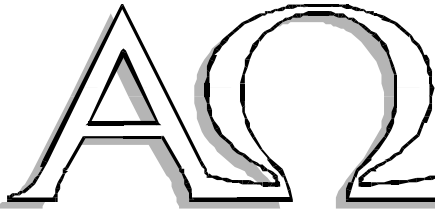


Creation Revelation



God is in the details

Volume 7, Issue 4

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R1

Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one
of thy righteous judgments endureth forever.
Psalm 119:160

Happy Are You.... (How to be happy)

“Man has always sacrificed truth to his vanity, comfort and advantage. He lives by make believe.” W. Somerset Maugham, *The Summing Up*, 1938.

“We must select the illusion which appeals to our temperament, and embrace it with passion, if we want to be happy.” Cyril Connolly, *The Unquiet Grave*, 1945.

“Rob the average man of his life-illusion and you rob him of his happiness.” Henrik Ibsen, *The Wild Duck*, 1884.

“You must be born again.” Jesus of Nazareth, *John 3:7*.

Happiness

Everyone seeks happiness. We buy the latest automobile to gratify this desire, only to find that very soon the novelty wears off, and something else catches our eye. What is your dream?

His chosen men.” It is their ordination.² John Stott comments that the entire sermon presupposes an acceptance of the Gospel and that the key verse, Matthew 6:8, teaches them to be different.³

The Essence of Christianity¹

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. Matthew 6:8 KJV ([KING JAMES VERSION](#))

The Code of Christian Conduct

The Sermon on the Mount, according to Barclay, is the “essence of the teaching of Jesus to the inner circle of

The Sermon is a blueprint for Christian conduct; and as such would reflect our relationship with the Father and His direction in our lives. For the true disciple this code is not

Usually we prefer to use the King James Version when quoting Scripture. We feel that the modern translations are from corrupted manuscripts (see: *Why I Read The King James Version*, [CREATION REVELATION](#), Volumn 4, Issue 2, April - June 2000). However, in this issue we felt, due to the subject matter, that in some cases the modern language flowed better with the ideas expressed, and we were careful to see that the selections used did not adversely effect doctrine.

optional, it is the minimum requirement.⁴ It is therefore a code of conduct for the true disciple. Only the true disciple could put it into practice and that practice would imply doing the Father's will (a right relationship). We must realize that it is not intended to be a "new legalism," but a "new relationship."⁵ The Sermon is not intended to present a legalistic code or a basis of discipleship, but represents the expected fruits resulting from seeking and responding to our new relationship with God and others.⁶ Therefore we walk in who we know we are in Christ because of who He is and of what He has done on our behalf. It becomes for us the natural thing to do.

You Must Be Born Again

Jesus said that we "cannot see the Kingdom of God" unless we first be "born again." Therefore, the Sermon cannot be understood apart from a realization of what it means to be born again (born of the Spirit). Jesus (in the Sermon) is talking about living our lives in the kingdom of heaven (spirit realm). We must be different. We must fix our eyes on the spirit realm, God's realm.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.** John 3:3 KJV

Marvel not that I said unto thee, **Ye must be born again.** John 3:7 KJV

Jesus made it absolutely clear - "You must be born again!"

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for **the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.** 2 Corinthians 4:18 KJV

The Beatitudes, of which we will speak more of later, are the essence of the Sermon on the Mount. Lloyd-Jones admonishes that, "There is nothing more fatal than for the natural man to think that he can take the Beatitudes and try to put them into practice."⁷ Being born again is a requisite for practicing the Beatitudes, and for becoming a Christian.

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have **put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:** where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Colosians 3:9-11 KJV

Regeneration (born again) consists of an initial change (a commitment) followed by an on-going (life long) process. We can say with assurance, "Jesus is really Lord!"

The Old Man and the New Man

To appreciate the regeneration process we need to consider that man consists of two parts, the material part (outer man) and the immaterial part (inner man). The material part consists of his body. The immaterial part consists of the human spirit and soul.⁸ **The essential man is spirit.**

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth. John 4:24 KJV

But **the natural man** [without the Holy Spirit] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are **foolishness** unto him: neither can he know them, because they are **spiritually [man's spirit] discerned.**⁹ 1 Corinthians 2:14 KJV

The essential man is spirit.

Howbeit **when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak

of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. John 16:13, 14 KJV

The things of the Spirit are not communicated through the soul (mind). The ignorance of the natural man "never so strongly shows as it does in those who are called men of learning...dosed with the drugs of flattery and sin...He may say, 'I am free from all the religious extremes of weak and narrow souls...void of superstition, the disease of fools...' Natural man is free from holiness, from the religion of the heart, and from the whole mind which was in Christ."¹⁰ Natural man "awakes...in a moment...by degrees, the eyes of his understanding are opened."¹¹ "The inward, spiritual meaning of the law of God now begins to dawn upon him."¹² He realizes that he has been living in rebellion against God. In his struggle he repents, accepts the sacrifice of the cross, is regenerated (born again) and submits to Jesus as his Lord, entering into a personal relationship with Him.

The Threefold State

John Wesley describes the threefold state of man as the **natural, legal and spiritual.** He says: "the **natural** man neither loves or fears God. Man under the **law** fears God. Man under **grace** loves God...**The heathen, baptized or unbaptized, has a fancied liberty, which is only licentiousness.** Man operating **only under the laws of God is in heavy, grievous bondage. He who is filled with the Holy Spirit enjoys the true, glorious liberty of the sons of God.**"¹³

They **exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things** rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.... Furthermore, since **they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind,** to do what



ought not to be done. Romans 1:25, 28 NIV (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, Zondervan, 1978)

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because **through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.** For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, **God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.** And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who **do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace,**... Romans 8:1-6 NIV

For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Romans 7:19 NIV

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of **power, and of love, and of a sound mind [self-discipline].**¹⁴ 2 Timothy 1:7 KJV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, **self-control. Against such there is no law.** And those who are Christ's have **crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Gal 5:22-26 NKJV (NEW KING JAMES VERSION, Thomas Nelson, 1982)

Christians Are Not Perfect, Just Redeemed

The world stands eager to condemn the Christian at the first sign that he has failed to live up to the teachings of Christ. They fail to understand that Christ came to save the lost. If you are not lost you don't need a savior. They demand perfection from a Christian in an imperfect world, gleefully calling the Christian a hypocrite at the first sign of fault.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.** 1 John 1:8-10 KJV

