

Being a Culture of Life - Part 5

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Overview: The Beatitudes

The beatitudes are the Kingdom manifesto; how the citizens of the kingdom should live. They are not a list of things to do, but the attitudes and motives of the Christian.

Key Text

Matt 5:27-32

Background

- Jesus was teaching Kingdom principles
- These principles are meant to be evident in the Christian life, as the Christian is the representative of the King and the Kingdom culture.
- The Jews were waiting for a King who would conquer all their enemies; however Jesus was emphasising an internal freedom, irrespective of their external situation.

Key Themes

- Purity of heart
 - Jesus is talking in hyperboles*; He is not suggesting that we literally cut off our hands or take out our eyes. Reason: These external actions will not affect our internal attitudes and sinful condition.
 - The Mosaic Law deals with external actions, whereas Jesus was addressing the internal motives and attitudes. Eg. The young rich man seeking the Kingdom.
 - Adultery refers to sexual immorality.
 - Holiness is a process that began at salvation and it continues throughout the Christian life. It deals with the heart, rather than a list of rules.
 - Jesus is addressing the images that we view, as our eyes allow in influences that can stimulate our sinful desires. eg. TV, billboards, movies, Internet. Instead, fix your eyes on Jesus. [Psalm 119; 2 Cor 4:18, "Keep your eyes on things unseen."]

- Faithfulness of commitment
 - Faithfulness in life; being faithful to one another, especially when things go wrong. [1 Cor 7, Matt 19]
 - Does this scripture allow for divorce? The Old Testament allows for divorce on certain grounds. Jesus and the apostle Paul condemned marriage after an invalid divorce, but not after a valid divorce.
 - There is no hierarchy of sin/actions in the Kingdom. Therefore, there is forgiveness for every sin/action. Divorce is *not* an exception to this. God's desire is to bring us to a place of repentance. [Gen 24:26; 2 Tim 2:13; Exo 34:6]
 - Divorce is allowed, however Christians should focus of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Practical Application

The citizens of the Kingdom should be abounding with love, have no anger and be faithful. With these values, we bring a culture of life within a culture of death. We need to learn to be servants and to serve one another. [Deu 7:9]

* Figure of speech, often exaggeratory in nature.