

Jesus Brings Us Gifts

Luke 6:17-26 ¹⁷ And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, ¹⁸ as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. ¹⁹ And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all. ²⁰ Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed *are you* poor, For yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹ Blessed *are you* who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed *are you* who weep now, For you shall laugh. ²² Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile *you*, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward *is* great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets. ²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich, For you have received your consolation. ²⁵ Woe to you who are full, For you shall hunger. Woe to you who laugh now, For you shall mourn and weep. ²⁶ Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

One of the things we try to teach the confirmation kids is the difference between law and gospel. This is not always as easy as it should be. Our sinful flesh often sees a law or a commandment where God meant only to give us a gift.

Sometimes a parent might spend all time making what they think is wonderful supper. Yet the kids come and sit down and say "Do I have to eat that." They have changed a gift into a command.

This happens quite often with the beatitudes. Jesus gives them as a gift but we often see them as a law.

Jesus says to us, "I see how poor you are, so I brought you the riches of the kingdom."

We respond, "Do I have to."

The Beatitudes Are Jesus Gift To Us

They are called the beatitudes, the blessings, a blessing is a gift from God. These beatitudes are gifts that Jesus brings to us. Jesus sees that we are poor, hungry, sorrowful, and persecuted He brings us the riches of heaven. That is what these beatitudes are Jesus comforting sinners. They are Jesus bringing gifts to us. It is only when we understand the beatitudes in this way that we understand them correctly.

In Ephesians 1:3 saint Paul helps us to correctly understand the beatitudes:

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

The Beatitudes are Given to us In Christ

Paul says we are “blessed in Christ.”

The Beatitudes are Christological. They come from Christ. They lead to Christ. They are centered on Christ. They exist in Christ and without Christ there are no beatitudes.

This is true of all scripture, as Jesus explained to the Emmaus Disciples

Luke 24:27 ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

And as he told the Jewish leaders

John 5:39 ³⁹ "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

All of scripture becomes meaningless and empty if we take Christ out of it. Yet that is exactly what we do with the beatitudes. We read them and think that if I am poor than I will receive the kingdom. When we think of the beatitudes this way we are forgetting that Jesus brings them as a gift. We are thinking of them as though they are some great cosmic law that exists outside of Christ. Jesus does not here describe some truth greater than himself. He is announcing a gift a blessing which He is bringing. When Jesus sees our poverty, he tells us to rejoice because he is bringing us riches.

These beatitudes are preached by Jesus. They are given to those who come to Jesus. Without Jesus they are not received. Jesus brings us them as gifts.

Every Believer Has Every Spiritual Blessing

Paul also says that Christ has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

Like the motto of the French musketeers the beatitudes are all for one and one for all. That is to say either we receive all of God’s blessings or none.

When Jesus talks about the poor, the hungry, the weeping and the persecuted, He is not talking about four different categories of people. He is describing us as He sees us. He came down from heaven and look around and was “moved with compassion” because we are poor, hungry, and filled with sorrow. To us who are poor, hungry, and filled with sorrow Jesus says be comforted because I give to you the joy of the kingdom.

The woes that Jesus talks about later are the way we think of ourselves in our sinfulness. We think we are rich, full, and joyful.

The choice is all or nothing. We either come to Jesus in our poverty and receive the fullness of His blessings, or we come thinking we are rich and receive nothing.

Jesus gives us all the gifts of heaven.

The Beatitudes are spiritual.

Paul says that Jesus has given us, "Every SPIRITUAL Blessing in the HEAVENLY Places."

Both the condition, for example hunger, and the fulfillment, for example being filled, are speaking spiritually.

We are sometimes physically hungry, and at such times we can take comfort in God's promise that in His kingdom we will never go hungry again. We are however ALWAYS spiritually hungry even though we often don't realize it. Jesus is speaking here primarily of our spiritual lack.

The Gospel of Luke bears out this truth. Luke gives us examples of Jesus fulfilling these beatitudes.

In Luke 19 It is Zacchaeus who dines with Jesus. Zacchaeus was never physical hungry but was spiritually starving. He comes to Jesus in spiritual hunger and Jesus dines with him and fills him spiritual.

In Luke 7 the disciples of John come to Jesus asking if he is the one. Jesus responds, "the poor have the gospel preached to them." What riches does Jesus give the poor? Not earthly riches. In fact when they try to make him their king he walks away from that. The riches are the riches of the gospel.

In Luke 8 Jesus finds a young girl dead and women weeping. Even though He is about to raise the girl He tells the women "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." He does not say do not weep I will raise her from the dead. That resurrection at that time was not a reason to rejoice since it was only a resurrection back to this life. But rather Jesus says joy comes from knowing that the one who dies in Christ is only sleeping. They are only waiting for the resurrection into the kingdom.

The beatitudes do offer us comfort in our physical hunger, poverty, sorrow, but their true power is to grant us spiritual gifts because we are spiritual destitute. Jesus does not offer us fullness of joy in this life which after all will so soon be over but in that life which is to come.

The one who best understood and appreciated these gifts that Jesus offers us here was King David. Who perfectly summarized all the beatitudes in Psalm 32

Psalm 32:1-2 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,

All the beatitudes come down to this same truth. We are poor and sinners, Jesus brings us riches and forgiveness.

David does not mean here that we should seek out sin so that we can later be forgiven. No more does Jesus mean that we should seek out poverty so that we can later be rich--Rather it means that in our sinfulness we have this joy, that Jesus Christ has given us this blessing that our sin is forgiven.

All the beatitudes ought to be seen in this same manner,

In our poverty Jesus has given us wealth

In our hungry Jesus has given us fullness

In our suffering Jesus has given us Joy

In our persecution Jesus has given us fellowship with the Father and with each other

The Beatitudes are the gifts which Jesus brings to us.