

Blessed Are You . . .

Jesus is making waves. He healed on the Sabbath in Jerusalem. Then His disciples picked grain of the Sabbath, and He healed a man on another Sabbath. How could His opponents not see their hypocrisy and lack of mercy? Yes, if you want to be in Jesus' kingdom, your righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Note: I've enjoyed and recommend Mark E. Moore's "The Chronological Life of Christ." Some of my comments can be found in his material by coincidence (he's not the only one making such observations articulated in his material), and other times, I've leaned on his accurate and helpful observations. He's done an excellent job making 1st-century culture and practices available.

Events that occur between the Sabbath controversies and choosing the 12:

- Jesus retreats by the lake with His disciples. Many come from all over (except Samaria) to Him to be healed. He taught from a boat because the crowds were crushing in on Him.

The Twelve Apostles (Luke 6:12-19)

- Jesus officially calls His 12 apostles.
 - These men played a specific role that carried a unique authority. They were special messengers of Jesus or ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). They were sent out by Jesus.
 - It is interesting how Peter is always listed first in such "lists." Peter had the honor of presenting the gospel to the Jews for the first time after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 2) and the first Gentile convert around 10 years later (Acts 10). He did not hold authority over the other apostles (Matthew 18:18; John 20:23; Galatians 2:11-14).
 - It is a sober reminder that Judas' ultimate betrayal was not forgotten (oddly, the only outsider not from Galilee, but Judea).
 - These men (minus one) would serve as the foundation of the church.
 - These men would learn from Jesus and continue the gospel message after His departure.
 - Let's take note of how Jesus prayed all night before His call. Jesus does not keep God in the dark concerning His plans because He and the Father are one. They are in constant connection. Truly, Jesus looked to the Father before taking a step.
 - If we see Jesus as the Father, it will result in prayer at every turn. The world will benefit from seeing such faith. Note: **The goal is not to be seen but to speak to God because He has seen us.** His love and grace comfort us and bring us to our knees.
- Everyone in the surrounding area hears of Jesus, comes to learn from Him, and is healed. Those with unclean spirits were being healed, and the crowd sought to touch Him to be healed.
 - Is this the same event as Matthew 5-7? That passage states He was on a mountain, while this says He was on a plain. Matthew says He sat, while Luke says He stood. Matthew's account is also much longer than Luke's. Matthew uses more "spiritual"

language (see the beatitudes). Yet, both have Jesus entering Capernaum afterward. Either (1) Luke's account is different, and we're simply learning that Jesus taught this message more than once, which wouldn't seem odd. (2) Luke's is a shortened version of Matthew's. Perhaps it was still on the mountain but on a level portion. Also, we may be making too much of the "sitting/standing" difference. Perhaps He did both, or we're taking it too literally.

Blessed Are You (20-26)

- Instead of comparing these with Matthew's account, I'd like to look at them as a whole.
 - "Blessed" is to be "fortunate/happy." Like all passages, we look at the entire context and point to understand its meaning. Life doesn't leave us feeling "happy" all the time. However, we are reminded that we are most fortunate, having been favored by God because of our faith in Him. This brings joy and peace that anchor us through life's storms. Perhaps this was directed at His true disciples in the crowd who were among non-disciples? So, blessed are you . . .
 - Who are poor - yours is the kingdom of God.
 - Who are hungry now - you will be satisfied.
 - Who weep now - you shall laugh.
 - When people hate you - your reward is great in heaven.
 - "Woe" represents pain or displeasure. "It's an expression of shame and pity." Horror. Typically followed by a consequence. Perhaps this was directed at those who were in the crowd but not His disciples? So, woe to you . . .
 - Who are rich - you have received your consolation.
 - Who are full now - you shall be hungry.
 - Who laugh now - you shall mourn and weep.
 - When all people speak well of you - their fathers did to the false prophets.
- A very "now" or "later" point is being made. Not to say that we can't find peace and joy now, but everything will be fully realized after this life ends. Those blessed by God will someday experience complete salvation, joy, and peace. Those who seek immediate gratification will suffer a rude awakening. They will learn the hard way that their temporary happiness had eternal consequences. Let's have an accurate expectation of life and respond accordingly. You can strive to make this world your prize, but you will forfeit an eternal home with God. Having a realistic view of our life and commitment to forgo worldly pleasures is deliberate on our part. So, just because a person is loved by the masses as they smile and laugh their way to the bank . . . doesn't mean they're on the righteous road. Their road has an abrupt and terrifying end. All smiles and laughs fade. They'll finally acknowledge they've been spiritually bankrupt, and the one who loved them before they were born will be unreachable forever more. Enter the room of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- Try to imagine the crowd and what they were experiencing at that time. This is about the kingdom, and there is no kingdom without people. At that time, they were experiencing miraculous healing and profound truths. Yet, they will experience hunger before long, sadness, disappointment, and persecution even if they decide to follow Jesus. Indeed, in the crowd were people ready to enter the kingdom while others required more soul-searching. And so it could be today - there's always the possibility of having a mixed bag. We have to get our hearts and minds straightened out before we can live a righteous life.

