

Matthew 19-06-02a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a pleasure and a privilege to gaze into your visages and to telepathically greet those who are joining us from a distance. We will continue this morning our study of Matthew chapter 5. We're in the post beatitude phase where we are looking at salt and light.

We'll do a quick run-up through the first 12 verses and then pick up our study. We've done the salt, fixing to do the light, and then into the theme of this particular sermon which is in the following three verses 17 through 20. This introductory section provides the background and the setting for the great gem of Jesus theme which is something we will look at in the second session this morning.

Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study and then we'll begin. Father, we are so grateful and it is such a source of motivation and encouragement to us to know that there are believers who share our enthusiasm and our recognition of the importance of our lives before you, the power of your word, the presence of your Holy Spirit, the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all of the great potentials that are ours in the time that you've granted to us on this earth to make preparation for the future. We thank you for your many gifts, your watch care, preservation, provision, and for the conversation that we enjoy that builds us up and allows us to share the truth with one another.

We ask your blessing on our fellowship and on our study this morning. May God the Holy Spirit find our hearts ready and quick to learn and fruitful in the sense of remembrance and applying these things in the opportunities that present themselves in the days ahead. We pray that the Lord Jesus will be glorified in our worship and in our instruction, in our fellowship.

We pray all these things in his name. Amen. Well, as a quick review just to set the context here, Jesus has seen multitudes, and seeing the multitudes, he decides to thin the multitude.

He could have just said, seeing the multitudes, he opened his mouth and began to speak. But instead, he went up on a mountain. I don't know which mountain.

Several have been suggested as the Mount of Beatitudes. There's one that's called now over in Israel. But he goes up, and when he was seated, his disciples came to him.

These are the ones who are dedicated, who have been following. This isn't an aspiring disciple. This isn't a potential disciple.

This isn't someone who hopes to become a disciple. It is someone who is already a

follower. These individuals have established their name, disciple, by past behavior.

These words are for those who have already passed that first phase of interest and deciding to set aside other things and spend time. Remember, if you think about it, people had daily lives. You have a daily life.

I have a daily life. I wake up in the morning, and there's an almost infinite number of things that need to be done, can be done, ought to be done, must be done, better be done. And just as an example, imagine that you hear that somebody you really appreciate is going to be nearby and is going to be there Tuesday afternoon this coming week.

Well, in order to be there, you might have to move some things around. You tend to think of biblical times, people were just kind of sitting around, you know, making an occasional trip to the well. And there are children to be cared for.

There are jobs to be performed. There is a great agricultural effort going on that is constant and ongoing, and time is spoken for. So for multitudes to gather, they have made an exception.

They have set aside time on this one particular day to look for Jesus. I hear that there's a miracle worker. Look, here's a guy that used to be lame, and now he's not.

Someone that used to be blind, and now he's not. He was in a nearby town. This man is going to be nearby.

I'm going to set aside for the moment and that's one thing. But to be a disciple, somebody has done this many times. They have been setting aside time on many days for many weeks, perhaps months, to go and sit at Jesus' feet and be where he is and listen to what he says.

So it's no small thing when it says he was seated, his disciples came to him. These are people who have established a new priority in their lives, and it is to be where Jesus is, hearing what he has to say. Hopefully this is a description of us in the sense that we make regular effort to set aside time for our spiritual life, which is not only instruction.

That's a key component, but not the key component. The key component of your spiritual life is not what you hear, is it? What is the key component? It is what you apply. It's one thing to go to school.

It's something else to be able to pass the test. And you can listen to the teacher all day long, but if you can't get those problems solved and arrive at correct answers, it's kind of all for naught. Well, that's what a disciple is, and his disciples came to him.

These words are for people who are serious, who have made a priority, who have

demonstrated that priority by setting aside time and effort and established that as a pattern. In fact, Dr. Krizzle has a sermon. He always came up with these catchy titles.

I don't have that gift, which is why I seldom give any title at all. I leave that to others. But he has a sermon called The Pattern Disciple.

The Pattern Disciple. Well, pattern is really inherent in being a disciple. It's something that you do.

