

Kingdom News

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

Volume 4, Issue 11

November 2010

Column: Living Waters

Series: The “BE” Attitudes

Take a walk with me, will you?

While contemplating the beatitudes I heard this phrase the “BE” attitudes. This, as you could appreciate, struck a resounding chord with me. This was no longer just a list of “nice-to-haves.” I began to see these as directives for the servant of the Lord. I began to see them as edicts or mandates given by a Sovereign. I would admonish you as follows: “He who has an ear, let him hear.”⁽¹⁾

Example: If someone said to you that “people who are taller than 5’4” are usually very intelligent.” You would subconsciously measure yourself by that criteria and subliminally include yourself in that class of intelligent beings (where fitting). And this may happen mentally even if you didn’t categorically agree with the assessment “prima facie.”⁽²⁾ Let’s do that same thing here.

On that note, let’s take a fresh look at the “BE” attitudes.⁽³⁾ This time regard them as directives, very specifically to you. **Caveat:** A hint to the wise is sufficient.

Blessed are the poor in spirit ... (Hint: “BE” poor in spirit)
Blessed are they that mourn ... (Hint: “BE” mournful)
Blessed are the meek ... (Hint: “BE” meek)
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness ... (Hint: “BE” hungry and thirsty for righteousness)
Blessed are the merciful ... (Hint: “BE” merciful)
Blessed are the pure in heart ... (Hint: “BE” pure in heart)
Blessed are the peacemakers ... (Hint: “BE” a peacemaker)
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake ... (Hint: “BE” persecuted for righteousness)
Blessed are you who are reviled, persecuted and slandered for Christ’s sake ... (Hint: “BE” reviled, persecuted and slandered for Christ’s sake)
You are the salt of the earth ... (Hint: “BE” salt)

You are the light of the world ...
(Hint: “BE” light)

Although each of these could, in themselves, be an exhaustive discourse, we’ll spare you the volumes of prose. Instead we intend to very softly, lift the curtain on each of these beautiful expressions of light and life. Over the next couple of editions we enlarge upon each of these.

This month, let’s look at just a few of them:

“BE” poor in spirit

The poor know that they are in need. To be “poor in spirit” means to recognize your need for God.⁽⁴⁾ It means to recognize your need to be led by the Spirit of God. It is not the case that you cannot do anything by yourself. The challenge is that nothing you “do by yourself” will be acceptable to God. It seems that due to the unfortunate influences of Pop-Psychology, “the church” has had a change of heart. Whereas “we” used to be cognizant of our desperate need for God (and the things of God); popular psychology has taught, that we can do anything if we just “believe in ourselves,” or if we just “visualize our goal.” Now that may have been a somewhat useful bit of encouragement to other nations. But it is counter-intuitive (and almost sacrilege)⁽⁵⁾ to the way of the Kingdom. Pardon my tone, but nowhere in the scriptures and nowhere in the Kingdom, will you find such an admonition. All *faith* in the Kingdom finds both its source and its substance in the Person of Jesus Christ. Paul said well, “for I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwells no good thing.” We NEED God, always and in all things!!! And only the “poor in spirit” know that. So “Be” poor in spirit.

Blessed are those who recognize their need for God; for to them belong the riches and resources of the Kingdom of Heaven.

“BE” mournful

This means that we live in such a way as to be constantly mindful of the fact that we live in a fallen world. And that although the grace of Calvary is available to all who will come; there are many who *will not* and/or *have not* come as yet. We are to pray and weep before the throne of God for the souls of men.⁽⁶⁾ Our Lord, wept over Jerusalem, because they didn’t understand the gift of God. They didn’t understand how the heart of the Father had both longed for and made provision for their salvation.⁽⁷⁾ We ought to guard against a “cavalier heart,” when it comes to the salvation of souls. We will certainly see the salvation of the Lord, when we begin to weep for the souls of men. We will see the gates of the Kingdom swing open; when we mourn over the wretched state of affairs; when we require of the Lord a dispensation of the “blood of the Lamb.” We are to mourn for our own brokenness, and to not justify our error. As well, we take hold of the horns of the altar for the brokenness of others. The Lord will hear, and He will answer; when we begin to care about the souls of men, like He cares.

