

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM
Speaker, Robert Emerson
 Study Sunday 10:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM
 Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM
Singing every 2nd Sunday evening
 Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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“Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

— Romans 7:24,25a

**Servants during April:**

Songleader: Larry (3), David (10), Peter (17), Stanley (24)

Reading: Larry

Announcements: Stanley

Table: Peter, David, Robert, Marty

Wednesday Lesson: Kris (6), Larry (13), Stanley (20), Kris (27)

Lawn Mowing (week starting): Kris (3), Marty (10), Stanley (17), Larry (24)

Area Meetings:

Gooch Lane, 3pm (24);
 College View (23,24);
 Eastside, Athens (24-27);
 Marion Street, Athens (24-27);
 Market Street (24-27);
 Killen Park, 6:30pm, Shelter #3 (25)

Hays Mill church of Christ

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 Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Beatitudes: The Character of Kingdom Citizens

By Paul Earnhart

Jesus opens his momentous sermon with a series of eight pungent and largely paradoxical statements known traditionally as the “beatitudes,” Mt 5:2-12. They must have fallen like thunderbolts upon those first century Jewish ears. A more likely formula for success could hardly have been imagined. They assaulted every maxim of conventional wisdom and left the hearer startled and perplexed. In this way Jesus gains the attention of his audience and drives home the essential character of the kingdom of God and its citizens,

The whole world, then as now, was in earnest pursuit of happiness and had just as little conception as men today of how to obtain it. There was no surprise in the announcement that there was true blessedness in the kingdom. The shock came in the kind of people who were destined to obtain it.

The beatitudes speak exclusively of spiritual qualities. The historic concerns of men—material wealth, social status

and worldly wisdom—do not simply receive little attention, they receive none at all. Jesus is clearly out-lining a kingdom not of this world, Jn 18:36; a kingdom whose borders pass not through lands and cities but through human hearts, Lk 17:20-24. This altogether unlikely kingdom arrived as announced in the first century, Mk 9:1; Col 1:13; Rev 1:9; but most were unprepared to recognize and receive it even as they are now.


It must be further noted that not only were the qualities of the kingdom citizen spiritual but they are qualities which would not come to men naturally. They are not the product of heredity or environment but of choice. No one will ever “fall into” these categories. They not only do not occur in men naturally, but are in fact distinctly contrary to the “second nature” which pride and lust have caused to prevail in the hearts of all humanity.

Perhaps there is no more important truth to be recognized about the beatitudes than the fact that they are not independent proverbs which apply to eight different groups of men, but are a composite description of every citizen in the kingdom of God. These qualities are so interwoven in one spiritual fabric that they are inseparable. To possess one is to possess them all, and to lack one is to lack them all. And as all Christians must possess all these qualities of kingdom life, they are also destined to receive all its blessings—blessings which, like its qualities, are but components of one reward: one body called to one hope, Eph 4:4. In sum, then, the beatitudes do not contain a promise of blessing upon men in their natural state (all men mourn but all will certainly not be comforted, Mt 5:4) nor do they offer hope to those who seem to fall into one category or another. They are a composite picture of what every kingdom citizen, not just a few super disciples, must be. They mark off the radical difference between the kingdom of heaven and the world of other men. The son of the kingdom is different in what he admires and values, different in what he thinks and feels different in what he seeks and does. Clearly, there has never been a kingdom like this before.

A Kingdom for the Sinful and Lowly

There have been many approaches to the specific content of the beatitudes. Many feel that there is a progression of thought moving through them which begins with a new attitude toward self and God, leads to a new attitude toward others, and culminates

with the world's reaction to this radical change. There is some merit to this analysis, and whether or not such a neat format always coincides with the actual order of the beatitudes, the ideas are certainly there. To a society governed by some serious misconceptions of the kingdom of God, the beatitudes make two basic statements. First, that the kingdom is not open to the self-righteous and self-assured, but to the supplicant sinner who comes seeking out of his emptiness. And, secondly, that the kingdom is not to be had by the "mighty" who obtain their desires by wealth or violence, but by a company of patient men who yield not only their wants but even their "rights" to the needs of others.

Though not explicitly stated (Jesus was not to speak clearly of His death until a year later, Mt 16:21) there is nothing quite so obvious in this sermon as the central gospel truth that salvation is by the grace of God. Here the dispensational premillennialist is palpably wrong. How could men and women so hungry for righteousness (Mt 5:6) and so much in need of mercy (Mt 5:7) find a place in a kingdom governed by a system of law alone? And who could imagine that citizens in the earthly kingdom envisioned by the dispensationalists would ever suffer persecution, Mt 5:10-12? The righteousness of the kingdom does not rest on a system of law but upon a system of grace. Its holy standards are attainable by sinful men, Mt 5:48. Otherwise, the Sermon on the Mount would be the source of greater despair than the Law of Moses, Rom 7:25. 

Mary Had a Little Boy

Mary had a little boy, His soul was white as snow;
 He never went to Bible class, 'Cause Mary wouldn't go.
 He never heard the tales of Christ That thrill the childish mind;
 While other children went to class, This child was left behind.
 And as he grew from babe to youth, She saw to her dismay—
 A soul that once was snowy white Became a dingy gray.
 Realizing he was lost, She tried to win him back;
 But, now the soul that once was white Had turned an ugly black.
 She even started back to church And Bible study too;
 She begged the preacher, "Isn't there A thing that you can do?"
 And so, another soul is lost That once was white as snow.
 Bible study would have helped—But Mary wouldn't go.

—Blake Martin 

I recently found the preceding poem by Blake Martin with the following note attached:

March 30, 1980

Thank you mother for taking me, and not just sending me. Thank you for loving me and caring for my soul. You're my mother and I love you so very much for so many reasons, but this one is the one I love you for the most. I am sure that God will reward you for your faith and deeds in this life.

I love you, mother,

Era Faye

(At the time of writing, Era Faye was 35; her mother, Maudie, was 62)

Come hear the gospel of Christ!

We will be having a meeting April 24 through 29!

*Speakers: Sun, Tim Sutton; Mon, Stephen Russell; Tues, Glenn Hamilton;
 Wed, Kevin Chancellor; Thurs, David Wheeler; Fri, Marshall McDaniel*

Remember in Prayer

Betty's sister, Dean, is battling cancer; the **Emerson's** and **Beddingfield's** often suffer health issues, but **Pam** is doing some better after having one of her knees replaced! Please continue to pray for **Carolyn Dennis, Dot Hice** and **Joyce**

Smith.

Pray for our upcoming meeting, those preaching, and those in our community, Eph 6:19. Please pray for our leaders, and the upcoming elections in the US, 1 Tim 2:1,2. 