So then he begins, once these disciples come to him, he opens his mouth and teaches them. He taught them saying, and then we have these eight statements. And there's actually a nice set of seven as he begins four of them.

The first four, if you look at it, you can just what I do in my Bible is put a little, you know, the brace mark, the pointy bracket, they call it sometimes I will group things and label them out by the side. But these first four are toward God. So blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, blessed are the meek and blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. These are God word attributes. These are things that are observed and known and rewarded by God.

And I, in passing will note, probably should have noted this earlier, but I'll note it now better late than never. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Every place you see heaven in this chapter, it is plural.

And, and to get a little bit of a fresh take on this for your mental eyes, you can read this, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. That's what it says throughout. Tois Ouranois is plural, kingdom of the heavens.

And it just helps it to fall a little more crisply and freshly on our ear maybe to, to read it that way sometimes. And of course, poverty of spirit is recognition of need. If you're poor, it pretty much goes without saying that you're needy.

It's almost a tautology to say the poor and needy. If you're needy, you're poor. If you're poor, you're needy, but what kind of poverty? Well, it is recognition that in and of ourselves, we do not have the ability to attain righteousness.

All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We fade as a leaf. Our iniquities carry us away.

Our iniquities separate between us and our God, our sins hide his face from, from us. And we are inadequate and incapable and have not the resources to solve our problems. That's poor in spirit.

It's everybody is actually poor in spirit, but like the Pharisees, you know, if you were blind, you would have no sin. But because you say we see Jesus told them your sin

remains, it is failing to acknowledge poverty in spirit. So everybody is poor in spirit.

Does this beat attitude apply to everybody? Because everybody's poor in spirit. It is those who recognize are conscious of that poverty and have gone to the outside source that can make provision and fill the lack and meet the need. So we, we are now always have been, and always will be poor in the sense of our own spirit.

It is only that which God supplies that enables and restores and, and gives us any, any riches of the spirit at all. But those who recognize that poverty and look to God for its remedy now possess. It doesn't say theirs will be the kingdom of the heavens.

Does it say theirs is, it is a current possession. Blessed are those who mourn. And this again is not only sort of a flippant and casual acknowledgement that, well, of course, God's standards are so high.

I couldn't meet those, but mourning is you are sorrowful about failure. You're sorrowful about sinfulness. You're sorrowful about corruption.

You're sorrowful about injury and failure. And this makes a difference to you. And it is something regrettable and something that you want to overcome.

So this is a reflection of humility, which is the next blessed are the meek. And when it says they shall be comforted, blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted. Again, some, sometimes this is all cast as being fulfilled in the future kingdom, being fulfilled in the resurrection, being fulfilled in the millennium, depending on what context you apply it in.

But really those who are mourning, this is a present active participle. This is right now, you're mourning. Interesting thing about mourning.

I knew a couple that was in their eighties. They had lost a child 60 years earlier, many happy experiences, many happy times, many smiles, really good sense of humor, especially on the part of the husband, but lots of ups, lots of downs, lots of normal course of life, but returning to the subject of the loss of that child in infancy always brought back a shadow. That mourning never went away.

So when you say blessed are those who mourn, this isn't shuffling around with the downcast expression all the time, but on certain subjects, certain things in view, there is mourning. When we are bereaved, anytime you think of that bereavement, there is going to be this moment of refreshed pain and loss and mourning, but it's not pervasive. It's not all encompassing.

It's not constant over the long term. We learn to renegotiate the terms of our existence and we find occasions to dwell on other things, to be involved in other activities, but it's never going to be a happy subject. Well, blessed are they who mourn.

Christians are not supposed to be mournful and downcast. The Jews who originally heard this sermon on the Mount were not supposed to, well, no more smiles for me. The pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas before W.A. Criswell was George W. Truitt, and he was there upwards of 40 years, but in the 1940s, he was out hunting with the chief of police of Dallas and a couple of other guys, and he stumbled over a root and his shotgun went off and blew the chief of police's head off.

And they said from that point forward, nobody ever saw George Truitt smile again. He was something of a formal personage in any case, but he never cracked a joke. He never got humorous, never.