Somehow we have been beguiled into believing that the responsibility for the salvation of souls rests squarely upon the shoulders of the clergy. And we abdicate our personal responsibility to be living epistles read of men.⁽⁸⁾ To see the result of the natural outworking of such a mindset, let’s peek into our educational system. When parents and care-givers began to abdicate the responsibility for the education of their children to the public school system; nationally we saw a decline in both the learning experience and

aggregate GPA. We the church are a *BODY* of believers; the head cannot do everything. Even our Lord is the “first fruits” of many.⁽⁹⁾ He said, “these things and greater, shall we do.”⁽¹⁰⁾ He started it, and it is through us that He will finish it.

See our “big brother” Moses in one of his many petitions for Israel. “*And I looked, and, behold, ye had sinned against the LORD your God, and had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you. And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and break them before your eyes. And I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread, nor drink water, because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.*”⁽¹¹⁾

Point of Interest: Notice that when Moses interceded for Israel, he didn’t enter on the premises of Israel’s “deserved-ness.” Moses didn’t dare take the posture that they “meant well.” To do this would have been patent absurdity. To beseech the Holy One, talking about how much Israel deserved to be forgiven. What was of preeminent importance was that God had been offended, by Israel’s adultery. And Moses approached God on that basis (that’s wisdom crying aloud).

Our Lord desires that they be reconciled to Him. We want to see them saved, petitions for forgiveness or salvation ought to be on the grounds of the heart of God and the finished work of Jesus Christ. We want to see our loved ones (and others) saved, because of the great price our Lord paid on Calvary, and the eternal efficiency of the blood of the Lamb. Upon this basis, you’ll have the ear of the Majesty.

Blessed are they that petition the throne of God for the salvation of souls; for their mourning shall be turned to joy, as they see their loved ones (and others) come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

“BE” meek

This means that we are to be characterized by patient humility. There is any number of similar definitions for *meekness*. May we enlarge of this particular expression?

It is said of our Lord, that He shall not cry [*aloud*] nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.⁽¹²⁾ Our Lord identifies Himself is meek and lowly in heart.⁽¹³⁾ A King, Who rides a donkey, now that is meek.⁽¹⁴⁾

Meekness is one of the nine fruits of the Spirit⁽¹⁵⁾ which means as much so as we are led by the Spirit of God; we display meekness as a way of life (as opposed to transactional occasions of meekness; which anyone can perform.)

In dealing with the faults or shortcoming of other believers, we are to approach them in the spirit of meekness to facilitate reconciliation.⁽¹⁶⁾ A spirit of meekness enables us to be longsuffering with others; as our Lord is longsuffering with us.⁽¹⁷⁾ Especially, for those of us who have a particular calling to teach (aka live) the Word; we have a “double” responsibility to be meek and gentle to all.⁽¹⁸⁾

But let our adorning be the hidden man of the heart ... even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.⁽¹⁹⁾

Blessed are those whose way of life is characterized by patient humility; for the earth shall be their inheritance.

Man shall not live by bread alone, but man shall live by every “BE” attitude that proceeds out of the mouth of God. =LW=

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- (1) Revelation 2:7
- (2) Definition: “at first appearance; at first view, before investigation” from Dictionary.com 10/25/10 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/prima+facie>
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- (6) Joel 2:17
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- (8) 2 Corinthians 3:2
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- (10) 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23
- (11) Deuteronomy 9:18-19
- (12) Matthew 12:19; Isaiah 42:2
- (13) Matthew 11:29
- (14) Matthew 21:5
- (15) Galatians 5:23
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- (17) Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:12-13
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- (19) 1 Peter 3:4

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Kingdom News

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

Volume 4, Issue 12

December 2010

Column: Living Waters

Series: The “BE” Attitudes

Part 2 – Matthew 5:6-8

We continue with a fresh look at the “BE” attitudes.⁽¹⁾ Let us also continue to regard these as directives, very specifically to ourselves. **Caveat:** A hint to the wise is sufficient.

Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness ... (Hint: “BE” hungry and thirsty for righteousness)
Blessed are the merciful ... (Hint: “BE” merciful)
Blessed are the pure in heart ... (Hint: “BE” pure in heart)

Last month we received light on being *poor in spirit*; what it means to be *mournful*; and on being *meek*.

This month, let’s receive life on being *hungry and thirsty for righteousness*; being *merciful*; and being *pure in heart*.

“BE” Hungry and Thirsty for Righteousness

Why are we directed to be hungry and thirsty? And why for righteousness?

Let’s address the second question, first. Why righteousness? Perhaps, it is because “Righteousness” is characteristically the sum of many, if not all, of the other virtues. Righteousness holds mercy and judgment in perfect tension. Righteousness is a balance of both love and justice. Righteousness both cuddles and chastens with the same sure-footed flare. Righteousness does not wink at disobedience or sin in an effort to spare discomfort.