We are sinners because of our sin nature. However as Christians in the true sense we have been redeemed. As committed Christians we no longer willfully sin.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Hebrews 10:26, 27 KJV

We are therefore sinners in the sense that we have sin natures; and although we resist sin, we are susceptible to temptations. While the "immaterial part of our human nature (soul and spirit) has been redeemed from hereditary corruption... our unredeemed body still harbors the sin principle..."¹⁵ "[O]ur redeemed immaterial nature can come under the temporary domination of the sin-principle..." through the lusts of the flesh (unredeemed material nature), but "it is now our duty to quit submitting ourselves" to the demands of the flesh "and to yield ourself to our new Master, for His use and glory."¹⁶

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23 KJV

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. **So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.** Romans 7:22-25 KJV

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, Romans 8:13 NIV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,** which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1 KJV

As we study the Sermon we must keep in mind that we are far from perfect, and that in the sense that true Christians do occasionally succumb to temptation the Church is full of sinners. Therefore Jimmy Swaggart, Mother Teresa and the Pope are sinners. You and I and Billy Graham are sinners. If Christians were not sinners, they would not need Christ.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Romans 3:23 KJV

Because of our imperfection, our salvation is through what Christ has done. We are not capable of obtaining salvation on our own efforts. That truth must be made

abundantly clear. Salvation is by grace, not by what we have done for ourselves. Salvation is a free gift that we obtain by the grace of God, freely bestowed, through faith in Christ, the One who secured it. We do nothing of ourselves to earn it. We can never deserve it. We cannot “work” our way to heaven.¹⁷ What Christ is teaching in the Sermon is not “works” in that sense, rather as James has said, “Faith without works is dead.”¹⁸ The believer, not for his salvation, but because of it, does “Works”; and the believer is not to merely listen to the Word (Scripture) but to do what it says as well.¹⁹

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10 KJV

Not All Christians Are Christian

Since the world is eager to condemn the failure of the Christian we must also realize that not all those who profess to be Christian are actually Christian. Not every act performed in the “name of Christianity” is actually a Christian act.

Wherefore **by their fruits ye shall know them.** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but **he that doeth the will of my Father** which is in heaven. **Many will say** to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and **in thy name done many wonderful works?** And then will I **profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.** Matthew 7:20-23 KJV

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. J. B. Phillips, THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH

Therefore, as we study and ponder the Sermon, it must become increasingly apparent that not all those professing to be Christian are practicing Christian principles as taught by Christ. This is true of the institutional church as well as the individual. Gradually since the first century men compromising and injecting their own wills and rules created and perpetuated a “religion” where none was intended (Christianity is relationship not ritual). Throughout Christian history nominal Christian men exulting themselves, ascended the leadership of a ritualized church, forbidding the reading of Scriptures by the common man, wielded worldly power over God’s people; even committing atrocities in the name of Christianity. It is said by the critics that many untold millions have been killed in the name of Christianity. The simple response is to ask them to search the Scriptures and show

by the evidence that the people committing these atrocities in the name of Christianity are truly Christian. Are they truly acting from changed hearts?

John Wesley wrote that Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees as being the “false teachers in that age, who had perverted the Word of God.” Wesley again said that, “Their false comments and teachings on the law showed in advance how Christian teachers of all ages and nations could pervert the Word of God.”²⁰ “It does not appear that it was ever Jesus’ intent at any other time or place to lay down at once the whole plan of a new religion. In the Sermon on the Mount, He gave us a full prospect of true religion.”²¹ A careful study of the Scriptures will reveal that we are instructed to live far different lives than what the world supposes.

Martin Luther finally realizing the meaning of the Scripture in Romans, “The just shall live by faith,” ignited a movement that opened up the Scriptures and returned Christian liberty to the common man.²² Thereafter, godly men, born again believers (not perfect, but sinners), have carried the banner of the risen Christ to the uttermost parts of the world. Men and women changed by the Gospel have fed the poor, founded hospitals and given their lives for their belief in that truth.

What made these men different? What difference was it that caused Eric Liddell of “Chariots of Fire” fame to choose not to compromise his integrity for momentary glory? Why did he choose to sacrifice his life and to die as a missionary to China? What caused Paul, while in Roman chains, to say: “...Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain?”²³

Paul admonishes us to, “Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth...put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge...Put off...the old man...and be renewed in the spirit of your mind...put on the new man...”²⁴

A thorough study of the Sermon will reveal that difference in the way of life for the born again Christian.

We Must Be Different

Paul says in his epistle to the Romans: “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed.”²⁵ Bishop Fulton Sheen states that, “The unthinking often say the Sermon on the Mount constitutes the ‘essence of Christianity.’ But let any man put these Beatitudes into practice in his own life, and he too will draw down upon himself the wrath of the world.”²⁶

The “wisdom of God is foolishness to the world...Occasionally it is branded as downright lunacy and distraction.”²⁷ Receiving warning, the non-Christian, thinking

himself wise, "would say that his head (the Christian's head) was out of order. Much religion has surely made him mad!"²⁸

Do not be swayed to walk and think as the world thinks. The message of the sermon may seem contrary to man's nature or the world system, but as Paul says:

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, **I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.** Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? **Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. **Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.** For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:** That no flesh should glory in his presence. **But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:** That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 KJV

The Characteristics of a Righteous Man

- 1 **And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:**
- 2 **And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,**
- 3 **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- 4 **Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.**
- 5 **Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.**
- 6 **Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**
- 7 **Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Matthew 5:1-12 KJV

The Beatitudes

If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. Deuteronomy 18:19 NIV

The Sermon opens with the "Beatitudes" (Matthew 5:1-12) which, according to Alfred Edersheim, "are the New Testament counterpart to the Ten Commandments. These present to us, not the observance of the Law written on stone, but the realization of that Law which, by the Spirit, is written on the fleshly tablets of the heart."²⁹

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: Matthew 5:1 KJV

The message was primarily for the disciples; secondarily for the multitude, as it was delivered within their hearing; and ultimately for everyone in every generation. Notice that Jesus went away from the crowds up on the mountainside and the disciples came to him there. He sat down.

