

SERMON: February 3, 2019 The Superbowl Beatitudes  
TEXT: Matthew 5:1-12  
SUBJECT: The difference between our priorities and God's priorities  
THEME: God's ways of grace and humility will overcome the world's ways of strength and domination.  
PURPOSE: To encourage grace and humility  
PIC: Superbowl logo

Yes!!! It is finally here! The day we have all been waiting for!!! It's...



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NATIONAL CARROT CAKE DAY!!!

Yes, today is national carrot cake day, and I know that all of you have been anxiously anticipating its arrival!

What, you haven't been? Then maybe you've been eagerly awaiting...



<https://www.gowherewhen.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/iceworm.jpg>

National Cordova Ice Worm Day!

You know, the day when we ice-fishermen go out to brave the cold weather and participate in our favorite wintertime sport!

No? You don't celebrate national Cordova Ice Worm day?

How about...



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“The Day the Music Died”! Yes, on this date 60 years ago Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and the Big Bopper got onto a plane in Clear Lake, Iowa, and crashed in a cornfield while on their way to Moorhead, Minnesota.

Well, not much to celebrate there – but we also have on this date:

American Painters’ Day, Elmo’s Birthday, Dump Your Significant Jerk Day, National Missing Persons Day, National Women’s Physicians Day, the Four Chaplains Memorial, National Wedding Ring Day, and...something else...what was it?



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Oh, yes! Superbowl Sunday!

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So, to get things started, we are going to do a famous sports tradition, “The Wave”!

(DO THE WAVE)

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Isn’t it interesting – if you stand up and cheer during a football game, you’re a fan, but if you stand up and cheer in church, you’re a fanatic!

We’re going to be looking at “The Beatitudes” from our scripture today, the collection of sayings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. (It may be helpful to know that this was probably not a single sermon that Jesus gave all at once, but a compilation of what He was preaching during His years in Galilee.)

Right here we are focusing on the “blessed” sayings – “Blessed are the poor”, “Blessed are those who mourn” – and seeing if they have any validity today. Are Jesus’ words still meaningful?

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For instance, do you think that the meekest team is going to win the Superbowl today? What about “merciful” or “poorest in spirit”?

These ideas of humility and servanthood seem to be diametrically opposed to what the world says that you need in order to succeed. If you want to win, you have to be assertive, aggressive, to take charge. This “meekness” and “humbleness” stuff just isn’t going to work.

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I have taken the liberty of re-writing the Beatitudes so that they are more relevant to today, especially in light of the upcoming Superbowl:

***Blessed are the proud and arrogant, for they shall win the Lombardi Trophy!***

***Blessed are the losers, for they shall still get a big paycheck!***

***Blessed are those who strut along the sidelines, for they shall get the big endorsement contracts!***

***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for the other teams’ blood, for they shall be filled!***

***Blessed are those who dominate the front line, for they shall drive their opponents into the ground!***

***Blessed are those who can hide their personal fouls, for they shall get the other guy to get penalized!***

***Blessed are those who show no mercy, for they shall annihilate their enemies!***

***Blessed are the taunters, for they shall cause the other team to make mistakes.***

***Blessed are cruel, for they shall gain the upper hand!***

***Blessed are you when you know the rulebook inside and out, for you can figure out ways to get around it!***

So, what do you think? Should I publish my own Bible now?

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The problem is with our understanding of what Jesus was actually saying. We have our own biases about what it means to be meek, or humble, or peacemakers, and sometimes they are very different from what Jesus was talking about.

So let’s look at a couple of the Beatitudes that Jesus gave us –

First of all the word that Jesus was using was

***MAKARIOI = Blessed, happy, fortunate***

It has the connotation of being the recipient of divine favor. So it’s not just lucky or happy, but a specific gift from God that you really didn’t deserve.

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Now, looking at these, we see that Jesus was really messing with people's heads! He kept making assertions that, on the face of it, seem to be false. "Happy are the poor"? "Blessed are the sad"?

Jesus is deliberately using words that will make them stop and take notice, and start questioning everything that they ever believed in.

Don't you hate it when God does that? Just when I think that I've got things all tied up and settled and comfortable, Jesus comes in and causes me to look at things completely differently!

And it's not because He just wants to mess with me – it's because Jesus does not want for me to accept less than the very best. God created us to share eternity with Him, and anything that gets in the way of that – anything that we are tempted to love more than His best makes Him very jealous. God wants only the best for us!