Now for the first question, we have some empirical (personal) knowledge of both hunger and thirst; as we are acquainted with both appetites.

Admittedly, we are often confused when trying to differentiate between the two appetites. Nutritional experts will tell you that many times we “eat” when our body is simply “thirsty.” Those facts notwithstanding, we’ll look at what types of needs each of these two appetites are expressing.

To some of you this may sound a little parochial or juvenile, but bear with the rest of us, please. When the body is genuinely *hungry*, it is not asking for something to “drink.” And when the body

is genuinely *thirsty*, it is not asking for something to “eat.” Which means in a very real sense, these two appetites are different, and they cannot ultimately be substituted for each other. So we see, in part, why the scriptures identify both of them in our pursuit of righteousness.

The hunger and thirst for righteousness is our composite appetite for the Way, the governance and the lifestyle of the Kingdom. How do we know this? Well, before we answer this question, you may recall this analogy. How do we know which crimes are most offensive to public justice? Shouldn't it be evident to us in how the judicial authorities respond to the infraction? So again I ask how can we know that a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness signifies an appetite for the Way and lifestyle of the Kingdom? Is it not made known to us by the way that Jesus responds to the appetite itself?

Throughout John, chapter 6, the Lord is telling us that “He is the bread of life.”⁽²⁾ He says to us that whoever “comes to Him” will never *hunger* again. But He doesn't stop there, He goes on to say that whoever “believes on Him” shall never *thirst*. So we see that “coming to Him” satisfies our *hunger* and “believing on Him” satisfies our *thirst*. And He doesn't even stop there. He goes on to say that “whoever *eats* My flesh” and “*drinks* My blood,” has eternal life. Now eternal life is the Way and the lifestyle of the Kingdom.

There is more ... there is MUCH more, but the Lord is saying, “That's enough for now.” I am however, asking Him for permission to expand on this in the January 2011 edition. We'll see what He says about that petition.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall have their fill of the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. They shall receive sufficiently of the Way, the governance and the lifestyle of the Kingdom.

“BE” Merciful

The Lord thy God is a merciful God;⁽³⁾ therefore He tells us to be merciful. Like Father, like son; right? He says “I AM merciful to you; now you be merciful to others.”⁽⁴⁾ Now here's the catch ... the Lord has agreed to be *as* merciful to us; *as* we are merciful to others.⁽⁵⁾ The good you do to another, is the good you do to yourself. The merciful man does good to his own soul.⁽⁶⁾

While we're talking about being merciful, it might be useful to understand what mercy really consists of. In a sense, “mercy” is a disposition to extend compassionate forgiveness. It is the refraining from harming an offender. We see this in the sinner's petition for the Lord's mercy.⁽⁷⁾ And we ought to see this same posture of the heart, when our offenders petition our mercy.

Let's do a bit of “compare and contrast;” looking at mercy and grace. “Grace” is the extension of undeserved favor or kindness. But “mercy” is the extension of “grace” to one who has a present offense on the docket. Still not seeing the jagged edges of this mandate? Let's look a little closer, shall we. “Grace” is like a passing smile to a neighbor who does not regard your presence. “Mercy” is a full course meal personally purchased, prepared and delivered to the door of the one who has just defrauded you in the worst way. Is the air beginning to clear up a bit? In the words of Romans⁽⁸⁾ My children, do not seek revenge, instead allow others to express wrath. As previously stated, “Vengeance is Mine, says the Lord; I will repay.” So if someone offends you and is later hungry, feed him. If you find that he is thirsty, make it your business to give him a drink ... Don't let their evil overcome you; instead allow your mercy to overcome their evil.

When the Lord directs us to be merciful; He is saying to us “freely and liberally extend forgiveness and be compassionate.” He knows that the human heart loathes *extending* forgiveness; but loves to *receive* it. Our ways are certainly “unequal.” But the Lord is telling us here, that we will inevitably and consistently need mercy and lots of it; so He admonishes us to sow “mercy.” He goes further when He says, that when you come before the Judgment Seat of Christ your mercy will be metered out using the exact same instrument that you used to measure out mercy to others. ⁽⁹⁾ My apologies for being so direct and abrupt; but sometimes things don’t really matter to us until the car is parked on our front lawn.