I mean, it was a sort of a permanent scar and loss and he never got over it. And something like that, I mean, only people who've been through something like that could speak. But we all have regrets.

We all have bereavements and losses and they have their place. It's part of what makes us who we are. Our experience defines who we are.

Our past experiences mold us and shape us and educate us and inform us in so many ways. This is the tragedy, of course, of losing your memory in later life is you lose who you are. We're defined by our relationships.

We're defined by what we've been through and our highs and our lows. And so when it says blessed are those who mourn, this is again, in these four, this is before the Lord God and we're not mournful every time we come before God. We're not tear streaked and sorrowful, but on certain subjects, it always, a little shadow passes in front of the bright noonday sun.

It's sobering. It makes us thoughtful and it makes us mournful. There is such a thing as godly sorrow.

I don't see scripture connecting it to forgiveness of sin, but it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Just because you don't have to be sorry to be forgiven doesn't mean there isn't such a thing as genuine godly biblical sorrow. And that's what Jesus is talking about.

And this is, as I said, a participle, those who are mourning. And on that subject, we're always mourning. You can always think back.

All of us have things we wish we hadn't done, failures we wish we hadn't perpetrated, pain we wish we hadn't caused, situations and episodes. Anytime you think of them, it's not happy times. And in that sense, it is constant.

It is a present source of sorrow anytime you return to that area or that subject or that situation. And that's the present participle. It's part of us.

I've got a, this is trivial, trivial example, because I don't want to use serious examples. I was in a high school play and it called for a gunshot at some point off stage. So a girl brought a little keychain cap gun.

And this is back before safety. I don't know if OSHA, I don't know what was going on. But this little keychain pistol had brass gunpowder cartridges and they were potent.

I mean, this thing would make a gunshot as loud as cranking off a 38, which is why we were using it for the play. Well, I was, my character was not on the stage at the time. And so it was my job to make this sound effect.

And so the girl handed it to me, said, here's two or three of these little cartridges. And I loaded one in there and I was goofing with it. Well, it went off and it went off while my left index finger was over the muzzle and it blew a big chunk of flesh right out of my finger.

And oh my, did that hurt? It hurt a lot. And it blasted bits of spent gunpowder into my fingertip that are there to this day. And it destroyed my, it destroyed my fingerprint in that place.

And I don't know if you can see it, but there's still an indentation there to this day because, you know, you blow things away. They don't just regenerate. And my, my, my.

One of the more painful experiences I've ever had. That nearly twisting my thumb off with a half inch power drill. Same hand, by the way.

But the scar is there. The pain has long since left, but the fingerprints permanently damaged. They ever look up my kindergarten fingerprints when I commit a crime, they're not going to be able to match them because this one doesn't look the same, but it's always there.

But I didn't have to wait for the kingdom to be comforted. When you are mourning, comfort comes even in the morning. The mourning may continue.

It's a present participle, but this is the point. The comfort is not in the by and by. They shall be comforted in their mourning.

They will be comforted as the mourning continues. It doesn't say blessed are those who mourned yesterday because they got comforted and now the whole thing is over. The mourning is ongoing and so is the comfort.

They shall be comforted. There is a present comfort and there is a future comfort. In the restitution of all things, there's a much greater comfort.

There's restoration, there's renewal, there's reunion, there's all kinds of wonderful things that happen. There is freedom from our sinful nature. Tears are dried and so on.

But don't think that the comfort is all in the future. Jesus phrases this in such a way, and it's even more beautiful when you retrovert it into Aramaic. But blessed are those who are mourning or are mourners, present active participle.

Blessed are those who are mourners or are mourning. They shall be comforted. This is a near term.

Think of it this way. Look down at verse six, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. These are also present active participles.

Blessed are those in verse six who are hungering and are thirsting for righteousness. And you've got the same future tense in the next line for they shall be filled. If you are hungering and thirsting for righteousness, you're not waiting for the millennium or the future or the resurrection or the kingdom of the father or something to be filled because you are someone who hungers and you are someone who thirsts.

You are regularly filled. You look for it and God grants it. It's the identical construction.

