

God's Good News for the Unexpected and Undeserving (Matthew 5:1-12)

It is really difficult for us to understand this text

- Oriented toward self-sufficiency; strength; victory; privilege; power
- These words make no sense to us (not the audience)
- So, we try to make them a to-do list that we can conquer (it is not that!)

What is happening in Matthew

- He is presenting Jesus as the long expected Messiah, King, Savior of the World
 - But He does not come in the expected way (money, power and pedigree)
 - Broken and sordid family tree
 - Born in a small town animal stable
 - Became a refugee fleeing the corrupted powerful
 - Raised in an off the map town doing manual labor
 - Announced by a bug eating, camel fur wearing prophet
 - = Unexpected
 - But then the baptism... and the victory over Satan
 - God's gracious blessing and righteous rule had arrived (the Kingdom)

Jesus is now **announcing, demonstrating** and **explaining** the **Good News** of the **Kingdom** (Matthew 4:23-25)

- He demonstrated it in the healings
- What did they demonstrate?
 - Many things...but that God helps those who **cannot** help themselves
 - Those who were in pure need and could not be helped by anyone else
 - Jesus comes to those people and helps them
 - It is the sick that need a physician
 - He has come to seek and save the lost
 - He is the friend of the broken, outcasts and sinners
 - God's restorative and redeeming blessing has been brought to those who had no other hope

Now, he is explaining what He has been demonstrating

- Who is **blessed** and to whom does the kingdom belong (cf. the inclusio)
- Again, it is unexpected
 - It is not those who would have normally been seen as "in"
 - There was an "in" here... it was the religious elite (and the rich and powerful)
 - That is who the whole culture would have expected the kingdom to belong to... they were the ones who had successfully helped themselves and so seemingly impressed God
 - But God is not impressed, and God is not looking for the good performer, the strong, the self-sufficient...
 - ... He has come to save the **unexpected** and **undeserving**

Remember: Jesus fulfills the **story of God and Israel** (started with God and humanity)

- Loving creation; sinful rebellion; gracious redemption; loving law
- The gracious redemption part = God choosing and saving Israel by grace alone
 - It wasn't because they were **big** and **strong**: **Deuteronomy 7:7-8, NIV**
 - It wasn't because they were **rich** and **powerful**: **Deuteronomy 8:17-18, NIV**
 - It wasn't because they were **good** and **obedient**: **Deuteronomy 9:4-5a and 6, NIV**

God saved and delivered Israel in spite of their liabilities and their lack of merit

- This is what God is offering to all of humanity through Jesus
- See **Matthew 4:23** = **Jesus was proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom**
 - That God (in Christ) was bringing His **deliverance, forgiveness, blessing** and **rule** to the world
 - The **Good News** is that it was being offered to those who do not deserve it & didn't expect it

Key to the Beatitudes (they are not the be-attitudes) (not how to be **blessed**)

- Not good advice on how to be blessed—rather, good news that God blesses the unexpected
 - **Blessing** speaks of **approval** or **favor** or special action of **acceptance**
 - Who does Jesus seek out to extend the kingdom blessing to?
 - **Counter to that culture and ours (the unexpected & undeserving)**

Luke 18:9-14, NIV

This is the very idea that Jesus opens with (**5:3**)

- Those who are shamed and waiting with head low and hand open for undeserved spiritual deliverance
- Jesus came to help those who cannot help themselves (your grandma was a heretic)
- **Isaiah 66:1-2, NASB**

The concept of surprise continues in (**5:4**)

- We would assume the person who is celebrating is the blessed one
- But Jesus came to comfort those to whom life has been cruel
- **Isaiah 61:1-3, NASB**

We are further surprised in (**5:5**)

- Who ends up **inheriting the earth**? Survival of the fittest/strongest right? No.
- Jesus promises to provide the **meek** and **humble** their **blessed** position in the future
- **Psalms 37:7-11, NKJV**

We are brought Good News again in (**5:6**)

- Similar promise to **Psalms 37**
- **Righteousness** or **justice** (NLT)?
- Either way, the effect is the same... those who have suffered at the hands of **unrighteousness** or **injustice**
 - Israel, multitudes in Matthew, many now (could be from **without** or **within**)
- The promise of **satisfaction** for the righteously unsatisfied
- **Revelation 7:15-17, NASB**
 - Cf. **Matthew 5:10-12** (counter-cultural; counterintuitive; not meant to be good advice)
 - Jesus is announcing Good News to those who appear to be losing
 - Israel in OT and 1st century; persecuted; those who do right, but receive wrong; Cf. Cross

Seen further in (**5:7-9**)

- The world functions differently:
 - Not **mercy** but ruthlessness
 - Not **purity** but deceitfulness
 - Not **peace** but war
 - The **merciful**, the **pure**, the **peacemakers** seem to lose

But Jesus here is announcing the **different quality** and **unexpected blessing** of His Kingdom

- Good news not good advice
- He is not saying, you need to become this way or do these things to be blessed (**persecuted?**)
- He is announcing that He brings a blessing to the **unexpected** and **undeserving**
- **It is not a call to work, it is the pronouncement of grace**
 - Jesus is not offering good advice about how to be blessed—He is **announcing good news** about the God who blessed the unexpected undeserving

So, what do we do with this?

1. See ourselves here...
2. Rejoice that Jesus has come to us with God's blessing by grace
 - (In the next couple of weeks Jesus will teach us the right response to grace)
3. Hope in the promises
4. Thanks and praise