



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Reflection November 22, 2020

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 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.” **From the Beatitudes, Matt 5:10-12.**

The Beatitudes

A few weeks ago, I suggested that the Beatitudes were not just beautiful poetry that could transport us to our “happy place.” In fact, the Beatitudes are, like much of the Jesus’s teachings in the Gospels, challenging. Take the verses above: they do not describe how people will be happy to hear what you have to say and invite you in for tea and biscuits! Not at all. Most likely, they will run you off and seek to discredit you. And why is that?

Over and over (and over) Jesus makes distinctions between the ways and “things” of the world as opposed to the Kingdom of God. The world is temporal and short-lived, the Kingdom eternal. The world is visible and often publicly idolized, the Kingdom invisible and loved by the heart. The world often benefits only the Self and a close-knit few, the Kingdom ignores the Self for the benefit of all. The world acknowledges Self only, the Kingdom God only.

The Beatitudes invite us to lose our Self in God, and they show us the results in fewer words than I have ever heard or read. Yet, they are a sober reminder that at some point in everyone’s life, a decision has to be made: will we follow the eternal ways of God with all our heart or will we follow the temporal ways of the world.

We should not be discouraged, like the young man who would not sell everything and follow Jesus. Jesus could tell he was too focused on the wrong things and not guided by God. Think about the duties and responsibilities we have throughout our lives: as an obedient child or student, as a spouse or parent or wage earner, as a civic or church leader. Fulfilling those responsibilities guided by God without regard to Self is also the path to the Kingdom, is it not?

Special prayers this week: Randy’s and Wayne’s continued recovery; an impending baby delivery; rational gatherings to prevent the spread COVID-19; prayers for the souls who have died from COVID and comfort for their families; pray for an end to the wildfires in the West; increased focus on narrowing divisions in our country rather than creating new ones; a peaceful transition of power in the United States. Hear our prayers O Lord!

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Happy Thanksgiving!