

The Fruit of Fullness

Matthew 5:7-12; October 14, 2018

Introduction and Context:

Last week Tanner introduced this new sermon series going through the Sermon on the Mount:

- Sermon on the Mount (as a whole)
 - We're calling it "The New Normal" because Jesus not only offers new life but a new way of living as we follow him.
 - This new way of living is the pathway to true human flourishing (Pennington) both now and into the future.
 - This sermon doesn't include everything that is true of the gospel. Through the death and resurrection of Christ believers are made alive by God's grace. As we stand in this grace, we are able to respond to Jesus' invitation in his sermon.
- The first section of this sermon is what we call "The Beatitudes."
 - They all begin with "Blessed are..."
 - Jesus is describing the state of those who are living under the rule and reign of God. They experience his smile, his kindness and his favor.
 - The order of them are not accidental.
 - Tanner used "ladder" imagery last week to explain the order of the beatitudes. You've got to take go up a ladder one step at a time.
 - One author I read this week used a similar example: 7 rings
 - Colin Smith says to picture a series of seven rings in between two platforms (think monkey bars). Your goal is to get from one platform to the other swinging from ring to ring.
 - The first four rings are the *roots* of a godly life. They expose our spiritual need before God. We start poor and empty-handed and end with fullness, "satisfied." That's why Tanner titled his sermon last week "E to F." The first four rings take us from emptiness to fullness.
 - Transition: the rings that we're going to be challenged to grab today move from the *roots* of a godly life to the *fruit* of a godly life.
 - You won't see the fruit of these rings in your life if you skip the first four. They are essential.

Read Matthew 5:1-12

The Main Point: Let dependence on God produce the fruit of godliness in your life

I. The Fruit of Mercy (7).

- What is mercy?
 - "Mercy is a loving response prompted by the misery and helplessness of the one whom the love is to be showered" (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 24).
 - Illustration: The Mercy Rule in Flag Football (when a team is winning by 28

points or more, the mercy rule is in effect and it goes into “scrimmage mode.” In scrimmage mode, the losing team gets three straight offensive series and then the game is over).

- The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (Exod. 34:6 ESV)
- But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (Eph. 2:4 ESV)
- God’s loving response to our wretched sinful state is his mercy extended to us through Christ. He extends forgiveness and eternal life.
- Awareness for your own need of mercy leads you to be merciful
 - A perfect example of this is the parable Jesus tells in Luke 18:9-14 of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector
 - The Pharisee was completely unaware of his own spiritual bankruptcy and so he showed no compassion or mercy towards others.
 - On the other hand, the Tax Collector was completely aware of his spiritual bankruptcy and need for God to have mercy on him. I bet you he knew what it meant to show mercy.
 - This is why you won’t see the fruit of mercy in your life towards others unless you start with being “poor in spirit” yourself. I’m able to be merciful toward others because I see myself as one in need of mercy. Lord, humble me.
- Your own experience of receiving mercy leads you to be merciful.
 - What reasons does the Bible give us for forgiving others?
 - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Eph. 4:32 ESV; cf. Matt. 18:21-35; Col. 3:13)
 - We forgive because we have been forgiven.
 - In the same way, we are to show mercy because we have received mercy.
 - The Mercy of God is the foundation and motivation for our own mercy towards others.
- What does it look like to be merciful?
 - “We are to be compassionate and gentle, especially toward the miserable and helpless” (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 24).
 - We are merciful toward the suffering and the needy.
 - Our hearts should break for those who are needy and suffering spiritually.
 - Our hearts should break for those who are needy and suffering physically.
- What is our reward?
 - We will receive mercy from God; not necessarily mercy from others.
- Questions to ponder:
 - Am I merciful toward the miserable?
 - Am I compassionate and gentle toward those who are downtrodden?
 - Am I helpful or callous toward those who most need help (both inside and outside of the church)?

II. The Fruit of Purity (8).

- A Clean Heart is Required in Order to See God
 - Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. (Ps. 24:3-4 ESV)
 - Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. (Heb. 12:14 ESV)
- The Problem: Our Hearts are Incredibly Wicked and Evil
 - For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (Matt. 15:19 ESV; cf. Rom 1:21; 2:5)
 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer. 17:9 ESV)
 - Jesus addressed many of the religious leaders who overemphasized external ritual purity
 - You look great on the outside but the inside is full of dead people's bones (cf. Matt. 23:25-28).
- The Solution: The good news of the gospel is that when Jesus saves us, he makes us alive and gives us new hearts.
 - I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezek. 36:25-26 ESV; cf. Heb. 10:22)
- Additionally, we know that in the new creation, the new heavens and earth, we will see God face to face and all things will be pure and clean (cf. Rev. 21:22-27; 22:4).
 - Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 Jn. 3:2-3 ESV)
 - "In other words, according to John (cf. 1 John 3:2-3), the Christian purifies himself now because pure is what he will ultimately be. His present efforts are consistent with his future hope...[T]he disciples of Jesus who looks forward to the kingdom as it will be finally perfected, is already determined to prepare for it. Knowing himself to be in the kingdom already, he is concerned with purity because he recognizes that the King is pure, and kingdom in its perfected form will admit only purity" (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 25).
 - We see God now through the eyes of faith. As we pursue purity, we have intimate fellowship with God. As I grow in purity of my, my perception of God and fellowship with him will grow.
- Practical implications and questions to consider:
 - We pursue purity in area area of our lives (mind, thoughts, hands, work, relationships, etc.).
- Questions to consider: how do I know areas where I can grow in purity?

