

Morning Sermon December 29, 2019

"The Pursuit of Happiness: God's Way" Matthew 5:1-12

"And now for something completely different"

Monty Python's Flying Circus

In the first twelve verses of His Sermon, our Lord Jesus makes it clear what He is talking about, the words "Blessed are" are repeated 9 times, at the start of these verses. Blessed means Happy, and here Jesus preaches a way of pursuing happiness that is "completely different..."

I. *Happiness or Blessedness is connected to keeping (not breaking) God's Law –*

5 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: Matthew 5:1–2 (NKJV)

- 1. It is no coincidence that Jesus Christ, God's Son, teaches us from a mountain, this is just what God did in the Old Testament –*

And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. Exodus 19:11 (NKJV)

Now, God gave the people the Law / the Ten Commandments from the mountain, Mount Sinai, and this was a scary experience for them –

¹⁸ Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Exodus 20:18–19 (NKJV)

- 2. Part of the reason Jesus comes in the flesh is to take away some of this fear factor; yet Jesus still upholds the law, teaches about the law –*

¹⁷ "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven

and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17–22 (NKJV)

This is what we see in Psalm 1 –

1 *Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.* Psalm 1:1–6 (NKJV)

He, the blessed man, refuses to go the wrong ways, the ways of an ungodly world, rather he delights in God's Law!

- 3. There is only one PROBLEM with this... we don't keep the law, nor do we naturally delight in it –*

7 *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.* Romans 8:7 (NKJV)

A. In fact, we are under the spell of sin, we wrongly think it will make us happy, when in fact it blinds and destroys us –

¹⁷ *"I will bring distress upon men, And they shall walk like blind men, Because they have sinned against the LORD; Their blood shall be poured out like dust, And their flesh like refuse."* Zephaniah 1:17 (NKJV)

B. The writer of Hebrews exhorts us, and calls us to exhort each other, about this, Moses is his example for us of one who resists sin –

¹³ *but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.* Hebrews 3:13 (NKJV)

²⁴ *By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,²⁵ choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin,* Hebrews 11:24–25 (NKJV)

Yet, even Moses sinned, he was kept out of the Promised Land, and David, the man after God's own heart sinned notoriously...

There must be another way to happiness / Blessedness?

II. Happiness or Blessedness is connected to forgiveness (in regard to breaking God's Law) –

A Psalm of David. A Contemplation. ¹Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. Psalm 32 (NKJV)

1. This is where Christ's Beatitudes come in, they imply we have sinned, and we are NOT COMFORTABLE in our sinful state –

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, ... Matthew 5:3 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4

Poor is spirit ... mourning are not comfortable states, "they shall be Comforted" implies comfort to be a future state for those who mourn, who mourn, cry, weep over sin –

2. This discomfort with sin is something David felt -

When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah Psalm 32:3-4 (NKJV)

3. This great discomfort with sin leads to acknowledgement and confession of sin –

A. Acknowledgment of sin is not merely acknowledgment of its presence or existence, no, it is also an acknowledgment of sin's and my iniquity, something is wrong, with ME!

⁵I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. Psalm 32:5 A

B Confession is my acknowledgment of this problem / and that it is a problem with ME and not with God! His judgment is right, my sin deserves Hell -

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah Psalm 32:5 B

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

III. Yet, Jesus adds to this, blessedness comes from –

- Meekness –
- Hungering and thirsting for righteousness -
- Being merciful -
- Heart purity, not merely outward purity -
- Being a peacemaker -
- Being persecuted for righteousness sake –

We are persecuted or will be because pursuing happiness God's way makes us DIFFERENT from an ungodly world! We are different because we are becoming Christ-like -

¹⁸"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. John 15:18 (NKJV)

IV. True, happiness, blessedness, means repenting, changing, making resolutions –

⁵So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done *it* for a long time in the prescribed manner. 2 Chronicles 30:5 (NKJV)

1. Their Passover was equivalent to our Lord's Supper, both were Covenant Signs, both pointed to Christ, and His sacrifice to save us from our sins –

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29 (NKJV)

- A. They had not done it for a long time in the prescribed manner. 2 Chronicles 30:5 (NKJV)
- B. Seemingly they were doing it, but not in the right way ... or in the right manner –

²⁷Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29 (NKJV)

2. Examine yourself, what is Christ, the Son of God, worthy of from you? What might you change in 2020 to live in a manner more worthy of Him? Would living in a more worthy manner = Blessedness? Yes!

Arnold Brevick