

05152022 Comforted to Comfort... Jesus has just chosen the primary message bearers of his good news about the Kingdom of God....now he goes on to teach them the ways of his Kingdom.... The beatitudes.. how it works... The opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount are called "The Beatitudes." **The word beatitude means blessedness, or the highest happiness. It is the disciples that Jesus is talking to and it is the disciples that Jesus is talking about.**

Jesus says “you guys are blessed. Yes, you might seem to be no body’s by the world standards – no power, position, or Prestige, but you’re blessed.” They are blessed, not because they lack these things. No. They are blessed because they are disciples chosen by Jesus to belong to his Kingdom, and when the Kingdom comes you will be rewarded.

Now the word blessed calls for some thinking. Just what does the word blessed mean? Our word happiness may come close, but it is often too trivial a word as happiness is fleeting and is most often dependent favorable circumstances.

The word used in the New Testament is not the common Greek word for happiness. **It refers to the attainment of an ideal and a goal.** Jesus is talking about highest human ideals will be in the future reached in his Kingdom and their fulfillment become normal !

He starts with the entry point qualification

- *NLT Luke 6: 20* Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, “God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.
From Jesus perspective all humans are poverty stricken
- **We are all in a slow but continual state of decaying! We all age until death... our bodies are poverty stricken therefore no matter how much wealth I have...I leave it here for my body will die**
- **And in a spiritual sense everyone is poverty stricken by sin dead spiritually ...suffering its penalty eternal separation from God... death..**

- **When we see ourselves correctly, we become kingdom-fit.**

The Second blessing...is a mind or intellectual undertaking...we see a broken world and become concerned to do something about it....

NLT LK 6: 21 God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied.

NLT MT 5:6 God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

- *You are hungry now in the present for something that will reach it fulfilment in the future! Justice*
- **When you see your poverty ...you are now able to see the worlds poverty ...of righteousness and Justice ...you begin to long for it... this is what happens to a follower of Christ..**
- *To hunger for righteousness takes one to the next level...to get involved with alleviating injustice...to be moved by injustice...is a God thing...*

*ISA 42:3 A **bruised** reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ISA 42:4 he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope."*

We know that we do not see justice in this world. We disciples hunger and thirst for it and we work and pray for it, but we do not see it, not in its fullness, not now. No.

In this world we continue to see wicked men conquer and evil schemes triumph, despite the best of our efforts. But one day, when the Kingdom comes, we will see true justice prevail, and we shall be satisfied. That is Jesus' promise.

*Which takes us to the **Second part of Luke 6:21..today the third and fourth blessing***

the Third Blessing...

NLT Luke 6:21God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh.

Matthew an eye witness says it this way in a little different order:

MT 5: 4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

- I'm no Greek scholar; but, according to those in the know, the Greek word used in this phrase to describe 'mourning' is the strongest in the Greek language.
- It signifies the devastating grief of the death of our dearly beloved – the experience of deep, profound, heartbreaking, painful, sorrow.
- To mourn means to go where it hurts, to enter into the place of pain to understand brokenness, fear confusion, loss and suffering.
- It seems like a contradiction: how can you weep and mourn and be blessed at the same time? It is much more than mourn now, be happy later. Suffer now, get your blessing later.
- **Those who mourn are blessed, for "they will be comforted." They will laugh again!...**
- Those who mourn are blessed for they recognize what is good. Without loss and mourning we overlook the good we have ...we are often ungrateful for what we do have...chase after that which is not that important...
- those who mourn are fortunate to know about the good and they are blessed to have the longing for it.... the blessing isn't in the lack, it's in the longing. Sooner or later, one way or another, their longing will be satisfied.
- and God comforts us...He will make everything right!

The blessing is that this acknowledgment heightens our awareness of the Lord's love and mercy. In fact without mourning there can be no awareness of the Lord's love and mercy and thus by definition no blessing, all of which comes from Him.

He will fix that which makes us Mourn...including that which is in us...

- You cannot be blessed when you are unaware of the evil in your life. On the other hand, when you are aware of it - and mourn on account of it - not only can you begin to appreciate His mercy in that He

continues to love you and care for you in spite of these evils, you also put yourself in the position of being willing to receive His help.

- **Blessed are those who acknowledge their evils, for they shall get help! And they'll get it because they want it, for there is no lack of help offered by the Lord at any time in our lives; it's just that most of the time we resist it because we don't think we need it. "Blessed are those who mourn."**

- **This is where the promise of comfort comes in.**

Jer 8:21 I hurt with the hurt of my people. I mourn and am overcome with grief.

- **God says the pain of his people it effects him personally - it's as if you are actually crushing me - and I grieve about it deeply.**

- **So he is moved to help...it is why he came, but there is more**

- **Do you remember the teaching**

ESV John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever...

- **the Holy Spirit, In some translations he is called "the Comforter" "the Advocate," The verb means "to help."**

- **That word is Paraclete or in its verb form paracalleo, meaning to call alongside. Literally, The Holy Spirit will walk by their side.**

- **IT IS NOT ENOUGH for us ... within the arena of our pain merely to know of a God who sympathizes. we need comfort!**

***** Not only are we comforted... as Jesus followers and Kingdom citizens We feel the pain of others and are moved because of Jesus to bless them...it's a God trait ...**

ESV2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Our capacity to comfort deepens and broadens... we can laugh with those who laugh and truly mourn with those in mourning!

