

The Power, the Service and the Cost of Love

Matthew 5:6-12

In the first three Beatitudes we saw that the way Jesus understands what it means to be blessed is very different from the way the world sees it. Now we see that the life of a disciple is going to be very different from that of the crowd.

The Power of Love

What you love has the power to direct your life. Hunger and thirst are strong words. Jesus is talking about what our hearts most want, what they most love. Whatever that is has the power to pull you in one direction or another. To be a Christian means for your loves and longings to come into line with Jesus'. This is not just about what we want for our own lives, but for others as well. But what do we hunger for?

Jesus says those who hunger for righteousness are blessed. Righteousness means three things: being right with God; a righteousness of heart and life; and a righteousness of society. This is what we are to hunger for. The danger comes when we settle for less. However, when we do want God's righteousness, we will be satisfied: the day will come when we are made fully righteous and when all injustice and oppression are put away.

The Service of Love

Jesus says blessed are the merciful. The world tends to do revenge, not mercy. But when we show mercy we will receive it – in this life and the next. Showing mercy is the sign that our lives have been transformed by mercy. When you hunger after God you have a rich well of mercy to draw on.

Jesus says blessed are the pure in heart. Those whose hearts have been transformed by Jesus pursue heart purity. This is not just fighting sin, it is having an undivided heart – loving God with our whole heart. When we do that we will also seek to love our neighbour. A single-minded longing for God's kingdom to come results in working, serving, and living for the good of others. When we do we are blessed – because we will see God: our relationship with him will deepen and ultimately we will see him as he is.

Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers. When you hunger for righteousness you will work to see people reconciled with each other, and with God. God is the ultimate peacemaker. When we make peace we show ourselves his children – and that is what it means to be blessed.

The Cost of Love

But not everyone wants to hear the gospel of peace, or appreciate a pursuit of righteousness. Jesus disciples will face opposition. But they are blessed if they do Jesus says. This is very different from the world's pursuit of popularity. We need to be sure any opposition is because of Jesus – not because of us; but still we must expect it. However, when it comes we can be filled with joy. Persecution tries to take from us – but it can never take away Christ – our greatest treasure, if it is for more of him that we are hungry and thirsty for.