It's the same idea. If you hunger and thirst for God and for his righteousness in this life and you find yourself filled on a regular basis, it doesn't mean that you stop thirsting and stop hungering. You're an ongoing hungerer and thirster, but you have regular deposits of righteousness.

You have regular fulfillments of that need and that desire, right? It's the same with the mourning. The comfort comes in the same way. It is in the midst of.

Doesn't mean you quit mourning. Doesn't mean you quit hungering and thirsting, but God fills and God comforts and God encourages along the way. And the only reason our hunger and thirst for righteousness is bearable is we get meals along the way.

And pretty soon I want to know more and I want to be back with the people of God. And I want to see and experience the righteousness of God that cleanses my soul and frees me from the corruption and the filth of the world and drives away the darkness that wants to creep in and overcome everything. I never lose hunger and thirst and you don't either for that.

But you have regular amelioration, remedy, amelioration. So that's the idea here. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

The word for earth there is G-E, gay. If you've ever seen these people with a perm, these women that are herbalists and want to talk about Gaia and mother earth and all that, that gay Gaia all comes from the same thing. They're into Celtic music and Save the Whales, all kinds of that.

Gaia and I mean, there's new age albums that are nothing but, you know, these frizzy

haired gals, you know, looking at a butterfly going by and thinking idealistic thoughts about, oh, I'm part of the feminine side of creation. And because of that, you know, conclusions are drawn. Gay, G-E.

I want to plant that word in your mind. And that's why I'm going to lengths to do it because we're going to see it as something Jesus is about to say this morning. And it's very important.

It's translated here, earth. And sometimes we just can't get our minds completely back in the day when these things were spoken and written. When we say earth, we've got a post-scientific planetary view.

You have a picture. When I say earth, especially if I put capital E on it, you're thinking view from the moon. Here's the blue marble.

Here's the view out the cockpit. Well, actually from the moon, it's kind of small, but, you know, people in orbit look back and the blue marble, you know, the clouds and earth, it's planet earth. It's the globe.

We think globally. We know about all of the continents, all the, we know the spheres. We know the seas and you think earth, you think the globe had a globe.

I was showing it to my sister the other day. I still got a nightlight globe. My folks got when I was a tiny child, hung on a little deal and globe earth.

When I think earth rep local, there it is. You know, it's got all the old countries on it. Still got the Congo, Belgian Congo, all of the old borders are still there.

Well, that's not what this word means. Doesn't mean globe. Doesn't mean planet.

Doesn't mean think about the continents and the seas. None of that. People didn't have that thought.

Didn't have that frame of reference. When you say the earth, gay, most of the time, it means land. It means the land.

They will inherit the land. Now let me be labor this for you just a little bit. And you can do this for yourself.

I'm going to do a little bit. You can do as much as you want. If you've got a Strong's or go online, Strong's is online now and gay is a Strong's number 1093.

But you can also look this up in the theological dictionary of the New Testament and get a treatment that will just humble you and bring you to your knees because it is so, so verbose. But in Strong's, the idea here is over and over again, it is land in the sense of a definite land, which is not named. So in Matthew 9.26, it talks about the word of him

went out through the whole land after Jesus does a miracle.

Same thing in verse 31, Matthew 9.31. In Mark 15.33, talking about the crucifixion and the three hours of darkness. And it says there was darkness over the whole land, not the whole earth, the whole land. There was darkness locally.

They wouldn't know about the whole earth. They couldn't talk to people in China or the city of Rome or the land of the Asians and Africans and the rest of them. They didn't know what was going on in Ethiopia, but there was darkness over the land everywhere in the immediate environs for a good long distance.

There was darkness. That's GE. In Acts chapter seven, verse three, Acts seven, four, talking about a foreign land.

It'd be pretty hard to have a foreign earth on the earth over and over again. You can look this up. It's often used for, and also if it says land of Israel or land of Egypt, it's the GE of Israel, the GE of Egypt, the land, the area.

It means an inhabited place. It speaks of habitation. The other word that's commonly translated earth or world is what you have further down in our context, which is cosmos.

And the cosmos is the arrangement, the civilization, the culture, or the order. GE speaks more of an area of habitation by man. Cosmos speaks more of the order that defines that.