RO 12: 15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

- **Mourning causes compassion which challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears...to actually be present with the hurting**

The ability to feel pain led to action to minister to pain!!!

Jesus said it this way...

NLT *Luke 10:25* One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: “Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ Jesus replied, “What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?” ²⁷ The man answered, “‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’ And, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ²⁸ “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!” ... ***in other words this is the fullness of living the law of God!***

²⁹ The man wanted to justify his actions, (***which tells us he was very selective in whom he considered a neighbor worth loving***) so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man (***he gives him someone who certainly would be considered a neighbor***) was traveling from Jerusalem down to Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road. ³¹ “By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. ³² A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side. (***busy with own life, work, meeting to make, family etc.***) (***perhaps concerned with the service that night...not to defile himself***)c.)

³³ “Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. ,

- *half breed marginalized by exactly this kind of man a Jew..*
- *he though was familiar with pain, and suffering...in touch with his own pain but not consumed by it has the capacity to feel anothers pain...and move to bring comfort*

³⁴ Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. *(he entered into this mans pain)* Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he handed the innkeeper two silver coins,^[e] telling him, ‘Take care of this man. If his bill runs higher than this, I’ll pay you the next time I’m here.’

³⁶ “Now which of these three would you say was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by bandits?” Jesus asked. ³⁷ The man replied, “The one who showed him mercy.” Then Jesus said, “Yes, now go and do the same.”

- So who is a neighbor...anyone coming across your path!
 - The Samaritan...engaged with compassion someone along the path of his journey...he did not have to look for pain...he ministered to the pain he encountered...
 - He stopped for a stranger because he felt the stranger’s pain as his own...to be moved by pain...is what God is all about..
 - He was light in that man’s darkness, exactly what were called to be
 - And because he could empathize with the stranger’s pain, he could not just walk by.
 - This is pleasing to God...and is a characteristic of God
- As God’s people, we are called to love the world as God does. And given the state of the world, all those who love the world as God does, will ‘mourn’ over the state of the world as God does.

Jesus, he makes it very clear where he stands. He says:

*NLT Matt 25:*³⁴ “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. ³⁶ I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’

37 “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing?

39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,^[f] you were doing it to me!’

Like the good Samaritan...we don't have to look for the pain, it is with us personally and others as we journey on our paths... ...all we need be is aware...

Someone in here today in pain... Others will be found in our path in pain...are we connected to feel ...and if we are we will be used to bring laughter to those in pain...healing...

- **It is the way of Jesus it is the way of his people... They live with purpose, act with purpose and make choices on purpose...the blessed become a blessing!**

Go and Do likewise...

End

- As we sympathize and empathize with our neighbors who are in pain – as Jesus does, and as we are expected to - we demonstrate our citizenship in His Kingdom..
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- **Briefly stated, then, Blessed are those who acknowledge their evils, for they shall get help! And they'll get it because they want it, for there is no lack of help offered by the Lord at any time in our lives; it's just that most of the time we resist it because we don't think we need it. "Blessed are those who mourn."**

Samuel and Pearl Oliner, a couple who did extensive research on rescuers of Jewish Holocaust victims, were curious to understand why certain non-Jewish citizens risked their lives, careers and friends to save endangered Jewish people.

When the Oliners compared the empathy scores(in a psychological test used to measure levels of empathetic response to various life situations) of rescuers with those of non-rescuers, they found no differences between the two groups on such measures as shared feelings, affection, anxiety, pleasure, humor, or susceptibility to the moods of others.

However, One difference stood out. **The rescuers had a strong tendency to be moved by pain. “Sadness and helplessness aroused their empathy, claimed the Oliners. At some point in their lives, the rescuers had developed the capacity to connect with and be moved by another person’s pain. This capacity to connect with another**

person's pain was what compelled them to reach across racial and legal barriers to protect Jewish people.

- There is no shortage of pain in this world to connect with: and There is a lot of death and dying in the world for us to grieve over.
- While the top 20% of the world's population have more than 80% of the world's total income and live lives of unparalleled luxury; the bottom 20% of the world's population try to survive on less than 1.5% of the world's income and are condemned to live lives characterized by cycles of deprivation and despair.
- Because they cannot access their fair share of the world's income, many, in desperation, sell their labor for a pittance.
- More than 250 million children work for as little as 25 cents a day. And as a last resort, many even have to sell their bodies. Slavery is rampant in many parts of the world
- More than a million children are forced into prostitution every year. Millions of kids, die unnecessarily, from easily preventable causes, every day, of every week, of every year.

However, though there is much to grieve over, not everyone 'mourns' the current state of the world.

What we feel depends on what we see and hear, and what we see and hear depends on where we stand in the world, and how in touch we are with our feelings for the pain of others..

If we identify with the top 20% of the world's population who are 'well fed' and 'laugh' (Luke 6.25), we will probably 'rejoice with those who rejoice'(Rom.12.15).

It is only if we identify with the other 80% of the worlds' population - especially the bottom 20%- who 'go hungry' and 'weep' themselves to sleep (Luke 6.25), that we will actually 'mourn with those who mourn' (Rom.12.15).