The Happy Christian

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:2, 3 KJV

Notice the rendering of Matthew 5:3 with the use of the word "happy" in the Amplified Bible:

Blessed—**happy**, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous [that is, with **life-joy and satisfaction** in God's favor and salvation, **regardless of their outward conditions**] -are the poor in spirit (the humble, rating themselves insignificant), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! Matthew 5:3 Amp (THE AMPLIFIED BIBLE, Zondervan, 1965)

The Living Bible uses “fortunate” for the word “blessed”. “Humble men are very fortunate...”³⁰ The Good News Bible translates the word “blessed” as “happy”. Jesus is teaching in the Beatitudes what the Christian character must be like - because you are Christian be like this. Think for a minute, when was the last time you really felt happy? Happiness implies feelings of well-being, peace, and comfort; things are going right.

To Utterly Depend on God

The Greek word translated “poor” (ptochos) is an adjective describing “one who crouches, a beggar.”³¹ Poor is used as a metaphor to denote our dependence on God. We are always in want of God’s grace. We should be content with our position and possessions in life, trusting God, not setting our hearts on (obsessed with) worldly wealth and position. Worldly wealth and position is not wrong unless it takes the place of God in our hearts. In the story of the rich ruler, Jesus initially did not ask him to give up his wealth.³²

The “poor in spirit” are the humble, those convinced of their own sins, not dependent on their material possessions. He lies helpless, naked and exposed before God with no redeeming qualities, aware of his guilt, knowing he deserves only punishment. “Poverty of spirit, then is a just sense of both inward and outward sin. It is a sense of our true guilt and helplessness. It becomes the first step we take in running the spiritual race which is set before us.”³³

Lloyd-Jones paraphrased: “We have to be poor in spirit before we can be filled with the Holy Spirit.”³⁴ “Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit!”³⁵ Poverty in spirit is “the first step to all real and substantial happiness. Without this quality, there is no happiness in this world or that which is to come.”³⁶ Wesley indicates that poverty of spirit is the foundation teaching from which we progress to the other principles until we are perfected.³⁷ It should be clear that we are incapable of living in the kingdom unless we first empty ourselves, acknowledging our helplessness before God, and accept His leading and lordship in our lives.

How happy are those who **know their need for God**, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! Matthew 5:3 JBP (J. B. Phillips, THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN ENGLISH, MacMillan, 1958, 1960, 1972)

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up. James 4:10 KJV

Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same **is greatest** in the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:4 KJV

We are to Live Humbly

Just as we are always to be humble before God, we are to live humbly before our fellow man. We are to put other people first. Think about it. If we are always putting other people’s desires before ours how can there be conflicts in our lives?

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, **being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.** Philippians 2:1-4 NKJV

There is a visible kingdom (the sense realm) and an invisible kingdom (the spiritual realm). In the spiritual realm there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. **Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another**, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” **Humble yourselves, therefore, under**

God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:5-7 NIV

And What is the Kingdom of Heaven?

“The inward kingdom of heaven is set up in the hearts of all who repent and believe the gospel. That kingdom is none other than righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Every babe in Christian faith knows that we are made partakers of these blessings the moment we believe in Jesus. However, these are but the first fruits of His Spirit.”³⁸ “The kingdom of heaven, then, is in us.”³⁹ In this kingdom we have the joy of *knowing* that our sins are forgiven and that we share in our inheritance as God’s children. All the “promises” of the Bible are ours.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of **righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Romans 14:17-18 NIV

The Two Kingdoms

Jesus speaks to the disciples of the kingdom of heaven (kingdom of God). We need to have a firm grasp as to what He is speaking about. There is a **visible kingdom (the sense realm)** and an **invisible kingdom (the spiritual**

realm). In the spiritual realm there are two kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. We enter the realm of the kingdom of God when we are "born again".⁴⁰ A change takes place and we begin to experience God's power in our lives as the Holy Spirit begins to guide and teach us.

Jesus answered, 'I am telling you the truth: **no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.**' John 3:3 GN (GOOD NEWS BIBLE, Today's English Version, United Bible Societies, 1976)

Notice how the Amplified puts it:

Jesus answered him, "I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that **unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see—know, be acquainted with [and experience]—the kingdom of God.** What is born of [from] the flesh is flesh — of the physical is physical; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not—do not be surprised, astonished—at My telling you, **you must be born anew (from above).**" John 3:3, 6, 7 Amp

We begin to live in the kingdom of heaven (spiritual realm). We begin to discern spiritually and grow in knowledge and understanding through hearing, applying, and the study of God's Word (the Bible).

But the Comforter, which is **the Holy Ghost**, whom the Father will send in my name, he **shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance**, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26 KJV

If we are not in the kingdom of God, we are under the authority of the kingdom of Satan, as Satan is the prince (ruler) of this world.⁴¹ We instead live in the soulish (sense) realm. Whatever we know or learn comes through the five senses. God will deliver us from the power of darkness if we are "born again," redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Who hath **delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:** In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Colossians 1:13-14 KJV

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ...and **have put on the new self**, which is being **renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.** Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian,

Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all." Colossians 3:2, 3, 10, 11 NIV

Christ Must Reign, Not Us

You will be happy if you put your whole trust in God, humbling yourself, acknowledging your utter dependence on Him, stripped of all pretense; then you will live in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. We live humbly, not insisting on our own way. **Whenever Christ is reigning as Lord over our lives the kingdom has come.**

The Sorrowful Christian

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4 KJV

Mourn (pentheo) is used for mourning in general; and also for sorrow for sin or condoning sin.⁴² This is a penitential mourning, Godly sorrow, for our sins and the sins of others. This is mourning in a spiritual sense rather than a natural mourning.

After the joy of the knowledge of salvation comes spiritual mourning, a realization of our sins. We must then hold fast to His promises; not allowing

ourselves to be turned away in defeat, then we will be comforted by His Holy Spirit; "receiv[ing] a fresh manifestation of His love..., a fresh witness of His acceptance..."⁴³

I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but **your grief will turn to joy....** So with you: Now is your time of grief, but **I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.** John 16:20, 22 NIV

Material things and pleasures are not wrong unless they are substitutes for God. If you only build your life around the pleasures of this world you will have your mourning later. You may find momentary happiness in material things. You may spend your whole life accumulating things that bring pleasure, in order to keep the pleasurable high going. However at some point the high will seem hollow and you may realize that something is missing. You may have spent your lifetime accumulating temporary treasures that "moth and rust destroy," failing to secure the eternal treasures that truly satisfy.⁴⁴

Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Luke 6:25 NIV

We begin to discern spiritually and grow in knowledge and understanding through hearing, applying, and the study of God's Word (the Bible).