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So "Blessed are the poor in spirit" –

This word **PTWXOI** is the Greek word for "beggar" or "miserable" – that's a strange thing to start out with! "Blessed are those who beg"? I'm sure that Jesus really had their attention at this point!

The "beggars in spirit" – does anyone have an idea of what that might mean? (TAKE ANSWERS)

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I get the feeling that Jesus was talking about those who place their absolute dependence upon God. The world's ways are to earn and gain enough for yourself so that you never have to depend upon anyone else to ever have to take care of you. Don't we teach our children that growing up means taking responsibility for yourself? And who of us wants to become a burden to our children?

But Jesus is telling us that this is really the wrong focus – it's okay to earn and save and put away for the future, but don't expect that your wealth is going to bring you happiness. The truly valuable things in life can't be bought with money or gold or influence. The things that really matter are what we do for God, and what we do for others.

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"Blessed are they who mourn" – at our Bible study on Wednesday there was an interesting comment that mourning is really seeing things from God's perspective. We mourn because we recognize that things are not the way that God intended – we have a broken relationship, a loss, something that forces to get real with ourselves and admit that things aren't right.

I have found in my own life that my relationship with Kim has grown stronger as we have faced hardships together. It's not that we look forward to the hard times, but it's during those times that choose to re-commit ourselves to being there for each other, to making this relationship work.

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“Blessed are the meek” – this one I think is the most misunderstood of all of the beatitudes. Because we think that “meek” means – what?

(TAKE ANSWERS)

Weak, not standing up for yourself, easily taken advantage of –

But that's not what “meek” means at all! The word here in Greek is **“PRAEIS” – gentle, humble, considerate**

There's another definition which really means a lot here – as you know, horses were often used in the military for battle. In order to prepare a horse for battle, you had to get them used to fire, and pain, and loud noises. If you didn't, what would happen?

They would bolt, or rear up, and try to escape from battle.

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The procedure used for training horses to not shy away from battle but to stand their ground and to go wherever the rider directed was called “PRAUS” – “meeking” the horses!

A horse that has been “meeked” is one that is not led astray by everything going on around it. **A “meeked” horse pays attention and listens only to its master, and is not distracted by anything else.**

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Does that describe you and me? When financial markets turn upside-down, when friendships begin to deteriorate, when cancer or mental illness begin to set in upon ourselves or the ones that we love, do we settle ourselves to listen to the Master, and no one else?

Jesus went on to talk about those who only want God to fill them all they need, those who hunger and thirst; with those who show mercy to the ones who don't deserve it; with those who seek Him with honest and pure hearts, with those who actively seek to bring peace to difficult situations.

And in all of these, Jesus contrasted what the world wants us to believe with what He says –

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“Blessed are those...” Happy are you when you choose to believe that God’s ways are the only true ways to live, despite what the world tries to tell you.

If you have read my newsletter article for February, I talk about how I believe that love is a decision, not a feeling. I feel the same way about faith.

Scientists say that the feeling of being “in love” – that heart-fluttering, passion, “I can’t wait to see them again” feeling of infatuation that you feel for somebody – only lasts for 2-3 years; at most 7.

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One of the saddest things I hear is for someone to say, “I just don’t love him anymore,” because what they are doing is confusing feelings for true love.

If love were just based upon “feelings”, I probably wouldn’t be married today – because there are times when my wife doesn’t “feel” very happy with me! (You may not believe it, but sometimes I can be kind of a jerk!)

But thankfully she and I have realized that there is a deeper love than just hormones and emotions – there is a deep, abiding presence that comes with choosing – deciding – that this is the person that I am going to dedicate the rest of my life to helping them to succeed.

When you have two people who are both dedicated to helping their partner to succeed, that’s the kind of relationship that God designed. I believe the best ministry I can do is to help Kim to be the person God has designed her to be. She is MUCH more talented and pleasant to be around than I am! So whatever I can do help her to let her gifts shine is going to build the Kingdom of God. What could be a better relationship than that?

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The world wants for us to think power and domination are the way to win in this life. Jesus shows us that humility and surrender to God are the path to true happiness.

So be meek. Have your heart so set on Jesus that nothing else can distract you from following Him. Be forgiving – not holding other’s sins against them, but forgiving in the same way that you have been forgiven.

Be a peacemaker – when there is tension and hard feelings in a room, be the person that helps others to gently gain perspective.

Be the difference that God can use to transform this world back into His image.

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Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.

## The Beatitudes

He said:

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.