*Blessed are those who do not just show mercy (transactionally), but are characteristically merciful; for they shall always be on the receiving end of their **much needed** mercy. Goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their life and they shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

“BE” Pure in Heart

Okay, I see you sliding down in your seat. We hate to talk about *purity of heart*, don’t we? Is it because we know that, on a personal note, we are not ourselves “*pure in heart*?” Is it because it seems so unobtainable?

May I ask you a few more questions?

Is it possible that ... to be *pure in heart* doesn’t mean to be without flaw (as we have traditionally understood it)? It could not mean “to be flawless;” because that would exclude all of the sons of Adam from having pure hearts. If excluded, then this edict could not have been directed at us; could it? Is it possible that ... to be *pure in heart* means to have a heart that is “unmixed” or “without mixture?”

Will you humor me momentarily? Let’s say that to be *pure in heart* means that the heart is “unmixed.” Let’s say that it means that the one central controlling objective of one’s life is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ. If our central desire or objective is to be conformed, then this directive is not only conceivable, but it is very really “do-able.” So we can see that to be *pure in heart* (on those terms) is within our dominion. Now we see how our Lord could require this of us. [Aaahhhh ... sigh of relief] Don’t get me wrong, “do-able” and “easy” are not the same. But God never promised that this way would be “easy.” His “yoke” is easy; ⁽¹⁰⁾ but this “way of life” may not, at times, be regarded as “easy.” But that’s okay.

The scriptures promise that “you shall seek God and find (see) Him when you shall have made God the single central focus of your life.”⁽¹¹⁾ We all know that our life issues out of our heart.⁽¹²⁾ So a pure heart; yields a pure life.

To be “unmixed” or *pure in heart* means to have a heart with a single life focus; ⁽¹³⁾ as opposed to being double-minded. James says “purify your hearts you who are double-minded.”⁽¹⁴⁾ To be double-minded means to have multiple disparate objects in one’s view. It means to be led about by multiple competing influences. It implies the ability to hunger and thirst after both righteousness and riches. It implies the ability to desire that which “is;” while being occupied by that which “is not.” It implies the intent to serve both God and mammon.⁽¹⁵⁾ To hold two disparate objects in view is as impossible as being both “here” and “not here” at the same time. The scriptures say that we’ll love the one and hate the other. I’m inclined to believe the scriptures.⁽¹⁶⁾

The *pure in heart* shall see God. Said otherwise, the heart whose central life focus is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ shall see God. This is both a promise and an absolute necessity. If our singular heart's desire is to be conformed, we MUST see God; because it is that "beholding Him" that so conforms us. It is only by seeing God, that we may be made *pure in heart*.

Blessed are those whose single, central focus in life is to be conformed into the image of Jesus Christ; for they shall see God. For they shall have seen God, because without beholding Him, there is no purity of heart.

God takes the foolish things of this world to confound the wise "of this world." What is foolish? According to this world's standards, it is foolish to hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is foolish to be merciful and pure in heart. These are all reckoned as signs of weakness and foolishness; are they not?! Whereas our Lord says, they are "blessed." Whose report will you believe?

Man shall not live by bread alone, but man shall live by every "BE" attitude that proceeds out of the mouth of God. =LW=

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

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| (1) Matthew 5:6-8 | (2) John 6:35, 48 |
| (3) Deuteronomy 4:31 | (4) Luke 6:36 |
| (5) Matthew 5:7; Proverbs 18:25; 2 Samuel 22:26 | (6) Proverbs 11:17 |
| (7) Luke 18:13 | (8) Romans 12:19-22 |
| (9) James 2:13 | (10) Matthew 11:30 |
| (11) Jeremiah 29:13 | (12) Luke 6:45; Proverbs 4:23 |
| (13) Matthew 6:22 | (14) James 1:8; 4:8 |
| (15) Matthew 6:24 | (16) Matthew 6:24 |

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Kingdom News

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Volume 5, Issue 1

January 2011

Column: Living Waters

The “*BE*” Attitudes Part 3 – Matthew 5:6-8

Please continue to regard these “BE” attitudes as directives, very personally.

Blessed are the peacemakers ... (Hint: “BE” a peacemaker)
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake ... (Hint: “BE” persecuted for righteousness sake)
Blessed are you when men revile you ... (Hint: “BE” reviled)

Last month we rediscovered what it means to be *hungry and thirsty for righteousness*; what it means to be *merciful*; and what we are being asked to do by being *pure in heart*.

This month, we’ll receive revelation on what our Father expects of us as he directs us to *be peacemakers*; *to be persecuted for righteousness sake*; and *be reviled*.