"[C]onviction must of necessity precede conversion, a real sense of sin must come before there can be a true joy of salvation."⁴⁵ It is a mourning (sorrowing) after God, a sense of lost spiritual joy, a longing for "the pardoning power of His Word and a taste of the good world which is yet to come."⁴⁶

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Psalms 32:5 KJV

My sins, O God, are not hidden from you; you know how foolish I have been. Psalm 69:5 GN

The World Will Not Mourn With You

The world cannot see Him; they see only temptation and sin. They cannot possibly understand this message until they are "born again." They believe that most Christians are deluded and devoid of good sense. Let's live, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die. Christianity is foolishness.

For the message of the cross is **foolishness to those who are perishing**, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Corinthians 1:18 NKJV

When my thoughts were bitter and my feelings were hurt, **I was as stupid as an animal; I did not understand you.** Yet I always stay close to you, and you hold me by the hand. Psalm 72:21-23 GN

He Will Wipe Away All Your Tears

You will be happy when your heart is broken for the world's suffering and sorrowful for your own sin. Out of this sorrow you will find the Joy of God.

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. **He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain,** for the old order of things has passed away. Revelation 21:3, 4 NIV

The Obedient Christian

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Matthew 5:5 KJV

The Amplified puts it this way:

Blessed—happy, blithesome, joyous, spiritually prosperous [that is, with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, **regardless of their outward conditions**] — are

the meek (the mild, patient, long-suffering), for they shall inherit the earth! Matthew 5:5 Amp

Meek is defined as: "Mild of temper; patient under injuries; long-suffering." A synonym for "meek" is the word "humble".⁴⁷ The Greek word translated meek (praos) means gentle or mild in disposition.⁴⁸ "Meekness is not adopting a low view of oneself or discrediting the position, the authority, that God has given to an individual. Rather meekness recognizes God's authority and submits itself to every manifestation of it. Meekness and obedience go hand in hand. Meekness is characterized by unquestioning submission. Christ promised that those who submit to divinely constituted authority will inherit the earth."⁴⁹

The Christian Must Be Self Controlled

Think of men that we admire. One characteristic that most of them exhibit is self control. All Christians should develop control over every aspect of their lives.

...gentleness, **self-control**. Against such there is no law. Gal 5:23 NKJV

He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise. Proverbs 11:29 NIV

Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who **lacks self-control**. Proverbs 25:28 NIV

The Christian is not merely self-controlled, but God-controlled. "[O]nly in His service do we find our perfect freedom, and in doing His will our peace."⁵⁰

All Christians should develop control over every aspect of their lives.

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. **And the Lord's servant must not quarrel;** instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those

who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them **repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,** and that they will **come to their senses** and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. 2 Timothy 2:23-26 NIV

The Christian is Patient

Are we patient with the shortcomings of others? Patience is an important element of self-control. How do we handle the difficulties of life?

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for **my strength is made perfect in weakness.** Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my

infirmities, **that the power of Christ may rest upon me.** Therefore I take pleasure in **infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses** for Christ's sake: for **when I am weak, then am I strong.** 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10 KJV

Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. **Honor one another above yourselves.** Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, **patient in affliction,** faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. **Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you;** bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. **Live in harmony with one another.** Do not be proud, **but be willing to associate with people of low position.** Do not be conceited. **Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge,** my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** Romans 12:10-21 NIV

Submit Yourself to Authority

It is right to submit to all authority who are placed over us, whether government, those we work for, or our parents.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. **The authorities that exist have been established by God.** Consequently, **he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.** Romans 13:1, 2 NIV

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. **For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.** Live as free men, but **do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.** 1 Peter 2:13-16 NIV

Remind the people to **be subject to rulers and authorities,** to be obedient, to be ready to **do whatever is good,** to **slander no one,** to **be peaceable and considerate,** and to **show true humility**

toward all men. At one time **we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved** by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, **being hated and hating one another.** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.** He saved us **through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,** whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been **justified by his grace,** we **might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.** Titus 3:1-7 NIV

We are Heirs!

In this sense we mean that the blessings, not only of heaven will be ours, but we will be satisfied with our earthly blessings as well. "Not that they shall always have much of the earth... [m]eekness... has a real tendency to promote our health, wealth, comfort and safety, even in this world."⁵¹

Listen, my dear brothers: **Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?** James 2:5 NIV

Who, then, **is the man that fears the Lord?** He will instruct him in **the way chosen for him.** He will **spend his days in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land.** Psalm 25:12, 13 NIV

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. For **evil men will be cut off,** but **those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land.** A little while, and **the wicked will be no more;** though you look for them, they will not be found. But **the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.** Psalm 37:8-11 NIV

Meekness is Strength of Character

You will be happy when you are **self-controlled** and not given to self-pity. No man can lead others unless he has learned **self mastery**⁵²; a man who is **God-controlled** and **with a teachable spirit.** He is a man who is **cool under pressure or when others are hot.** He is a man who **realizes**

But seek for (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom, and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right], and then all these things taken together will be given to you besides. Matthew 6:33 Amplified

his own ignorance and weakness⁵³ and is in submission to the will of God. No man can hurt you because you are not proud or boastful. In this way we inherit the earth because we are always satisfied and content.,” as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”⁵⁴

The Just Christian

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matthew 5:6 KJV

The Greek word translated righteousness (dikaioisune) is the character or quality of being right or just, formerly spelled 'rightwiseness'; of whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God.⁵⁵

Hunger and Thirst For Right Standing

In the proper order of things we hunger and thirst for right standing [to be free from whatever is hindering our relationship (sin)] with God, spiritual, not material possessions, pleasures or experiences. This would include seeking righteousness and justice in our social lives as well. Material possessions never satisfy; we are never filled. Someone asked a very rich man once: "How much is enough money to satisfy you?" He replied, "One dollar more."

