

“BLESSED ARE THE PLACEMAKERS”
**A SERMON BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW (5:1-12) AND PRESENTED FOR
ORLEAN UMC ON NOVEMBER 1, 2020-----
(SERMON ON THE MOUNT)**

TYPOS.

**WHEN YOU RUN ACROSS THEM IN YOUR DAILY
READING, THEY ARE NO BIG DEAL..... BUT WHEN
THE ERRORS OCCUR IN HOLY SCRIPTURE, THEN
YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OF BIBLICAL
PROPORTIONS.**

“THOU SHALT COMMIT ADULTERY” IS WHAT ONE BIBLE SAID. THAT MISTAKE IN THE 20TH CHAPTER OF EXODUS COULD HAVE STARTED A SEXUAL REVOLUTION.

“KNOW YE NOT THAT THE UNRIGHTEOUS *SHALL* INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.” THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS LOBBY CERTAINLY LIKED THE SOUND OF THAT ONE.

“GO AND SIN ON MORE,” SAID JESUS IN JOHN 8:11. WELL, TO BE HONEST, JESUS SAID, “GO AND SIN *NO* MORE,” BUT THE PRINTER WAS LOOKING FOR A LOOPHOLE.

**“LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE KILLED.” MUST
HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY A FRUSTRATED
PARENT. WHAT JESUS REALLY SAID IN MARK
7:25 IS “LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE *FILLED*.”**

**AND IN MATTHEW 5:9, PART OF TODAY’S
PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE, WE HEAR, “BLESSED
ARE THE PLACE-MAKERS.” THAT’S ALMOST AS
BAD AS THE LINE THAT MONTY PYTHON
MISUNDERSTOOD AND MANGLED INTO
“BLESSED ARE THE CHEESE-MAKERS.”**

**WHAT JESUS ACTUALLY SAID WAS “BLESSED
ARE THE *PEACEMAKERS*,” BUT A PROOFREADER
FAILED TO CATCH THE TYPO.**

**FORTUNATELY FOR US TODAY, THE PEACHTREE
EDITORIAL AND PROOFREADING SERVICE IS
WORKING HARD TO CATCH AND CORRECT SUCH
BIBLICAL BLUNDERS..... THIS COMPANY IS
DEDICATED TO PROOFREADING BIBLES AND
MAKING SURE THAT SUCH MISPRINTS NEVER
MAKE IT INTO A SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READING.**

***YOU MIGHT SAY THAT TYPOS ARE THIS
COMPANY'S DAILY BREAD.***

**WITH AN ORDINARY BOOK, YOU CAN PUT UP
WITH MORE MISTAKES "BECAUSE IT'S NOT
SOMETHING YOU'RE BASING YOUR WHOLE LIFE
ON," SAYS JUNE GUNDEN, WHO FOUNDED THE
COMPANY ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND DOUG.
"IT'S INFORMATION, BUT IT'S NOT REALLY LIFE-
CHANGING INFORMATION."**

***WITH THE BIBLE, HOWEVER, PEOPLE EXPECT
PERFECTION.***

**JUST THINK OF THE PROBLEMS THAT WOULD
HAVE ARISEN IF THE GUNDENS HAD NOT
CAUGHT SEVERAL ERRORS IN THE MOST
RECENT EDITION OF THE BIBLE. THE PHRASE
“OUR ANCESTORS” WOULD HAVE BEEN
“*SOUR* ANCESTORS.” INSTEAD OF CONDEMNING
“FACTIONS,” THE BIBLE WOULD HAVE CALLED
FOR AN END TO “FRACTIONS.”**

**NOT THAT AMERICA’S YOUNG MATH STUDENTS -
----INCLUDING MINE -----WOULD HAVE MINDED
THAT ONE.**

**WHAT'S SO SHOCKING ABOUT TODAY'S
PASSAGE FROM MATTHEW IS THAT IT SOUNDS
LIKE IT IS FULL OF TYPOS — EVEN WHEN IT IS
COMPLETELY ACCURATE. WHEN YOU READ THIS
STUFF, IT IS SO COUNTER-INTUITIVE THAT YOU
FIGURE THAT THERE MUST BE A MISPRINT HERE.**

***“BLESSED ARE THE MEEK”? THE MEEK? I DON'T
THINK SO!***

**THE ONLY WAY TO SEE THESE WORDS CLEARLY
IS THROUGH THE LENS OF THE KINGDOM OF
GOD. A PROOFREADER'S MAGNIFYING GLASS
CANNOT HELP US TO SPOT THE TRUTH HERE —**

**WE NEED TO BE LOOKING THROUGH THE DIVINE
OPTICS OF THE KINGDOM PROCLAIMED BY
JESUS CHRIST.**

“BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT” ...

“BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN” ...

**“BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS” ... THESE
ARE NOT PRESCRIPTIONS FROM THE SELF-HELP
SECTION OF YOUR LOCAL BOOKSTORE.....IF**

**YOU STILL HAPPEN TO HAVE ONE IN YOUR
COMMUNITY..... INSTEAD, THEY ARE
STATEMENTS OF WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT THE
NEW REALITY THAT THE LORD IS INSCRIBING ON
THE WORLD.**

**THERE ARE NO TYPOS HERE. ONLY THE GOD'S-
HONEST TRUTH.**

**SO WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE
COUNTERINTUITIVE REALITIES? *FOR STARTERS,*
WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT THESE BLESSINGS,
KNOWN AS THE BEATITUDES, ARE NOT
*DESCRIPTIONS OF HUMAN FEELINGS.***

**WHEN JESUS SAYS THAT WE ARE “BLESSED,”
HE IS NOT SAYING THAT WE ARE NECESSARILY
“HAPPY.”**

TO BE REVILED AND PERSECUTED BECAUSE YOU FOLLOW THE LORD MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE A BLESSING (V. 11), BUT IT IS NOT GOING TO MAKE YOU FEEL PARTICULARLY CHEERFUL. THE NINE BEATITUDES WHICH JESUS PROCLAIMS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE SO MUCH MORE THAN NINE “BE-HAPPY-ATTITUDES.”

TO BE BLESSED, IN THIS CASE, IS TO BE MADE PRIVILEGED OR FORTUNATE BY THE ACTION OF ALMIGHTY GOD. IT CARRIES WITH IT A SENSE OF SALVATION AND PEACE AND WELL-BEING. YOU MIGHT SAY THAT THE OPPOSITE OF BLESSED IS NOT “UNHAPPY.”

**RATHER, THE OPPOSITE OF BLESSED IS
“CURSED.” TO BE BLESSED IS TO BE GIVEN THE
GIFT OF DIVINE FAVOR, A GIFT THAT WE ALL
HAVE A DEEP HUMAN HUNGER TO RECEIVE.**

**STATED THIS WAY, IT’S CLEAR THAT THE
BLESSING OF THE BEATITUDES IS NOT ABOUT
US, AND IT’S NOT ABOUT HOW WE FEEL.**

**INSTEAD, IT’S ALL ABOUT WHAT GOD HAS DONE
FOR US.**

**WITH THIS PERSPECTIVE IN MIND, WE CAN GET A
CLEARER SENSE OF WHAT JESUS IS TALKING
ABOUT WHEN HE DESCRIBES HIS DISCIPLES AS
“BLESSED.”**

WHAT HE IS SAYING IS THAT THESE FORMER FISHERMEN ARE BLESSED BECAUSE THEY ARE EXPERIENCING THE COMING OF GOD'S KINGDOM, AND THEY ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DISCOVERING THAT THEIR LIVES ARE BEING RESHAPED BY THIS NEW REALITY..... NO LONGER WILL THE MEANING OF LIFE BE DEFINED BY THE CULTURE OF THE TOWN OF CAPERNAUM, OR THE EXPECTATIONS OF THEIR EXTENDED FAMILIES, OR THE SIZE OF THE FISH BEING PULLED OUT OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.

**FROM NOW ON, THE DOMINANT REALITY IN
THEIR EXISTENCE WILL BE THE KINGDOM OF
GOD, AND THE BLESSING OF GOD WILL COME TO
ALL WHO MAKE A PLACE FOR THIS KINGDOM IN
THEIR LIVES.**

**WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THERE WAS SOME
TRUTH IN THE TYPO THAT READ “BLESSED ARE
THE PLACE-MAKERS.” BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHO MAKE A *PLACE* FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

**SO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US TO MAKE A
PLACE FOR THE KINGDOM IN OUR LIVES TODAY?**

**WHAT KIND OF BLESSING WILL WE EXPERIENCE
IF WE ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE TRANSFORMED
BY THE RADICAL NEW REALITY THAT JESUS
OFFERS US? WHAT KIND OF RENEWAL WILL
COME OUR WAY IF WE TAKE SERIOUSLY THE
INVITATION TO OPEN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS
TO THE ARRIVAL OF GOD'S KINGDOM?**