The scripture suggests that God identifies with all people he has made in his image - both rich and poor alike (Gen.1.26-7); but God has a special place in his heart for the poor who are treated so heartlessly. (Prov.14.31)

When God comes in Jesus, he makes it very clear where he stands. He says: 'whatever you do to one of the least' - one of those that most of you consider the least - the marginalized, distressed, disabled, and disadvantaged - you 'do it to me'. (Matt. 25:40,45)

God says that whenever you crush my people contemptuously - I take it personally - it's as if you are actually crushing me - and I grieve about it deeply. He says 'My people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me.'(Jer.8:21-22).

As we sympathize with God and empathize with our neighbors who are in pain - as we are expected to - we will inevitably be moved towards 'com-compassion' – or 'a deep sense of shared pain'

When it comes to compassion, Jesus is our supreme example.

HEB 4:14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize(mourn) with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- He is in touch with our need...and he shows mercy toward us...he feels and acts...
- IT IS NOT ENOUGH for us ... within the arena of the world's pain merely to know of a God who sympathizes.
- It is not even enough to know of a God who heals. We need to know of and be connected with a God who experiences with us, for us, each grief, each wound.
- We need to be bonded with a God who has had nails in the hands and a spear in the heart!
Flora Slosson Wuellner, Weavings

Jesus does not bless those who are happy with the present state affairs. He blesses those who 'mourn'. The motto of the newspaperman, Joseph Pulitzer, owes much to Jesus: "Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."

- And because they are loved, people will share their wealth with them, and help them meet their basic needs. When the early Christians were “one in heart”, “no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had”, so “*there were no needy persons among them!*” (Acts 4.32-34)

‘When he saw the crowds, he had com-*passion* on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd’. (Matt.9.36)

Like the good Samaritan...there is pain that is there on our journey...all we need be is aware...

Someone in here today in pain...

Others will be found in our path in pain...are we connected to feel ...and if we are we will be used to bring laughter to theos in pain...healing...

Blessed are those who mourn ...for they will laugh...

It is the way of Jesus it is the way of his people...

Go and Do likewise...

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A foe of Christianity in the second century ridiculed this religion because it attracted "the very dregs of the population, peasants, mechanics, beggars, and slaves." One Christian, named

Origen -- though himself a distinguished scholar who might have refuted the charge by pointing to his own learning -- answered that the church could take pleasure in following its Master by appealing to those whom others despised.

When we think of blessings we do not usually think of sadness, difficulty

or want. We usually think of happiness, peace and plenty. Indeed the word, blessing, means happiness and suggests that we have everything we need.

Why, then, does the Lord seem to say the opposite?

If today a person were to feel grief for all the pains of the world, he could not bear the load.

Hence we steel ourselves, stifle emotion, avoid thinking about pain and suffering buck up, don't cry, be strong,. The world was in turmoil in Jesus' time too. The Stoic philosophers were saying: "Don't mourn.

Now the first thing that needs to be said about these *Beatitudes* is that they are not attitudes. Being a "peacemaker" is not an attitude. It's a lifestyle. Similarly, being persecuted certainly isn't an attitude.

What about being "poor in spirit". Is that an attitude? I'm not entirely sure what it means to be "poor in spirit". Christian scholars are still debating the matter. Maybe it does just mean being humble. But the word "poor", in the original language of the Bible, tends to denote those who've been crushed by poverty into destitution. Maybe this is why Kenneth Caine, in *The Positive Bible*, actually decided to leave that particular *Beatitude* out.

The second thing that needs to be said about these *Beatitudes* is that they don't actually tell us what we are supposed to be. They actually are not prescriptions at all.

They are descriptions of people, not exhortations to be something. They are in fact all descriptions of the disciples. All eight groups of persons mentioned - the poor, the meek, the persecuted, and so on, are in fact the same group - the disciples.

This is clear from the way the passage opens in Luke 6, with the crowds following Jesus up the mountainside, and then it says, still in verse 1, that "His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them [ie. the disciples] saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit ..." Jesus is talking to His disciples. In Luke's version, it is made even more clear. It says "Jesus looked as his disciples and said, 'Blessed are you poor ...'"

It is the disciples that Jesus is talking to and it is the disciples that Jesus is talking about. It is the disciples who are spiritually "poor" or "crushed". It is the disciples who are hungering and thirsting for justice. It is the disciples who are being persecuted.

Jesus says "you guys are blessed. Yes, you might seem to be a pretty pathetic bunch by worldly standards - poor and meek and persecuted, but you're blessed." They are blessed, of course, not because they are poor and meek and persecuted. No. They are blessed despite the fact that they are poor and meek and persecuted. But they are poor and meek and persecuted because they are disciples. Let's be clear about this.

Jesus is not telling us to be poor any more than he is telling us that we ought to strive to be persecuted. Jesus commands us to be disciples. And if indeed you count the cost and become a disciple, then there is every likelihood that you will find yourself poor and persecuted. Even so, Jesus says that you are "blessed". Not by worldly standards, no. By worldly standards you are poor and meek and persecuted. But from Jesus' perspective you are blessed because you are a disciple of the Kingdom of God, and when the Kingdom comes you will be rewarded.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth

The picture, as Jesus depicts it, is a bit of a trade-off. The servants of the Kingdom of God forego the blessings of this world but are compensated when the Kingdom comes. Like it or not, the blessings that Jesus promises (at least those in these *Beatitudes*) are not due to kick in until the Kingdom comes.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." When? When the Kingdom comes.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." When? When the Kingdom comes in its fullness. That's when those of us who have been hungering for justice will finally be satisfied, for that is when we will finally see justice.

