by John R.W. Stott
"The Cost of Discipleship" by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
"The Jesus I Never Knew" by Philip Yancey