

2/20/19

NT #8

Matthew 5, Luke 6 "Blessed Are Ye"

The sermon on the mount & on the plain is Jesus' stump speech, he would have talked often about the kingdom this way

GT

Matthew 4:17 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ^{near} First thing Jesus teaches.

But what does it mean for God to establish his kingdom? (Ex 19:3-6) - the kingdom is for those who are priests, or who are holy (or that was the distorted view of Pharisees & scribes)

Matthew 5:17 Think not that I ^{am} come to destroy the ^(torah) law and the prophets (he says this because they do think he's undermining the scriptures)

Blessed are ...

poor in spirit
persecuted
reviled
mourn

These are the "wrong" people

especially (or likely)
hunger after righteousness (justice) = those who have been wronged
mercy, peacemaking, purity, meekness are the highest values

Last words of sermon on mount: the people were astonished at his doctrine teaching
amazed
stupefied
struck with shock
stunned

because he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes

- 1) listeners saw themselves as separate from the scribes' philosophy
- 2) scribes liberally appealed to scripture and talmudic commentary to justify opinions

After Yehweh tells Israel they are his kingdom & his peculiar treasure, ^{I've carried you on eagle's wings} he delivers the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 - This is the covenant.

- This kingdom is a failed attempt to find the light to the world & the salt of the earth

BUT Jeremiah 31 teaches that Yehweh will not give up. After talking about

Israel's punishments, Yehweh promises a new covenant

31:33-34 (read) The law (torah) will be written on their hearts and put into their minds. No one will have to teach about me - they'll all know me.

Obedience will become natural, willing, voluntary.

How would you, if you were God, ever get the people to such a place?

The word "for" in v. 34 gives a clue → Israel will know the Lord because he will forgive their sins.

This is the context for v. 17. Jesus is not doing away with or undermining the torah, he is explaining how to plant it in our hearts. He is, in this sermon, putting it in our minds & planting it in our hearts.

The sermon on the mount is the Sinai of the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah.

Forgiveness is the opposite of what we do naturally. But Yehweh promised in Jeremiah 31 that he would move toward his people in such a powerful and connecting way that the demands of the law will no longer feel like a duty but a joy. The unnatural will become natural.

What is our evidence of this? Jesus spends the next several verses explaining how the essence of the torah is not in the outward appearance but in the heart. Receiving this teaching, as untold thousands have done since the time of Christ, is writing the law upon your heart.

Murder → anger; Adultery → lust; Perjury → dishonesty; Tribalism → Charity

Blessed Are all the poor of the people → they shall be my people

Matt 6: 33 these things shall be added unto you = I shall be your God

Matt 7: 7-12 Ask & receive, golden rule, father knows how to give good gifts to son

Matt 6 → God will forgive as we forgive → we do something unnatural

At the last supper, Jesus institutes sacrament → the new covenant in my blood
Jesus doesn't wait for sinners to approach him & sacrifice in the temple, etc.
He instead comes to them with forgiveness.

You've heard that it was said - Torah law, followed by his own teaching (fulfillment)
Jesus' interpretations do not abolish the commandment, but bring them to new levels of fulfillment
The purpose of the law is to change your heart, my commands fulfill the law.

Your righteousness must exceed Pharisees → cannot be limited to behavior, must extend to heart

Be perfect → Matt 22: greatest commandment is love God & love man → torah & prophets depend

Jesus was criticized for eating with publicans & sinners → forgiving traitors & sex workers

We reenact these dinners every week. Jesus appears & offers grace without us being deserving. He invited those least worthy into his kingdom because they knew they were sick

"Blessed" - Jewish convention

② Jesus ben Sirā (Ecclesiasticus)

25: 7-11 9 blessings (he who lives to see enemies' downfall)

he who serves not an inferior - Bednar - meekness
he who speaks to attentive ears

① Psalms Blessed are those who fear the Lord, trust the Lord, keep commandments
1: Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly

② Qumran & 4Q525 & 9 beatitudes

Blessed are those who rejoice because of [wisdom] and who do not spread themselves in the way of folly

Blessed - Favored of God, God is pleased with you, prospered, important, recognized

Jesus falls within the convention, but turns it on its head. He begins with "Blessed are..." But then those who were blessed were not the likes of the scribes and pharisees for the first time. This audience had seen Jesus perform miracles, but to hear him vindicating their suffering and their weakness, calling them the people of the new covenant, essentially, left them shaken, stunned, amazed, stupefied, astonished.

Poor in spirit - no one cares what they think - not necessarily worldly poor, but those who have less to lose who are the more openminded - they are the most likely to respond. The kingdom is theirs

The next 3 go together mourn, meek, hunger & thirst for righteousness. - right relationship - an action to create or maintain a right relationship

These are not experiences we seek after - they are things that happen to us. These are people who have an unmet longing for these relationships in the world. - This presupposes they have or see a lack of such relationships

These people mourn at the lack of righteousness. They have not distracted or anesthetized themselves or chosen to check out of a broken world, they have internalized the pain of the missing righteousness.

They are meek people who don't see themselves as important. Moses was meek, but was important. They don't look at others compare themselves to them, and think they're better.

Blessed are merciful - they are motivated to mitigate the suffering of those without right relationships

Pure in heart don't care about status among men, they care about seeing God and seeing others the way God sees them.

