

**I. OVERVIEW OF THE BEATITUDES**

- A. ***An Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount*** – Jesus gives the beatitudes as His introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. These heart values overshadow the entire sermon. They are the foundation on which the rest of His teaching is built.
- B. ***Interpreting the Beatitudes Rightly*** – Many have considered the Sermon on the Mount to represent some type of perfection that is unobtainable but that was not Jesus’ intent in giving us the sermon and the beatitudes. Others have sought a “deeper meaning” rather than simply taking the text as it is written. The beatitudes are quite clear and plain; therefore it is important that we read them with a simple, literal hermeneutic. They are not difficult to understand; they are difficult to live.
- C. ***A Measuring Stick*** - The beatitudes serve as a measuring stick or “litmus test” for our hearts by revealing the character of God that should be formed in our own hearts. Not only is it a measuring stick for our own hearts, but it is an evaluation tool for our ministry as well. Our ministry should produce the fruit of the Sermon on the Mount in those we minister to.
- D. ***Attitudes with Rewards*** – Each of the beatitudes have a direct correlation with a reward. Each of the beatitudes not only produce fruit in our own heart, they also have significant rewards attached to them. It is critical to understand that the beatitudes have a direct correlation to your future because the rewards Jesus offers in association with each of the beatitudes are significant. If we take Jesus’ offer of reward seriously, we will take the beatitudes seriously. We can draw conclusions from Jesus’ offer of specific rewards for the beatitudes:
1. Often we don’t take the beatitudes seriously because we don’t take Jesus’ promise of rewards seriously or because we do not interpret His rewards literally.
  2. The direct correlation between each of the beatitudes and a significant reward is designed to give us the requirements for that specific reward in the age to come. It is a list of “job requirements” for the age to come.
  3. Jesus plainly offers us rewards for each of the beatitudes because He desires to motivate us to pursue each of the beatitudes. He knows that the beatitudes are in opposition to the spirit of this age and so He offers significant reward to us to help motivate us to go against the spirit of the age and pursue the culture of His kingdom.
  4. Because Jesus rewards the beatitudes so significantly in His kingdom, we should likewise reward these beatitudes in our own ministries. Jesus is giving us the values that we should value in ministry. When you build ministry teams and set a leadership culture, you would be wise to value the same things that Jesus does. He is going to invest significant authority in the age to come for those who cultivate the beatitudes in their own heart. In light of that, we should also develop ministry cultures that value those who embrace and demonstrate the beatitudes over and above those who have gifts or talents.

5. Jesus desires to reward us for these heart values. Therefore, we must see the beatitudes are being actually obtainable. Many approach the beatitudes as if they were ideals that are impossible to actually live out. Jesus intends us to pursue the beatitudes as realistic goals for our life. He longs to release strength to us through the power of the Holy Spirit to empower our weakness to actually live the Sermon on the Mount. *Many completely miss out on the rewards Jesus desires to give them because they do not believe the beatitudes are realistic. All the while Jesus longs to release strength to our hearts to live them out.*

## II. THE BEATITUDES

***“Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” – Matthew 5:3***

- A. ***Poor in Spirit*** – Embracing poverty of spirit means acknowledging our own weakness and lack and acknowledging our great need of strength and power from God to walk in righteousness. *It is significant that this beatitude is first because this beatitude is the doorway into all the other beatitudes.*
  1. Pride, which is the foundation of all kinds of wickedness, is rooted in the refusal to embrace poverty of spirit. Lucifer fell because he embraced strength in his own spirit and chose to challenge God. Adam and Eve fell in the garden because they chose to take on the “strength of spirit” to determine what is right and wrong rather than remaining in a place of dependence on God.
  2. Jesus is extending an offer of governmental rule in His kingdom. He is looking for those whom He can trust to rule with Him in His government and He only trusts those who are poor in spirit.
  3. It is “strength of spirit” rather than poverty of spirit that has fueled rebellion and pride throughout history, therefore only those who are poor in spirit will be qualified to rule in the age to come. This is a “job description” for those who will rule with Him in the age to come.
  4. Only those who are poor in spirit will be able to stand in the high places of government that Jesus desires for us. All others will fall prey to pride and corruption. He is inviting us into a position before Him that is so high in creation that only poverty of spirit can protect us from pride and destruction.  
***“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” – Proverbs 16:18***
  5. Only God Himself is ultimately self-sustaining and so we must embrace poverty and dependence upon Him if we desire life. When we reject poverty of spirit, we embrace ourselves as all sufficient and we embrace death because the only life we have is that which is given from Him.

