

Week 2 Talk Notes

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our **image**, after our **likeness**;

Image: The immortal Soul Likeness: Intellect and Will (mind and heart)

See CCC 1700 - 1715 and 355 - 368

Intellect and will are attributes of the soul, not the body Note: God gives us a free will

Word Study: "Heart" used 900 times in the RSV

The spiritual tradition of the Church also emphasizes the heart, in the biblical sense of the depths of one's being, where the person decides for or against God. CCC 368

"You have formed us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in You." St. Augustine Confessions

Ezekiel 36:26 A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (see also Ezekiel 11:19, 18:31)

Heart of stone is apathy/indifference, not just hatred - This is the message of Jesus in the Gospel

In the Image of God - The Immortal Soul

In Sacred Scripture the term "soul" often refers to human life or the entire human person. But "soul" also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that by which he is most especially in God's image. CCC 363

The Church teaches that every spiritual soul is created immediately by God—it is not "produced" by the parents—and also that it is immortal. CCC 366

Jesus is the New Moses: In the Book of Exodus, God writes the Law on tablets of stone for Moses to give to the people. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us the new law and He writes it on our hearts.

Sermon on the Mount The phrase "your Father" is used 17x in chapters 5-7. Jesus describes the attitudes Jesus' disciples are to have in relationship to God as their Father, to Jesus as their Lord, to one another as brothers and sisters, and to others, even their enemies. As God's children, they are to live differently from others in the world and follow a standard that is nothing less than being "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect". GM-CCSS

Blessed - The Greek word for happy (makarios) denotes blessedness or happiness not in the sense of an emotional state but in terms of being in a fortunate situation.

13x in Matthew and 37x elsewhere in the NT. 45x in OT mainly in Psalms and Wisdom books

Blessedness in the Psalms - O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in you! Psalm 84:12

Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, Psalm 119:2

...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven - "indicating that all the several kinds of blessedness are aspects of the one supreme blessing of possessing the Kingdom of Heaven."

Future tense: they shall be (central beatitudes vv. 4-9)

Present tense: theirs is (foundational blessing vv. 3 & 10)

The beatitudes show us Jesus himself - Ultimately the beatitudes are nothing less than a portrait of Christ's own life. Matthew depicts Jesus as meek (11:29; 12:15-21; 21:5), merciful (9:27-31; 15:22; 17:14-18; 18:33; 20:29-34), and persecuted (27:27-31, 39-44). As an indirect portrait of Jesus, the beatitudes "display the mystery of Christ himself, and they call us into communion with him." Pope Benedict "Jesus of Nazareth"

Blessed are the poor in spirit - The poor refers not just to those in economic hardship.

It refers to people who take their powerlessness to heart, who recognize that God is the only one who can help them, and who trust that God will act on their behalf.

Blessed are those who mourn - those who grieve over wickedness, whether it be afflicting others or causing them suffering directly (Tobit 13:14; Isaiah 61:2; Ezekiel 9:4)

This comfort belongs also to those who repent and mourn for their own sins (Psalm 51) and to those who, like Daniel and Ezra (Daniel 9:1–19; Ezra 9:5–15), mourn for the sins of God's people.

Blessed are the meek - Biblical examples of meekness include Moses, when criticized by his sister and brother (Num 12:1–15); David, when King Saul was trying to kill him (1 Sam 24:1–20); and above all Jesus, at his arrest and throughout his passion (Matt 26:49–27:50).

Allusion to Psalm 37:11 But the meek shall possess the land, and delight themselves in abundant prosperity.

those who hunger and thirst for righteousness - The person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness longs for God's saving action and seeks to do God's will "with the intensity of someone starving for food or dying of thirst. Righteousness: living in the covenant...

Righteousness is a state of conformity to the covenant, and to act in righteousness means to fulfill one's obligations by keeping the commandments of the covenant. (Deut 6:25, 24:13; Isaiah 48:18; Luke 1:6). CBD

Justification - As an action, justification is the moment when God makes righteous the one who believes in Christ and establishes him or her in a covenant relationship with himself. As a process, justification is the growth in righteousness and grace that takes place in the believer who embraces the demands of the gospel and yields himself or herself to the leading of the Spirit. CBD

St. Paul describes this will all three tenses: I have been justified, I am justified and I am working on my justification.

Blessed are the merciful - Mercy involves an inward identification with those in need and an outward action of kindness and generosity toward them. In this beatitude Jesus emphasizes the reciprocal nature of mercy—a theme Matthew develops throughout his Gospel.

Mercy - *ḥesēd* or *raḥāmîm* (Hebrew) alternate translation = steadfast love

Hesed: occurs 254 times in the OT, including 127 times in the psalms. CDT (mercy: 61x NT)

Definition: "loyal, steadfast covenant love"

God is faithful to his covenant obligations, and God's mercy is part of that faithfulness. CBD

St. John Paul - Dives in Misericordia (Rich in Mercy)

When in the Old Testament the word hesed is used of the Lord, this always occurs in connection with the covenant that God established with Israel.

...whenever Israel broke the covenant ... (Mercy) showed itself as what it was at the beginning, that is, as love that gives, love more powerful than betrayal, grace stronger than sin.

Blessed are the pure in heart

In Hebrew, the heart is the center of a person's inner life—the emotions, the intellect, and most especially the will. The clean of heart are those who love God with undivided allegiance, with all their hearts.

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. (Deut 6:4).

Blessed are the peacemakers - those who strive to bring about harmony with God and with others in society. They seek to unite those who are estranged from one another and to be reconciled with their own enemies.

persecuted for righteousness' sake - Recalls the Old Testament and the many heroes from the history of Israel like the prophets, who were killed for their faithfulness to God. (see 2 Chronicles 36:16; Nehemiah 9:26)

Matt 5:44-48 Love for Enemies

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matt 5:48.

Chapter 6 - v. 2: when you give alms v. 6: when you pray v. 16: when you fast

These are the three pillars of Jewish piety, and Jesus teaches us about the motive and manner in which we are to do them. Motive and manner: the why and the how

Matthew 6:6. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Jesus gives us a detailed guide on personal prayer here.

“Our Father” - Jesus teaches explicitly who God is and implicitly who we are.

Who we are: Sons/Daughters of the Father and brothers and sisters with one another.

Matthew 6:10 Thy will be done - We have a free will and we give up that freedom to do the will of our Father.

Matthew 7 Sermon on the Mount Part 3

The chapter does not focus exclusively on any one topic but strings together sayings on various subjects.

Judging Others - Matthew 7:1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

Judging vs Admonishing - Matthew 18:15. “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. Galatians 6:1. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. James 5:19–20. ...whoever brings back a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

The Narrow Gate Matthew 7:13–14.

Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Few verses in the Bible are as sobering as these.

Concerning Self-Deception - Matthew 7:21 “Not every one who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

How do we live a life of Beatitude? The Sacrament of Confirmation gives grace, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Isaiah 11:2) wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit build the seven virtues within the believer (1 Cor 13:13; Wis 8:7). The virtues then form the believer to live the Beatitudes. 3-Faith, Hope, Love 4-Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance

Living the Beatitudes: A Journey to Life in Christ. by J. Brian Bransfield, Pauline Books and Media, 2011. p. 9