

Bridgeway Community Church
Founding & Senior Pastor Dr. David Anderson
Series: Living a MAKE IT BETTER Life
September 25, 2022

Living a MAKE IT BETTER Life
“8 Attitudes to Make You Better” (Part II)

May God be with those that we prayed over to serve God and people in need as refugees from Ukraine in Eastern Europe.

And happy Hispanic Heritage Month! We grieve the loss and devastation that has blown through Puerto Rico over this last week with Hurricane Fiona. Our prayers are with you and your families who are from the Island. Also, THIS Friday night, September 30 @ 7pm, Bridgeway is having Latino Night...

All are welcome (*Latino or just Latino at heart*) for a time of fun, music, dancing, and culture. That's this Friday evening. Go to Bridgeway.cc/events

Next Week:

We will continue with our sermon series Living a Make it Better Life with the “9 Fruits to Make You Better” for 2 weeks, followed by “10 Commandments to Make You Better.”

Today is the second installment of “8 Attitudes to Make you Better” from the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus.

Repeat after me, please:

Rejoice & be Glad, even when the kingdoms of this world have gone Mad!

THAT IS TODAY'S MESSAGE. If you need to leave now, you've got the word. Rejoice & be Glad, even when the kingdoms of this world have gone Mad!

In Jesus' first sermon he preaches and teaches about the kingdom of heaven.

Question:

What is the Kingdom of Heaven?

The Kingdom of Heaven or the *Kingdom of God* is the domain where Jesus Christ is Lord and King over those who follow him by faith. In order to come into that Kingdom, one must do as Jesus said in the book of **Matthew 4:17** - "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.*" (NIV84)

This word "**Repent**" means to "*Turn to God and away from your sins and other gods.*"

When Jesus came onto the earth and began to preach his first sermon called the "Sermon on the Mount", he sat down on the side of the mountain and began to teach his disciples in front of a crowd of people. Jesus opened his sermon with "**8 Blessings**" - We call these blessings the "Beatitudes" - which means in the original Greek language "blessedness" or "blessing."

Before Jesus began preaching repentance and teaching his disciples, and healing the sick, the devil attempted to stop Jesus by tempting him to choose other worldly desires. This is often the strategy the devil tries to use on us to keep us from fulfilling our purpose. He tries to tempt us with worldly desires to distract us from completing our mission. The devil tempted Jesus three times to give everything up! But Jesus would have NONE of it!

He was trying to tempt Jesus by giving him *a crown* without him having to go through *the cross*.

How many of you know that going through your cross and difficulties in life will produce a better crown, and a better result, than taking short cuts? Jesus refused to take a shortcut for a cheap crown.

Allow me to call your attention to **the third temptation of Jesus** by the devil.

- 8 "*Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD and their splendor. 9 All this I will give you, he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' 10 Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' 11 Then the devil left him and angels came and attended him.*" (Matthew 4:8-11 NIV84)
- "*From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent for the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is near.'*" (Matthew 4:17 NIV84)

Jesus wants his disciples to - *Rejoice & be Glad, even when the kingdoms of this world have gone Mad!* I want to give you 2 Observations and 3 Promises from today's teaching on the Beatitudes...

Observation #1:

Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven to *our world* so we could be free from the kingdoms of *this world*

Please observe that the devil was focused on giving Jesus the “*kingdoms of this world*” in verse 8. Jesus, on the other hand, came to free people from the kingdoms of this world!

Jesus was focused on bringing the *kingdom of heaven* onto the earth in verse 17. He preached repentance to the world so that we would all turn to him for salvation because of our sins. When we repent and turn to Jesus, He becomes our King and we become servants of God. And with that repentance comes many PROMISES and BLESSINGS!

When Jesus began preaching the Greatest Sermon ever told, he began the introduction to his message with “the Beatitudes,” or the *Great Blessings*.

Jesus began by teaching his disciples these things:

- *Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NIV84)*
 - Those who are humble and spiritually poor
 - Last week we talked about the poor poor, physically
 - Here we see that those who humbly acknowledge and realize that they need God for help, will receive the blessings of God
- *Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4 NIV84)*
 - Those who are sad, sorrowful, and suffering grief, they will receive the comfort of God’s Spirit
- *Blessed are the **meek**, for they will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5 NIV84)*
 - The lowly and gentle, God will bless them with a great inheritance on the earth
 - Possibly meaning that they will ultimately and spiritually possess the land or earth (New heavens/earth, cf. **Rev 21**)
- *Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6 NIV84)*
 - God will fill all of us who are spiritually hungry and thirst for righteousness and truth
 - If we seek God, he will satisfy our desires
- *Blessed are the **merciful**, for they will be shown mercy (Matthew 5:7 NIV84)*
 - Showing compassion over condemnation
 - Choosing kindness over crushing someone down

- *Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8 NIV84)*
 - Honesty, authenticity, and morality over impurity and selfish ambition
- *Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9 NIV84)*
 - Choosing reconciliation over revenge
 - Tamping down violence instead of instigating it
- *Blessed are those who are **persecuted** because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:10 NIV84)*
 - Those who receive backlash and bullying, maybe even being beaten for doing what is right and righteous

When we look at these 8 Great Blessings or “Beatitudes,” I want you to observe how they are laid out. Each blessing has a reward or positive result after each of them. Also notice their placement and the order...