It can be the order among people. It can be the order of day and night cycles or seasonal cycles or whatever. But the cosmos is just like cosmetics.

It means arrangement, order. And so the God of this world has blinded the minds. It's the God that permeates the way things work right now.

So that's important. And we're going to see it a little bit further down in a really interesting context. So these first four, the poor in spirit, this is recognition of our innate and inherent poverty.

Those who mourn, it makes a difference to you. Some people, oh yeah, I'm a rascal and I don't care. But we do.

And anytime we return to that subject, we find sorrow and soberness of heart. And the meek, these who are humble, meekness, I like the definition of it, that it is strength under control. In Greek, it is the word *praos*, which means mild, soft answer turns away wrath.

It doesn't make you weak to be self-controlled. You can be very powerful and be self-controlled, but it means mild. You are restrained.

It doesn't necessarily mean kicking the toe in the dirt and saying, aw shucks. And, oh, you know, I ain't no good. I ain't much.

And we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. And in that sense, we are incredibly valuable, but it is lack of pride that results in forceful action, that results in being the bull in the China shop and doing the wrong thing at the wrong time and hurting others and ourselves in the process. Meekness is largely a matter of restraint.

And if you have the ability to control the power that you have, sometimes it's the power to hurt. It's the power to wound. It's the power to lash out and, well, you've hurt my feelings.

I'm going to hurt your feelings. If you have the ability to rein in that which you are capable of doing, those people will inherit the earth. Why? Or inherit the land.

Why? Because you've been faithful in a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. If you've got the restraint to hold your tongue, if you've got the restraint to keep your temper, if you've got the restraint to not let things boil, if you've got the restraint to not let things drag you down, not let things buoy you too far up, not be reactive and be the thermometer that reflects the mood of the room.

You keep your head when all others are losing theirs. That's qualification and essential quality for leadership, right? Leadership in the church. Look at the list in Timothy and in Titus.

Restraint. Able to rule well his own household. Able to not aggravate his children.

That self-control qualifies for leadership. And inheriting the earth doesn't just mean possession. It also means oversight.

So these are things that are judged by God. Poverty of spirit, mourning, self-control, and the hunger and thirst for righteousness are things that are largely between us and the Lord. He's looking at it and evaluating it.

We do these things before him. Then the next three are lateral. They are next to each other.

You got to have somebody else there to be merciful. Tom Hanks with the soccer ball on the island can't really be merciful unless there's something to be merciful to. So this is lateral.

Blessed are the merciful. And this is just an adjective and it says they shall obtain mercy as you would have others do unto you. So do.

The golden rule idea. If you would like to be forgiven, forgive others. There is mercy for those who are merciful.

And this mercy often is in the sense of sympathy. It doesn't necessarily mean judicial mercy so much as compassionate mercy. God, by the way, is never called merciful in this sense.

This word, ELEMEN, which is E-L-E-E-M-O-N, but it's two different kinds of E there. So you have epsilon, lambda, epsilon, and then you have eta, which is so it's E-L-E-E-M-O-N or E-L-E-E-M-O-S, sympathetic and merciful. But in the New Testament, God is not ever called merciful because you have his mercy expressed in the Lord Jesus.

And you have more of the sense of judgment here. But what you do have, and this is perhaps the best place to see it, turn to Hebrews chapter two, verse 17, because this is the Lord Jesus. If we want to be this, we need to know how it works, right? So Hebrews two, verse 17, and this is a subject the author is going to return to in later chapters.

But he says, Jesus had to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ELEMEN, merciful. So what is the quality of this mercy? It's in things related to God and it is self-sacrificial.

He made propitiation by offering himself, right? So when Jesus says, blessed are the merciful, this is in the spiritual sense. This doesn't just mean, oh, I got out of my car and moved a turtle off the road, I'm merciful. Or I saw somebody with a flat and I helped them change it, I'm merciful.

This mercy is the quality that the Lord Jesus has in things pertaining to God, benefiting others by being sacrificial itself. It is an expression really of love. It's in the spiritual realm and it is sacrificial.

It benefits others at one's own expense. That's mercy as it is spoken of here. And just look at two 17 of Hebrews to see that quality.