***“Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.” – Matthew 5:4***

- B. ***Blessing for Mourning*** – Jesus offers blessing to those who first mourn over their own brokenness. The word Jesus uses here can be used for mourning for the dead or for lamentation. It is a serious word that indicates a deep feeling of sorrow.
1. Jesus invites us into an honest assessment of our heart and condition. From that assessment, desperation should arise in our own heart to be extreme in our pursuit of breakthrough.
  2. The feeling and expression of grief causes certain inhibitions to be removed. When we are grieving we think less of what others think of us because we are in pain over the reality of the situation. When we enter into mourning, we will desire breakthrough and will not be inhibited by what others think of us, nor will we be willing to go on with business as usual.
  3. While the first posture of our heart should be mourning over our own heart, Jesus also invites us into His heart for creation. We fail to mourn over the condition of creation and the condition of lost men because we lack perspective. Jesus invites us into the mourning that is in His own heart and His own zeal to see it restored. God desires those who will share His heart and His burden in the place of intercession. See Romans 8. All of creation, along with the Holy Spirit, is in a groaning and mourning for God’s restoration. When we fail to mourn over the current condition of things, it indicates we are living under a delusion that things are ok. The reality is that things are not ok until Jesus returns and restores all things and that should provoke us to mourn at the present condition of things and with desire for His return.  
  
***“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” – Genesis 6:5-6***
  4. Those who mourn out of their own lack and over the condition of creation will receive an comfort from Jesus in the age to come. There is a unique opportunity in this age to share the grief that is in God’s heart that will enable us to enjoy the joy in His heart at the restoration of all things.

***“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.” – Matthew 5:5***

- C. ***Blessed are the Meek*** – Meekness and humility have an incredibly high value to Jesus. Meekness is strategically located in the list of beatitudes. After first emphasizing poverty of spirit and mourning in our spiritual condition, Jesus exhorts us to meekness that we might carry whatever we receive from the Spirit with a posture of humility. God responds to poverty of spirit and mourning, and meekness is required to steward what we receive. This particular beatitude is also a quote of Psalm 37:9,11.

***“For evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth...But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” Psalm 37:9,11***

1. We should live and minister from a servant spirit. These are the characteristics that matter to God in leaders. He will choose His leaders from among the meek and the gentle. He is looking for those that intentionally use their privilege and authority to serve others rather than increase their own agenda, position, or comfort.

***“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.” – Matthew 20:26***

2. Meekness is primarily about how we carry our hearts before God. When we carry our hearts before God properly in the spirit of meekness, we will also carry our hearts properly before men.
3. Meekness is rooted in a right perspective of God and in a confidence in His judgments and in His rewards.

***“...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? – Genesis 18:25***

- a. In order to walk in meekness and gentleness, we must have an understanding of how much we have been forgiven (Matthew 18:21-35). We can treat others with kindness and gentleness because God has treated us that way.
- b. Meekness that leads to inheriting the earth also comes from full confidence in God’s judgment. Rather than attempting to possess the land in our own strength, we have full confidence in God’s promises and wait for Him to inherit the land. Jewish people had a clear expectation of Jesus to rule over the land. Jewish zealots arose who attempted to throw off Roman oppression that they might possess the land. Jesus instead called the Jews to place their confidence entirely in God’s faithfulness and trust Him to give them the land rather than rely on human zeal to bring forth their rightful inheritance. Jesus was the ultimate example of this as He submitted to His Father’s will. Rather than seizing His rightful place of ruling over creation, He submitted to the cross and fully trusted God to exalt Him at the proper time. Though He has already been seated at the right hand and has all authority, Jesus continues to wait for the Father to give Him political possession of the kingdoms of the earth.
- c. When we are confident in God’s rewards, it sets our hearts at ease. We are able to walk in obedience from a heart posture that is at rest because we know He will reward. Meekness flows from understanding that our rewards are secure because they are based on God’s faithfulness alone. Obedience is our only part in securing our inheritance.

