



river west church

The One Thing We Do

Matthew 5:6-11

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From Poor in Spirit to Peacemakers

The Beatitudes take us on an amazing journey. The entry point is a humble heart. This is the door to grace. Jesus meets us at the bottom. Jesus comes to us when we have nothing to offer and nothing to claim. The most prominent thing about us in the first beatitude is our need. It's a beautiful reminder that the beatitudes are all rooted in the grace of God freely poured out to us in our desperate need.

The grace of God is more than just an idea. It is a power that transforms us. God takes those who are poor in spirit and shapes them into people who can actually change the world. He turns them into peacemakers. The beatitudes are an incredible picture of what we are taught in Ephesians 2. We are saved by grace through faith, not by works. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ for good works, which God has prepared ahead of time for us (see Ephesians 2:8-10).

In the beatitudes we begin as those who receive from God by grace, and end up as those who work for God and His purposes. It is God Himself who is working in and through our lives all the while.

The One Thing We Do

Read the beatitudes again. They are all about the heart, what's going on inside of you, your attitudes, desires and dispositions. Then we come to Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." Take note! This is the first and only beatitude that talks about actually doing something. This beatitude moves us from attitude to action.

It's remarkable. It's as if all the other beatitudes were in preparation for this. All the other beatitudes are describing the kind of heart that God wants to develop within us so that we can go out and DO this one thing, make peace.

From Peacemakers to Persecuted

If you move one verse past "peacemakers" you come to "blessed are the persecuted" (5:10-11). It's strange! Why in the world would someone who is a peacemaker be persecuted? It seems ironic. The person who ends conflict is going to become the center of conflict! What is going on here?

To understand the power of the beatitudes you simply have to understand that God is preparing our hearts for action. God is preparing us to be peacemakers. Peacemaking is an action. It is something we do, where we literally mend up the hearts, the lives and the relationships that have been torn to pieces in our broken world. This is the work of peacemaking. The peace that Jesus is speaking about is far more than the absence of strife. It is the healing and transformation of hearts, lives and relationships. This is what Jesus is preparing us to do. This is what He is calling us to do.

Oddly enough, to be a peacemaker is literally to enter the front lines of an incredible spiritual battle. That is why persecution can flow right out of peacemaking!

Shalom!

Today we will take a good look at the biblical concept of peace. The Hebrew word for this is shalom. It is one of the most important words in the Bible. But it is more than a word or an idea, it is something God wants us to DO – to MAKE! As you listen today, listen for the Spirit of God speaking to your heart and showing you how you can get to work in the gracious work of peacemaking. Just look around you. We live in a broken world filled with broken hearts and broken relationships. This is your moment, through Christ's grace to become an agent of Christ's peace, healing and wholeness. Where will you start today?