One of the few other places in the New Testament that word is used. You also have the notion of pure in heart. And you say, well, how is pure in heart related to other people? You can find this in Ephesians, I'm sorry, in Hebrews chapter 12, verse 14.

You know it's going to get to 12 eventually. Hebrews 12, 14, the idea of pure in heart. Look at the beginning at verse 12, Hebrews 12, 12.

Therefore, in the light of all of the things that have been spoken of in chapter 11 and in the first part of chapter 12, whom the Lord loves, he chastens. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons. That's up in verse seven.

But then at 12, 12, therefore, it's always important to know, if you ever see therefore, go find out what the therefore is. Therefore, find out what preceded. So when he says, therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down and the feeble knees.

Well, in the light of what has just been communicated above, make straight paths for your feet. Strengthen the hands which hang down and the feeble knees and make straight paths for your feet. These weak hands and feeble knees, those are yours.

You got to work out. Make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

What is the reward for the pure in heart? They shall see God. So this purity of heart is in the idea of pursuing peace with all and the holiness, without which you won't see the Lord. This is operational purity.

This is purity in dealings with others. This is honesty. This is integrity.

This is character. This is reliability. This is your word being good.

You don't have to take an oath. Your yay is yay and your nay is nay. This is purity in your dealings with others.

He's talked about poverty of spirit and so on. And by the way, the word that's translated pure, this is just the Greek word that means clean, clean in heart. They shall see God.

Your heart is clean. Doesn't mean it doesn't get dirty, but you've got great skill at using soap and being cleansed to be clean, clean in heart. We'll see God.

And that righteousness, that operational righteousness is necessary. And the author of Hebrews, who I think is Paul says, if you haven't got that, you're not going to see the Lord. Then the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God.

And this is not Henry Kissinger diplomats. These are those, these are, you could translate this strife healers. It's Irene Pollo.

It's just the two words jam together. Peace and Pollo is to make or to do, but these are menders. When there is a schism, there's a division, there's a controversy, there's antagonism.

These are the people who quell the emotions. They calm people down. They help them to see reason.

They are menders of what is tearing, what is separating. They mend it. They, they glue it back together.

This is the makers of peace for they shall be called sons of God. Why would they be called sons of God? Turn to Colossians chapter one, verse 19. The whole first chapter of Colossians is just such a wonderful compendium of truth.

We've done Colossians once. I'm tempted to go back and do it again, but look at one 19. It pleased the father that in Christ, all the fullness should dwell and by him to reconcile all things to himself by him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

And you who were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works. Now he has reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in his sight. Look at the nature of the peacemaking of Christ.

In the same way that you look at the nature of the mercy of Christ, look at the peacemaking of Christ. This was sacrificial on his part. It's in the realm of spiritual things and it draws everyone closer together and closer to God.

That's it's not just any old piece. It is Colossians one 19 through 23 piece. You can be blameless and above reproach in his sight.

If indeed you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you heard preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul became a minister. And this is the dispensing of the healing balm of truth, biblical truth, spiritual truth into stressful situations where there is strife, there's discord, there is schism. This is what Paul did in Corinthians.

We saw that in the whole book of Corinthians, where there are wars and divisions among you. And what did Paul do at some cost to himself? Because he took a lot of abuse for this. You, you say I'm weak in your presence and have a squeaky voice and all the rest of it, but he poured truth into that wound at a cost to himself and that provided reconciliation.

This is what the son of God himself did for us. And because he is the son of God, when we follow in his steps and sacrificially attempt to heal divisions, if look, you can't decide, I mean, in a crude physical example, if two people were arguing over who should pay the bill and you didn't even eat the meal, but you say, I'll pay the bill so that there's no more wrangling and fighting, that, but in the spiritual sense to ease contention, peacemakers, what we call sons of God, because you're following in the Lord's footsteps in the same way that the merciful obtained mercy in following his steps. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

And you've come full circle in verse 10, back to verse three, because the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. And you get the idea that in the first sense, the poor in spirit are poor in spirit toward God. And they inherit, they have an inheritance in the heavens, in the kingdom of the heavens, same thing, those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.