“BE” a Peacemaker

Sounds good ... but how?

As simple as it sounds, a peacemaker is one who “makes” peace. The concept of “making” something implies the “bringing forth from something else.” It’s no different with our Lord’s mandate to “BE peacemakers.”

What does it mean to “make” peace? Perhaps we could state it a bit differently to stimulate understanding.

Blessed are those whose *presence* makes a place peaceful.

Blessed are those whose *speech*, says to the storms of life, “Peace, be still.”

Blessed are those whose peaceful *disposition* brings calm and strength to others.

Blessed are those whose peaceful *dealings* bring stability to situations.

Blessed are the peace “makers.”

What are some of the ways we can “make” peace?

Follow peace with all men ⁽¹⁾ ...

We have permission to speak *peace* over places (and situations). ⁽²⁾

Receive from God the *peace* that passes all understanding, and allow it to manifest in your daily transactions of life.⁽³⁾

Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ^(3A)

...

In order to “make” peace, we must first receive peace. Here are some other things we should know about peace.

- Great peace, have they which love the law of the Lord; and nothing shall offend them.⁽⁴⁾
- God has called us all to peace; both to have it and to share it⁽⁵⁾
- Jesus is our peace⁽⁶⁾ ...
- Peace is a fruit of the Spirit⁽⁷⁾
- To be spiritually minded is life and peace⁽⁸⁾
- The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, by peacemakers⁽⁹⁾
- We are commanded to allow the peace of God to rule our hearts⁽¹⁰⁾

Peace is an attribute of God’s own character.⁽¹¹⁾ So in one real sense, peace cannot be “made.” However, it is not by nature an inherent attribute of *our* character. Therefore, we must get it from somewhere else (its Source is God) and bring it to bear on people, places and things. And thus, “make” peace.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God, because peace is a characteristic of the nature of God. Like Father, like sons.

“BE” Persecuted for Righteousness Sake

Do I hear you saying to me, “That’s easy for you to say, JoAnn?” Advice is easy to *give* but difficult to *take*, isn’t it?

The scripture says that those who are persecuted for righteousness sake are blessed. Now that’s peculiar, isn’t it? Talk about taking the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. It’s not quite the same as saying “someone who has just gotten his debt forgiven is blessed.” This we readily acknowledge. But you’re suggesting here that I allow someone to persecute me!! Why, pray tell, would I do something like that? Pardon the expression, but who in their right mind does that? Name one *sane* person who puts up with someone persecuting them ... What’s that you say? ... Jesus Christ? ... Oh, okay ... I stand corrected.

Question: Why did Jesus do it?

Answer: Because He *knew* that they *didn’t know* what they were doing. As he hung there on that “god-forsaken” cross (no disrespect intended);⁽¹²⁾ (He asked the Father to forgive those who persecuted Him, for righteousness sake.⁽¹³⁾ But He wasn’t just asking for the forgiveness of those who physically nailed Him to the cross; or those who literally uttered accusations against Him, that fateful day on Golgotha’s hill. He was also praying for *our* forgiveness ... for *my* forgiveness. Because He knew that all of his persecutors were not standing at the foot of the cross at Calvary. He knew that one day I would be born. He knew that although I was not literally hanging on one of the two crosses next to Him that I would “cast the same accusations in my teeth.”⁽¹⁴⁾ He knew I would ask, “Lord how could You let this happen to me?” He knew I would wonder who was really in charge in this world, as it seemed that those who had no regard for God, always seemed to triumph. He knew that I too would persecute Him. And so He said, Father forgive JoAnn (or put your name here), she don’t really understand what she’s doing. They don’t understand why they shun the Arms that long to

carry them through the valley of the shadow of death ... to comfort them. Father, forgive them. They don't understand that the ache in the pit of their stomach is really "My calling card." Saying come unto Me, all you that labor and are burdened with a heavy load, your rest is with Me. And so they scorn, Me for their pain.

The decisions that the Lord makes for us (on our behalf) are made in righteousness; whether or not we agree or understand. And although we act like we believe that He ordains our way; we still persecute Him for it. We moan and complain about the way that He has chosen for us ... about His way with us. Instead of saying "Be it unto me, as You have ordained." Jesus said to the disciples, "What I do, you won't know now, but hereafter you will."⁽¹⁵⁾ And so He says of our lives.

Question: Why is He asking this of us, too?