Love Your Enemies (27-36)

- This is for those "who hear." Who we are will be known by our thoughts and actions. When God is put to the side and out of our hearts and minds, we tend to be benefit-driven. I benefit from your love, so I love you. I pray for those who ask for blessings for me. I strike those who strike, cling to what I have from those who would take, and do to others as I see fit because I can't count on them doing good to me. The problem? It's the way of the sinner. It's all conditioned upon others being "good enough" or if they benefit me. God benefits people, and people are ungrateful and evil. God is merciful to an unmerciful people.
- Again, we need to have a realistic expectation. You will have selfish, self-centered people in the world. How will we respond? Why would we respond in a positive manner? Our struggle is justifying our actions when these opportunities arise. We hear someone's sob story and then justify their cold reactions or lack of mercy. "Yep, I see why you did that." More of an "eye for an eye" response. Or they don't retaliate, but they are certainly not praying for this enemy or helping them out. Have you ever helped an enemy while they still view you as an enemy? Brethren, if we can't do this in little ways, why would we think we'll rise to the occasion when a big challenge comes our way?

- **Brief Pause For Application:**

- Jesus likely had a mixed crowd: those who hear vs. those who don't. **Disciples vs. observers/spectators.** Which one are you?
- These principles are only appreciated when lived out. Think about individuals who are humble in all areas of life. Remember moments when they put others first and acted contrary to the norm. Then, ask, "When do I live this out? Would anyone think of me?" What are we contributing to the world, brethren? This flies in the face of a "consumer" driven mentality. Where are our rights in these passages? What do we get out of it? Jesus is getting to the core of who we should be. "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" was the message. We have to change our mind. Jesus was breaking down worldly mindsets to produce citizens of the Kingdom.
- Do you think we would have comforted Jesus if He said, "You know, that last night when I washed the apostle's feet . . . it took everything in Me to touch Judas. But, I remembered it was the last time I had to." Would we have said, "We understand Lord. After all, He betrayed you." Or do you think Jesus was more likely thinking, "I'm feel heartbroken right now, because it's the last time I get to touch Judas."?

Judging Others (37-42)

- Okay, let's get this out of the way. Did Jesus make judgments? Yes - keep reading. But was His purpose to save or condemn? Are we to make judgments? Of course we do (and everyone does). What's the point? Where are our hearts? Do we hear that God will consider our mercy before He gives mercy?
- Hypocrites. This is the point. "So no one should ever correct or approach another?" No, that won't harmonize with other passages. But if you're blind, what made you think you can direct another's steps?
- Such people also tend to be self-righteous. They always see the little problem in their brother's life when they have a catastrophic problem. Notice that Jesus criticizes those with

major issues who judge those with smaller issues. If one were to look at himself, he would put down the stone and walk away.

The Fruit We Bear (43-45)

- "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance" was John's message. My dad used to say, "I'm not a judge, just a fruit inspector." Now, we must inspect ourselves before looking at any other tree. Notice how the passage begins with "for," which is connected to the previous teaching. "What do I look for?" Look for what you do (or don't do), and that will say it all. We cannot contain what we think/believe on the inside. Eventually, it will be revealed
 - As a side note, Matthew's account connects this to false prophets. Be wise. Talk is cheap - pay attention to what a person says/does over time. Brethren, if we see a diseased tree, protect yourself.

Who's The Builder (43-45)

- Do you see a common theme? What you say vs. what you do. Why don't we listen and follow the "blueprint?" Because we genuinely believe our vision is better. We don't trust Jesus. We don't see eye to eye.
 - Some trust in Jesus. They find that their life will weather all storms. This is Jesus' wisdom and not ours. We pay attention, trust, and build.
 - Those who ignore Jesus think their plan will work, but our plan has no foundation. It comes from our own wisdom, which is flawed and weak. So, life occurs, and our lives are torn apart.