And you turn a corner here in verse 10, because the first four largely looked at God. The

next three beatitudes looked at fellow believers. These are the ones to whom you can be merciful for profitably so, fruitfully so.

Your purity and heart that works itself out in honest dealings and dealings with integrity and that are upbuilding and that are a blessing to others, your clean heart, there's not sin, there's not subterfuge, there's not corruption in your dealings with others. Think how great it would be if all of the pastors and youth ministers that have done despicable things with women in the congregation and girls in the youth group and all that, if they had had a clean heart, think what a blessing that would have been and how much pain and schism and division and besmirching of the name of Christ could have been avoided. The Catholic church is still wrestling with all of their aftermath of abuses in the church and in the name of the church and wearing the garb and using the mechanisms of the church to perpetrate these awful things.

If there had been a clean heart there, none of that would have happened. That cleanness of heart works itself out in integrity and in blessing and dealing with others. But that's those next three, the mercy and the purity and heart and the peacemaking can only function in an arena of fellow believers who are on the road.

Now we move to a third category. You've got God, you've got those in the fellowship, now we've got those outside the fellowship. You're persecuted for righteousness sake and this continues.

He starts that theme in verse 10 which kind of circles back to verse 3 and then he says in verse 11, blessed are you, and he changes the pronoun. When they revile and persecute and say all kinds of evil against you, falsely for my sake. I always, when people say well they said or they told us or they did this or they did that, I always want to know who's they? Who's behind the pronoun, right? Anytime people, especially on the news, well it was said or they claim, who's they? Is this one person? They had a, what did I see? I saw just a little snippet of video and there was a rainbow parade or something and they said well this was a parade celebrating whatever that long string of you know BLT, GB, whatever it is.

You know the people and they were wearing rainbow costumes and outlandish, freakishly revealing. It was the gay, lesbian, whatever all that long string of things is. Well they said well this parade was held and they showed this little snippet.

Well I learned in Dallas by accident one day driving down Ross Avenue. I went by this little building that was the head of the Dallas Board of Education and somebody was staging a protest and there were like nine or ten people out there and nine or ten signs. Each of them had a little cardboard sign and they were kind of marching around and it was it was a nothing.

It was like a station wagon or two had let some people out. They got their signs out of

the back. They marched around and then they left.

On the evening news this same thing was on and but the way they framed the shot, they made it look like there were hordes and that this was a big deal and oh the controversy and oh what's the Board of Education going to do with this mass uprising of popular opinion. It was like nine or ten people. I saw it.

It was just a block from the seminary and I thought they've fluffed and puffed this. They're trying to make something out of nothing. This was a mole hill filmed as a mountain.

Same thing with this bi guy thing or with a rainbow. I am not trying to be dismissive or denigrating but the first person in this little parade actually had a clown suit on. It was a clown suit with the wig and everything and all these rainbow colors, short things with little skinny socks and long shoes.

I mean it was just like the thing was being led by a circus clown costume type of thing. Well I looked at the shot in the brief time that it was on there and there was about you know 25 or 30 people but it made the evening news. There was a parade held.

You could see the beginning and the ending of the thing. It was all in like five car lengths and there's a handful of people who went down but it's news. Well when they revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake, those two qualifiers that are in there, all of these things are in the spiritual realm but the turning here, who is doing the reviling and persecuting? Who is the they? Well it's not those with whom you are sharing mercy and peace and cleanness of heart and have a communal hunger and thirst for righteousness and a recognition that we need God's grace.

We need our mutual fellowship. We need our mutual encouragement. We need to be with others so that we can give and receive in the one another commands.

These are outsiders. They say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. So they're saying evil.

It's not true and it is because of your faith in Christ and because of your Christian walk and your Christian values. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad. Dance.

Great is your reward in the heavens. Great is your reward in the heavens and this does look to the future. You're not necessarily going to get a reward now but your reward is great in the heavens.

So they persecuted the prophets who were before you. You look at the example of the prophets. They also had to wait for their reward of faithfulness until the resurrection.

So the comparison is very apt. That brings us up to speed now on the similitudes at

verse 13 which is where we'll pick up when we come back from the break.