- What do you think about when your mind slips into neutral?
- What do you find yourself trying to hide or cover up in your life so no one will see?
- What do you want more than anything else?
- What and whom do you love?
- To what extent are your actions and words accurate reflections of what is in your heart?
- To what extent do your actions and words constitute a cover-up for what is in your heart?

III. The Fruit of Peacemaking (9).

- Jesus is the prince of peace
 - “Within the total biblical framework, the greatest peacemaker is Jesus Christ—the Prince of Peace. He makes peace between God and man by removing sin, the ground of alienation; he makes peace between man and man by removing sin and by bringing men into a right relationship with God” (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 26).
- Gospel Peacemaking
 - “Thus the good news of Jesus Christ is the greatest peacemaking message, and the Christian who shares his faith is, fundamentally, a harbinger of peace, a peacemaker” (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 26).
 - How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (Isa. 52:7 ESV; cf. Rom. 10:15)
- Relational Peacemaking: the 4G's of Peacemaking (by Ken Sande)
 - There's nothing in the passage to restrict this to just gospel peacemaking
 - The response of peace-faking (escape responses): suicide, flight, denial
 - The response of peace-breaking (attack responses): murder, litigation, assault
 - The response of peace-making: overlook, reconciliation, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, accountability
 - **Glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 4:32).**
 - How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?
 - **Get the log out of your eye (Matt. 15:18-20; 7:1-5; James 4:1-3).**
 - Suspect yourself, inspect yourself, and admit that circumstances only reveal existing sin
 - Before talking to others about their wrongs, with God's help I will examine myself
 - When I see that I have sinned, I will ask God to help me:
 - Repent
 - Confess my sins
 - Change my attitudes and behavior by God's help
 - **Gently restore (Gal. 6:1).**

- How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?
- **Go and be reconciled (Matt. 5:24; 18:15-35).**
 - How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?
- The reward is that we will be called “sons of God”
 - The reason the text says “sons of God” and not just “children” is because the focus is on reflecting the father’s character, the way a son reflects his father.
 - We reflect our heavenly father’s wonderful peacemaking character.
- This is normal Christianity (not the exception).
 - “Instead of delighting in division, bitterness, strife or some petty ‘divide-and-conquer’ mentality, disciples of Jesus delight to make peace wherever possible” (Carson, Matthew, 135).

IV. The Fruit of Joy in Persecution (10-12).

- This final beatitude is so important that Jesus expands it and explains it in more detail
- What kind of persecution is in view?
 - Persecution can take many forms:
 - Physical persecution
 - Ridiculed by your family
 - Ostracized by relatives
 - Insulted at work for honesty and truthfulness.
 - The believers in view here in the persecution are those who are persecuted because they are determined to live as Jesus lived (“for righteousness’ sake”; “on my account”).
- Disciples of Jesus should expect to experience persecution because Jesus experienced it as well (John 15:18-20; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:12):
- Implications (inclusio:)
 - “This final beatitudes becomes one of the most searching of all of them, and binds up the rest; for if the disciple of Jesus never experiences any persecution at all, it may fairly be asked where righteousness is being displayed in his life” (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 27-28).
- Why rejoice?
 - “Jesus’ disciples, then, must determine their values from the perspective of eternity (a theme Jesus expands in Matt. 6:19-21, 33), convinced that their ‘light and momentary troubles are achieving for them an eternal glory that far outweighs them all’ (2 Cor. 4:17)” (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, 29).

Conclusion

- The world has its own set of beatitudes (Kevin DeYoung)
 - Blessed are the rich, for theirs is the kingdom of pleasure.
 - Blessed are those who feel good about themselves, for they shall be confident.
 - Blessed are the aggressive, for they shall control the earth.

- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for recognition, for they shall be noticed.
- Blessed are the demanding, for they shall receive what's coming to them.
- Blessed are the sexually liberated, for they shall be their own gods.
- Blessed are the scheming, for they shall be called children of the powerful.
- Blessed are those who are praised by the world, for theirs is the kingdom of now.
- Ray Ortland concludes: "The world has its own version of events, its own eschatology, its own promises of reward. We must choose. And either way, we will be living by faith. But have you ever met one person who believed and lived by this world's unBeatitudes and came to the end a satisfied, radiant, wise person? Even *one*?"
- What promises are you going to believe?
- Are you ready to grab hold of the rings of mercy, purity, peacemaking and joy in persecution today?