

July 29th, 2018
Pinecrest Baptist Church
a.m.

Sermon Series: Being Heavenly Happy
Sermon #1 Title: The Background for Blessedness
Sermon #1 Text: (Matthew 4:23-5:3)

If I were to ask you this morning the ever present cliché, What is the key to happiness? What would you say? I didn't say the key to Holiness, or the key to Peace, or the key to Pleasure, I said, "What is the key to Happiness?"

- Let me give you some responses from the high priests of entertainment, philosophy, and social scientists.

Author – Gretchen Rubin – ““I think self-knowledge is a key to happiness. We can build happy lives only on the foundation of our own natures, our own values, and our own interests.”

Feminist Author Rita Mae Brown – “the Key to Happiness is a bad memory.”

Singer/Songwriter Sarah McLachlan – “Happiness is like a cloud, if you stare at it long enough it evaporates.”

Harrison Ford – “Being Happy is something you have to learn.”

Author Jodi Picoult – “To be happy, improve your reality or lower your expectations.”

The late George Burns famously said, - “Happiness is having a large, loving, caring close-knit family - - in another city.”

Without question, all of those quips and the millions more like them all actually fall dead flat short.

- Sometimes, one might think all of these little sayings through and come to the conclusion, that true happiness is a hopeless cause.

- Well, we have some good news – it is not a hopeless cause, because the God that made us, also made a happiness for us, just as sure as He made air for us to breathe.

The Bible is full of promises and precepts of happiness –

Psalms 144:15 – the Psalmist declared, “Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.”

In one of the most famous sermons that Jesus ever preached, 9 times He opened the door and pierced the veil to let the sunrises of Heavenly Happiness shine through for us to see.

- That's exactly what we're going to do for the next several weeks.

When we read this, friend – we are not reading some motivational guru – some inspirational philosopher with self-help books to sell – we are hearing the final word on the facts of Heavenly Happiness, from the Lord Jesus Himself.

To see the most out of the message, we first have to look at the things behind it, so the things in front of it will stand out, and Matthew gives us that today.

I. The Ministry of Jesus – vs 23

*note – Matthew closes what we call chapter 4 with a summary outline of the activities that made up the earthly ministry of our Lord. – He calls attention to three primary activities that Jesus considered to be His labor from heaven...

A. Teaching –

- 1.) “And Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in the synagogues...”

*Note – This is the first sight and sound of Jesus ministry that Matthew gives us to us – and the first activity that he gives us is that Jesus went “teaching.”

- 2.) Matthew records for us some basic information:

- a.) Where Jesus was at the beginning
 - In Galilee – (northern Israel)
- b.) Where the first actions of this ministry took place – “in the synagogues”

*Note – This tells you something about Jesus you ought to take note of. The Synagogue was the regular place of public worship, corporate learning, and scheduled meetings.

- Wherever there was a synagogue, by virtue of its existence there is both a “place” and a “time” to meet, and it was the activity of Jesus to be in that place at those times.

- c.) What he was doing there – “teaching”

Teaching is the act of Explanation - Part of Christ’s work in the synagogue was the work of explaining the scriptures to the hearers.

- This is exactly what he was doing in Luke chapter 4 when he announced to them that the messiah spoken of in Isaiah had arrived in Him.

*Note – Jesus had a ministry of Bible “explanation.”

B. Preaching

- 1.) “and preaching the gospel of the kingdom”
- 2.) Not only did Jesus have the ministry of explanation, He exercised the ministry of Proclamation.

- a.) Preaching is the word, “kerooso” and it means to herald forth . . .

*Note – There are some things to be explained . . . and there are some things to be “proclaimed.”

- 3.) What did he come preaching?

- a.) the gospel of the kingdom!
- b.) Mark 1:14 – Mark’s account tells us that – “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.”

*Note – Now take note, - Jesus came preaching, or proclaiming the gospel . . . What is the characteristic of this gospel?

- The Bible calls the gospel the “gospel of grace,” “gospel of Jesus Christ,” the “gospel of peace,” the “gospel of God,” the “gospel of your salvation,” “the gospel of Christ.” – here at the introduction of the gospel it is called the “Gospel of the Kingdom.”

*Note – Now what does that mean?

First – Israel was looking for the Kingdom of God to be established on earth, through them, and in fact they still are. When Jesus prayed, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done...” He is referencing the time when all the nations of the world will be politically, and legally governed by the Theocracy of the Messiah ruling the world.”