- The first and the last of the 8 beatitudes ends with the phrase **“theirs is the kingdom of heaven”**. Did you notice that?

We will call these The BOOK ENDS of the Beatitudes:

- *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3 NIV84)*
- *“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10 NIV84)*

The first and the last. The beginning and the end. The alpha and the omega.

Does this remind you of anyone? Yep. JESUS!

Jesus was poor in spirit: *“He humbled himself and became a man and was obedient to death - even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:5-7 NIV84)*

Jesus was persecuted more than anyone else ever was or could be as he took on the sins of the entire world! The middle six blessings are categorized into two blocks; three and three...

Category #1 - THE BROKEN (v. 4-6)

Those that are:

- *Mourning (v. 4)*
- *Meek (v. 5)*
- *Mouths wide open (Hunger & thirst) (v. 6)*

Category #2 - THE BEAUTIFUL (v. 7-9)

This beauty is an inner beauty:

- The beauty of *mercy*,
- The beauty of *morality* (“*Blessed are the pure in heart*”), and
- The beauty of *mediation* (“*Blessed are the peacemakers*”)

This is not like that soap opera television show called “The Bold and the Beautiful.” That show was about outer beauty with bold and boisterous personalities. Jesus was bringing a different mindset; a “kingdom of heaven” mindset. Jesus was teaching the disciples how to RETHINK what the Kingdom of Heaven was.

This also included rethinking what beauty was! “*Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*”(1 Samuel 16:7 NIV84)

Our Human concept of beauty is different from Heaven’s concept of beauty. The kingdom of heaven values the beauty of the *inner person* more than the *outer person*.

Some of us in the kingdoms of this world have *focused so much on our outer man and outer woman*, that we have neglected our inner man and inner woman!

What about you? Do you focus on your inner spiritual person?

Question:

Have you ever met someone who is beautiful on the outside but ugly on the inside?

The devil was trying to offer Jesus the *kingdoms of this world* which may be beautiful on the outside to the human eyes, but inside the kingdoms of this world are:

- Corrupted
- Corroded
- Contentious
- Contemptuous
- Ultimately, they will be *Condemned!*

Jesus was bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth for *the Broken and the Beautiful*. That beauty is on the inside! Not just the outside! I would always tell my daughter when she was growing up that she was beautiful on the outside *and* on the INSIDE!

While the world focuses on outer beauty, I wanted her to know that inner beauty was just as important...if not more! To this day, my 22 year old daughter has them both and I am so proud of her. *“Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.”* (Proverbs 31:30 NIV84)

The prophet, Isaiah, in the holy scriptures, puts it this way when prophesying about Jesus as the coming messiah...

- *“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”* (Isaiah 53:2b NIV84)

Again, the second category of those who are blessed are those with the inner character and beauty of *mercy, morality, and mediation*.

Jesus says, Blessed are those that are:

- Merciful (v.7)
- Moral (“Pure in heart”) (v. 8)
- Mediating (“Peacemakers”) (v. 9)
 - *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men; the man Jesus.”*
(1 Timothy 2:5 NIV84)

So in the Beatitudes we have THE BOOKENDS: *the Broken and the Beautiful* in character!

Jesus is blesses those who reflect his beautiful character:

- Merciful
- Moral (“*Pure in heart*”)
- Mediating (“*Peacemakers*”)

As followers of Jesus as our King and our messiah, we no longer have to be enslaved to the worldly characteristics of domination, immorality, and conflict.

We no longer have to buy into the fallacy that only the rich and wealthy are blessed and find favor with God...

The poor matter to God.

The physically poor and the spiritually poor

The physically hungry & thirsty and the spiritually hungry & thirsty

The **first observation** was - Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven to *our world* so we could be free from the kingdoms of *this world*

The second observation is...

Observation #2:

Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven to *our personal worlds* so we could rejoice in Him before the kingdoms of *this world*

BIG IDEA - Jesus wants us to be Rejoice & be Glad, even when the kingdoms of this world have gone Mad! Jesus wants us to be able to rejoice and be glad *amid the difficulties that we face in the Kingdoms of this world.*

Please observe that Jesus was bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to THIS world, but he was also bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to THEIR world...*meaning the disciples themselves.*

Notice this...

In the BOOKENDS, verses 3 and 10, Jesus says: “For THEIRS is the Kingdom of Heaven...”

In the BROKEN and BEAUTIFUL (in character) categories, Jesus says: “For THEY...”

- “*For THEY will be comforted*” (v.4)
- “*For THEY will inherit the earth*” (v.5)
- “*For THEY will be filled*” (v.6)
- “*For THEY will be shown mercy*” (v.7)
- “*For THEY will be see God*” (v.8)
- “*For THEY will be called sons of God*” (v.9)

Check out the shift in **verse 11** after the Beatitudes are done...

- 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.”
(Matthew 5: 11-12 NIV84)

Did you notice the shift from “*theirs*” and “*they*” to YOU in verse 11?

