Being a part of the Kingdom: Holiness In Daily Living

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**Foundational Scripture:** Matt. 5:6-9

**Intro**:

* The topic and idea of the kingdom dominates the gospel narrative. It is one of the most important themes of Jesus’ message made evident by His repeated use of it in sermons, parables, miracles and rebuke. Perhaps in His greatest sermon ever, Jesus speaks of the Beatitudes (supreme blessings) immediately at the onset in order to break down for us the key components of this kingdom. Because it will be at the forefront of His ministry to come and because it will be the cause of what He ultimately dies for, Jesus wanted all men to know and understand the importance of the kingdom and what they needed to do in relation to it. And all these years later, Jesus is still hoping we see the importance of the kingdom and that we take necessary action. A couple weeks ago we talked about the first part of the beatitudes which deal with the entrance and access to the kingdom. Jesus invites us and welcomes us to be a part of this spiritual rule and domain but we must be *“poor in spirit.”* We must be willing to be honest with ourselves and mourn over our sin with a view to repentance. We may have power and the strength to one-up others and retaliate against our enemies but we must forego those things for the sake of the greater good and the greater goal. If these things are ours, then entrance and access to the kingdom is granted. We become a part of the majestic domain of the King of kings and the Lord of lords.
* Yet, being a part of the kingdom is more than just getting in and having access. True kingdom citizens seek to be involved in any way they can to grow their faith and their knowledge. They look for ways and means through which they can further evolve into the character of their Lord: Jesus the Christ. And that’s exactly what Jesus reveals in this second section of the beatitudes. Those who enter the kingdom and have access to the kingdom must continue in humility, mourning and meekness but they must build upon that. Many people want to stop at the first section and take their fill. But Jesus says if you want to remain in the kingdom, you have to **embody holiness in your daily living**. Holiness is one of the most important, if not the most important characteristic of God. He wants us to be like Him. To be holy is to be separate, set apart or otherworldly. So, what does holiness in daily living look like?