But **seek** for (aim at and strive after) first of all **His kingdom, and His righteousness** [His way of doing and being right], and then all these things taken together will be given to you besides. Matthew 6:33 Amp

Righteous men will be happy, and things will go well with them. They will get to enjoy what they have worked for. But **evil men are doomed**; what they have done to others will now be done to them. Isaiah 3:10, 11 GN

"If every man and woman in this world knew what it is to 'hunger and thirst after righteousness' there would be no danger of war."⁵⁶ We must reject self-concern (selfishness), thinking of others first. We are not to seek happiness; we are to seek righteousness, then we will be happy (filled). Being righteous means "doing, or according with, that which is right."⁵⁷

He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil— **this is the man who will dwell on the heights**, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. **His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.** Isaiah 33:15, 16 NIV

Trouble follows sinners everywhere, but **righteous people will be rewarded** with good things. Proverbs 13:21 GN

We Must Act Like Christ

Christians should act like Christ knowing their sins are forgiven (a free gift). Salvation is a free gift because we must be absolutely perfect (sinless) to stand in the presence of a Holy God. This would be impossible on our own merit. We are to continue to 'hunger and thirst' to be Christ like, avoiding those things opposed to God, and are filled and continue to be filled.

As the deer pants for streams of water, so **my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God**, for the living God. Psalm 42:1, 2a NIV

For I say unto you, That **except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees**, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:20 KJV

The righteous get what they want, but the wicked will get what they fear most. Proverbs 10:24 GN

The Righteous Will Be Satisfied

You will be happy if you constantly seek to do whatever is the righteous way.

Blessed and fortunate and happy and **spiritually prosperous** [that is, in that state in which the born-again child of God enjoys His favor and salvation]

The Hebrew word chesedh (mercy) "means the ability to get right inside the other person's skin until we can see things with his eyes, think things with his mind, and feel things with his feelings." William Barkley, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God), for **they shall be completely satisfied!** Matthew 5:6 Amp

Righteous people will always have security, but the wicked will not survive in the land. Proverbs 10:30 GN

The Merciful Christian

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Matthew 5:7 KJV

“Mercy implies compassion so great as to enable one to forbear punishing even when justice demands it.”⁵⁸

While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’ When he had said this, he fell asleep. Acts 7:59, 60 NIV

The Greek word translated “merciful” (eleemon) does not simply mean - possessed of pity, but expresses the sense of being highly compassionate. It is a God-like compassion.⁵⁹ The Hebrew word chesedh (mercy) “means the ability to get right inside the other person’s skin until we can see things with his eyes, think things with his mind, and feel things with his feelings.”⁶⁰ It “means a sense of pity plus a desire to relieve the suffering.”⁶¹ What a difference it would make if we tried to achieve these feelings for other people.

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.** Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14 NIV

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, **how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’** Jesus answered, ‘**I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.** Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees before him. “Be patient with me,” he begged, “and I will pay back everything.” **The servant’s master took pity on him,** canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii.

He grabbed him and began to choke him. “Pay back what you owe me!” he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, “Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.” But he refused. Instead,

he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. “You wicked servant,” he said, “I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. **Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’** In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you **forgive your brother from your heart.** Matthew 18:21-35 NIV

At one time each of us were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of your tender mercies, **blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.** Psalm 51:1 NKJV

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Matthew 6:1 KJV

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Luke 6:36 KJV

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. James 2:13 NKJV

Consider the Grace and Mercy of God

You will be happy if you **have** such perfect **sympathy, caring and compassion for others** that you can **feel with their feelings**; and if you do that you will soon discover that others will do the same for you. **God through His mercy and grace offered us the free gift of salvation though we are undeserving.** “If I am not merciful there is only one explanation; I have never understood the grace and the mercy of God; I am outside Christ; I am yet in my sins, and I am unforgiven.”⁶²

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and **what doth the Lord require of thee,**

but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah 6:8 KJV

Christian faith is ultimately not only a matter of doctrine or understanding or of intellect, it is a condition of the heart. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, STUDIES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The Sincere Christian

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matthew 5:8 KJV

The Greek word translated pure (katharos) simply means clean.⁶³ "Clean" is defined as: "Unmixed... Free from moral defilement or guilt; hence, innocent; guiltless... Chaste."⁶⁴

Heart (kardia) means the heart (literally); thoughts or feelings (figuratively). "By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life."⁶⁵ "The heart regarded as the seat of spiritual or conscious life; soul; spirit; specif.: a The emotional as distinguished from the intellectual nature; as, *heart* and *head* often disagree..."⁶⁶ "The words 'heart' and 'spirit' are used interchangeably in the scriptures." We must be careful with matters of the "heart." Whatever governs our lives governs the heart; whether God, Satan, or sin.⁶⁷ Peter spoke of the inner self when he said: "Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight."⁶⁸ Peter was speaking of the regenerated man, ruled by the Holy Spirit, placing his faith in God.

"Christian faith is ultimately not only a matter of doctrine or understanding or of intellect, it is a condition of the heart."⁶⁹ "The heart...is the centre of man's being and personality..."⁷⁰ Education and/or a change in environment, contrary to humanistic thinking, does not change the heart.⁷¹ Being born again of the Spirit does that.

For **out of the heart come evil thoughts**, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. Matthew 16:19 NIV

We might say, happy are them that have unmixed motives (sincerity), and free from inward (heart) moral defilement (guilt or pride). "Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God!"⁷² We need to become guileless, **living in the open, stripping and exposing ourselves of all masks and pretense, not being concerned about what other people think**. It means sincere in relationships with both God and man, involving no falsehoods.

