

8.10.23

### **Throw Up My Hands**

I've been studying the beatitudes a lot lately - the 8 statements of what it means to live a "blessed" life in the beginning of Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount. It's a pretty loaded word: "blessed." We often use it on Instagram posts or in prayers when we reflect on life, community, financial stability or good health.

And yet, the way Jesus describes the blessed life doesn't mention good fortune, a nice car, or a 401k. In fact, Jesus' statements on blessing our countercultural both to our current culture, and the culture of the first century Jews that were listening when he shared it. The Jewish people were used to a religious system based on rules and regulations. As Jesus sat on a mountainside, bringing to mind the image of Moses on a mountain with the ten commandments, the Jewish listeners were most likely expecting a list of rules on HOW to get to a blessed life. But instead, Jesus offers 8 completely countercultural rules on what it truly means to be blessed.

His first beatitude is found in ***Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***

The first century Jews expect: blessed are those who follow the religious law. 2023 San Diegans expect: blessed are those who work harder. Blessed are those who go to church enough or avoid certain behaviors or donate X amount of money or have enough Instagram followers.

Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Jesus doesn't give us a list of commandments. Jesus doesn't say the blessed life is those who are religious enough. Jesus doesn't designate the "good Christian" vs. the bad sinners. Instead, blessed are those who are POOR spiritually. Those who recognize their spiritual poverty, and know they NEED God's help.

The blessed life isn't when we reach a certain religious standard. The blessed life is when we recognize that we will never be able to close the gap between us and God that sin has caused. We find blessing when we throw up our hands in surrender to him and admit - we don't have what it takes. At the end of ourselves is when real connection with him begins.

Where have you been believing in culture's definition of blessing? Where have you maybe even fallen to the lies of Christian culture, that can often get it wrong?

Blessing isn't about the world's standards or our family's standards or religious standards. Blessing is about a God who is the only true fix for our problem of sin. Blessing is about humbling ourselves and admitting we have nothing without Jesus.

Blessing doesn't look like the glamorous moment we often crave. Blessing is the messy moment where we look to the heavens and admit, "God I don't know what to do. I don't have what it takes. I'm exhausted from trying to do this on my own. I need you!"

Maybe that's the step this week, friend. Stop trying to fix God sized problems with worldly solutions. Take a half an hour and just be with your Heavenly Father. Throw up your hands, fall to your knees, and pour your heart out. Share the pain. Confess where you have been looking to the wrong things. And admit how poor in spirit you truly are.

At the end of yourself is where the greatest connection with God can truly begin. Are you ready to run to him?