God is not just about THEM, He’s about YOU too!

Question:

Honestly, have you ever felt like God was blessing everyone else, *but you*?

He cares for everyone else, but you?

Have you ever secretly said in your heart, “*BUT GOD, WHAT ABOUT ME?!?*”

- What about *my* life?
- *My* children?
- *My* family?
- *My* parents?
- *My* needs?
- *My* heart?
- *My* emotions?
- *My* feelings?
- *My* finances?
- *My* healing?
- *My* miracle?

“Lord, I know you’re blessing everyone else and that’s great. I know the poor in spirit and the hungry and all of them need you. Got it! But Jesus, WHAT ABOUT ME!?”

Question:

Have you ever had a W.A.M moment with God?

What About Me?

Then, you start feeling guilty about it. You feel selfish. You feel ungodly for thinking about yourself, because there's always someone else worse off. So you push down your feelings... Jesus is SO gracious! I imagine him turning to the disciples after talking about all these other people in the crowd, looking them in the eyes and saying...AND...

“BLESSED ARE YOU!!”

- “*Blessed are YOU when people insult YOU, persecute YOU and falsely say all kinds of evil against YOU because of me.*” (**Matthew 5:11 NIV84**)

I’m here to tell someone now that God is turning toward you...

- He is looking your way
- He’s turning his gaze in your direction right now

Someone needs to hear me today!

- God is looking at you
- He cares about you
- God has not forgotten about you
- Who am I talking to?

I feel the presence of the Lord (even as I am writing this message) speaking through me to somebody right now! I feel this message penetrating into your spirit man/woman even now This is food for your soul...

- God see you
- God hears your cry
- God has not forgotten you
- God knows your aching heart’s desire

Jesus is saying to you, “BLESSED ARE YOU!

Review:

TWO OBSERVATIONS...

1. **Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven *to our world* so we could be free from the kingdoms of *this world***
2. **Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven to *our personal worlds* so we could rejoice in Him before the kingdoms of *this world***

3 PROMISES from Jesus we can hold onto from this passage for a MAKE IT BETTER life...

1. **You are Blessed, Even Though You Are Broken**

2. You are Blessed because of the Beauty Inside of You, not Because of Your Outer Gifts & Skills

3. You are Blessed even if You are Beaten, Battered, and Bullied in this world...

- God will come to your defense
- God will show up for you
- God will fight your battles
- Rejoice by faith

BIG IDEA: *Rejoice & be Glad, even when the kingdoms of this world have gone Mad!*

Why? Your reward will be great because you're living in the Number 8!

There are 8 Beatitudes or Blessings...

Question:

Do you know what the number 8 stands for in the bible?

NEW BEGINNINGS!

- The number 7 is the number of *completion*
- The number 8 is the number of *new beginnings*, starting the count from 1 to 7 all over again...

I am here to tell somebody that *their new beginning is NOW*. Their new blessings are now! Your 1 through 7 season is over.

In Hebrew culture, there was a year known as the **sabbatical year**, which occurred every seven years. And every seven sabbatical years, comes the **year of Jubilee** (cf. **Leviticus 25**)...

- Hebrew slaves would be freed
- Debts would be forgiven
- Mercies of God would be manifested in new ways

8 is the new beginning. 8 is *your* JUBILEE!

In the year of Jubilee, the Shofar (a ram's horn) trumpet would sound and there would be shouts of joy. *Jubilee means shouts of joy!*

After the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho 7 times, the walls came tumbling down and their new beginning started as they possessed the land.

I believe that someone needs to shout for their victory...*BLOW THE SHOFAR!*

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "REJOICE AND BE GLAD, BECAUSE GREAT IS YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN...!" (**Matthew 5:12 NIV84**)

Question:

Is there anybody in this place that wants to end today's sermon with a "Shout to the Lord!?"

YOUR NEW SEASON IS HERE! *Blow the shofar to declare your new season:*

- The new season of victory
- Deliverance
- The new season of BCC
- We've come out of the pandemic season
- You Are coming out of your brokenness
- Are you poor in spirit?
- Are you persecuted?
- The Lord is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the alpha and the omega
- For "theirs" & "yours" is the kingdom of heaven!

Your happiness and joy should come from knowing that you are *blessed by GOD* even when you are cursed by Man!

- ***"IT IS BETTER TO TRUST THE LORD THAN TO PUT YOUR CONFIDENCE IN MAN."* (Psalm 118:8 NIV84)**

Your reward will be GREAT, because you're living in the NUMBER EIGHT!

JESUS is our NEW SEASON!

“God saw all that he had made and it was VERY GOOD!” (Genesis 1:31 NIV84)

Friends, Jesus was crucified on a Friday, there was silence on Saturday, but He rose again on Sunday. This is why the believers worshiped on the First Day of the Week. (Number 8 - *a new beginning!*) We are living in the Resurrection time of Jesus! You are no longer a slave to the kingdoms of this world!

Rejoice & be Glad, even when the kingdoms of this world have gone Mad!

My reward is GREAT, because I'm living in the NUMBER 8!