**Holiness In Daily Living**

1. **Seeking Righteousness (Matt. 5:6)**
	1. Jesus says those who would be supremely blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. These people will always be filled and they will never need to worry about going hungry or thirsty. And how true of a statement that is! Think about the number of avenues today we have to grow, to learn and to excel still more.
	2. Jesus on a number of occasions fed the multitudes when he saw that they were hungry (Matt. 14:13-21; 15:32-38). In Jn. 6, Jesus noted that the multitudes kept following Him and coming after Him because they wanted their mouths filled and their stomachs satisfied. They wanted nothing to do with His word and the righteousness of God.
	3. In the wilderness where Israel wandered for a period of 40 years, God gave them manna and when that was not enough for them He gave them meat. They grumbled and they complained time and time again not so much because they didn’t have food or water but more so because it wasn’t the quality they wanted. They rejected His word and His righteousness for food, pleasure and self.
	4. Jesus modeled this quality for us when He Himself was tempted by the devil in the wilderness (Matt. 4:2-4). Jesus hungered and thirsted for the righteousness of God and His life showed it (Jn. 4:34). Righteousness consists of all those qualities (vv. 3-5) that make one morally justifiable and right in the sight of God. Righteousness is an essential part of having an intimate relationship with God. We may not always have food but we will always have God and His word. There is only one thing that will satisfy our souls and that is God.
	5. Being holy in daily living is not easy. It is never easy to be otherworldly when we live in a world that is carnal in nature and our spirits are housed in a body that is carnal. Yet we are called to be transformed, renewed and to set our minds on things above (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:1-3). We must be spiritually focused.
	6. The word used in Matt. 17:2 for Jesus’ transfiguration is the same word used in Rom. 12:2 speaking of the transformation we are to undergo. If we listen to Jesus and seek righteousness we will be transformed now and one day experience a glorious change as He did on that mountain (1 Cor. 15:51).
2. **Being Merciful (Matt. 5:7)**
	1. To have mercy on someone is to show compassion and forgiveness instead of following through with the punishment or harm that can be done to that person for the wrong they have done. This quality goes hand in hand with being meek. It is generally thought in most societies that if we can exact revenge and punish our enemies then we must do it. Jesus’ statement here contrasts that mindset. He is asking us to be different than this world (Matt. 9:13; 12:7). We, kingdom citizens, are called to be otherworldly (holy).
	2. Jesus told a story in Matt. 18:23-35 which illustrates the importance of this beatitude. We all want mercy when our day of reckoning comes, but when it’s the reverse, are we willing to do the same? Sometimes we forget the debt we were forgiven or the punishment that was overlooked when it’s our turn to sit on the seat of judgment.
	3. Every single one of us has had the blessing and privilege of being granted mercy. The King has shown us compassion we have never once deserved. Family and friends may have done the same. Part of being holy in daily living is remembering that we have been shown mercy and as kingdom citizens, we must do likewise (Prov. 11:17) if we want to continue to be a part of the kingdom.
3. **Being Pure in Heart (Matt. 5:8)**
	1. To be holy is directly proportional with being pure. Many scriptures use this word to speak of God’s holiness. They can be interchangeable. To be pure is to be free from any contamination. It is the quality of one who strives to be undefiled, without blemish, untainted by immorality and free from sin.
	2. One of the most difficult things for any person is to maintain a pure heart and a pure mindset. With everything that we see and everything we listen to, from time to time we have thoughts entering our minds that shouldn’t be there. Sin multiplies because we do not take those thoughts captive and destroy them (2 Cor. 10:5).
	3. The reward of purity is seeing God. Since God is free from darkness and sin, we cannot expect that we will see Him if we do not seek to be pure as He is pure (Psa. 23:3-4; Heb. 12:14; 1 Jn. 3:2-3). We must seek to separate ourselves from sin and impurity. If that means cutting cable then we do it. If it means that we avoid going to a certain place then we do it. Remaining a part of the kingdom so we can be with the King in the end is too valuable to give up for the impurities and lusts of this world.
4. **Being Peacemakers (Matt. 5:9)**
	1. Another significant aspect of holiness in daily living is making peace. We may think of this quality as finding common ground with the worst of enemies and that would be correct. However, being peacemakers may also require that we step in to reconcile others who are at odds such as our brethren. The natural desire of man is usually to seek retribution and feed our grudges (Matt. 5:38, 43).
	2. Jesus appeals to His disciples to be different, to be otherworldly by seeking peace with their enemies and peace with others. And again, Jesus does not ask us to do something He Himself never did. Jesus was often at odds with the Jews and religious leaders and even then He sought peace with them (Lk. 23:34).
	3. The twelve He called to walk alongside Him were from different backgrounds and no doubt they all had differing views. They may not have gotten along well in the beginning and on occasion later on in the gospels, they would argue and try to one-up each other. Jesus stepped in several times as a peacemaker and He encouraged them to make peace with one another (Jn. 13:34-35; 17:11, 22-23).
	4. Those who embody this quality in daily living will be called *“sons of God”* since God Himself is the ultimate peacemaker (Matt. 5:44-45). Through the blood of Christ, God brought Jew and Gentile to the same table. Master and slave made peace and overcame their differences.
	5. Not all conflict can be avoided and will be avoided and God knows this and He encourages us accordingly (Psa. 34:14; Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14). May we be people who seek to spread love and stop strife. May we encourage one another and make peace with all men. If this quality is ours, we will be sons of the king and thrive in His kingdom.

**Conclusion:** Being a part of the kingdom of God is not easy. It takes constant and consistent work beginning with humility, repentance and meekness. But it does not stop there. Jesus commends us to holiness in daily living by hungering and thirsting for righteousness. We must be willing to extend mercy and forego harm if we can. We must take control of our hearts and minds and take captive the thoughts of impurity and lust. And we must be peacemakers. Making amends with enemies and bringing those together who are at odds is crucial to our relationship with God. The results won’t always be perfect but as long as we do our best, we will remain in the kingdom. These qualities must at all costs be a part of our identity because our relationship with God depends upon it. Heaven depends upon it! Many people want to come to Jesus but when told what to do they walk away. It isn’t what they expected or it’s ultimately not what they were looking for. Jesus gives us everything we need to know and all that we need to do. If you haven’t repented and been baptized for the forgiveness of your sins, you are not in the kingdom. Step 2 can only begin if you’ve done step 1. How valuable is God to you and how valuable is Heaven to you?