4. In His meekness, Jesus understood who He was, but He intentionally walked in meekness and chose to posture Himself before us as a servant. It is not a covering of false humility or self-deprecation that God is looking for, but rather the one that surrenders their own interests for the better of others. We can serve others by intentionally taking less in some cases and in other cases, laboring on behalf of the betterment of others according to our abilities and strengths. It is the one who serves others and seeks their welfare as equal to or even above his own that is humble. Jesus perfectly demonstrated what God was looking for in man when we lowered Himself to our estate purely for the purpose of man's betterment and salvation. Jesus has been exalted above all other rulers because He walked in humility and meekness before God and before man and chose to use the resources at His disposal, in this case His own life, to exalt others to a place they could not attain on their own.

***“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men...He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.” – Philippians 2:5-9***

5. The word inherit here is used in the Septuagint in terms of inheriting the land. The idea is that there is going to be a real, physical inheritance. Just as Abraham was promised a real inheritance for his obedience, so too the meek are promised an inheritance in the land. If we do not understand this inheritance, or lack understanding of God's purpose for the earth in the Millennium and beyond, then we will not properly value this reward.

***“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.” – Matthew 5:6***

- D. ***Blessed are those who Hunger and Thirst*** – Jesus invites us into a heart posture of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Hunger and thirst are life long pursuits of nourishments. When we hunger and thirst for righteousness, it means we consider it critical to our survival. Therefore we persist in our desire and pursuit of God for wholeheartedness regardless of obstacles, trials, pressures, or disappointments in life.
  1. The word here used for filled indicates satisfaction and abundance. God will release abundant righteousness to us, but the door for that abundance is hunger. The word used here for hunger is not just a mild hunger, but it is deep hunger. It is related to famine, exhaustion, and persistent hunger. We are called to desire righteousness as though our very lives depended on it because the reality is that it they do.
  2. Hunger and thirst are the fundamental appetites of life. Jesus intends that our longing for righteousness should be our primary appetite. For those that embrace this appetite, He promises that we will be filled or fully satisfied. However, deep hunger is required to be fully satisfied. We must desire Him as deeply as the need to eat and drink in order to receive fullness. The abundance of righteousness is not just received passively, it requires tenacious hunger to allow Jesus to work the transformation He desires in our hearts.

- a. We should hunger and thirst in our inner man for transformation. We freely receive the righteousness of Jesus, but we must hunger and thirst for His righteousness in order to cooperate with the Holy Spirit for transformation of our inner man. Longing for His righteousness enables us to lay aside compromise and pursue Him through difficulty. When we truly hunger it releases grace to endure the difficulties of life and endure trials that bring transformation.
- b. God also invites us into His own desire for creation to be filled with His righteousness. In the place of intercession we can share His heart for the earth to be filled again with righteousness and for wickedness to be destroyed. All of creation is longing for righteousness to fill the earth. Our lives should be lived with a posture of longing for righteousness to not only fill our own hearts, but to fill the entire earth. When we truly hunger and thirst for righteousness, it releases a hunger and thirst in our inner man for Jesus to return and fill the earth with righteousness. This deep desire for righteousness actually provokes us to love Him even more. It provokes us to posture our hearts with desire for His rule, first in our own hearts, and then in the nations of the earth. We desire righteousness, because we desire Him the only righteous one.