We know that we do not see justice in this world. We disciples hunger and thirst for it and we work and pray for it, but we do not see it, not in its fullness, not now.

No. In this world we continue to see wicked men conquer and evil schemes triumph, despite the best of our efforts. But one day, when the Kingdom comes, we will see true justice prevail, and we shall be satisfied. That is Jesus' promise.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Yes. The prophets before us suffered, as we will suffer if we have the courage to proclaim the truth, but this is no reason to get depressed. No. "Rejoice and be glad!" For the day will come when the "earth will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea", and when that day comes, we will all enjoy the full blessings of God.

This is the promise we are given in the *Beatitudes of Jesus*. This list of blessings is not a prescription for how to lead a happy and successful life. It is not a list of benefits that we will immediately enjoy if we sign up with Jesus. No. These are the comforting words of hope that Jesus gives to those who have forgone immediate joys and worldly success in this life for the sake of their commitment to the new world coming.

In this life, we disciples who would serve the Kingdom must expect poverty and persecution. But one day, when "all things are brought together in Christ", we shall be satisfied.

Is that Good News? Not if we came to Jesus because we were looking to Him to make us more comfortable and successful, but if you have counted the cost and made the decision to follow Jesus anyway, and have committed your life to building the Kingdom of God, then these are comforting words indeed.

Blessing awaits! Times may be hard now, but blessing awaits! The wicked may seem to have the upper hand in this world, but the Kingdom of God is coming! And when that Kingdom comes, we who have been hungering and thirsting for justice shall be satisfied!

I don't know how we got the *Beatitudes* so mixed up.

Not everybody has, of course. Even poking around on the Internet I found some really terrific material on these blessings from Jesus - not so much on the high profile sites of the well-known evangelists, but on small discussion boards where ordinary people get together to reflect on the Scriptures.

One of the most impressive reflections I found was on a discussion board hosted by a group called "Absolutely Gay Christian Men". I always appreciate it when an online group lets you know where they're coming from right from the outset, and this group were certainly up front about who they were.

If you visit their discussion board you'll see a lot of honest dialogue that struggles with the Scriptures and with issues of male identity, some of which has been focused on the *Beatitudes*. One guy was writing about how he saw in the *Beatitudes* Jesus' affirmation of him just as he was. Another guy, by the name of Kudo, wrote back and said:

My goodness, if you read the beattitudes and all you come away with is that you just have to be yourself...well 'nuff said. I personally don't see the easy life in these challenges. Jesus presents a list of very radical human living standards that frankly go against everything we are taught by our families, our culture, and frankly by many of those who consider themselves spiritual leaders. "Poor/Poor in Spirit", "Meek", "hungering and thirsting for righteousness", and in case anybody missed it you get no credit for persecution you receive on your own, you only get credit when they do it to you for being a follower of Christ. Truthfully the only thing that makes this list at all appealing in any way, is that Jesus himself said it.

Maybe that's a bit hard. Certainly they are sobering blessings - these *Beatitudes of Jesus* - but they are still blessings. Yes, we are expected to go the hard path, enduring poverty, pain and persecution if necessary, but in the end ... we shall be satisfied!

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2. those who mourn

Blessed are 'those who mourn'— who wail, lament and cry out loud.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted'.(Matt.5.4)

I'm no Greek scholar; but, according to those in the know, the Greek word used in this phrase to describe 'mourning' is the strongest in the Greek language. It signifies the devastating grief of a lover over the death of their dearly beloved – the experience of deep, profound, poignant, painful, sorrow. There is certainly a lot of death and dying in the world for us to grieve over. While the top 20% of the world's population have more than 80% of the world's total income and live lives of unparalleled luxury; the bottom 20% of the world's population try to survive on less than 1.5% of the world's income and are condemned to live lives characterised by cycles of deprivation and despair. Because they cannot access their fair share of the world's income, many, in desperation, sell their labour for a pittance. More than 250 million children work for as little as 25 cents a day. And as a last resort, many even have to sell their bodies. More than a million children are forced into prostitution every year. Millions of kids, under the age of 15, are developing HIV and dying of AIDS. And more than 25,000 people die unnecessarily, from easily preventable causes, every day, of every week, of every year.

However, though there is much to grieve over, not everyone 'mourns' the current state of the world. What we feel depends on what we see and hear, and what we see and hear depends on where we stand in the world. If we identify with the top 20% of the world's population who are 'well fed' and 'laugh' (Luke 6.25), we will probably 'rejoice with those who rejoice' (Rom.12.15). It is only if we identify with the other 80% of the world's population - especially the bottom 20% - who 'go hungry' and 'weep' themselves to sleep (Luke 6.25), that we will actually 'mourn with those who mourn' (Rom.12.15).