Answer: There are more reasons here than the books can contain. Some of the reasons He asks us to do it is because He did it for us. And we are predestined to be conformed into His image.⁽¹⁶⁾ Another reason He directs us to bless those who persecute us for righteousness sake is because we reap what we sow. And if we do not bless those who persecute us ... we will not be blessed, when we persecute Him. Because not only are we our brother's keeper ... we are our brother. What we do to others we do to ourselves. That is why the Lord admonishes of to do unto others as we would have done to us. And because "God is not mocked" what we do to others, will be done to us.

Question: What does it mean to be persecuted "for righteousness sake?"

Answer: We offer the following disclosure, so that we don't make the tragic mistake of thinking that all persecution is the same. And so that we don't misunderstand; all persecution of "Christians" does not fall under *the banner of "persecution for righteousness sake."*

We can either be persecuted for "doing" righteousness; or for "being" an expression of righteousness.

In a very succinct manner: If you are doing or saying (or being for that matter) what has been ordained by God and we are persecuted for it; that comes under the banner.

However, if our life is not circumspect (I didn't say perfect) and we are buffeted or persecuted for our own indiscretions, this most certainly does not come under the banner.⁽¹⁷⁾

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

"BE" Reviled

Okay, wait a minute. First you want me to be persecuted for righteousness sake. Now you're asking me to allow people to revile me? What's the difference between being persecuted, and being reviled? Great question! To be persecuted is to be "afflicted or harmed." To be reviled is to be "cursed at, or spoken to with harsh often slanderous language."

So we see that we are directed to bless both those who "do" us harm AND those who "speak" harmfully to us. Wow! ...

Now here's an interesting paradox. We as Ambassadors for Christ are commanded to "do" justice and to "speak" peacefully, under ALL circumstances. And when we don't, we are

chastened, and rightfully so. But when someone else “does” injustice to us; and “speaks” injuriously to us; we are commanded to bless them? Okay, so let me see if I’ve got this right ... we must “do and speak” right. And we must endure or tolerate others who do not “do or speak” right to us?

Why?!? Because ...

A person who would persecute or revile someone, especially someone who loves them, someone who honors God, is very, VERY broken. And God’s desire is for them to see their need for the saving grace of Jesus Christ. And He intends to do this by allowing them to occasionally find themselves face-to-face with a child of God. Notwithstanding the unfavorable circumstances in which we then find ourselves.

It’s often easier to notice that *your* “light is OUT;” when you’re standing next to someone who’s light is not only “ON” but is “Very Bright.” The Lord is seeking to win them to the Light. And He’s going to use us to win them; imagine that. However, He is not seeking to win us to the Light. He is simply making us an able reflection of that Light.

This also explains why we must *bless* those who find themselves unwittingly seeking to do us harm or to speak irreverently to us; (very specifically) when we have not provoked such an attitude or response.

At the risk of adding salt to an open wound; please notice the qualifications affixed to these directives. The scriptures says when we are persecuted FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE, we are to bless the perpetrator. Or when we are reviled, FALSELY FOR CHRIST’S SAKE, we are to bless the persecutor. Why such qualifications as “for righteousness sake” or “falsely, for Christ’s sake?” B-e-c-a-u-s-e if we are persecuted or reviled as a legitimate response to our own indiscretions, we are commanded to “repent” and not to justify our inappropriate behavior.

Sometimes it easier to take a spanking (without retaliating); when you know that you deserve it. But when you have done nothing worthy of such an attack, it takes the GRACE of God (and a great deal of it) to return “blessing” for “cursing.” And that’s just the point, isn’t it? The Lord wants to extend His grace to those who are thus broken; and He wants to extend it through us. But He can only do that if we submit and allow Him to respond with blessing (and not have us respond in-kind).

We could go on to talk about the VERY, VERY, VERY attractive Return on Investment (ROI) promised to those of us who will “bless persons who persecute or revile” them.

But why?

Isn’t it sufficient enough of an incentive to do it because our Lord requires it of us?

Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.

Remember, man shall not live by bread alone, but man shall live by every “BE” attitude that proceeds out of the mouth of God. =LW=

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Kingdom News

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

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Section: Living Waters

The “*BE*” Attitudes

Summary – Matthew 5:13-14

Please continue to regard these “BE” attitudes as directives, very personally.

You are the SALT of the earth ... (Hint: “Do” what salt does)
You are the LIGHT of the world ... (Hint: “Do” what light does)

Last month we rediscovered what it means to be a *peacemaker*; why one should be willing to be *persecuted for righteousness sake*; and what we are being asked to do by being willing to *be reviled*.

