

CREATED GAY

The Kingdom is Yours Now

by Gary Simpson

Matthew 5:1-12 (KJV) And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The Sermon on the Mount can be difficult to understand and to evaluate, because it might have been more than one sermon. There are good reasons to believe that the Sermon on the Mount was more than one sermon and that it might have been a summary or an abstract of “all the sermons that Jesus ever preached.”¹ Parts of the Sermon on the Mount appear to have little connection to the material that comes before or after it.²

This is part of the Sermon on the Mount. Charles Cunningham had a pastoral career spanning six decades.³ In a sermon titled “Be Distinct Not Extinct,” Cunningham says a person complained, “There is no way I can live up to the red-letter edition of the Bible! Christ’s teachings are too hard to live by! His expectations are too high!” Cunningham says that he replied, “I know. So, get on with it, live it as best you can, and be happy.”⁴ Not bad advice. My thoughts: Just relax and enjoy. Let God do the hard work.

¹ William Barclay. “William Barclay’s Daily Study Bible Matthew 5.” *Study Light*. n.d., 26 Oct 2019. <<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dsb/matthew-5.html>>.

² William Barclay. <<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dsb/matthew-5.html>>.

³ “Charles Cunningham: About Charles.” *Sermon Central*. 01 Aug 2019, 20 Oct 2019. <<https://www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/charles-cunningham-profile-176588?ref=SermonSerps>>.

⁴ Charles Cunningham. “Be Distinct Not Extinct.” *Sermon Central*. 01 Aug 2019, 26 Oct 2019. <<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/be-distinct-not-extinct-charles-cunningham-sermon-on-sermon-on-the-mount-241301?ref=SermonSerps>>.

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One of my favorite Bible commentators, William Barclay, was a Greek scholar. He translated the New Testament. There are many passages where I prefer his translation. Where the word “blessed are” is used in the King James Bible, Barclay translates the passage ‘O the bliss of those’.⁵ When I read the Sermon on the Mount, I do not get the feeling that the the people described feel like giving a sigh of bliss.

Charles Cunningham says the Beattitudes collectively describe the “Christian fellowship.”⁶ I am to take things in a slightly different direction than Cunningham did. The Bible is written about oppressed people and for oppressed people. Like Cunningham, I can see how each of the Beattitudes describes the community, not just a few people. This sermon was given on a mountain, not in a synagogue, but it probably was given to a mainly Jewish group in Roman occupied Palestine. The Beattitudes, collectively, represent traits of the Jewish people. Despite all their circumstances:

- Dispirited.
- Mourning.
- Forced to be submissive to the Romans.
- Persecuted for their faith.
- Defamed.
- Hungering for righteousness.

The Jewish people are:

- Merciful.
- Peacemakers.
- Pure in heart.
- Going to be blessed.

I can almost picture Jesus talking to LGBT+ people of faith and making the same comments we see in these verses of Matthew Chapter 5, because like Jesus’ ancient Jewish contemporaries, we are dispirited, mourning, defamed, hungering for righteousness, and, at times forced to be submissive to churches and unjust governments just to survive. And in the midst of that climate of oppression, Jesus says, that God’s queer tribe are merciful, peacemakers, pure in heart and are going to be blessed beyond belief.

Verse ten in Barclay’s translation “O the bliss of those who are persecuted for their loyalty to God’s way of life, for the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven are theirs here and now.”⁷

I recall hearing a description of a distinguished, highly educated father getting down on his knees in front of his son, holding his son’s face in his hands and telling his son that he loved him. The scene feels powerful, because his son could feel the touch of love, see the look of love and hear the voice of love. In the Sermon on Mount, the Eternal comes to you when you

⁵ William Barclay. *The New Testament: A New Translation*. Vol. 1. (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1968), 61.

⁶ Cunningham. (2019) <<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/be-distinct-not-extinct-charles-cunningham-sermon-on-sermon-on-the-mount-241301?ref=SermonSerps>>.

⁷ Barclay (1968), 61.

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are feeling completely beaten down and the Eternal gets down on the Eternal's knees, your face is held in God's hands and God says, "I love you. The blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven are yours, here and now."

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