The scripture suggests that God identifies with all people he has made in his image - both rich and poor alike (Gen.1.26-7); but God has a special place in his heart for the poor who are treated so heartlessly. (Prov.14.31) When God comes in Jesus, he makes it very clear where he stands. He says: 'whatever you do to one of the least' - one of those that most of you consider the least - the marginalized, distressed, disabled, and disadvantaged - you 'do it to me'. (Matt. 25:40,45) God says that whenever you crush my people contemptuously - I take it personally - it's as if you are actually crushing me - and I grieve about it deeply. He says 'My people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me.' (Jer.8:21-22).

As God's people, we are called to love the world as God does. And given the state of the world, all those who love the world as God does, will 'mourn' horribly over the state of the world as God does. As we sympathize with God and empathize with our neighbours who are in pain - as we are expected to - we will inevitably be moved towards 'com-compassion' - or 'a deep sense of shared pain' (Luke10.27). When it comes to compassion, Jesus is our supreme example. 'When he saw the crowds, he had com-compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd'. (Matt.9.36)

There are three phases of 'mourning' associated with a 'compassionate' response to a world in pain.¹

The first phase is '*wailing*' - agonizing with the pain - either as a 'victim' or 'one who loves the victim'. Jesus 'wailed' with Mary over the death of her brother Lazarus. 'When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied'. And 'Jesus wept.' (John 11.33-5).

The second phase is '*lamenting*' - analyzing the pain, its tragic causes and catastrophic consequences - as the 'psalmists' did in the psalms of lament. Jesus 'lamented' over Jerusalem. 'As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes". The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.'" (Luke19.41-44)

The third phase is '*crying out loud*' - criticizing the groups and organizations, which are the perpetrators of pain in our society - like the 'prophets' did - so the public are forced to confront the issues involved.

Jesus 'cried out loud' against the merchants in the temple. 'When it was time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" (John 2.13-16)

Jesus does not bless those who are happy with the present state affairs. He blesses those who 'mourn'.

¹ Dorothee Soelle *Suffering* Fortress Press Philadelphia 1975 p73

Next section: [3. the meek](#)

3. the meek

Blessed are 'the meek' - who practice self-restraint and self-control.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (Matt.5.5)

In the ancient world in which Jesus lived, the concept of 'meekness' was very different from today.

Today, the word 'meek' is often used as a synonym for the word 'weak'. So we often think of a 'meek' person as a 'weak' person - a 'wimp', a 'wuss', a 'gutless wonder' - a scrawny, cowardly individual.

But in Jesus' day, the word 'meek' was often used to connote a 'quiet, controlled, internal strength of character' in a person, which opponents would only interpret as a sign of 'weakness' at their own peril. The word '*praus*' - which we translate as 'meek' - actually had two separate but interrelated meanings.

The first meaning of the word '*praus*' was 'neither too much anger, nor too little anger - but just the right amount of righteous indignation' to address any grievous wrong that it might be confronted with.

The second meaning of the word '*praus*' was separate from, but related to, the first - as the word was used for 'domesticating wild horses' - for harnessing the explosive potency of primal, spirited power.¹ So when Jesus talked about the 'meek', he was talking about people who practiced spirited but non-reactive self-restraint and powerful but non-violent self-control in the face of violent provocation. There is great danger in getting angry. When we get angry, we want to hit back at people who have hurt us, or hurt those whom we love. When we hit back, we are tempted to hurt them like they hurt us.

We call them names, which dehumanize them and/or demonize them, and then set out to destroy them.

On 9-11-2001, Osama Bin Laden ordered an attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre at the heart of the 'Satanic' Empire, killing more than 2000 innocent Americans. In retaliation, George Bush ordered an attack on Osama Bin Laden in Afghanistan - and an attack on the 'tyrant' Saddam Hussein in Iraq, (who did not have any weapons of mass destruction, or anything to do with 9-11, but had once tried to kill Bush senior,) leading to the deaths of over a 100,000 innocent civilians - and still counting.

So it is not surprising that Jesus said: 'you have heard that it was said, *'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'* But I tell you that *anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.* Anyone who says to his brother, *'Raca,'* (or 'I spit on you') is answerable to the Sanhedrin. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.' (Matt.5.21-22)

However, while Jesus says there is grave danger in getting mad and calling people names, Jesus does *not* say that we should '*not be angry*', or '*never call anyone a fool*'. There is plenty of evidence Jesus got angry (Matt.21.12-17) and called the Pharisees 'fools' (Matt.23.17) His statements here are not prescriptive, but descriptive. He depicts a violent cycle of action and reaction we can get stuck in, *if we are not careful*, by being annoyed with one another and insulting one another. *Yet, he does not tell his disciples 'not to be angry'; he tells them - as Paul reminds us - 'be angry but do not sin.'* (Eph.4.26)²

Jesus shows us how we can be angry 'yet without sin' at the tomb of Lazarus. John says when Jesus was confronted with his friend's death, he was 'deeply moved' (John 11.34,38). The word we translate as 'deeply moved' is '*embrimaoma*'. It means to 'snort in spirit'. It is the word used to describe a stallion, rearing up on its hind legs, tearing the air with its hooves and snorting before it charges into battle.³ By using this word repeatedly, John is saying Jesus got really, really 'wild' about the needless death of his friends and was 'mad' enough to do something about it, even though it looked impossible. But, unlike many of us when we get 'mad', Jesus made sure *he channeled his rage constructively*. He didn't react - '*returning evil for evil*'. He acted proactively - '*overcoming evil with good*'. (Rom.12.21)