Peacemakers see two parties in conflict and love them both. They create right relationships from turmoil and resentment. They are often disliked by both parties, but strive for reconciliation, which is ^{the} ^{est} high value in the kingdom

Persecuted for righteousness' sake - because you love God ~~without~~ and are not ashamed of him and are willing to seek reconciliation and care more about mercy than status, others are put off by you

reviled, ill spoken of, persecuted, for Christ's sake

Now, you are motivated to do something, but not because you want to be blessed, but because you already have been blessed. These values are not ideals, they are descriptions of people to whom Jesus' message will naturally appeal. You don't strive to be persecuted or to mourn, you mourn because of the love of God which is in you. The mourning, the persecution, comes as a punch in the gut. And Jesus is saying "this is a sign to you that I'm with you, you have my favor, you will be prospered. But not in the way you're thinking of prosperity." ~~Revelation~~

★ Tim Mackie → Because if each of the 9 beatitudes is one chip of glass in a stained glass window, whose image is that window a picture of? The death of Jesus is not the unfortunate result of a failed attempt to help the world - it is the way he epitomized the values of the kingdom.

Matts. 13-17 salt & light. This is what Israel was called to be in Exodus 19. They were intended to let their light so shine that others would see their good works & glorify God. Instead, read the description of what happens to salt that has lost its savor, and contemplate how that might apply to exiled and scattered Israel. None of this would have been lost on Jesus' listeners. But now he's telling them the kingdom is back and they have another chance, but a different chance

do right by somebody is an act of righteousness
fulfill the nature of how you ought to behave in that relationship

The point has now been made that those whom he's talking to are to receive his law inside of them - in their inward parts. Now he talks about specific ways we do that. These verses are about intent.

Keep in mind, our thoughts ascend to heaven. Nowadays it's very popular to mock "thoughts and prayers." But Jesus teaches these are our creations. ~~the~~ When we choose where our thoughts go, we are performing acts that have significance beyond ourselves.

So, this completely radical and unrealistic teaching ~~of~~ about anger. Who can possibly go through life without anger? Anger is natural, common, human.

And that is precisely the point. The whole message of the sermon on the mount & plain is that we are to act unnaturally if we want the unnatural gift of forgiveness. And so, Jesus equates anger, specifically unresolved anger, to murder. ~~the~~ Keep in mind, the proscription here is not against any manifestation of anger. But when that anger lingers, it not only colors our relationships, it makes us unable to properly bring our gifts to God's altar. Now, we have a word for unresolved anger, resentment. Resentment happens when we make a choice to hold on to anger because we want the anger. The anger fuels something inside us that we can't let go of - we don't want to let go of. And what Jesus is saying here is that when we create these lasting angers, these resentments, we are murdering someone in our heart.

Thoughts & prayers ascend to heaven. So if good & charitable thoughts are prayers to God, what is resentment? What is resentment but a prayer to Satan? Bring evil to someone. Someone created in the image of God, and I want evil to happen to him. This is toxic, not to that person (who is presumably not praying to Satan) but to us. When we destroy the sanctity of the image of God, it is our own self we damage.

Jesus tackles lust next.

Covenant from Genesis - image of God - 2 become one flesh. But ~~to~~ lust is more than ~~is~~ an instant of noticing something - as Jesus says - the look is with the intent to fuel lust. So, like resentment is unresolved or lasting anger, lust ~~is~~ ~~is~~ ~~is~~ more than the instantaneous thought. It involves the choice to engage or incite desire in ourselves or others. Lust ~~is~~ lingering sexual desire with someone other than a covenant partner, and even with a covenant partner, lust can be present, when sexual desire involves taking rather than giving. In that case, we are, as in the case with resentment, desiring to end the humanity of someone created in God's image, and reduce them to a feeling or a body part or a moment in time that exists only for us in pure selfishness. No wonder Jesus says we have committed adultery in our hearts as if that meant something.

We have, when we choose to lust, prayed to Satan to end another person's humanity. Again, this merely proves we have lost connection to what true humanity actually means and are insensative to our own.

Souls, symbols, Sacraments - sex is the renewal of the marriage covenant. To experience the renewal without the covenant still creates a bond that must then be broken. And the easier it becomes to break that bond, the less the bond will mean.

Divorce, then, will function as an extension of lust. When entered into too casually, as Jesus describes, it cheapens the bond that can exist between covenant partners.

Now please don't misunderstand me. Justified/Necessary divorce...

forswear thyself - perform thy oaths

↳ swear not at all

The sin is not perjury, the most egregious form of lying
it is spin - when we let spin linger, we have committed perjury in our hearts.

eye for eye, tooth for tooth

↳ ~~do~~ resist not evil

could there be a more radical teaching? Let someone hit you twice?

Someone sues you (unjustly) and you should give more than awarded.

Where is the sin in resisting evil?

Love thy neighbor, hate thy enemy

↳ love thy enemy

aren't we all enemies to god?

the point of loving an enemy is not to love them as an ~~an~~ enemy, but to turn them from enemy to ~~my~~ neighbor. Or, better stated, to see an enemy as a neighbor (good samaritan)

We have to have a righteousness that exceeds the publicans, that exceeds the scribes and Pharisees, that exceeds our selves, if we want to be perfect.