***“Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.” – Matthew 5:7***

- E. ***Blessed are the Merciful*** – Jesus promises mercy to those who show mercy to others. When we are not merciful to others it indicates that we lack understanding of the mercy we have received. Jesus expounded on this issue in the parable of the servant in Matthew 18:21-35. The servant in deep debt received mercy from the master, but then refused to show that same mercy to a servant that owed him a much smaller debt.
1. A failure to be merciful is a failure to understand the heart of God. God’s own heart loves to forgive. His heart is bent towards mercy. Mankind’s rebellion was aimed directly at the heart of God and yet He releases mercy. God’s mercy is not only passive, but it is active. His mercy compels Him to pursue the wicked. His desire for mercy drove Him to the cross.  
***“Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?’ says the Lord God, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live?’” – Ezekiel 18:23***
  2. Jesus is inviting us to be actively merciful towards those in life that offend and hurt us. The core issue in mercy is how we handle those who have hurt and offended us and what we do with the pain or injury they have done to us. The question is whether we require this same pain or injury of them or if we are willing to bear the pain without inflicting a reciprocal pain on the wrong doer.
  3. In leadership it is sometimes required that we deal with issues of failure or compromise and even administer discipline. However, it is critical to carry a heart posture of mercy towards the one being disciplined. This means that we do not seek to tell others about another’s failures, nor do we take any delight in their punishment. Our heart posture should always be one that desires restoration and seeks to cover sin and failure.

*“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’” – I Peter 4:8*

4. Often we fail to be merciful to others because we have a wrong view of God. If we do not see Him as truly merciful and see Him as He is, we will relate to others wrongly. If we feel that He is unmerciful towards us or holding offenses against us, we will then withhold mercy from others. Because we have not felt the liberation of mercy, we fail to give it to others. A right perspective of God allows us to freely receive His mercy, which is the key to being merciful to others.

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.” – Matthew 5:8*

- F. ***Blessed are the Pure in Heart*** – The blood of Jesus cleanses our spirit and makes it clean before God because of His finished work on the cross, but Jesus also calls us to embrace purity of heart. God is not content simply to cleanse us from sin. He made us for communion and He wants us to have a clean heart so that we can experience deep intimacy with Him. Many are focused on the externals of what they do and measure their spiritual stature entirely by performance, but Jesus measures us by our heart. This does not minimize our works; on the contrary it is a higher standard, because a pure heart will produce pure works.
  1. It is not enough for us to be disciplined in our actions or consistent in good works. Jesus desires that our heart is completely transformed so that our inner motives and inner thoughts are washed clean and are pure enabling us to relate to God and see His beauty.

*“What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” – Mark 7:20-23*

    - a. Jesus refuses to relate to us superficially or externally. He desires deep communion.
    - b. When we relate to God only on the basis of our works we are relating out of pride acting as though we ourselves are capable of pure works.
    - c. When we relate to God on the basis of works we are also relating to Him externally when He designed us to relate to Him internally. The Holy Spirit was given to us that He might commune with us, not externally, but internally within our inner man. Therefore God desires purity of heart so we can fully relate to Him and enjoy communion with Him.

2. Jesus offers a significant promise to those who pursue purity of heart in order to provoke us to heart purity. He doesn't want us to be discouraged when we look at our own heart, but rather energized to pursue Him wholeheartedly. The inner ache of the heart is the desire to see God. We were made to gaze upon His beauty and His glory. The human heart was designed to that it longs to look upon God. Our eyes were designed for fascination and only God Himself can truly satisfy our deep desire for fascination. Given our ache for God and seeing His beauty, Jesus offers that promise to the pure in heart so that we will have strength to pursue purity of heart. Because of the promise and the rewards of seeing God, we have strength to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He leads us in heart transformation.

***“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face.” – Psalm 24:3-6***

- a. We were designed to gaze upon God. Even the ability to see God in a small measure causes us to be fascinated with Him. He invites us to gaze upon the Son that our heart might be transformed unto gazing upon the Father on the throne in the New Jerusalem. Just as it is for the living creatures, this ability to gaze upon Him will be the highest level of pleasure and fascination available.
- b. We must desire, not just release from the guilt of our actions, but rather an entire transformation of the inner man that results in our hearts being like God's own heart.
- c. No one has been able to see the uncreated God (John 1:8, 6:46) in fullness and yet God offers the promise that a day is coming when we will be able to stand before Him and gaze upon Him. This is why He desires such a deep heart transformation. He wants us to be capable of gazing up on Him. He wants us to embrace such a deep work of the Holy Spirit that we will be able to stand in that day and will be able to gaze upon Him.
- d. His gaze would kill us in our present condition, but a day is coming when He will rest on the earth and Jesus is longing for us to be in that company that will have the ability to gaze upon God as He sits enthroned in the New Jerusalem.