Now, the only way we will ever be able to act proactively, like Jesus did, is if we practice self-control to such a degree we do not react, but respond with self-restraint - regardless of the way others treat us. Jesus says we can practice proactive self-control by learning to 'turn the other cheek', 'go the second mile' and give people the 'shirt off our back'. He says, "' If someone strikes you on the right cheek, *turn* to them the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, *give* them have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, *go* with them two miles. *Give* to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you".' (Matt 5.40-42)

Jesus says '*do unto others as you would have them do unto you*'. (Matt.7.12) *Do not treat others 'as they treat you' - nor 'as they might treat you' - but 'as you would like to be treated' - regardless of the way that they may treat you.* 'You have heard: "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy". But I tell you: *Love* your enemies and *pray* for those who persecute you that you may be sons (and daughters) of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' (Matt.5.44-48)

Jesus says, 'blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth' advisedly. (Matt.5.4) Because if we are 'meek' - like our sister Gladys Staines - and 'love our enemies' - there is more than enough room in the world for all of us - friends and enemies alike. But if we are not 'meek' - and want to bomb the hell out of our enemies like our misguided brother George Bush - there will be no earth left for us to inherit.

4. those who seek righteousness

Blessed are those who seek 'righteousness' - to do right by others

' Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.'(Matt.5.6)

Many of us interpret Jesus blessing upon those 'who hunger and thirst for righteousness', as a particular benediction for those of us who zealously seek 'personal piousness'. However, the word that we translate as 'righteousness', which Jesus uses in this blessing, indicates *he is commending those who fervently seek 'social justice' in this world, rather than 'personal piousness' that is not of this world.*

The fact that Jesus' bestowed his blessing upon those 'who hunger and thirst for justice' should come as no great surprise to those of us who know the scripture, as the 'pursuit of justice' is a core theme in the Bible, and the words used for 'justice' recur over 1000 times in the Old and the New Testaments.

For Jesus, the 'pursuit of justice' involved five different tasks: *confronting injustice in society; delivering the poor from exploitation by the rich; liberating the powerless from oppression by the powerful; . freeing people from cycles of violence and counter violence which are a constant threat to vulnerable populations; and creating just communities which are intentionally committed to including outcasts.* ¹

Many people say Jesus said a lot about love, but very little about political, economic and social justice. But Jesus constantly confronted the injustice in his society. In the synoptic Gospels - not counting the parallel passages - there is a clear and unmistakable record of *Jesus specifically and repeatedly confronting both Roman and Jewish authorities with the injustices they perpetrated in Israel - 40 times!*

Jesus followed on from John the Baptist in denouncing the exploitation of the poor by the rich. John told the armed forces: "*Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely - be content with your pay.*" And he told the tax collectors: "*Don't collect any more than you are required to*". He said: "*The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.*"(Luke 3.11-14) Jesus confronted Zacchaeus, an infamous tax collector, personally about his extortion. As a result of this encounter, Zacchaeus promised Jesus to give "half of my possessions to the poor", and "if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." (Luke 19.8)

Jesus not only consistently denounced the oppression of the powerless by the powerful, he also actively advocated liberation of disempowered groups of people through the empowerment of the Spirit. Jesus attacked the key religious leaders of the day, as "lovers of money"(Luke16.14-15),who would maintain a façade of sanctity, by saying long prayers in public, but would "devour widows' houses". When he saw a widow "put everything - all she had to live on" - into the collection box, Jesus condemned the temple for extorting the last coin from the kind of person it was set up to protect. (Mark.12.38-44) Jesus broke the monopoly on forgiveness that the temple had developed through the sacrificial system it controlled, by baptizing people in the Spirit and giving them the authority to forgive sins. "Receive the Holy Spirit," Jesus said; and "if you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven." (John 20.22-23).

Jesus advocated communities with leadership that would serve the people rather than oppress them. He said to his disciples: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, *whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant*, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve*, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt.20.25-28)

Jesus demonstrated the practice of active, radical, sacrificial nonviolence, that would free people from the cycles of violence and counter violence which are a constant threat to vulnerable groups of people.

He said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd...and I lay down my life for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10.8-18) Jesus turned to his friends and said: "*Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends*". (John 15.13) Jesus created communities that were committed to doing justice to the marginalized and disadvantaged. The dominant value of Jewish society was "purity" - but the dominant value of Jesus was "inclusivity". While the Jews despised Gentiles, Jesus declared "my house shall be called a house... for all nations."

(Mark 11.17) While the Pharisees ostracized "sinners", Jesus invited "outcasts" to his parties. (Mark 2.16) Jesus said, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, (sisters) or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. *Although they cannot repay you*", Jesus said, "*you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous*." (Luke 14.12-14)

The world is cursed by the fact that there are so many of us who witness injustice but do nothing about it. Jesus says that: those who bless others - by seeking to do justice to them - will be blessed themselves

1Glen Stassen & David Gushee Kingdom Ethics IVP, Downers Grove, 2003 p 355ff

Next section: [5. the merciful](#)

5. the merciful

Blessed are the 'merciful' – 'who treat others like themselves'.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matt.5.7)

Jesus blesses those who seek justice, but reminds us that true justice always needs to be full of mercy. As far as Jesus is concerned, *it is impossible for any of us to do justice to one another unless we show the same kind of mercy to others as we would hope - and pray - for others to extend to us in our need.*

Jesus said we can summarize all the laws written in holy scriptures, and all of the words uttered by godly prophets, in two commandments - one of which is: *'love your neighbour as yourself.* (Matt.22.39) So *true spirituality means you should 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'.* (Matt 7.12)

In the light of this truth, it is not surprising we can find a reciprocal 'Mercy Rule' in all major religions.

