

What Sort of Christian Are You?

by Timothy Tow

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility, mourning over sins, meekness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, and persecution for righteousness' sake in becoming a true Christian.

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Timothy Tow preaches on the Sermon on the Mount, emphasizing the qualities of a true Christian as outlined in Matthew 5:1-16. He challenges believers to reflect on their spiritual state and measure up to the high standards set by Jesus. Through the eight blessings mentioned, he highlights the importance of humility, repentance, meekness, hunger for righteousness, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, and perseverance in the face of persecution for righteousness' sake.

Transcript

Text: Matt 5:1-16

We are now entered into what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, a long sermon preached by our Lord on a mountain overlooking the Sea of Galilee . It is three chapters long, Chapters 5-7. It is a discourse on what a true Christian is. Chapter 5:1-6 tells us the basic qualifications of a Christian. What sort of Christian are you? How do you measure up to the high standards set?

Now, let us scale the eight peaks of the Mountain of Blessing Jesus has set for us.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (v.3). Blessed are they who are of a lowly spirit, not puffed up, humble as a little child, docile and easily led. To become a Christian one must start at the very bottom of the climb. To enter into God's Kingdom one must submit to the sacrament of baptism. When I was a young pastor I was approached by Mr Sng Choon Yee, my boss when I was a Government interpreter. He was Chinese Assistant to the Secretary for Chinese Affairs during the Colonial Government. He humbled himself in baptism. I was touched by his humility.

But there are those of his rank who have believed, and yet they hold back on baptism from a sense of self-righteousness and good upbringing. Let them reconsider quickly. Baptism is surrendering one's life to Jesus, his Saviour and Lord. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (v.4). The next

step to scale the 8-peak Mountain of Blessing is to mourn. To grieve over one's wretched condition, viz., one's sins. This is what has happened at every Spirit-drenched Revival Meeting.

Whether it be with William Burns, Dora Yu, Ting Li Mei, or John Sung, those who came to Christ all mourned and wept for their sins. Not like the Charismatics who only stress the speaking of tongues but never confess their sins. John Sung denounced them for their tongues in confusion and for not having tears in confession. Everyone of us who comes to Christ must have the experience of weeping for our sinful past. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (v.5).

In our lowly position still at the base of the 8-peak Mountain of Blessing we should exhibit the spirit of meekness, which is to be unaggressive. The world does not like a boastful and talk-big person. Avoid every Christian who exalts himself but talks bad of other people. Beware if you jabber and jabber. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin" (Prov 10:19). A meek person inherits the earth in the sense that even the world will be good to an unassuming Christian. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (v.6).

This verse has its equivalent in Matt 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (material) shall be added unto you." "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (v.7). A Christian, having experienced the lovingkindness and mercies of God, will naturally be merciful to others. If we want God to forgive our sins we must be willing to forgive the sins of others. Do we? "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (v.8).

This is the condition of inward holiness. Only one who cultivates a clean spirit can see the deep things of God. This applies particularly to the preacher of God's Word. Unless he is right with God, he will not behold wondrous things out of His Word. He will not have the refreshing message to preach to his congregation. He is blind to many truths hidden right in the Bible passage before him. So it is the same with carnal Christians who are not attuned to God. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (v.9).

Every Christian is for peace. When a quarrel has broken out between two brothers in Christ, it is for him to calm them down and get them made up. As a pastor I have tried to carry out this ministry of peace-making. But I have experienced the greatest difficulty. "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle" (Prov 18:19). Take for example the unending contentions between the Jews and the Arabs, who are cousins, both descendants of Abraham. Peace-making between them is as difficult as scaling the Himalayas.

One day when Anwar Sadat, President of Egypt, suddenly decided to go to Jerusalem to see his counterpart Menachen Begin, it caused a stir of hope to the whole world. They both signed a peace treaty so that you can travel peacefully between Israel and Egypt today in your pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But Sadat was gunned down in a National Day celebration. He died a martyr's death.

Then from Israel arose General Rabin. He is another Sadat. When he pushed for peace, a Jewish extremist also gunned him down. He is another martyr for the cause of peace. What they did was for a God-given cause and they will be remembered for their heroic deeds. Peace-making is never an easy mission.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, 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: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt 5:10 -12). Blessed are they who are persecuted for standing for the Truth. The prophets were messengers of Truth. Jeremiah was imprisoned repeatedly and finally forced to go to Egypt where he died. So was Isaiah killed and sawn asunder by the wicked king. Finally, Jesus was killed by the Jews because he preached against their hypocrisy. Our B-P Church was started as a Reformation witness against the Ecumenism, Romanism, Liberalism and Charismatism of our day. We take a stand against Benny Hinn, example of the Charismatics, who exhibit not the power of the Holy Spirit but of an unholy spirit. One Charismatic pastor got so mad with me that he threatened he would report to the Government against me. Let us remain faithful to the cause of Truth, come what may.

Having scaled the 8-peak Mountain of Blessing we have attained to become salt and light to the world. We, instead of conforming to the world, must rather transform those with whom we come in contact.

Jesus says we are salt. Salt works in an unseen way. Salt preserves meat from corruption. Why do we make Christian art calendars and Jesus Saves clocks? These go out to exude a moral influence even in Christian homes. When a "Christ is the Head of this House" calendar is hung in the home all the semi-nude calendars from the world must go out. A Jesus Saves clock also blesses the home to remind Christians that they belong to Christ. Of all the gifts a young girl going overseas to study receives she treasures most the Jesus Saves clock I gave her. She says the words Jesus Saves gives her good comfort, day and night.

Christians are light. This is our visible witness. We are like a lighthouse set on a hill which shines far and wide. Jesus says that we should let this light shine so that those who see this will glorify the Father in heaven. This light is the testimony in word and deed from every Christian. Let us examine ourselves if our behaviour and speech are always glorifying to the Lord?

What sort of Christian are you? May you scale the 8-peak Mountain of Blessing and be salt and light to a dark world. Amen.

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