"Who may ascend the Eternal's hill? Who may stand within his sacred shrine? **He only who has clean hands and a heart unstained, who never sets his mind on what is false, who never breaks his word;...**" Psalm 24:3, 4 JM (THE JAMES MOFFATT TRANSLATION, Harper & Row, 1922, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1935, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954)

"Woe to you, Pharisees and you other religious leaders. Hypocrites! For **you won't let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and won't go in yourselves**. And **you pretend to be holy, with all**

your long, public prayers in the streets, while you are evicting widows from their homes. Hypocrites." Matthew 23:13, 14 LB

To be pure in heart means to do things with (pure) unmixed motives. Think how the minute you do something good, pride corrupts your motives. For example, It is said that John Bunyan was told that he preached well on a certain day. He responded that the devil had already told him that. In this sense it also means being single-minded about God. James had much to say about double-mindedness:

[T]he life of a man of divided loyalty will reveal instability at every turn. James 1:8 JBP

Well then, submit yourselves to God; resist the devil, and he will fly from you: **draw near to God, and he will draw near to you**. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and **purify your hearts, you double-minded;** James 4:7, 8 JM

So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For **in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin** at work within my members. Romans 7:21-23 NIV

Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: **unite my heart to fear thy name**. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. Psalms 86:11, 12 KJV

Two things I request of You (Deprive me not before I die): **remove falsehood and lies far from me;** give me neither poverty nor riches **-feed me with the food You prescribe for me; lest I be full and deny You, and say, "Who is the LORD?"** Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God. Proverbs 30:7-9 NKJV

To be pure in heart also means to be cleansed from *inward* moral defilement. The Pharisees were concerned only with *outward* ceremonial purity. "Christian faith is ultimately not only a matter of doctrine or understanding or of intellect, it is a condition of the heart."⁷³ "The heart...is the centre of man's being and personality..."⁷⁴

Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, **you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.** Luke 11:39 NIV

If you are wise, **live a life of steady goodness, so that only good deeds will pour forth**. And if you **don't brag about them, then you will be truly wise!** And by all means don't brag about being wise and good if you are bitter and jealous and selfish; that is the worst sort of lie. For **jealousy and selfishness**

are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, inspired by the devil. For wherever there is jealousy or selfish ambition, there will be disorder and every other kind of evil. But **the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure and full of quiet gentleness.** Then it is peace-loving and courteous. It **allows discussion and is willing to yield to others; it is full of mercy and good deeds.** It is **wholehearted and straightforward and sincere.**
James 3:13-17 LB

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.
Romans 12:18 NKJV

Then Jesus called to the crowds and said, "Listen to what I say and try to understand. **You are not defiled by what you eat; you are defiled by what you say and do.**" Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you realize you offended the Pharisees by what you just said?" Jesus replied, "Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be rooted up, so ignore them. They are blind guides leading the blind, and if one blind person guides another, they will both fall into a ditch." Then Peter asked Jesus, "Explain what you meant when you said people aren't defiled by what they eat." "Don't you understand?" Jesus asked him. "Anything you eat passes through the stomach and then goes out of the body. But **evil words come from an evil heart and defile the person who says them.** For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all other sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands could never defile you and make you unacceptable to God!" Matt 15:10-20 NLT (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION, BibleSoft Version 4.1, 2003)

Are We Fit to See God?

"See," (Optomai) means an inward impression or a spiritual experience.⁷⁵ Regarding "seeing God", Barclay says that "we see only what we are fit to see..." An ordinary person sees only "pinpoints of light" in the night sky; while an "astronomer will call the stars and planets by their names, and will move amongst them as his friends."⁷⁶ Many "born-again" Christians are able to recognize God in the experiences of their lives.

Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 Corinthians 13:12 NIV

And **they shall see his face;** and his name shall be in their foreheads. Revelation 22:4 KJV

Consider the incredible love the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called "children of God"—and that is not just what we are called, but what we are. This explains why **the world will no more recognize us than it recognized Christ.** Here and

now, my dear friends, we are God's children. We don't know what we shall become in the future. We only know that **when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.** 1 John 3:1-3 JBP

You Can See God

You will be happy if you **keep yourself cleansed from inward moral defilement, utterly sincere, without pretense or guile** in our relationships with both God and man. **Then you will be able to see God.**

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Hebrews 12:14 KJV

The Harmonious Christian

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matthew 5:9 KJV

The noun "peace", Greek - "eirene", describes harmonious relationships between men and nations; friendliness; freedom from molestation; order in states and institutions; harmonized relationships between God and man; the sense of rest and contentment. "Eirene" together with the verb "poieo", to make, becomes the adjective "peacemakers".⁷⁷

Peace comes from facing issues and dealing with them, not evading them; even if the way to peace is through struggle.⁷⁸ We are talking about peace, not appeasement; not peace at any price. Righteousness and justice must be part of any lasting sincere peace.

Take heed to yourselves. **If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.** Luke 17:3 NKJV

Matthew Henry describes a peacemaker as one who has a peaceable disposition and peaceable conversation.⁷⁹ Lloyd-Jones adds that he must be entirely delivered from self, absolutely neutral, not sensitive or touchy, nor on the defensive. He goes on to say that when we view things as to their effect on us (selfishness) it brings war because others are doing the same. The problem is man's heart; it must be changed.⁸⁰ Happy indeed "is the man who makes peace in his own heart and in his own soul."⁸¹

My dear brothers, take note of this: **Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.** James 1:19, 20 NIV

If it is possible, **as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.** Romans 12:18 NKJV

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, **being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them,**

The Jewish Rabbis held that the highest task which a man can perform is to establish *right relationships* between man and man. William Barkley, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you **put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt** according to the deceitful lusts, and **be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.** Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,** just as God in Christ also forgave you. Ephesians 4:17-32 NKJV

"The Jewish Rabbis held that the highest task which a man can perform is to establish *right relationships* between man and man."⁸² We should never seek or be responsible for conflict. Pogo once said: "We have seen the enemy, and he is us." We must change our attitude concerning others. We should remember they are like that because they are still unregenerate. Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires

and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."⁸³ "You finish with self, then you begin to follow Jesus Christ."⁸⁴

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, **don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?** Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. James 4:1-4 NIV

Children of God

"Children [sons] of God" is a phrase used as an adjective to describe "doing God-like work."⁸⁵ If we are sons, then like a son we are His heirs.

All Who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are you meant to relapse into the slavish attitude of fear—you have been **adopted into the very family circle of God and you can say with a full heart, 'Father, my Father'.** The Spirit himself endorses our **inward conviction that we really are the children of God.** Think what that means. **If we are his children then we are God's heirs, and all that Christ inherits will belong to all of us as well! Yes, if we share in his sufferings we shall certainly share in his glory.** Romans 8:14-17 JBP

Right Relationships Produce Happy Lives

We will be happy if we do everything we can to live in harmony with our fellowman. If we do we will be doing a "God-like work."⁸⁶

The Christian Will Face Persecution

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:10-12 KJV

Early persecution came at the hands of the Jews. Paul (Saul) himself was actively engaged in such persecution at the time of his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus. Prior to that conversion, Paul stood by, holding the cloaks, assenting to the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen.