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- **So we live with purpose...we make decisions with purpose...**

I can just see Peter as he writes these words 25 years after the resurrection of Jesus ...thinking back how he sat there the first day after Jesus made him an apostle ...to Jesus talk of heaven...

He has lived the last 28 years of his life with purpose....he regrets not a day of it...

He was not perfect...he was faithful led, protected by God's power.....as he writes ...

1PE 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Blessed are you who are broken here...you won't be there
Blessed are the one who don't fit here... you will there

1. You see People who follow Jesus ... know the best is yet to come...

PHP 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

PHP 3:15 All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you.

- Their outlook on the world is eternal
- They expect God to do what he says
- They wait patiently on the Lord to do it
- They live with purpose, act with purpose and make choices on purpose

How far is heaven??? It is a breath away...live like it...

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Luke 6:21 God blesses you who weep now,
for in due time you will laugh.

²² What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man.

Matt 5:4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

- Mourn = Perhaps sadness over our sin – or the realization that we can't do anything about it on our own.
 - **Isaiah 61:1-3 – the God of Comfort**
 - “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me^{[[L]]}_{[[SEP]]} to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,^{[[L]]}_{[[SEP]]} to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion— to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,^{[[L]]}_{[[SEP]]} the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.”
 - **2 Cor 1:3-5 – The God of Comfort**
 - “³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.”
- 5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.**

- “Poor in Spirit” = our relationship with God
- “Meekness” = our relationship with each other
- Meekness = humble in recognition that we too are sinners.
- An inner confidence that we are God's holy children by faith in Jesus Christ.
- We can safely trust his care and providence in our life.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

- Because God gives it to you (the satisfaction)
- Not their own righteousness, but Jesus' righteousness imputed to you.
- Righteousness = to be in the right place – to be doing the right thing – being back to being what you should be.
- God does this for us / to us through Jesus
- **Jeremiah 23** speaks of a Messiah whose name is The Lord of our Righteousness.
- We will also see in verses 10 & 11 that it is for Jesus' sake.

In a grouping we can see that the 1st 4 are the same – the persons are the same. Jesus is giving to those who have nothing and they need everything. What he says he gives “Blessed are you.”

Humility

- Humility is the strand between people that underscores one common element: our humanity.
- Humility is the admission of humanity, a sense that you and I are in this together.

- Humility is the head understanding and heart stance that I am not above the rest of the human race
- Humility is the head understanding and heart stance that say I am not below the rest of the human race
- **A humble person is firmly identified with the human race...**
- **The root of the word humility comes from the word *humus* meaning earth...**
- **and also from a Greek word *meaning on the ground***
- So the humble person has his or her feet firmly planted on the ground...
- firmly planted in reality and that includes the knowledge that he is a down –to-earth, gifted, but imperfect person jut like everyone else...
- It is not lonely at the top or at the bottom if one is humble...because there is good company to be found at both extremes not to mention in the middle if I am humble...and down to earth...
- Because ones feet are firmly planted on reality...one is neither better than any nor worse than any...one is where one is.

As Popeye would say..."I am what I am and that's all that I am"...

In a nutshell...Humility identifies with others!

The humble person is one who has no need to pretend they are more than they truly are!

- 1) **First...When you are humble you identify with yourself as you really are neither higher or lower...your self confidence does not come from seeing yourself as strong, without flaws or above making mistakes...nor as hopeless and helpless...**

Jesus said these amazing words...

- *MT 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Jesus was and is more than any person could ever be...he is God

Yet he identifies with every human being...he is willing to associate with anyone who will come to him...

He says:

- Come to me...what will make Jesus attractive to come to when a person is **weary** (tired, worn out, exhausted drained...when you cannot go any longer) and **burdened** (loaded, weighed down, troubled, hampered)?
- Because of his character....he was humble...although God...
- His feet were firmly planted on the earth...people did not have to nor could they come up to his lofty position of supreme being...
- He met them at their point of humanity...
- He identified with people's true reality...
- But from his position of God he would and could
- Give the worn out **rest...he will refresh them**
- **And he will carry with them what weighs them down**
- **And He will teach them what he knows...(learn from me) for he knows all**
- **And he will do this...because he is gentle...kind and calm**
- **And he is humble in heart... He identifies with the human race generally and individuals specifically...and he approves of a person who is real with him...**

PS 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

*a broken **and contrite** heart,*

O God, you will not despise.

- The sacrifices God approves
 - **Broken spirit**...means out of order spiritually
 - **Contrite heart**...means apologetic and repentant mind set
 - When our feet are firmly placed in reality
 - God will not despise...look down on, but will help

MT 12:20 A **bruised reed** he will not break,
and a **smoldering wick** he will not snuff out,
till he leads justice to victory.

