

The anti-beatitudes

- These are some attitudes which are prevalent in our society today and which Jesus' teaching challenges. As followers of Jesus how should we live in the light of Jesus' teaching?

1. Work hard, be self-sufficient, and don't expect any free gifts. There's no such thing as a free business lunch. Religion is for weak people who need a crutch.

2. Avoid grief and pain at all costs. Take pain killers. Keep a stiff upper lip.

Beatitudes

Below, first of all, is written a familiar translation from the New Testament, e.g. NIV/New Century

The passages marked with a *are taken from "WHO? The story of Jesus" – the life of Jesus as recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark & Luke, blended together into a single account – see hopetogether.org.uk

TM is "The Message" version of the Bible

1. Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt)

Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the kingdom of heaven (Luke)

*** God loves those who realise that a place in His kingdom can't be earned through their own efforts, but only received as his free gift. Throwing yourself on his mercy makes you a perfect fit for His Kingdom.**

TM– you are blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

2. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted (Matt)

Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh (Luke)

***God's heart goes out to those who grieve. One day he's going to wrap his arms around them and wipe away their tears.**

TM – you are blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.

TM – You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding. You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes in the morning.

3. Push yourself forward. If you don't look after the "number one" then no one else will

4. Your aim in life should be to get a good job, earn plenty of money to enjoy spending on nice things for yourself.

5. When you are wronged then fight to get your own back. Do unto others before they do unto you.

6. There are no rights and wrongs in terms of morality – do what you like – if it feels good do it. Enjoying life is all that matters.

3. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth (Matt)

****God loves those who don't push themselves forward but instead trust him. He has a whole new world waiting for them.***

TM – you are blessed when you're content with just who you are – no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought

4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled (Matt)

Blessed are you who are hungry now for you shall be satisfied (Luke)

****God loves those who ache for right to triumph over wrong, because he wants the same. One day they'll be able to watch him straighten things out.***

TM – You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat.

5. Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy (Matt)

****God loves those who copy him by being merciful to others. He will always be merciful to them.***

TM – You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being "care-full" you find your selves being cared-for.

6. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God (Matt)

****God loves those who won't let anything rotten take root in their hearts. One day their eyes will drink in all the wonders of heaven.***

TM – You're blessed when you get your inside world – your mind and heart – put right. Then you can see God in the outside world.

7. If there's trouble around then keep a low profile, don't get involved - let people sort out their own problems.

8. Keep quiet about your beliefs - you don't want people to laugh at you.

9. When people insult you or say bad things about you then you have every right to get upset and angry.

7. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God (Matt)

****God loves those who try to bring his peace to others. He knows it's one of the hardest things, but it's a quality he seeks in all those who long to be adopted as his children.***

TM – You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.

8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others 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 (Matt)(Luke is almost the same)

****God won't let you down when you are hated because you follow me. He'll be right there with you. In fact, when you are pushed to the margins taunted and rejected because of me that's a red-letter day. Celebrate when it happens because what God has in store for you makes anything this life can offer pale into insignificance.***

TM – You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.