

## *Lecture 7: The Beatitudes #1*

1. So at this point, Christ has taken away our sins
  - a. By His suffering death and resurrection, he offers us forgiveness
  - b. But it takes more to be completely happy and fulfilled than just being sinless
    - i. We may not be bad, but we're not very good
    - ii. Also, we still have the bad habits that come from our sins
      1. Confession takes away the guilt, but not the habit
      2. We still suffer from an inclination to sin
      3. We've got to break these bad habits
2. Matt. 5:1-13
  - a. We want happiness, we don't know how to get it
  - b. Christ gives us our Roadmap, our design for happiness
    - i. Happiness does not lie outside of us. It comes from God and is found within. Happiness is found:
      1. In union with God
      2. In the development of one's soul
  - c. The word Beatitude means Happiness
    - i. St. Bruno: When Christ says "Blessed are the..." he means that they enjoy as much happiness as can be conceived
    - ii. Now, these are not different kinds of people (e.g., peacemakers vs. poor of heart vs. meek, etc...)
      1. These are the different demands made on everyone who wants to find Happiness
3. Matt. 5:3: Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven
  - a. Same Principle is expressed negatively in Luke 6:24: Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation
    - i. True happiness is not found in: Riches, Well-being, Fame, Power
  - b. The One Necessary thing to Possess to be Truly Happy is Union with God
    - i. This is the one thing the Martyrs would not give up
4. God is Infinite Truth, Beauty, Goodness
  - a. We have an infinite desire
  - b. Therefore, He is the fullness of every one of our desires
    - i. Every one of our desires is a manifestation of our desire for God
    - ii. Now, all of creation is a reflection of His Goodness
      1. Therefore, all of creation is good, it's just not enough
      2. It's not meant to replace Him
      3. To know that God is our ultimate goodness, and to seek Him above all things
  - c. Mt. 6:19-22, 24-33: "Seek first the kingdom of God and all things will be added."
    - i. Have to purify our hearts in order to teach us to seek after and love God above all things
  - d. Luke 14: 15-25, 33
    - i. Have to "hate" and "renounce" everything in order to be His

- ii. Doesn't mean we aren't supposed to appreciate the good things of creation
  - iii. It means that Christ demands detachment from worldly goods
  - iv. We are pilgrims. Real pilgrims don't get attached to things along the way.
- e. We are called to make use of created things, CCC 226
  - i. Meditation of St. Ignatius: "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it. For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.
  - ii. Use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to Him; detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from Him
  - iii. We must rest our feet on created things, but not our heart
    - 1. If we let them detain us, instead of serving as steps to lead us upward they change into obstacles
    - 2. We have to purify our intention
    - 3. Look at all we do and the way we spend our time
  - iv. We have to attach ourselves completely to God, realizing that all our desires find their satisfaction in Him
    - 1. E.g., desire for unconditional love, desire for the praise of a superior, desire to make the most of yourself, desire for peace, friendship, etc...
    - 2. Prayer of Nicholas of Flue (very courageous prayer)
      - a. My Lord and My God, take from me everything that distances me from you
      - b. My Lord and My God, give me everything that brings me closer to you
      - c. My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you
  - v. Detachment = Freedom
    - 1. To be happy we need to be free
      - a. Holy Detachment is the soul's first cry of freedom
      - b. In this way blessed are the poor in spirit
  - vi. Romantic Exclusive Relationships often distance us from God
    - 1. If we give all of time, attention, energy and love to that one person, we become too attached
    - 2. More than anything else, we diminish the development of who we are and who we are to become for our future spouse and family

3. We do this because we expect the relationship to give *what only God can give*
  4. Love is a total gift of self, but only when it is for the good of yourself and the loved one
  - vii. To be detached requires Humility and Trust in God
    1. Obviously, God, Our Loving Father, knows what is best for us. He knows how to make us happy.
    2. Not only that, He is constantly taking the initiative to make us happy
      - a. “Obsessed with our happiness”
      - b. Everything He asks of us is geared towards making us happy
    3. Yet we hesitate to give our lives entirely to God, because we do not have confidence that God is capable of making us completely happy
  - f. Important to remember that all Created things are good, and that their goodness comes from God
    - i. It may be that there are some goods we are not supposed to have, (especially if they distract us from God), but we must not forget that God made them, and that they are good
5. Blessed are the Meek, for they will inherit the land
- a. Meekness is often incorrectly thought of as weakness
  - b. Meekness is to be detached from oneself
  - c. (Poor in Spirit) is to be detached from exterior things; meekness is detachment from self
  - d. Meekness is the opposite of Anger
    - i. We become angry when faced with losing something we want to possess
    - ii. We encounter a situation we can't change and we don't accept it
  - e. Meekness is to accept what you can't change, and work with it
    - i. God is always working for our happiness in every circumstance: Rom. 8:28
    - ii. By accepting what one cannot change God sculpts us into a beautiful image: Through these things He is sculpting you into a beautiful masterpiece
      1. Imagine what a block of marble thinks when the sculptor comes at him with a hammer and chisel
      2. The trials of this life are His instruments to make you into a beautiful work of art
6. Blessed are They that Mourn, for They will be Comforted
- a. Luke 22:33, 54-62: This is what it means to mourn
  - b. Story of Peter: Sins, mourns, repents, and lays down his life for Jesus
  - c. To Mourn means:
    - i. Sin
    - ii. Sorrow
    - iii. Gain Self-Knowledge

- iv. Repentance and Confession
    - v. Get up quickly and go forward
  - d. Two Aspects to Blessed Mourning
    - i. Recognize our Sin with Sorrow
    - ii. Make a resolve to amend our lives
      - 1. Have got to get up and go forward
  - e. Our perfection is found in getting up quickly after a fall
    - i. The more quickly I get up after a fall, the more perfect I have become
    - ii. God is not keeping track of how many times you fell
      - 1. He is only interested in the process of your transformation
      - 2. He allows us to fall, so that we are humbled, learn and grow
- 7. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, (*heaven*) for they shall be satisfied
  - a. Holiness flows from desire
  - b. What does it take to be a saint? To want it! (St. Thomas Aquinas)
  - c. We talked earlier about Sloth, or boredom with the things of God: No desire for spiritual things, but tremendous desire for everything else, and filling all our time with those
    - i. Maybe you don't feel that desire for God: Then you should strive to foster a desire
    - ii. Suppose a husband felt he had lost his desire for his wife and now his passions draw him toward other women
      - 1. His only way out, his only way to rekindle the flame, is to act as though he were deeply on fire for his wife
      - 2. He must practice repeatedly the acts of love toward his wife
  - d. That which we have no desire to do, and is very difficult to do, and is not pleasurable at all, can be transformed
    - i. By repeated practice with the right intention over time
    - ii. You will be able to do the undesirable Promptly, Easily, Joyfully
      - 1. You will derive more joy from the good than the pleasure received from doing the sin
      - 2. Through repeated good acts the feelings eventually catch up to the head
      - 3. Fake it till you Make it, do it till you feel the desire
  - e. To increase our desire for God
    - i. Confession
    - ii. Daily Meditation/Contemplation
    - iii. Frequent Mass
    - iv. Root our mortal and venial sin

Recommended Reading:

*Catechism of the Catholic Church, ##1716-1729*

*The Pursuit of Happiness God's Way, Fr. Servais Pinckaers, Chapters 1-5*