- **Bruised person he will not break...or make worse**
- **Smoldering wick...barely lit...he will not snuff out**
- **Leads Justice to victory...he will be even handed, fair, impartial, with integrity leads to victory... or success**

We Know Our God is a God of completion...what he starts He completes...

It is what makes him attractive to those who do not know him...he is humble and acts gently

So we can and should run to our humble God when in need...

HEB 4: 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

And then we should give that same humble attitude to those who come to us in need...or to whom we go too..

EPH 4:1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² **Be completely humble** and gentle; **be patient**, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of **peace**.

- Key word...**Be**...means to subsist, live in, have as your presence
- 2) **First...When you are humble you identify with yourself as you really are neither higher or lower**...your self confidence does not come from seeing yourself as strong, without flaws or above making mistakes...nor as hopeless and helpless...
 - These are two sides of the same coin...Pride why? Because the focus is on self...exalting or belittling...
 - Because both of those positions are out of touch and blur important realities...it is pride because we overestimate or underestimate based on our own judgment.. which is flawed...

Humility paves the way for wisdom...we cannot grow and learn if we cannot admit our mistakes.

How can we get better if we do not think anything is wrong?

But if my self worth is so fragile that any exposure of fallibility is exposed...I must defend my self... we will have difficult and strained relationships at best...with God and others

Such a prideful spirit that resists correction makes for bad relationships...with ourselves God and others..

Secondly

- 3) When you are humble you identify with others ...where they are at...
 - **You are not defensive**...when you hurt others you take full responsibility and make it right...
 - **Blaming others for your actions** ...is not humility
 - People who blame others for their actions

- And are defensive when confronted with their actions and their effects on people have this in common...they have strained and difficult relationships...
 - Defensiveness and blaming are the marks of a fool...
 -
- 4) True self confidence comes from accepting flaws and mistakes and realizing that you can grow past them...and learn from them...with the grace of God and help of others you can and will... faith is reliance and confidence in God
 - And we each have a measure of it use it...don't put it aside...
 - 5) They are quit to admit when they are wrong
 - 6) And they receive correction and confrontation from others well...
 - 7) I want to know if I am doing something that is hurtful to you!
 - 8) Humility says...I am human...therefore mistake prone...

Humility paves the way for wisdom...we cannot grow and learn if we cannot admit our mistakes.

How can we get better if we do not think anything is wrong?

But if my self worth is so fragile that any exposure of fallibility is exposed...I must defend my self... we will have difficult and strained relationships at best...with God and others

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- 9) When you are humble you identify with others ...where they are at...
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 - People who blame others for their actions
 - **And are defensive when confronted with their actions and their effects on people have this in common...they have strained and difficult relationships...**
 - **Defensiveness and blaming are the marks of a fool...**

*PR 9:7 "Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult;
whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.*

*PR 15:12 A mocker resents correction;
he will not consult the wise.*

What a disheartening experience to endure in any kind of relationship !
You give valuable feedback, and as a result you get insulted...
Mocked...attacked, pout down...

That person is unable to grow and get past failure because he is closed off to the information that would help him.

- You see a defensive and blaming person feels like a victim when they are confronted with feedback or correction...
- They are not a victim...it is what it is...they did what they did...and if they are humble...identifying with the other person...they will be willing to make the changes to make right what is wrong

PHP 2: 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

- Selfish ambition...building one self up...preserving the image of being better than others
- Vain conceit...preserving the image of looking better...
- The exact opposites of humility...feet firmly planted on earth.... No need to present myself more than I am.... I'm gifted but flawed ...and identifying with others knowing they are the same
- being quit to admit when I am wrong
- And they receive correction and confrontation from others well...
- I want to know if I am doing something that is hurtful to you!
- Not whose wrong and whose right...but lets make this word best...

Humility is about giving up the need to appear greater, stronger, smarter, holier than we are...

- Giving up thinking that we know it all
- Giving up thinking that we can do it all
- Giving up thinking that we have to do it well all the time
- Giving up thinking giving up thinking that we are better than others when they do not do it well
- Giving up thinking we need to be seen as right or good all the time
- Giving up defensiveness and blaming when we are given feedback and correction
- Humility is basically being real
- You see it is really true...
- We do not know it all, though we know some
- Nor have all the answers, though we have some
- We don't always get it right, but we sometimes get it right
- We are as imperfect as the next person
- We cannot do life alone...we need others for they are a huge part of the equation of doing life well.
- We do not see everything clearly
- We desperately need God...because we are all weary and heavy laden...sin and life takes it continuing toll on each of us...

You want to be attractive ...nurture humility...be real

The best thing you can do to represent Jesus in this world is to be Humble...

For when Jesus described himself he used the term... gentle and Humble...someone who truly cares and identifies with others...

And you will draw people to you who will not feel judged by you , but they will know you identify with them...and in turn introducing them to their creator who loves them and identified with them so much that he left his heavenly throne to become a man...

That what we are willing and desirous to do in this church...go out and show people that we care for them and identify with them...and by that love draw them to our loving savior...

- They don't have to change to be like us to be accepted
- We will reach out to them where they are at....for they are worth reaching out too...they are valuable and loved by God...

The last 5 will deal with the last days that are upon us.