Then Saul, **still breathing threats and murder against the disciples** of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he **found any who were of the Way**, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Acts 9:1, 2 NKJV

For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because **I persecuted the church of God**. 1 Corinthians 15:9 NKJV

Next, the Romans persecuted the early Christians because they would not compromise their loyalty to Christ and worship Caesar as lord; and were perceived as disloyal, trying to set up a state within a state. In this way, Christians threatened the Roman political, social and economic system.⁸⁷ “The blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the church.”⁸⁸

Polycarp (ca70-155), a disciple of John, had been Bishop of Smyrna. At his trial, before the Roman Proconsul, he stated, “That he could not speak evil of Christ whom he had served eighty-six years and who had given him nothing but good. “ Polycarp was taken from the trial and burned at the stake for refusing to recant.⁸⁹

Christians have continually faced persecution. Other Christians persecuted the Huguenots in France. Christians have been martyred in China, Russia, Africa, and the Amazon. While Christians today still face severe persecution in other lands, Christians you know may not be called upon to make the supreme sacrifice with their lives, they nevertheless are persecuted in the media, the schools, the workplace and their own homes. It may only be a snide remark, an odd look, or a snigger. They may be given a choice between their jobs or their values.

A Modern Form of Persecution

The movies and TV invariably portray Christians as weak, mentally defective, and bigoted; certainly not someone we should emulate. Usually, no positive Christian role models are to be found. Our children are indoctrinated in the schools (“values clarification”) to despise the values of their parents. Adults are subtly indoctrinated into what is currently the socially or politically correct way to believe. “Television tells Americans what to feel as well as what to think about.”⁹⁰ The news media gleefully reports any dirt it may be able to dredge up which portrays Christians in a negative way, while seldom giving a moments thought to similar problems within other groups or “religions”. Do you think not? Thomas Dye in his book, Who’s Running America, The Bush Era (from a study done at Florida

State University) writes as follows: “The mass media set the agenda for conversation among people and debate among leaders. The media create some issues and obscure others. They spotlight some personalities and condemn others to anonymity. They define some conditions in society as ‘problems’ or even ‘crises’, and allow other conditions to go unnoticed. ‘TV is the Great Legitimater. TV confers reality. Nothing happens in America, practically everyone seems to agree, until it happens on television.”⁹¹ “As David Brinkley explained, ‘News is what I say it is. It’s something worth knowing by my standards.”⁹² “It is true that the nation’s media elite is the most liberal of the nation’s elite groups.”⁹³ “[M]ostly either Democrats or liberal independents... Most classify themselves ideologically as ‘left-leaning’... The responses of the newsmakers to various economic, social, and foreign policy questions confirms their upper-class liberalism... strongly committed to the welfare state... liberals on social issues such as abortion and homosexuality.”⁹⁴ “Prime-time entertainment programming suggests to Americans

how they ought to live and what values they ought to hold. Socialization—the learning, accepting, and approving of customs, values, and life styles—is an important function of the mass media.”⁹⁵

**H u m a n i s t
Indoctrination**

“[T]he humanist world view includes many thousands of adherents and today controls the consensus in society, much of the media, much of what is

taught in our schools, and much of the arbitrary law being produced by the various departments of government.”⁹⁶ The anti-Christian bias is so pervasive that “[v]ery few Christian authors or recording artists are interviewed on TV; in fact, it is so hard to penetrate the humanist wall that several big publishers of Christian books don’t even try.” We Christians “have good books, articulate, interesting authors” and advocates, but we contradict the liberal media’s religious beliefs—or those of the secular TV shows controllers. “Christians may appear on a handful of local shows, but except for Billy Graham, Pat Boone, few others make it on the national scene.”⁹⁷ Those that do make it on secular media generally soft sell the Gospel message, or they are edited in such light that their message is made to seem ridiculous, or out of touch with today’s mores. By controlling news and slanting their reporting, the media can marginalize, or make ineffective, any group or idea it chooses.

Persecution is Because They Have Rejected Christ

The persecution to which we are referring is “‘for righteousness sake’ and ‘on My (Jesus’) account’, that is, because they find distasteful the righteousness for which we hunger and thirst, and because they have rejected the Christ we

[T]he humanist world view includes many thousands of adherents and today controls the consensus in society, much of the media, much of what is taught in our schools, and much of the arbitrary law being produced by the various departments of government. Francis A. Schaeffer, A CHRISTIAN MANIFESTO

seek to follow. Persecution is simply the clash between two irreconcilable value-systems."⁹⁸

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.** If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. **If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.** He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. **But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: "They hated me without reason."** John 15:18-25 NIV

In light of these words of Jesus, we should carefully consider why the media seems to favor certain of the world's religious leaders, while treating the vast majority with scorn and ridicule.

Righteousness (Dikaiosune) is defined as whatever conforms to the revealed will of God or whatever has been appointed by God to be acknowledged or obeyed by man; the sum total of the requirements of God.⁹⁹ It is for the cause of Christ (our spiritual principles) that is meant by "for righteousness sake", not persecution that we bring upon ourselves because of our political or over-zealous motives. We must not be busybodies. It has nothing to do with being good or noble. "The world...generally praises and admires and loves the good and the noble; it only persecutes the righteous."¹⁰⁰

And now, dear friends of mine. **I beg you not to be unduly alarmed at the fiery ordeals which come to test your faith,** as though this were some abnormal experience. You should be glad, because it means you are sharing in Christ's sufferings. One day, when he shows himself in full splendour, you will be filled with the most tremendous joy. **If you are reproached for being Christ's followers, that is a cause for joy,** for you can be sure that God's Spirit of glory is resting upon you. **But take care that none of your number suffers as a murderer, or a thief, a rogue or a busy-body! If he suffers as a Christian he has nothing to be ashamed of and may glorify God by confessing Christ's name.** 1 Peter 4:12-16 JBP