This month, we’ll wrap up in “salt and light,” literally.

The prior nine “BE” Attitudes, were *directives* to “be or become” to allow, to endure. That we are “salt and light” are not such admonishments. Instead they are both “facts” and they are “truths” about the servants of the Lord. In a word: that we are “salt” and “light” are foregone conclusions. In the “spirit of the words” of our Lord, “They are blessed who are peacemakers; they are blessed who mourn.” You’ll notice that He doesn’t say “they are blessed who are salt and light.” Instead He says, “This is what you ARE ... salt and light.” You may (or may not) choose to be reviled for righteousness sake. You may (or may not) choose to be meek. But you *cannot* choose whether or not to be “salt and light.” In the Kingdom, this decision has already been made for you, welcome home.

(The following example is rather weak but it will serve):

For the next few minutes your name is Simon. And you are in a room full of small, impressionable children. I walk into the room and announce to the children, that “Simon is your leader,” as I point you out to them. I then direct them to “do” whatever they see you “do.” I turn around and walk out of the room, locking the door behind me. Whether or not you want to be their “leader;” until you can convince these small, fragile ones otherwise; they’ll be following your lead. A wise thing for you to do at that point would be to “mark well your behavior;” so as not to damage, harm or lead these little ones astray.

And so our Lord has walked into the “room” or earth; and the people that sat in darkness saw a Great Light. ⁽¹⁾ And by your “profession of faith” He has pointed to you and said, to the **world**,

“This is your **light**. Whatever you see him do; you do.” He has pointed to you and said to the **earth**, “This is your **salt**, be subject to whatever “flavor” he effects upon you; for I surely will hold him accountable.” And so I say to you (and to myself) “Mark well your behavior and manner of life. By letting your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”⁽²⁾ The eyes of the world are upon you; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. The heart of all creation groans for the manifestations of the sons of God; the elements groan for the earth to be salted.

Now that this grave responsibility has been placed squarely upon our shoulders; what is one to do? How to we discharge our duty as “salt and light?” We’ll come back to this, but first one notable mention.

Did you notice that the Lord has given *us* to the **earth as “salt;”** and He gave *us* to the **world as “light?”** Why? What does this mean?

SALT

The Lord has given *us* to the **earth as “salt.”**

For the most part when you see the term “earth” in scripture, it represents the physical planet, its elements, up to and sometimes including the universe, mankind, the heart of man, etc.

The earth is under a curse (judgment) or a burden.⁽³⁾ Its elements are under the jurisdiction of mankind; and as a result of the Fall, they are also at the disposal of the enemy. “Salt” is a preservative. While we cannot undo the curse, we can preserve what vestiges of life are left in the earth. And in some real ways we can make the earth to serve again, the will of God and the purpose of man. Just like mankind, the earth was made to serve in the Kingdom of Heaven.

May I show you something?

On Day #5 of the earth’s Restoration⁽⁴⁾ the Lord called forth in the seas multitudes of living creatures and blessed them. Prior to the curse, this is how the waters were supposed to serve (both God and) man. Now mark the events that occurred when Peter and his boys were out fishing on a couple of different occasions:

- 1) Before Jesus’ crucifixion at the lake of Gennesaret (*please read* Luke 5:4-7);
- 2) After His Resurrection at the sea of Tiberius (*please read* John 21:1-6)

On both occasions, they had toiled all night and caught nothing. I’m sure Peter was asking himself, “Where were all of those fish that were commanded to fill the waters?” Wherever the fish were, when Jesus showed up, they did too; and there they served the purpose of God and man. The waters behaved according to their original decree, at the command of Jesus.

(You remember our example above?) At the marriage supper of Cana of Galilee; Jesus’ mother walked into a room and pointed to Jesus and said to the servants “Whatever He says “do;” see to that.”⁽⁵⁾ And at the command Jesus, water was again made to serve the purposes of God and man.

During a very large healing conference, the people were hungry and all of the restaurants were closed.⁽⁶⁾ And at the command of Jesus, the earth (two fish and five loaves of bread) was again made to serve the purpose of God and man.

One evening during a storm, Jesus was asleep on a ship. The winds and the waves became irritable and began to misbehave. At the rebuke of Jesus, the elements were again made to cease and desist; they were made to serve both God and man.⁽⁷⁾

One evening as Jesus came down out of the mountain after prayer; saw His disciples in a ship amidst an unruly sea. The elements were boisterous. So he walked across the sea.⁽⁸⁾ At the will of Jesus, the waters were made to obey peace, and be still; the wind and sea were made to serve God and man.

