

Title: The Fruits and Beatitudes

Readings: Gal 5:16-26

Preacher: Paul Hallam

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This sermon can be found at: <http://www.westfieldurc.org/worship/sermons/>

Sermon Notes / Comments:

- Paul read the Beatitudes 5:3ff
- The Beatitudes begin and end with the same blessing. Theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. In each of the beatitudes the characteristic of those receiving the blessing are the characteristics of a citizen of heaven.
- Jesus said let the little children come to me, how much is this like those that are poor in spirit. Don't have the resources in order to come before God.
- Gal 5:16-26. A simple nature is described, followed by a warning saying that those who live like this will not inherit the Kingdom of God. There is a link between this passage and the Beatitudes and that link is the Kingdom of God.
- There is a contrast with the life of the kingdom and it's the blessings.
- And meekness? Meekness is very closely related to gentleness and gentleness is in the fruits of the Spirit and meekness is in the Beatitudes.
- Blessed are those that show mercy, for you to be able to show mercy you have to be a loving person. In order to be a peacemaker, you must yourself be at peace and thirst for righteousness and pure a heart sums up very well.
- This is a good reminder that all these descriptions of the characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom only find their fulfilment in the Holy Spirit.
- There is a progression in the list of the Beatitudes. The first two relate to our relationship to God himself. The next Beatitudes are to do with what that means to those around us. How do we live as God's people? Then we come to the final beatitude v10-12. This deals with not our attitude to the world, but the world's attitude to us (those that belong to Christ).
- The previous Beatitude is a blessing for the peacemakers and as God's ambassadors we are peacemakers, to try and maintain a peace between ourselves and those around us, but also as God's ambassadors saying to the world you should be reconciled to God.
- The world very often doesn't want to know, because that kind of peace requires first of all recognition of God's sovereignty. It is not a peace between equals it is a peace between the almighty and mortal man and the world often doesn't want to know and that then is the source of that suffering that is spoken about in the final Beatitude.
- Sometimes people resent the idea that God wants to have peace with you.
- 1 Peter 3:13ff - who is going to harm you who is going to harm you?

- There is no guarantee that if you do what is right you will be blessed! But even if you do suffer you will be blessed.
- We are coming to a time in this country, as in many other countries through out the world, that those that disagree will disagree very violently but as we go on in this passage we find that we are following Christ's example. 1 Peter 3:16
- 1 Peter 2:18ff, talks about how slaves behave (and of course we don't like to think that we live in a time where there is slavery). This is a repeat that we are following in Christ's footsteps if we are suffering as he did for us. Also see 1 Peter 4:12ff, which speaks of a similar situation.
- There 1000s of our brothers and sisters who are suffering like these and this is happening in this country. There are many who's families have turned away from people who have given their lives to Jesus.
- Paul speaks several times about this suffering for Christ. In 2 Cor 4:8-12 Paul sums up his life and sees that both the life and suffering of Christ was in his body. That is a profound thought. He saw the life of Christ was in those that he reached out to. Just as the suffering of Christ flows over into our lives.
- Col 1:24. We think about the suffering of Christ as being complete for our salvation, there is something that is lacking - it is not that it is lacking to pay for sin, but he calls on his people to work and strive and sometimes to suffer in order that the Gospel might be known. In order that the death of Christ might be known, by those that don't recognise him. And in this we sometimes have to bare the suffering in our bodies. We are one with Christ if we suffer for him.
- Luke's version of the Beatitudes (Luke 6:20ff) which focuses even more on the suffering of Christ's people.
- I have an easy life as a Christian, and find it hard to suffer for Christ. The suffering I have is being at one with those in other parts of the world who are suffering for Christ. The very idea of saying to these people you should leap for joy. There are people in this world who say I am one with Christ because I suffer with Christ.
- Rejection could be a sign that it is from God. We need to be careful that we modify the gospel. Especially if it focuses on the easy side of life.
- God often doesn't lift you out of your problems, your sufferings but says I am with you in this! Blessed are those that suffer...

Questions / thoughts and areas for discussion

- As normal read through all the passages mentioned.
- Read through again the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3ff). Which of the blessings would you most like to achieve?
- Which of the Fruits do you find it hardest to show? Do you think we all need to be showing all the fruits? Why / Why not?
- Paul says that he has an easy life as a Christian in this country? What about you? How can you support those around the world who perhaps don't have it so easy?
- Take three of the fruits and try to positively try to be / use them this week.

Please note these are Mark's thoughts etc on the sermon and may not be the Preacher's!