2022 02 13 BLESSINGS 2

Jeramiah 17:5-10. Psalm1. 1 Corinthians 15:12-20. Luke 6:17-26-36.

My thoughts on ‘blessings’, and a discussion with Pat yesterday, has taken me to what our Lord Jesus said to his followers as recorded in Matthew 7:21-23.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord ,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. One that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ and then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”

These people were showing the power of Jesus in their words and their actions – so what did Jesus see when he looked at their lives that Jesus rejected them? Jesus knows our inner selves and our motives and soul. He saw in these people that their actions were not based in love for him but in his power and the praise? it brought to them. Maybe it is like going on a ‘reality television show’ follow the script – look at me – look at me- I am famous, people will recognise me – pictures on the news - I can cast out demons – I can heal the sick – I – I -i-

When he sent out the 70 to preach in the villages and they came back excited because “even the demons were subject to us in your name” – Jesus said to them “do not rejoice because the demons are subject to you but that your names are written in the Lambs Book of Life.”

Did Jesus behave like this the reality TV shows? – no – he said – go home – tell no one about this and when they blassed it abroad he withdrew from the crowds and tried to find solitude to renew himself in the love and purpose of God the Fathers Presence.

“when you do a good deed, keep it to yourself and God will reward you in heaven.” “the widow who covered her hand as she put a few coins in the offering was greater than the rich man who threw in a loot”. “when you pray do not do it on a street corner where all can see and admire you - these days they would think us demented or ‘on’ something”. But go into your quiet spot and your Father in Heaven who hears you will reward you openly. Suzanna Wesley mother of two famous preachers had a lot of children and there was no quite spot so the family knew that when she threw her apron over her head they were not to disturb her – it was ‘God’ time.

It was one of these times that Jesus responded to the crowds and spoke of the reality of ‘who can be saved’ and the actions that are in the company of Jesus, worked in the Holy Spirits power and the grace of God.

Looking at Luke’s account in chpt 6 we see the basis of approval in Gods Kingdom is reversed from that in this world from self to ….focus on God on others:

Blessed are the poor for theirs is the Kingdom of God. Or as Matthew 5:3 has it ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God. It is a bit like the word ‘humble’ which means strength under control. It is not a vague hope it is God’s reality now – theirs/ours IS the Kingdoms of heaven.

The word for blessed means ‘godlike’ joy – it means having all our needs met in Jesus. Christian blessedness is untouchable. Jesus said “your joy no man takes from you.” John 16:22. “The beatitudes speak of that joy which sorrow and loss, and pain and grief, are powerless to touch, it shines through tears, and which nothing in life or death can take away” William Barclay. This certainty is based in trust – certainty of Gods love, of our name being written in Lambs’ Book of Life, of the seal of Gods presence in us by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1)

The origin of the word poor - a word which describes ‘absolute and abject poverty’. It applies to us when we come truly to God to trust in Jesus’ salvation, we can bring nothing of ourselves – we come because God loves us and Jesus has carried our rebellions away from us and gave God’s rightness (Jesus’ rightness from walking our lives in this world and staying always true to God in our place.)

The second and third reversal of the worlds standards that Jesus makes is to hunger for rightness and to weep over one’s rebellion against God is also for NOW in this life and in living after leaving this body – will bring satisfaction of our hunger for God and laugh in the joy of the Lord.

2 Corinthians13:4 Jesus’ flesh and blood human body died on the cross but now by the mighty power of God. We to are frail in our bodies as he was but now we live and are strong as he is and have all of Gods power to ‘use’. Maybe not ‘use’ but to live in.

We are told to rejoice if we suffer loss of friend and family and if people think we are very strange because of our faith – in this we are walking the path of Jesus - they did to our Lord Jesus the Christ.

Now in v27 **comes the test – the reality of our trust in Jesus and his turning the worlds values upside down.** *Can we bless those who hurt us?*

“I, Jesus, say to you who have a soul/heart, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” V36 “be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” “Lord may they come to You and be alive in the person that You intended them to be. No revenge – blessing.

What is the blessing, what is the source of the blessing –

God loves me before I loved Him, and I can reflect Gods love back to Himself.

God adopted me into His family and gave me the Friend who walks in me – the Spirit of Himself who brings Jesus and love and character and gifts of ability and callings to us.

**‘Blessed – to have all my needs met in Jesus.**

**The greatest most amazing blessing is that the God of the universe, of eternity and God of now and of the grain of sand – loves me – loves you –**

**May Gods will be done as that love flows out to us and circles back to God the source of love and blessing.**