- That was, and is, the drumbeat in the heart of Israel.
- So when Jesus proclaimed – “good news, the Kingdom of God has arrived”, at the outset many were ecstatic, while many were cautiously optimistic, while many were outright resistant.

BUT – When Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, what He was speaking of, was not God’s Theocracy over the nations . . . but God’s theocracy over YOU.

- So here it is, the good news is that the Rule and Reign of God has come to Rule and Reign YOU. – Not from the outside in, but from the inside out.

- The Good News is not that Christ came to “Take over the world” – The Good News is that Christ came to take over YOU!

*Note – Now one day He will take over the world. – But when He does, that will be bad news for whoever has not already been taken over by Him.

- If He has not taken you over, and governing you – when the Kingdom does come to earth – it won’t be good news then.

(Now let’s pause for a second and realize – God governing, ruling, and reigning you and me – is the subject of the Sermon on the Mount, and the parameters for the Beatitudes.

- When He says, “Blessed Are...” He is speaking of people that have actually submitted to being governed by God’s Word, governed by God’s Spirit, and are being Ruled by the Ruler.) – This is the Key to understanding the Beatitudes.

Jesus ministry was one of explanation, and proclamation, teaching, preaching, and Healing . . .

C. Healing – transformation

1.) “Healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.”

a.) It is in the heart, and work of Christ to “destroy the works of the devil.”

John said in 1st John 3:18 – “...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

- What are the works of the devil? – The Bible calls him the thief, and then says, “The thief cometh not but to kill, steal, and destroy.”

b.) All sickness’s and all diseases, are the result of living in a cursed world. – Only Christ by His Power can cancel the results and consequences of the curse.

*Note – Jesus has power over sickness because He has power over sin.

Alexander Maclaren said once “these healings were the first gifts the King gave to His subjects.” – (paraphrase))

- In fact one of the reasons that Jesus healed people then, was to demonstrate to them that He had power to forgive sin! Matthew 9:6 – “But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.”

- Christ’s ministry on earth was essentially a two-pronged ministry – a ministry of the Word of God, and a ministry of the Works of the Kingdom.

- As one writer states – This snapshot of Christ’s ministry on earth is a photograph of life in the Kingdom when it does come.

- A king that banishes diseases and devils . . .

*Note – Now all of that being said, this is the most basic description of the ministry of Jesus while He was on this earth . . . Teaching, Preaching, Healing . . . or Explanation, Proclamation, and Transformation . . .

*Note – The second thing that the scriptures give us in the framework and background of Christ’s message, is the multitude of people that He was speaking to.

II. The Multitude of Sorrow

*Note – When Matthew begins to take pen in hand and tell us about the crowds that were gathering, he didn’t give us the

count of the people, he gave us the “kinds” of people, or more yet, the kinds of things in the backgrounds of these people.

- Every person has a story and there were three kinds of stories in the backgrounds of the people that Jesus was ministering too.

A. The Sick – the diseased

1.) vs 24 – “they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with diverse diseases.”

*Note – Note something here. This is not a “moral” or “spiritual” evaluation of these people, this was merely a statement of fact.

- Sickness in general is a bona fide result of the fact of sin. While it is true that some sins have inherent sickness built into them, not all sickness is a symptom of personal sin.

- Sickness in general is a fingerprint of fallen-ness –

- What does that mean?

a.) Many of these people didn’t ask, cause, or initiate the sicknesses in their lives.

b.) Many of these people may have caused the sicknesses in their lives by carelessness, or by outright sinfulness.

*Nonetheless – of the people that Jesus ministered to that day, some would have been in their condition by their own fault, some would have been in their condition not by their own fault.

- BUT ALL where there in their condition by SOMEONE’s Fault. – Theirs, or Adams.

- All that Jesus has come to do and fix, and help rests at the feet of someone.

B. The Satanic – the deviled

1.) “and those that were possessed with devils.”

a.) the term possessed means “seized” – they were literally “seized by Satan.”

b.) These were people that Satan had confiscated their self-control, and mental control, and behavioral freedom...

- This is the condition in which a spiritual being takes control of a human’s faculties.

*Note – I do not know if someone who was demon possessed, and Satan controlled, is aware of it at the time. I do know that there are those after Christ freed them from their possessor, they were grateful and humbled by Christ’s work.

- Mary Magdalene - Mark 16:9 – tells us that Jesus had cast 7 devils out of her.

