

I. Revolution 1: Matthew 5:1-12

Gee Sprague, Lead Pastor

April 6, 2008

II. Religion or Revolution?

- A. Our church youth group did an annual retreat, and the older you were the more leadership you were given.
- B. I was in my Junior Year of High School and this was when you really began to accept some of the leadership challenges.
- C. We had a young associate pastor, Jack Taylor, who oversaw the youth ministry department.
- D. Jack was everything I wanted to be and he was so supportive of me and always looked for ways to support and challenge me in my faith.
- E. One of the responsibilities that you assumed as you grew as a leader was to be a co-leader of a group with one of the adult counselors.
- F. We had some great counselors; one of my favorites was Dr. John Kirst.
1. He played guitar and was a successful dentist.
 2. He was about 10 years younger than my dad, so he formed sort of a bridge between me and my parents.
 3. I had been in a group with him before and it was a blast.
- G. My pairing was not what I bargained for.
1. When the list was shared, I was going to be sharing small group duties with Mary Jeanne Blackburn, the wife of our Senior Pastor.
 2. I go by Lead pastor, because for so long we had Don on the staff, and I was so Grey, and he really looked like a senior pastor.
 3. Dr. Blackburn was the quintessential picture of a Senior Pastor and Mary Jeanne was perfect wife.
- H. That weekend though was one of the biggest revelations for me.
- I. Though I had become a believer about 3 years earlier, my personal faith in Jesus Christ was still pretty much just a religious function in my life.
- J. After that weekend, I began to understand that Christianity was much more of a Revolution than a Religion.
- K. The theme for that weekend was based on the Sermon on the Mount, recorded by Matthew in the 5th chapter of his writings
- L. *Matthew 5:1-12 (NRSV) When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. {2} Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: {3} "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. {5} "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. {6} "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. {8} "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. {9} "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. {10} "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. {12} Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
- M. These verses make up the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount and are known as the *Beatitudes*
- N. Even Jesus' followers followed Him because they thought he was going to lead a Revolt, a Revolution against Rome.
- O. They missed it, Jesus wants to bring a Revolution to the way we live our lives.
- P. It is a revolt, against the habits, the vices of our fallen way of living in this earthly kingdom. He is leading us into a new kingdom where vices no longer control, but the virtues for which we were created.

Q. Jesus is leading a revolution of the Hearts of Humanity.

R. Frankly, it wasn't so much what Mary Jeanne taught about the Beatitudes that got my attention; it was the way she lived them.

III. **The Beautiful Attitudes!**

A. The beatitudes are eight statements shared by Jesus as he speaks to a crowd gathered on the side of hill on the northern banks of the Sea of Galilee (*Show Map*).

B. They are statements of virtue and how a believer in Jesus Christ can achieve that virtue, actually what a virtuous life looks like.

1. Virtue is more than just moral character, it is strength.
2. This is virtual, it is real, not imitation life.

C. The Beatitudes provide a map for our life, a series of directions guiding us on our journey as we follow Jesus Christ. Very appropriate for us who worship at a Church called CrossRoad.

D. Remember, CrossRoad is single. It is the place where our lives intersect with God. Sometimes it is a divine appointment, sometimes it is more of a collision.

E. After we are connected, it is a new Journey, a New Road that leads us to the Cross.

F. The Greek word *Makarios Makarios* is translated blessed, fortunate, happy.

G. The Latin word for *Blessed* is *Beatus*, from which we get the word *Beatitude*

H. They are simply stated, but are profound in meaning. They guide. They point. They teach. They show us the values that Christ cares about. They are the very nature of who Jesus is!

I. One way to remember them is by *The Beautiful Attitudes*

J. There is no getting around it, **Attitude matters!**

K. Jim Cater, who is speaking at our next men's night May 9, was sharing with me one of the guiding values of his company.

1. Attitude is more important than aptitude.
2. He maintains that his company and most companies can train a person, give them the aptitude to do a job, but if a person's attitude is negative, selfish, self-serving, you fill in the blanks, there is very little that can be done.

L. Jack Taylor and the Sermon on the Mount

1. One of the best examples that I have ever witnessed of someone really having a Christ-like attitude was on a trip to the Holy Land Sandy and I made with my dad, a few friends from the church we were serving, and the Lead Pastor, Jack Taylor, whom I mentioned earlier.
2. At breakfast I overheard the tour guide ask Jack if he would like to share a devotional thought as we would go out on a boat into the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spent a lot of time with His disciples.
3. I thought that would be so cool, I was praying for a big wind to come up and for the boat to rock and Jack and I would walk on water, and then he would speak and the waves would calm and the wind would stop.
4. Out in the middle of the lake, the captain stopped the engine and this other preacher who had one of those radio type announcer voices got up and shared.
5. I was thinking, "what's the deal?" What happened to Jack? I got so worked up I never heard a word he said.
6. I looked over at Jack, and he was just smiling and nodding his head in agreement with everything the guy was saying.