***“Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.” – Matthew 5:9***

- G. ***Blessed are the Peacemakers*** – God calls us to bring peace and healing in the midst of a broken and fractured world. We are called to pursue peace and reconciliation for everything that is out of God's will (broken relationships, broken bodies, etc.).

1. As peacemakers we should carry God's own zeal for the restoration of creation. Peacemakers lovingly and fearlessly declare the gospel in order that men might be reconciled to God. *We must see Jesus as the ultimate peacemaker. We can only understand what it means to be a peacemaker by looking at Jesus.*
2. The message of peace is one of the most difficult messages we are called to carry. Far from being something of weakness, it is something that demands strength of the deepest kind. Who is willing to be abused? Who is willing to face the wrath of men and of devils to bring men to peace with God? Who is willing to surrender their right to long life and their right to defend their own life? Calling men to peace may cost you your life and Jesus demands that you do not take your life in your own hands, but rather that you surrender it even to the death.
3. Not only are we called to bring the rebellious to peace; we must also lay down our lives to maintain peace among the saints. This can be the most difficult call for maintaining peace among the saints can seem to exact a deeper personal cost at times then even declaring the gospel to unbelievers. Heart conflict is not just an issue in the world; it arises among the saints as well. We try to ignore it, but God allows it and uses it to form and shape our own hearts. Conflict and strife are often God's chosen agents of maturity if we allow them to be. It is imperative that we understand this or we will be tempted to give up or become embittered in church life.
4. We are called, in these places of strife and conflict even among the body, to lay down our lives that there might be peace among the saints. That is not a silent acquiescence to every conflict, but rather it is laboring for a spirit of peace among the saints whatever it costs. Some times we must lay down our own heart desires that the body might benefit. Other times we may be called to active opposition of a thing that will divide and destroy the body unless it is dealt with.
5. Those that embrace the difficult path of being a peacemaker will be called the very sons of God.

***“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” – Hebrews 2:10***

- a. Being called a son is a position of honor and inheritance. It is a massive honor because a son is to carry the authority of the Father as His proxy and is also to demonstrate the nature and the character of the Father. Jesus, as the preeminent Son, carried the Father's authority and demonstrated His nature. We are called to the exact same thing because Jesus longs to bring many sons to glory. Though Jesus stands alone as God, He desires to give us a measure of His authority as we rule with Him and wants us to demonstrate His nature to creation.

- b. Sons are to reflect their father. Our Father is like this. He willingly lowered Himself (Philippians 2) to the death so that we might receive mercy and have peace with Him. He transitioned us from our opposition to God into peace with God all through His own costly sacrifice. He is calling us to be like Himself. If we will embrace this call, no matter what the temporal cost, He will reward us appropriately. If we want to be called the sons of God that we might receive the inheritance, position, and honor due a son, we must be after the nature of a son. One who desires the privileges of a son, but does not carry the characteristics of the father is not a legitimate son. If we are to be legitimate sons, worthy of receiving His inheritance we must likewise embrace His nature and character which will mean being willing to pay a price even as He was willing to pay the ultimate price.

***“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”***  
***– Matthew 5:10***

- H. ***Blessed are the Persecuted*** – Jesus offers blessing for those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. It is critical to understand that the only type of persecution that is blessed is persecution for righteousness sake.

