



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Key To A Happy Life

MATTHEW 5.3-12

2/4/2015

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The good life! We all want it, but we are not always sure what the good life is exactly. What constitutes the good life in an earthly sense? Build a list in your mind of the things people chase striving to enjoy the good life. Material wealth, fame, prominence, achievement, sensual pleasure, and just having fun might serve as a summary list. Yet, countless souls throughout human history have had more than their fill of the items on the list only to find the experience woefully short of their expectations of the good life.

Jesus opens His inauguration speech, introducing his program or plan for His administration, His Kingdom, with a list of things we might call the blessed. This list sketches for us the good life in a spiritual sense.

Matthew 5.3-12—Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

In this passage, the citizen of Christ's heavenly kingdom finds a compelling description of the good life under His administration.

ACCEPT THE TRUE MEANING OF HAPPINESS

Happy is the most literal translation of the word rendered as blessed in this passage. The word places the focus on state of mind, one's attitude towards one's circumstances rather than on the circumstances themselves. Blessed is not an inaccurate rendering. Yet, it is clouded in our current sense of the word by the idea of outward conditions. "I am blessed" might be a reference to favorable outward circumstances. That is not at all the meaning here.

The blessedness Jesus holds before his listener refers to the enjoyment of God's favor. The root of the word He uses means great and came to be commonly used to mean 'rich.' The New Testament use of this word instills a higher meaning to convey the idea of someone that is rich in a spiritual sense.

Jesus' listeners were well versed in the idea of blessing and cursing in relation to God's rule. To walk in obedience to God's law was attended by blessings and disobedience attended by cursing. On this matter the Scripture was clear. But over the generations, God's blessing became more tied to outward circumstances in the minds of His people. This idea especially attached itself to economic standing. Those possessing this world's riches were considered blessed indeed. The poor man was considered cursed, as was the man with any physical infirmity. To suffer great injustice or the loss of loved ones was associated with God's curse.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Assessing the poor in spirit to be blessed or happy would have been a confusing statement to say the least. To call the one who mourns happy seems to be quite a stretch. What was Jesus trying to say? He was introducing a new definition of happiness in His kingdom. He was exposing the false idea that happiness is defined by outward circumstances.

The 20th century Bible scholar and pastor of the Westminster Chapel in London, G. Campbell Morgan said, "The King does not bestow gifts to make men happy. He creates a condition within the man, which enables him to find happiness everywhere. He does not create happiness by new surroundings. He creates new surroundings by happiness."

DESIRE THE TRUE BASIS OF HAPPINESS

Being precedes doing in the kingdom Jesus Christ announces in this message. Here at the outset of this great speech, before delving into

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS ONLY: WEDNESDAY LUNCH AT THE AUSTIN CLUB (11:30AM OR UPON ADJOURNMENT, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER)

CAPITOL COMMUNITY STUDY: FRIDAY BREAKFAST @ 8AM IN MEMBERS' LOUNGE (E2.1002) COMMENCING 1/30/2015

Texas

The Secret To A Happy Life

many specific behaviors that reflect the rule of the heavenly King, the basis of such behaviors is established. Happiness is not based upon desirable circumstances, but upon a state of being that fully realizes the rule of God. Happiness flows from a character bent to the will of God. First character...then conduct. In this new administration the emphasis is upon the innermost being.

- Happy is the man that is poor in spirit, one who is willing to be governed, not proud and self-sufficient.
- Happy are those who mourn rather than those characterized by raucous laughter and riotous living.
- Happy are those whose powers have been yielded to God and are not reckless and out of control.
- Happy are those who delight in doing what is right, not running after sinful pleasures and boasting in evil.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God

- Happy is the one who shows mercy, patience, and forbearance rather than being harsh and vengeful.
- Happy are those whose whole heart is set apart unto God, not being corrupt and two-faced.
- Happy are the ones that work to bring people to prefer one another and cooperate, never instigating trouble and avoiding inflammatory words.
- Happy is one who is suffers at the hand of others for doing and saying that which honors God rather than giving way to a man-pleasing spirit.

Character, not circumstance, is the true basis of happiness...so how does one come to enjoy it? How do we tap into the supply of happiness?

SUBMIT TO THE TRUE SUPPLIER OF HAPPINESS

Christ alone offers true happiness. He is the vital link between each of the character qualities listed in the beatitudes and its associated blessing or reward. Remember that Jesus Christ sought to make it clear that His kingdom was not of this world. Though the expectation was that the Messiah would come to establish an earthly kingdom, Jesus' inauguration speech lays out the priorities and the values of a spiritual kingdom.

Jesus is not proposing legalism on a new and higher level. This isn't to become a new standard for you to strive to maintain so that you can pat yourself on the back for what a righteous person you have become.

Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake...

Citizenship in the Kingdom, being announced by Christ in this sermon, brings with it all the blessings mentioned in this passage. Those who have made themselves subjects of the King—to them belongs the kingdom of heaven. And comfort in any trouble, the earth as an inheritance, their craving for righteousness being satisfied, obtaining mercy in times of failure, experiencing God's manifest presence, bearing the likeness of Christ...this is the life—the happy life available under Christ's rule.

CONCLUSION

We all desire the good life...a happy life. The world entices you with distorted definitions of happiness. Daily you make choices that belie your attempts to secure a happy life. Your daily choices reflect a desire for character or to manufacture desirable circumstances. Will you submit your life and your will to the Lord Jesus Christ and to His eternal kingdom?