7. When he was finished and the boat started up again I went to Jack and asked why he didn't speak.
8. He said that the guide had asked him, but one of the co-leaders had asked the other guy. In order to avoid hurt feelings, she felt like Jack would be easier to un-ask.
9. Jack was fine by it, even though I wasn't!!!!
10. Later that afternoon our tour took us to the northern banks of the Sea of Galilee. Standing on the hilly banks of the lake looking South at this massive inland body of water, she said that it was a sight very much like this where Jesus probably preached the Sermon on the Mount.
11. With that she nodded in Jack's direction and he came to the front of the crowd and read the Beatitudes.
12. {3} *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. {5} "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. {6} "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. {7} "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. {8} "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. {9} "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. {10} "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {11} "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. {12} Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*
13. As the words bathed over me, I also realized that I was seeing a real life expression of the Beatitudes, JACK!
14. If I had been the one to take a back seat on the boat, I would have probably pouted the rest of the day. I would have been indignant and felt like I had been treated unfairly.
15. Not Jack, he just did what Jesus would have done.
16. In the end, it was a more profound setting.
17. You could see people being visibly moved as Jack read those words.

IV. The Revolutionary Revelation.

- A. As I think back on my first real encounter with the Beatitudes, I realize it wasn't the teaching that really got my attention but the teacher.
- B. Leslie Flynn in *Dare to Care Like Jesus* tells the following story: "A Christian baroness, living in the highlands of Nairobi, Kenya, told of a young national who was employed as her houseboy. After three months he asked the baroness to give him a letter of reference to a friendly sheik some miles away. The baroness, not wishing the houseboy to leave just when he had learned the routine of the household, offered to increase his pay. The lad replied that he was not leaving for higher pay. Rather, he had decided he would become either a Christian or a Mohammedan. This was why he had come to work for the baroness for three months. He had wished to see how Christians acted. Now he wanted to work for three months for the sheik to observe the ways of the Mohammedans. Then he would decide which way of life he would follow. The baroness was stunned as she recalled her many blemishes in her dealings with the houseboy. She could only exclaim, "Why didn't you tell me at the beginning!"
- C. An ancient poet told the painters of Greece in a period of great decadence in art to write under their paintings the names of the animals they had painted. He told them to write "horse," "ox", and "cow" underneath, implying that without the name it was impossible for viewers to tell one shape or color from another. When we see what the grace of God does we don't need a lot of words. Only when goodness and love are weak do we need words to describe them.
Christianity is vital when it is seen, not just when it's just talked about.
- D. Here's the challenge, do the people with whom you brush elbows recognize in you the attitudes that are in Jesus.
- E. Or is the image of Jesus so greatly distorted, that people do not recognize it

F. *Philippians 2:5 (NASB) Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,*

G. *Philippians 2:5 (NIV) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:*

H. The Beatitudes, the Beautiful Attitudes of Jesus, are the artistic representations of Jesus that identify that we are His followers.

I. Without them, we say it's a horse, an eagle, a lion, but if you have to label it to identify it, it is not much good.

J. God is patient, like a loving parent when a child brings you her or his art work, you aren't supposed to say "WHAT IS THAT???"

1. You say, tell me about what you have drawn.
2. Then they will say, my dog, my cat, that's you Pastor Gee, that's Pastor George.

K. That's great while you are young, but one day that image has got to start bearing a closer resemblance to the real thing!

V. **Transformation, not imitation.**

A. I think people often treat being a Christian like Karaoke.

B. Somebody plugs in a sound track and you just do your best to sing like Sting, Usher, Beyonce, or Seline.

C. For some of us it is just lip syncing or airband.

D. You may be good at Guitar Hero, but that doesn't make you a Guitarist. Actually, one of my young friends who is an aspiring guitarist says his nonmusical friends are better at Guitar Hero.

E. They are imitation musicians, but very good at video games.

F. *Philippians 2:5 (NRSV) Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,*

G. This is not just *Imitation*.

H. This is a work of the Holy Spirit whereby Jesus' nature becomes ours.

I. Christianity is more about *Transformation* than *Imitation*.

J. *Romans 12:2 (NASB) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

K. Do not settle for imitation! What Jesus provides for us is a way to be transformed, a renewing of our minds, that empowers us to have the Beautiful Attitudes of Jesus.

VI. Invitation and Prayer