According to Stott: "The condition of being despised and rejected, slandered and persecuted, is as much a normal mark of Christian discipleship as being pure in heart or merciful." He further states that "**[u]niversal popularity was as much the lot of the false prophets as persecution was of the**

true."¹⁰¹ He concludes, "the disciples are strangers in the world, unwelcome guests and disturbers of the peace. No wonder the world rejects them."¹⁰²

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for **in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.** Luke 6:23 KJV

Yes, and **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.** 2 Timothy 3:12-13 NKJV

Lloyd-Jones says that the good and noble are admired because the world perceives them to be like themselves at their best, "[b]ut the righteous are persecuted because they are different." The Scribes and Pharisees hated our Lord because He was different, not because He was good. Again Lloyd-Jones states: "If you try to imitate Christ the world will praise you; if you become Christlike it will hate you."¹⁰³

"Some of the most grievous persecutions has been suffered by the righteous **at the hands of the Church herself,** and at the hands of **religious people.** It has often come from nominal Christians." John Wycliffe and John Hus, persecuted by the Church, "were branded as heretics who made the Bible the first standard of authority." The Council of Constance burned Hus at the stake.¹⁰⁴ "There are ideas of Christianity far removed from the New Testament which are held by many and which cause them to persecute those who are trying in sincerity and truth to follow the Lord Jesus Christ along **the narrow way.**"¹⁰⁵ Jesus referred to these people as wolves in sheep's clothing.¹⁰⁶

Jesus said he came to bring a sword.¹⁰⁷ By that He meant that would be the effect of His ministry. The non-Christian will persecute the true Christian because he is different, living for Christ's sake, and focused on heaven (the world beyond). "The non-Christian does everything he can not to think of the world beyond."¹⁰⁸

Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. **I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn 'a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.** Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me... Matthew 10:34-37 NIV

The Christian faces persecution by not retaliating or feeling resentment. The Christian must be self-controlled. We must get beyond the feelings of depressions brought on by persecution. These things are impossible to the natural man. We rejoice in persecution because in it we find proof of who we are (child of God), where we are going (heaven) and what awaits us there (our reward).¹⁰⁹ The worldly expression "life is too short" is packed full of meaning. Life is too short to infect our souls with thoughts of retaliation, resentment, and depression in comparison to the eternal joy and rewards waiting for us.

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. **I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.** 2 Timothy 4:6-8 NIV

For to you it has been granted **on behalf of Christ**, not only to believe in Him, but also **to suffer for His sake**, Philippians 1:29 NKJV

For our **light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.** 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 NIV

Persecutions Will Come

You will be happy if you accept persecution as the inevitable consequence of following Christ. Persecutions will come because we are different and are seeking to be Christlike. Rejoice and be glad because it confirms that we are children of God and our reward is great. Do not seek revenge. And do not harbor resentment or become depressed.

Summary of the Beatitudes

There may be no better summary of the beatitudes than the following by John Stott:

“The beatitudes paint a comprehensive portrait of a Christian disciple. We see him first alone on his knees before God acknowledging his spiritual poverty, and mourning over it. This makes him meek and gentle in all his relationships, since honesty compels him to allow others to think of him what before God he confesses himself to be. Yet he is far from acquiescing in his sinfulness, for he hungers and thirsts after righteousness, longing to grow in grace and in goodness.

We see him next with others, out in the human community. His relationship with God does not cause him to withdraw from society, nor is he insulated from the world’s pain. On the contrary, he is in the thick of it, showing mercy to those battered by adversity and sin. He is transparently sincere in all his dealings and seeks to play a constructive role as a peacemaker. Yet he is not thanked for his efforts, but rather opposed, slandered, insulted and persecuted on account of the righteousness for which he stands and the Christ with whom he is identified.

Such is the man or woman who is ‘blessed’, that is, who has the approval of God and finds self-fulfillment as a human being.

Yet in all this the values and standards of Jesus are in direct conflict with the commonly accepted values and standards of the world. The world judges the rich to be blessed, not the poor, whether in the material or in the spiritual sphere; the happy-go-lucky and carefree, not those who take evil so seriously that they mourn over it; the strong and brash, not the meek and gentle; the full not the hungry; those who mind their own business, not those who meddle in other men’s matters and occupy their time in do-goodery like ‘showing mercy’ and ‘making peace’; those who attain their ends even if necessary by devious means, not the pure in heart who refuse to compromise their integrity; those who are secure and popular, and live at ease, not those who have to suffer persecution.”¹⁰

What is your dream?

We began this study with the question, “What is your dream”? Most of us go through life seeking the elusive dream of perpetual happiness, only to be disappointed as the fading smile of the Cheshire cat reminds us that material happiness can satisfy only so long - only until we can find a replacement for the momentary fad we now worship. A billion dollar advertising industry proclaims that we can be truly happy only when we possess the particular product of the moment. We will be happy with the right beer, the fancy car, or the right address. “Diamonds are forever,” shouts the billboard or the movie poster, but, we never take them with us when we die. They cause stress when they are lost, and they are motivation for the greedy, and oftentimes illegal, actions of those that would possess them.

The elusive dream has no worldly solution. We spend our lifetimes chasing illusions, but at night, looking into the mirror, the makeup comes off. We then face the reality of our pretenses. As we have shown in this article, the dream of happiness can be realized, but not in the way that the world imagines. True happiness is spiritual happiness. You can be truly happy in your lifetime, but the requisite is that, as Jesus said, “You must be born again.” It’s so simple, but the simple truth is often missed in the glitter of the worldly forest. What is your dream? If you want true, lasting happiness, then you **must** be born again. Then you must put into practice the simple steps outlined by Jesus in His teachings to His disciples on that mountain so many years ago.

If you are reading this, and have been chasing your elusive dream, and have never accepted Jesus Christ into your life as your personal Saviour, then you need only to acknowledge that you are a sinner, and accept that Jesus died and paid your debt nearly 2,000 years ago on a wooden cross. Once you acknowledge that you have sinned, you then ask God to forgive you, and accept Jesus as Lord over your life. Only then can you effectively put into practice those things that will bring true happiness in your life. **AΩ**

(Endnotes)

¹ The first part of this article, *The Essence of Christianity*, was published as a condensed version in January – March 1999, CREATION REVELATION, Volume 3, Issue 1. It was an introduction to a much longer article, originally written in 1994. The longer article is published here for the first time.

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