

It's our final week in our summer sermon series. We're closing off our time in the Beatitudes today, although not completely because our Fall sermon series is going to bounce off of this. Next week we're having a combined service with Living Word church, and then that first Sunday of September we'll start a new series.

And if you were here last week, you'll have heard that I changed the title of the series again—which I promise I won't do very often. But that was honestly because—and I think I explained this—I myself have felt my mind transformed in this summer series.

Of course that's always the hope, that all of us experience the movement of the Spirit and God speaking to us when we open His word and dig into it. But I don't think I've ever had it before where I actually felt my perspective change on a particular passage as we went along.

And that's perhaps because of the uniqueness of the Beatitudes; they continue to speak and expand our imaginations of what 'logic' looks like in the Kingdom of Jesus. We spent *ten weeks* in twelve verses, going basically one verse at a time. And there's so much beauty in doing that because we realize the depth of what is present to us in Scripture.

What I originally thought was going to be a 'How then shall we live?' kind of sermon series turned into a cry for Christ's Kingdom to come near and reign in us, which then manifested into a deep longing for all of us to embody these verses and live them out.

And that's so much more than just a guidebook for living, even if it is living like Jesus. It's an invitation to invite the Kingdom to live in us.

I truly feel like we've been invited to sit at the Teacher's feet in this series, and I hope that you've been able to feel that too. That Jesus has been opening up His word to you in perhaps some new ways and inviting you to see His Kingdom in a fresh light.

I hope these words stick with you, so that in your regular interactions with others, and in whatever situations you're in, you draw them to mind—or even better, the Spirit draws them to mind. That we don't just memorize them and consider them, but we enfold them in—so much so that they become part of who we are.

That the Kingdom of Jesus becomes part of who we are. It becomes, really, all of who we are. It reigns in us. The logic of the Kingdom governs and defines how we think and interact.

Last week I posed this question: What if having a 'Beatitude impact' was the litmus test for us as Christians to really gauge how integrated we are in the realities of the Kingdom of heaven? What if we sought to be a Beatitude church, seeking to have a Beatitude impact? Not just to look like Jesus but to *think* like Him?

That's what we're going to talk about today. We're going to recite our verses together from memory, and then we're going to talk about what it looks like to have a Beatitude impact. So let's read the text: **Matthew 5:1-10.**

As I was writing the sermon for this week, I was struck—just thinking over the series—how much of our faith journey is transforming how we understand Scripture and how Scripture speaks about the Kingdom.

Again, we can't just memorize these verses; we need to let them change the way we think. We talk about having common sense; and here we're talking Kingdom sense.

A number of weeks back, I quoted the verse from Romans 12: *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* And in order to have a Beatitude impact, our entire pattern of thinking needs to be transformed by—what I'm calling today—a Beatitude logic.

Jesus—at least what we see Him doing and saying in the Gospels—presents us with a completely different picture of what is 'logical' or common sense looks like in His Kingdom.

Henri Nouwen once said this:

"Remember the big crowd, five loaves, and two fish (Matt. 14:15-21)? Jesus said, "Give them something to eat." The disciples responded, "Lord, five loaves, two fish, big crowd? It doesn't fit." Jesus said, "Give them something to eat." And he said, "Throw out your nets." They did and caught fish, but not just as many as they needed. They caught so many their nets could not hold all the fish.

"It is the same with the crowd. Jesus didn't just want to be sure everyone got a little piece of bread. There were twelve big baskets of leftovers! And the boat was so full of fish that Simon didn't know what to do with them.

"Jesus breaks right through our normal logic. He is moving all of reality to the kingdom. Suddenly the fishermen were no longer living in the logic of the world. They had entered the logic of God's house, which is beyond all human logic. They had entered a whole new world."

That seems to be what Jesus is doing here in the Beatitudes. He's entering us into a whole new world, a whole new way of thinking. Where His provision is enough. His affirmation is enough. His comfort is enough.

Every Beatitude verse that we've looked at this summer is basically asking us that question: "Is Jesus enough?"

Because what is required of us when we want to be poor in spirit? Poverty of spirit implies that you know you need Jesus in order to do anything that even remotely looks like the Kingdom.

What is required of us to mourn in a way that ushers in the Kingdom? A dependency on Jesus as our only comfort.

What is required of us to be meek, to hunger for righteousness, to be merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker, and suffer persecution? All of these imply that Jesus is enough for us.

And not just that He is enough, but that we want Him to be *more* than enough. We want Him to be everything. We want Him to define everything for us.

We want Him to literally be Lord of everything.

The author of Hebrews writes it like this: “*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw of everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith,*” (Heb. 12:1-2).

Last week we sang the song, ‘Hymn of Heaven,’ and one of the verses goes like this:

*And on that day, we join the resurrection  
And stand beside the heroes of the faith (the great cloud of witnesses)  
With one voice, a thousand generations  
Sing, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain”...*

We spoke about the persecuted last week, and how—so often—they exemplify for us what courageous faith looks like, what truly sacrificing everything for Christ looks like.

Many of them are now a part of that great cloud of witnesses, the heroes of the faith, who one day we get to join, and with one voice sing ‘Worthy’ to the Lamb who is on the throne.

This is literally what we were created to do. To long for His Lordship.

And Jesus is reminding us of that longing when we read through these ‘Blessed are’ statements. Because they just don’t look like how we normally operate.