***“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues...A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!”*** – Matthew 10:16,17,24,25

1. This beatitude is connected to the previous one, because laboring to make peace among others will cause persecution to come. That persecution results in great blessing, so long as it is for righteousness sake. *Persecution for righteousness’ sake is not something we face with bravado as a self-confident hero, it is something we embrace and endure with meekness. By denying self preservation and enduring persecution with love, we challenge the powers and principalities who rule on the basis of self preservation and self promotion.*
2. The persecution that we are called to is the same persecution Jesus received as He spoke the truth and liberated others from darkness. Just as Jesus received a counterattack from the enemy when He liberated the people, so too we will have to bear the counterattack of the enemy. The persecution that is for righteousness sake is persecution because your ministry is challenging powers and principalities and plundering the enemy’s kingdom.
3. This is a clear call to self-sacrifice. Embracing this beatitude is embracing personal loss and personal pain for the cause of seeing righteousness developed.
  - a. It is allowing the Holy Spirit to produce righteousness in you and embracing being crucified with Jesus.

- b. It is living in the zeal of the Lord to see righteousness in others and then laboring to see righteousness come forth in others.
4. Persecution is often the demarcation line in Christianity. The purest expression of the church comes in the pressures of persecution. We endure persecution because of love. Only love for Jesus will release the power to endure persecution. *Those that are persecuted for the sake of righteousness are those who are persecuted for love. They are rewarded because persecution has tested their love and revealed that it is genuine.*
  5. The reward here is powerful and is the same reward as Jesus offered in Matthew 5:3 for poverty of Spirit. Poverty of spirit combines with this beatitude to be Jesus' requirement for ruling and reigning with Him in government over all of creation.
    - a. This beatitude combined with the first one give a clear picture of what God is looking for in those He will give great authority to.
    - b. First they must embrace their own deep poverty of spirit and break the Edenic lie of self-sufficiency. This acknowledgment, and a lifestyle that matches it, is Jesus' first requirement and the doorway into all the other beatitudes.
    - c. Second there must be a deep love of righteousness, accompanied by labors for righteousness in others that endures persecution for the sake of love. Enduring persecution reveals a deep inward desire of righteousness that Jesus says is necessary. In Matthew 5:6 Jesus laid out the requirement to hunger and thirst for righteousness and now He promises a blessing for those that hunger and thirst so much that they are persecuted by the world.
    - d. It is significant that Jesus closes out the beatitudes with the same reward that He opened them with. Not only is He listing both of these heart values are requirements, His opening and closing serve to establish all the beatitudes, not just these ones, as values that He is looking for in those He is going to select to rule with Him.

***“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” – Matthew 5:11-12***

- I. ***Blessed are You when Reviled*** – Jesus offers a final beatitude by expanding on the previous one. The fact that He addresses the issue of persecution twice is significant.
  1. It is significant the way that Jesus describes the persecution that results in a blessing.
    - a. The overarching characteristic of persecution that is rewarded is that it is for His sake. There is no reward for being persecuted for our own sake or for any other purpose. Jesus was persecuted above all else because He confronted the deception and unreality of the earth. He was persecuted for the sake of truth. Because He is the only One that is true, it is only persecution for His sake that is valid.

- b. Persecution received with meekness (Matthew 5:5) is rewarded. Confidence in God’s judgment will be demonstrated in a heart posture of meekness. Failure to be meek under pressure is an indication of a lack of confidence in God’s judgment ultimate judgment.
    - c. It is critical to understand that rewards are given not just for being persecuted for what we have done, but also for being falsely persecuted for things we have not done. In many ways, this is the greatest test for the heart. We expect persecution when we confront the world with its unrighteousness, but we are also called to bear under persecution that is metered out to us for false reasons. Jesus was content for men to say false things about Him because He had confidence in God’s ultimate judgment. Because of that confidence, He was content to stay silent in the midst of false accusations.
  2. It is important to understand “heaven” as the place God dwells and rules from to properly esteem the reward in heaven that Jesus offers. In other words, His reward is not something that seem intangible, but rather He is offering us a reward before the very throne of God. This is not a light thing. We will be rewarded for enduring persecution in the same place that the four living creatures are crying out in adoration and worship. This is a very significant reward.
  3. Persecution for the sake of Jesus also gives us continuity with the prophets and establishes our own credibility in the line of the prophets. Jesus intends that His people should have a prophet spirit and that spirit will provoke the same persecution that it always has. The inheritance of the prophets of old (Hebrews 11:32-40 ) is the same inheritance that the church living in truth will receive.