One April 15th, A.D. 32 Peter was concerned that they would miss the tax deadline, that evening. Jesus saw the fretting of his brow and asked, “Peter, what’s on your mind?” Peter was slow to respond; so Jesus told Peter what was on Peter’s mind. He gave them His ATM card, and sent them to the bank (I mean the seaside) to get money for taxes. The fish and sea were made to serve the purpose of God and man.⁽⁹⁾

We could go on ... and on ... and on, but I believe you get the point. Jesus gave us great examples of how “salt” preserves the earth so that it is again able to serve the purposes of God and man. Take up your responsibility as “salt” and “these things and greater shall you do.”⁽¹⁰⁾

LIGHT

The Lord gave *us* to the **world as “light?”**

For the most part the scriptures use the term “world” to represent the overarching system that operates in and that is birth from the “mental/intellectual and emotional” realm of our existence. Read that again, please. I don’t want to belabor the matter, but it is imperative that we are on the same page, so that the balance of the disclosure will resonate with you. That being the case, please allow me to indicate that our economic, social, philosophical, and many of our religious systems and disciplines are all birth out (and are largely comprised) of our mental and emotions outputs. While they may make use of physical elements, they exist apart from them.

There is a sense in which the term “world” represents the “power centers” of this realm of existence; man’s power and the influence of the enemy’s power (*there is a great deal more here; but time forbids that we should enlarge upon it at this time*). Unlike the term “earth” the term “world” it is not, by and large, inclusive of the physical universe and its solar and stellar systems and planets; although on occasion it has been translated as such. One of the best implications as to what the scriptures mean when it rightly represents the term “world” is given to us in 1 John (3:15-17) when it warns:

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof ...

You see there that none of the descriptions of the world’s contents are physical. They are outputs of our appetites, lusts, passions, thoughts and intentions.

What is light? “That which does make manifest, is light.”⁽¹¹⁾ What does light manifest? Light manifests, identifies, flags up those things which do not meet with God’s approval. Light discovers and sets apart those thoughts, words and deeds that dishonor God and/or offend man. Now, light also illuminates the things that are approved of God. But for the present discussion,

our focus is on the things that meet with the disapproval of God, because the Lord is here awakening us to our responsibility in the eyes of the “world.”

Here’s where it gets difficult. When we discharge our duty as “light;” sometimes we make more enemies than we do friends. Not exactly what you signed up for, huh? Please recall that Jesus didn’t ask our permission before He told us that we were the “light of the world.”

*The scriptures say, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believes on Him is not condemned; but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that **light is come into the world**, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov’d. But he that does truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.”⁽¹²⁾*

In a very interesting sense, we are given to the world as light; just as the Law was given to Israel as a type of “light.” Paul admitted that he didn’t even know what lust was until the Law reprov’d his covetousness.⁽¹³⁾

As the light of the world our manner of life, by its nature, reprov’s the world’s manner of life. Such are the characteristics of light.

In summary, how do we discharge our duties as “salt and light?”

- We recognize that we are poor in spirit; and that we do all things through Christ; and we can do nothing without Him.
- We mourn for the lost; that they may be reconciled to God, or reprov’d.⁽¹⁴⁾
- We walk the way of meekness; thereby the hearts of men may be entreated..
- We hunger and thirst after righteousness; so that we may feed the hungry and give drink to the thirsty.
- We extend mercy.
- We have singleness of focus from a heart that is unmixed; we display purity of heart.
- We MAKE peace.
- We endure when we are persecuted for righteousness sake.
- We rejoice and are exceedingly glad when we are reviled.

Remember, man shall not live by bread alone, but man shall live by every “BE” attitude that proceeds out of the mouth of God. =LW=

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ Matthew 4:12-17; John 1:4-10

⁽³⁾ Genesis 3:17

⁽⁵⁾ John 2:1-10

⁽⁷⁾ Mark 4:38

⁽⁹⁾ Matthew 17:24-27

⁽¹¹⁾ Ephesians 5:13

⁽¹³⁾ Romans 7:7

⁽¹⁴⁾ 1 Corinthians 5:1-2

⁽²⁾ Matthew 5:16

⁽⁴⁾ Genesis 1:20-22

⁽⁶⁾ Matthew 14:14+

⁽⁸⁾ Matthew 14:23-32

⁽¹⁰⁾ John 14:11-12

⁽¹²⁾ John 3:17-21