Our inclination is always to fight back—in some capacity—or to resist the things that we don’t like, that hurt us, that cause us anger. And so it actually takes far more courage to live in *this* logic than it does to live in the world’s logic.

What do I mean by this. Well, consider this scenario, or something like it.

At your place of employment, you find out that your co-worker has been complaining about you to some of the other employees. He or she doesn't appreciate your leadership style, your work ethic, and it's very clear they in general don't respect you—and you're not sure why.

But it's deeply frustrating because they are bringing their woes against you to other employees. And you start to feel like everyone is now talking about you behind your back.

Now, how does Beatitude logic address this situation?

Blessed are the poor in spirit. I'm needy.

Blessed are those who mourn. I grieve this situation and bring that grief to you, Jesus.

Blessed are the meek. I'm not perfect. And so I probably haven't always been the greatest co-worker. Maybe I offended them somehow?

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. My own wisdom is flawed and empty, and so Jesus, I need your Spirit to help me address this.

Blessed are the merciful. Can I show them grace even though they don't deserve it?

Blessed are the pure in heart. Can I push out and throw off everything that might hinder me from addressing this in a Kingdom logic way?

Blessed are the peacemakers. What would it look like for me to seek peace with this person?

Blessed are those who are persecuted. If peace can't be established and they continue to hurt me, can I still love them?

You see how illogical this train of thought is? It's *so long*. It takes forever. There's so many steps. And really, it's so much easier to just go and report your co-worker to the higher authorities. It's so much simpler to just defend yourself when others bring up the criticisms.

It's much more logical to resent the person, report them, and let someone else deal with them.

Now, hear me out: in some severe situations, reporting someone is necessary. I'm not saying that we don't need to follow the appropriate channels of discipline or even justice.

But the Kingdom of Christ summons us to live with *His* logic in mind. So we always start here. Yes, it's the harder path, and it takes more courage to approach conflictual situations *like this* than to follow through with how we feel, and to lead with our frustration rather than a Kingdom logic.

But what if, after some time of practicing this kind of logic, this way of thinking started to come naturally to us? What if, eventually, it was the case that the Spirit would allow this to become common sense? What if this Kingdom logic became our default response? What would change?

For one, I don't think we would allow others to have so much control over how we think. Because our primary concern would be hungering and thirsting for relationship with Jesus.

And secondly, I think we would be genuinely surprised by what is actually possible, and what we are capable of, when the Spirit truly has reign over us and over how we think.

Just this past week, I read a short article about a man in Sydney named Danny Abdallah who lost three children to a drunk driver back in 2020. And he's just begun to speak publicly about why he chose to forgive the man, Samuel Davidson.

In the news documentary, he explained that his decision was rooted not only in his faith but also in the desire to save his marriage and support his surviving children.

In other words, he knew that holding onto his anger would only cause more harm. And that hating his enemy would never free him to move on. That was common sense to him.

"Do I pour bitterness, anger, and revenge," he said, "or love, compassion, and forgiveness?"

Now, apparently Abdallah actually visited Davidson in prison, and during a very emotional meeting between the two, Davidson expressed deep remorse for what he had done.

Which is great, but if we're honest, it feels quite trivial in light of the hurt he's caused, right? No apology will ever resolve what he did. I struggled to even include this story because I can't imagine this happening to my own family.

But here's the thing. Davidson's apology isn't what solicits Abdallah's forgiveness. It wasn't a necessary requirement in order for this interaction to happen. Davidson's apology was simply step one in his own journey towards a Beatitude logic. He knows he has caused great harm and is demonstrating—in his apology—a kind of poverty of spirit.

What Abdallah offered to him, without requiring *anything* ahead of time, was telling Davidson that he had *already* forgiven him. *That's* what changed Davidson's life. Receiving something—receiving mercy—that he knows he doesn't deserve.

"It meant that I've got a second chance at life," Davidson said. "He's given me everything."

Why? Why has it given him everything? Because Beatitude logic—no matter how difficult the situation—always has the capacity to free both the oppressed and the oppressor. That's the power of Jesus' words. That's the power of His Kingdom logic.

We are not free when we refrain from offering meekness and mercy in order to hold on to anger and resentment. Those are the very things that the writer of Hebrews says to *throw off*. Because they are the very things that keep us from embracing a Beatitude way of thinking.

They are the very things that keep us from embracing Jesus Himself. Again, He's never asked us to do anything that He hasn't already done Himself.

Terrible situations will happen. People will be hurt. Even in the places that should have the most Kingdom light, people will be hurt. People do get hurt, on the reg. It's inevitable. We are messy, broken people.

And so loving our enemies means loving them even when we don't want to, even when *they* don't want us to. Even when they don't want to love us back. Even when they—in no way—are seeking to live according to a Beatitude logic.

It doesn't matter. This is what Jesus asks of us. To be transformed by the renewing of our minds. In the Spirit, Beatitude logic has the capacity to transform not only our relationship with Christ but our relationship with everyone else.

*This* is what renews our minds. The realities of the Kingdom of heaven.

So we're going to finish this series by reciting the verses one more time. And if you know them, I encourage you to speak them from memory. Otherwise feel free to use the insert in your bulletin to follow along. Let these words sink in.

**(Recite Matt. 5:1-10.)**