

UPPER ROOM SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY
Living the Life of the Beloved/Belonging: Matthew 5-7
Pastor Jim Otte
Spring-Summer, 2018

Lesson 4 – (April 15, 2018) Matthew 5:8-20

From Last Session

- a. The “beautitudes” turn human logic upside down!
- b. There is a time and a place for anger; not for rage.
- c. God’s mercy toward us is the motivation and the power for our mercy toward each other.

**⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**

- a. **“pure in heart”** – (“katharos”) – unmixed, pure, cleansed, purged of chaff. When your motives (heart) are truly altruistic, with no hint of narcissism.
- b. **“will see God.”** – Self-service clouds your vision of God; pure service cleanses your vision to “see” God at work.
- c. **The Beloved Life Principle #10**: God’s gift of love fuels our desire to serve without “what’s in it for _____?”

**⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.**

- a. **“the peacemakers,”** – reconcilers
- b. **“called children of God”** – (“called doers of God’s work”) – As God sent Jesus to reconcile the world to Himself, you are called to share the ministry of reconciliation.
- c. **The Beloved Life Principle #11**: Peace-makers do the _____ work of making peace with their own faults, and then, help others find peace with each other, i.e. “log” work first; “speck” work second.

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

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

- a. **“those who are persecuted because of righteousness”** – persecution for your faith comes in direct and indirect forms:

- a. **Direct** – opposition from unbelieving people, i.e. mockery, false accusations, property confiscated, imprisonment, death.
- b. **Indirect** – encroachment from social, work, and home entities invading your spiritual space.
 - i. **Social**: your child’s sports/activity team sets its practice/game schedule for Sunday mornings with the rule of: “No practice; no play.”
 - ii. **Work**: your employer demands that you bill a customer for hours you didn’t earn or whose business practices are not consistent with your Christian faith.
 - iii. **Home**: your daughter moves in with a non-Christian or a non-church-going man. She tells you that this is what people do, in order to find out if they are compatible for marriage.
- b. **“because of Me”** – when your suffering is truly for Jesus’ sake, and not related to stupidity or pride on your part.
- c. **“Rejoice and be glad”** (“leap for joy”) -
- d. **“they persecuted the prophets”** –
 - a. **The Beloved Life Principle #12**: Suffering for your faith connects you to those who _____ before you. This reminds you that you are not _____!

Matthew 5:13-16

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

- a. **“salt of the earth”** – salt was a treasured commodity in Jesus’ day. It offered at least three benefits (which serve as word pictures for you):
 - a. **Purity** – The Romans believed that salt was the purest of elements having come from two of the most primal sources: sun & sea.
 - i. **The Beloved Life Principle #13**: You are “*salt*” in the earth, when your _____ with Jesus makes such a distinctive impression, other people wonder about the source of your inner strength.
 - ii. **1 Peter 3:15**. *But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,*
 - b. **Preservative & Flavoring Agent** – kept meat from spoiling & brought the best flavor out in foods.
 - i. **The Beloved Life Principle #14**: When you use the distinctiveness of your life to help prevent evil & to bring out the _____ in people, you are salt of the earth!

- b. Somber reverence can, sometimes, give a confusing example of Christian joy: *"I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers."* Oliver Wendell Holmes (Barclay).
- a. Various Christian denominations and individuals struggle with the tension between 'reverence' and 'entertainment' focused worship:
 - i. Clapping in church
 - ii. Pastors telling stories in sermons
 - iii. Praise bands up front on the chancel
 - iv. Video screens
 - v. Ornately decorated churches
 - vi. Plainly decorated churches
 - vii. Highly vested clergy
 - viii. Non-vested clergy
 - ix. Other? _____
 - b. What people grew up with, for the most part, dictates their threshold of reverence/entertainment.
- c. **"except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot"** – the Romans used rock, which had formerly been mined out of salt mines, as the foundation beds for road (some of which are still intact today!)