(Preacher, is there such a thing as demon possession today? Of course there is . . . what do you think the coming Anti-Christ is going to be . . . he is going to be the “devil-incarnate.” – He will be the chiefest of demons in the basest of men.

2.) I’ve been to the Holocaust museum in Israel, and it is my personal opinion that Adolf Hitler was a man possessed . . .

*Note – The fact is that we live in a world filled with depraved men, and demonic beings. That will not be the case when the Kingdom comes and Jesus reigns.

C. The Saddened – the defeated

1.) Note the term “torments”

a.) – “Basanos” –

it is the idea of being “on bottom” – in a positive sense, our word “basic” is related to it’s root.

*Note – It occurs 3 times in the New Testament and each time it is translated “torment.” – It is the concept of “going to the bottom.” – and the “torment of being on bottom”

*Note – In short – this term torments is not a reference to physical suffering – but to the effects of physical suffering, of being totally on bottom.

2.) Sickness and disease often have a debilitating effect on the heart and mind of men and women . . .

- sometimes some people seem to take it on the chin and grin (never showing what is actually on the inside of them.)

- sometimes some people rest in complete and total confidence in the Lord Jesus.

- sometimes some people are categorically defeated by unmerciful disease... and that is the description of the people in these crowds.

*note – More times than not the greatest problem people deal with is not physical pain on the outside – but the effects of the physical pain on the inside.

- Solomon wrote in Proverbs 18:14 – “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

- Let me tell you about someone who is totally defeated –

1.) That are saturated with sadness

2.) They are smothering in helplessness

3.) They are sitting flat in hopelessness

- They are at the end on the bottom

Now – Let’s sum up this crowd

- They were a Sick people – Diseased

- There was among them Satanic people – Deviled

- They were a Sad people – Defeated

*Note – It was this kind of people, these crowds of multitudes that heard Jesus preach, listened to Jesus teach, and yielded to Jesus healing...

- It was this kind of people that Message of Christ would resonate the most with.

III. The Message of Happiness – “Blessed Are. . .”

5:1-3 – “And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

*Note – When Jesus took a summary view of the crowd, He preached a summary sermon for all who would listen.

A. Is For Those Willing to Hear

1.) “He went to a mountain, and when He was set, His disciples came to Him.”

*Note – It is worth the note that Jesus did not proclaim to them the happiness of heaven “where they were” but where “He was.”

- He healed them where they were . . . He pronounced Happiness where He was.

a.) “disciples” came to Him.

(1) mathaytas – a pupil, a learner

*Note – Among the multitudes of people that Jesus had explained, proclaimed, and healed throughout Galilee there may have very well been some that went home – they did not go to the mountain where Jesus was.

- On this day, for those multitudes, whoever wanted more of Jesus, had to go to the mountain of Jesus to hear the message of Jesus.

- Jesus had come to them, ministered to them, and showed Himself to them . . . now whoever wanted Him . . . had to go to Him.

- whoever did not go to Jesus that day – did not get the message that day – and may never have.

B. Is Good To Those Hearing for their Will

*Note – It is one thing to be willing to hear, it is another thing to be hearing for the sake of your will.

1.) “Blessed” are.

a.) Makarios - “happiness”

10 times, the scriptures record Jesus declaration of Happiness! (9 hear and once in the book of Acts)

2.) There was no greater a word to land on the ears of a defeated people, than the possibility that there could actually be some “happiness” for them.

a.) He had taught them scriptures

b.) He had healed their maladies

c.) Hope was rising – Jesus was announcing to them that His kingdom was not merely about “surviving” but “thriving!”

John 10:10 – “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

For most of that crowd that day, the best news they would ever hear was just about surviving . . . but that was not what Jesus would pronounce – He would pronounce a thriving, happiness that was not just permitted by heaven, but was provided by it.

Conclusion: - The “happiness” that Jesus expounded upon that day were not the conditions for getting into the kingdom of heaven – the happiness that Jesus expounded upon that

day were the “conditions” of people who are in the kingdom of heaven.

- These “Beatitudes” are the “qualities of those who are personally, actually, and willfully under the rule and the reign of Jesus Christ by having surrendered to Him in faith.

When I was a boy in Sunday School and Children’s Church – one of the songs we used to sing was “Happiness is to be forgiven, living a life that’s worth the living, taking the trip that leads to heaven happiness is the Lord.”