**WE MIGHT DISCOVER, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WE
ARE "POOR IN SPIRIT" (V. 3) — A TERM THAT
DESCRIBES PEOPLE WHO FIND THEIR TRUE
IDENTITY AND SECURITY IN THE ONE LORD GOD.
THERE IS NOTHING WEAK OR PATHETIC OR
SHAMEFUL ABOUT BEING POOR IN SPIRIT,**

**BUT INSTEAD IT MEANS THAT WE ARE NOT
DELUDED ENOUGH TO THINK THAT WE ARE
MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE AND IN COMPLETE
CONTROL OF OUR LIVES. THIS SPIRITUAL
POVERTY IS REALLY AN EXCELLENT QUALITY TO
HAVE IN THIS POST-9/11 WORLD OF TERRORIST
THREATS, INTERNATIONAL TENSION AND
ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY AND GLOBAL
PANDEMIC — IT MEANS THAT WE ARE
DEPENDENT ON GOD, FIRST AND FOREMOST,
AND THAT THE LORD WILL REWARD US WITH
THE GIFT OF HIS KINGDOM.**

LET'S MAKE A PLACE FOR BEING POOR IN

SPIRIT.

**WE MIGHT ALSO FIND THAT WE ARE AMONG
“THOSE WHO MOURN” (V. 4) — PEOPLE WHO
FEEL GRIEF AS WE LOOK AROUND AND SEE
PAIN AND CRYING, SUFFERING AND DYING. WE
MOURN BECAUSE THERE IS EVIL IN US AND
AROUND US, ERUPTING IN BEDROOMS AND
BOARDROOMS, BACK ALLEYS AND
BATTLEFIELDS. THERE ARE TEMPTATIONS ALL
AROUND US, AND WEAKNESSES DEEP WITHIN
US, THAT MAKE IT AN EVERYDAY STRUGGLE TO
FOLLOW THE LORD IN FAITH.**

**BUT THE PROMISE OF TODAY'S PASSAGE IS
THAT THIS GRIM AND OFTEN GROTESQUE
REALITY IS NOT THE FINAL CHAPTER OF HUMAN
HISTORY — THERE IS GOING TO BE AN
UNEXPECTED TWIST IN THE TALE WITH A TURN
TOWARD LOVE AND PEACE AND JUSTICE. GOD
IS WRITING A SURPRISE ENDING TO THIS STORY,
AND HE INVITES EACH OF US TO PLAY A PART
BY DOING WHAT WE CAN TO LIVE BY THE
VALUES OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.**

**IF WE DO, WE'LL BE GIVEN A SENSE OF
COMFORT WE NEVER DREAMED POSSIBLE.
WE'LL FIND OURSELVES BLESSED, NOT CURSED.**

**PERHAPS WE ARE ALSO WHAT JESUS CALLS
“THE MEEK” (V. 5) — GENTLE PEOPLE WHO ARE
TRYING TO REJECT THE POWER-HUNGRY AND
VIOLENT WAYS OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.**

**OR WE ARE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HUNGER
AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (V. 6) BY
ACTIVELY DOING THE WILL OF GOD.**

**MAYBE WE ARE “PURE IN HEART” (V. 8), WILLING
TO SHOW THE WORLD IN WORD AND DEED THAT
THERE IS NOTHING MORE LIFE-CHANGING THAN
SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION TO GOD.**

**OR WE ARE “MERCIFUL” (V. 7), SHOWING
OTHERS THE VERY GIFT THAT WE ARE SO
ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE FOR OURSELVES.**

**THESE ARE NOT MISTAKES OR MISSPELLINGS,
AS STRANGE AS THEY LOOK TO US. INSTEAD,
THEY ARE KINGDOM-BASED QUALITIES THAT
CAN OPEN THE DOOR TO INNER PEACE AND
EVERLASTING SALVATION.**

LET’S MAKE A PLACE FOR THEM.

**THE CHALLENGE FOR US IS TO OPEN
OURSELVES TO GOD'S KINGDOM, AND RECEIVE
THIS RADICAL NEW REALITY THAT JESUS IS
INSCRIBING ON OUR HEARTS AND THUS MAKING
A PLACE FOR THE BEATITUDES.**

**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO OPEN THE DOOR TO
THE KINGDOM OF GOD, SAYS JESUS — BLESSED
ARE THE PLACEMAKERS.**

THAT'S NO TYPO.

**PRAISE GOD AND MAY IT BE SO FOR YOU AND
FOR ME.....AMEN**

