



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC The Beatitudes (Part 2)

SPEAKER Elder Lok Vi Ming

THEME Values for Living – the Beatitudes

DATE 19 & 20 Aug 2017

MESSAGE SUMMARY

WHAT MAKES A PERSON A CHRISTIAN?

Last week, Elder Lok shared with us what it means to be meek, righteous, merciful, and pure in heart (The Beatitudes – Matt 5:1-12). This passage in the Bible challenges us to act justly, lovingly, mercifully and to walk humbly with God, serving Him and doing good to others with a pure heart (The Exchange).

In this week's sermon, we look at the remaining four Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount: (1) blessed are the poor in spirit, (2) blessed are those who mourn, (3) blessed are the peacemakers, and (4) blessed are those who are persecuted. These are exhortations that we should aim for, as an expression of our faith and obedience to God and His Word.

GOD'S BLESSINGS UPON THOSE WHO OBEY HIM

1. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT:

Poverty in spirit does not refer to having a tough time in your spiritual life (e.g. back-sliding, not doing quiet time), nor does it refer to emotional poverty (e.g. having low esteem) or materialistic poverty (e.g. being poor financially). Being poor in spirit in this context refers to understanding our own [spiritual unworthiness](#) and recognising that there is nothing we can do on our own to win God's favour. It is only by His grace through the finished work of our Lord Jesus on the cross that we can reconcile with Him and receive salvation. Poverty in the spirit is also about [humbling ourselves](#) before God, just as the tax collector did in **Luke 18:9-14**, and recognising the need to [depend on Him](#). If we truly want to live as believers with a mission to carry out God's plans for us, we have to do it based on His terms and His strength, acknowledging that we can do nothing unless God empowers us to do so. We need to be spiritually bankrupt in order to be filled with the spiritual richness that we yearn for.

2. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

Grief is an emotion that everyone is familiar with. However, grievance in the Beatitudes refers to something else, which is the [realisation of our personal sin – godly sorrow](#). This sorrow is not the casual sorrow for the consequences of our sins, but a deep grief before God over our sins. One such example is King David, who found himself in this position after the prophet Nathan confronted him for hiding his sins (**2 Sam 11-12**). He realised the depth of his sin and was filled with a deep sense of remorse that he went to God in great honesty and brokenness, (**Ps 51:1-6; Ps 38:4-9, 17-18**), pleading for the restoration of his heart and salvation (**Ps 51:7-12,17**). Another example is in **Matt 26:75** when Peter mourned over his denial of Jesus, yet the Lord provided him with comfort and added fruitfulness to his ministry. This shows that godly sorrow produces repentance leading to

salvation (**2 Cor 7:10**). In spite of what David and Peter did, they were still deeply loved as men after God's heart. It is important to note though that we are not called to pursue mourning, but we know that God will comfort us when we mourn over our sins.

3. BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Looking at the world today, we see wars and conflicts that are prevalent and increasing in frequency and intensity. As Christians, we are called to be peacemakers, not only when conflicts happen, but even before disputes arise, by working towards building bridges and strengthening communities and relationships. Abigail in **1 Sam 25** was one such example of a peacemaker. When she heard about Nabal's insulting rejection of David's request for compensation for his service, she humbly appealed to David and prepared the compensation necessary to appease him. David had planned to kill Nabal and all the males in his family but Abigail's actions defused the crisis. She saved Nabal from David and saved David from committing a sin, leaving Nabal up to God's judgement.

We are called to be the salt of the earth (**Matt 5:13**) – salt that adds flavour into someone else's life and acts as a preservative to preserve God's values and improve relationships. But when salt loses its flavour, there is no longer beauty in it. Hence, we need to have that desire to help bring the peace of God into people's life, especially strangers, to the love of Jesus. Therefore, let us all unite as Christians to collectively pursue peace with all people, (**Heb 12:14; 1 Pet 3:8, 11**) as we are called to do in order to shine God's light into this world.

4. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED

2 Tim 3:12 tells us that whoever desires to live godly lives will suffer persecution. This persecution need not be physical; more often than not, it means suffering discomfort and making sacrifices. The beatitude is not asking us to seek persecution, but to face it when it comes. We should not retreat from or retaliate against it. When we yearn to live a godly life, there are bound to be people who would prefer evil to good (e.g. mock the righteous, scorn the just, insult the Lord's witnesses). Hence, we need to be aware of the temptation to compromise and the urge to preserve the status quo. Instead, we are to step out of our comfort zone intentionally to be the Lord's vessels in reaching out.

Conclusion

Through the Beatitudes, let us be encouraged and exhorted to obey the Word of God (**Matt 7:22-27**), for He has promised us that we will be recognised by the fruit that we bear (**Matt 7:15-20**) through our sacrifices for Him. When we obey His Word, not only will our reward be great in heaven, our earthly life will be a grace-filled, Spirit-driven, and an inspirational one.

QUESTIONS

1. Share about someone whom you feel exemplify one or all of these beatitudes. What makes this person stand out?

2. What does it mean to be a peacemaker and what is God's promise for peacemakers? How does this encourage you to be more intentional in building bridges and taking the step to strengthen relationships with pre-believers?

3. Out of all the eight beatitudes shared over the two sermons, which is the most challenging for you to live out, and what are some steps you can take to grow in this area?