

The Red-Letter Words of Yeshua ~ Part 23

Sermon on the Mount ~ Part C

Before we move on to the rest of the **Sermon on the Mount**, I want to continue to go back to the first twelve verses of Chapter 5 and provide some commentary. We pick up in verse 6.

6 "How blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness! for they will be filled."

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness is a metaphor for moral uprightness. This may allude to Psalm 37:12–17, which speaks of a time when oppressors will be no more. This line expresses a deep desire for personal righteousness and a world characterized by God's righteousness.

7 "How blessed are those who show mercy! for they will be shown mercy."

To receive **mercy** is not getting what you deserve, to receive pity instead of just condemnation. Rather, when you're guilty, mercy removes the misery you ought to receive. There's a blessing for those who extend it because you can bank on the fact that a time is coming when you'll need mercy. This is the **Golden Rule** in action: ***"Always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that sums up the teaching of the Torah and the Prophets."*** ~ Matt 7:12.

8 "How blessed are the pure in heart! for they will see God."

The **pure in heart** (Psalm 73:1) were those in **Isra'el** whose hearts were **clean** or **undefiled**, those who recognized that **God** alone was their help and reward (Psalm 73:2–28). The righteous would see **God** on the day of judgment (e.g., Isaiah 30:20), as in the first exodus (Ex 24:10–11).

9 "How blessed are those who make peace! for they will be called sons of God."

To be at **peace** is to be in harmony. To be a **peacemaker** is to be a **mediator** and resolve conflicts between estranged parties - whether individuals or groups. You make peace by identifying the truth, addressing the sin, and constructing a bridge between those at odds with one another. **Peacemaking** can be difficult work. But, if we persevere in it, we will be called **sons and daughters of God** because we will resemble our **Father**. He sent **the Son of God** to be our **mediator**, bridging the gap created by our sin and granting us peace with Him.

10 "How blessed are those who are persecuted because they pursue righteousness! for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. 11 "How blessed you are when people insult you and persecute you and tell all kinds of vicious lies about you because you follow me! 12 Rejoice, be glad because your reward in heaven is great - they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way. ~ Mattityahu 5:6-12."

Verses 10-12 address **persecution** and likely reflect those who first read **Mattityahu's** Gospel which may explain why the theme receives such extensive treatment. Later in the narrative, **Yeshua** encounters each form of persecution recorded here and suffers the same fate as many of the prophets in the **Tanakh** (see Matt 23:29–37).

It's hard to believe that undergoing **persecution** is a blessing, but **Yeshua** wanted His **talmidim** to know that He was serious. Notice that the **persecution** that brings blessing is directly tied to **Yeshua**. ***You are blessed when people insult you and tell lies about you because of Yeshua*** (5:11). Since essentially the same thing happened to the **prophets** in the **Tanakh**, you're in good company. But how can you **be glad and rejoice** amid the mess? You can remember that ***your reward is great*** (5:12). **God** knows how to

deliver. And as **Sha'ul** told the Romans, ***I don't think the sufferings we are going through now are even worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed to us in the future*** ~ Romans 8:18.

In our next post, we continue to explore the **Sermon on the Mount**.