



river west church

The Open Heart

Matthew 5:1-6 (part 2)

Pastor Guy Gray

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Rescue and Renewal

The Gospel (good news) of the “kingdom” is that the power of God’s grace is present right here and right now. It is present in Jesus Christ – to grant us forgiveness, to heal, to bind up our broken hearts, to set captives free. This is why the people came out by the thousands to see and hear Jesus (see Matthew 4:23-25). This is the first dimension of the grace of God in Christ. Think of this dimension of God’s grace as His grace to rescue us.

But we learned last week that there is also a second dimension to the grace of God in Christ. This is the grace of God to renew our lives, to transform our lives through Christ, and it is equally the good news of the Gospel. This is the message of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Rescue and renewal, these words always go together in the Gospel. That means that God meets us where we are, no matter how low or desperate, through His grace in Christ. But He does not want to leave us there! He wants to transform our lives. All too often Christians only know the grace of Christ as the grace of rescue and they never learn to walk in the grace of renewal. When that happens they find themselves getting stuck over and over again, ever in need of rescue, and failing to live a life that impacts the world for Christ. This is why the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is so important for us. Christ wants us to know how to live in the grace of renewal so that we can actually be used by Him as part of His redemptive mission in our world.

A Heart Truly Open to the Grace of Renewal

It all starts with your heart. Your heart IS the door to grace – the grace of renewal. This is why Jesus gives us the beatitudes. He starts with the heart. He shows us the heart that is truly open to the work of God’s renewing grace. When our hearts are truly open to God’s renewing grace, we become people who can share His rescuing and renewing grace with others. Last week we briefly looked at the first four beatitudes. But they are so foundational that we need to take some extra time with them. These first four beatitudes describe the heart that is truly open to Christ. The qualities of heart described are not highly valued by the culture around us. But that totally fits, because Jesus is actually working to create a “counter-culture”, a counter-culture of the Gospel in our broken world. So let’s prayerfully consider four qualities that describe a heart that is truly open to the grace of God in Christ. Use the space below to write down how God speaks to you through His Word:

A Humble Heart (Poor in Spirit)

A Hurting Heart (Those who Mourn)

A Yielded Heart (The Meek)

A Hungry Heart (Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness)