

THE ATTITUDE OF LIVING BEAUTIFULLY IN A BROKEN WORLD # 1 Pete Grieg

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

Matt 5-7, the "Sermon on the Mount" is known as Jesus' Manifesto. J Stott says that it is the best known and least obeyed teaching. He says, "It is the nearest thing to a manifesto that Jesus ever uttered.. the most complete delineation anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counterculture."

This series has 2 aims:

1. To help us live more beautifully in a broken world. (Think war, earthquake, C of E fragmentation). Jesus is not insecure: "you will have suffering" (Jn 16v33) but he prayed for unity (Jn 17). E Kubler-Ross: "The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths." Beautiful people don't just happen.
2. To help us become Christians again! By presenting Jesus' teaching so our response is: "OMG (right words!) I didn't know it could be so challenging." Aim is to help us look more like Jesus

Matt 5v1-10. Just 96 words for an unstoppable revolution.

V1 *Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.*

Note: Large crowds. 4v25 shows they came from many places, some 70 miles away. It was a highly charged atmosphere.

Note: Up a mountain. Probably a hill overlooking Galilee. Matthew was writing primarily for a Jewish audience. [His gospel is split into 5 sections paralleling the Pentateuch (first 5 books of OT). Each section ends with "*When he had finished teaching.*" Matt 7v28, 11v1, 13v53, 19v1, 26v1] They would have recalled Moses going up a mountain to receive the 10 Commandments.

Note: He sat down. An intentional posture as Rabbis sat to teach.

"*Blessed*" (Greek: *makarios*) = happy, privileged, blessed. Not just subjectively emotional but objectively how God sees you: you ARE blessed/happy. Compare a Dad saying to his distraught child "It's OK to have a meltdown, it's late, you're overtired and you're full of sugar. Everything will be fine."

Jesus is counterculture: Those who feel themselves "losers", underdogs or "not very good", they're "poor in spirit" but Jesus says you're happy/privileged/blessed. Those who mourn are not pain free but God's priority. The meek are not narcissistically self-confident but are happy/privileged/blessed. Those who passionately pursue righteousness are happy/privileged/blessed. The helpless and vulnerable (reference those in hospital with end of life care) are happy/privileged/blessed. This message makes sense to a broken world.

Tony Campolo told of a youth camp where one lad had cerebral palsy and was ribbed and mocked by the other lads. They thought it would be funny to nominate him to lead morning devotions. With the campers sniggering as he tentatively made his way to the platform he haltingly said, "Jesus loves me and I love Jesus." The mockers began to weep and pray asking for forgiveness. Years later Tony says he's met many pastors who responded to Christ on that day. The moral is that God uses the weak and the poor.

The world's no.1 Trappist beer is Westvleteren 12. Financiers wanted to expand production but the monks refused, shunning commercialisation. Pete was given a bottle and hid it at the back of his cupboard for a special occasion - it's not visible but it's valuable. Maybe we're like this? Reference David, hidden as a shepherd, Joseph hidden in prison, Simeon and Anna hidden by old age, Jesus hidden until age 30.

So, what about us? What do we feel? Has the world given up on us? Jesus says "I see you, you're cherished, blessed and valuable to me."

- What was the most challenging thing for you from this talk?
- Pete asked who do we know in our circle (home, work, school, etc.) who is most mocked by the world that I can prioritise this week? Can we name them in collective and be accountable to each other?
- Who feels hidden/bypassed/forgotten? How can we show reassurance that you/they are loved by God, the apple of his eye?

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