

Week 3, February 2, 2011
THE 612
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- VII. The Gospel of Matthew. Matthew was a tax collector writing to a Palestinian Christian Jewish audience. This is widely significant because every first century Jew knew the Torah by heart by the age of 13. In other words, every NT word would have been illuminated by the first century reader because of their understanding of the OT. This explains the emphasis on Christ's pedigree in the opening chapter.
- A. Christ as the Son of Abraham. The Beatitudes mark the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham - that through his descendants all the nations of the world would receive God's blessings (cf. Gn. 12:3, 22:18).
- i. God has chosen to bless the weak and lowly, those foolish and despised in the eyes of the world (1 Cor.1:26-31). The poor in spirit are those who know that nothing they do can merit God's mercy and grace. These are the humble remnant spoken who taught to seek refuge in the name of the Lord (cf. Zeph.3:12-13).
 1. Blessing: Barak (Hb.): meaning, "to bless; praise", or "kneel". This term can be found in the OT 330 times.
- B. Christ as the Son of David. Christ as the "*Son of David*" is seen 9 times in Matthew reinforcing the Davidic Kingdom was present--a thematic picture to the Gospel of Matthew (along with the Kingdom of God). Reader is well aware of the role that the son of David would have in salvation history.
- i. 2 Sam.7:10...covenant established between God and David's line was a kingdom covenant. A kingdom that was inscribed upon the heart (cf. Jer.31; Ex.36). God's law was about the blessing we would receive via Baptism and the call to live in his beatitude.
 1. Blessing: eulogeo (Gk.): meaning, "to invoke by pronouncement", or "to consecrate for prosperous growth". Greek used in the Annunciation.
 2. Blessing: makarios (Gk.): meaning, "to be in favorable standing with God—covenant relationship". This word is also about happiness by way of blessedness. Greek used in the Beatitudes.
 - ii. From the Old to the New, we see law move from rules to virtues...from exterior to interior...from stone to heart!
- C. In addition to the figures of Abraham and David, Matthew continues to draw upon the richness of the Jewish tradition, to show how the story of Jesus is the climax of Israel. Let us consider the giving of the Beatitudes and how they correspond to the 10 commandments. Once again, Matthew purposely draws on Old Testament imagery to magnify the message of Jesus and who he was. Note word of the week on **Type**. Note Mosaic (enforce law) typological imagery:

<u>Moses</u>	<u>Jesus</u>
<u>1. Wicked decree by Pharaoh</u>	<u>-wicked decree given by King Herod</u>
<u>2. Saved through Joseph's dream</u>	<u>-saved through Joseph's dream</u>
<u>3. Freed from slavery through waters</u>	<u>-freed from slavery through waters</u>
<u>4. Fasted for 40 days and 40 nights</u>	<u>-fasted for 40 days and 40 nights</u>
<u>5. Next seen giving law of O.C. on Mtn.</u>	<u>-next seen giving law of N.C. on Mtn.</u>

- i. Moses hands the baton to Joshua to lead the people to the Promised Land. Jesus (Hebrew word for Joshua) is the new Joshua who receives

the baton from Moses (typologically) to pioneer a new exodus and entrance into the Promised Land.

1. Ex. 4.22... *“For out of Egypt I have called my son.”*

- VIII. The Beatitudes are Christ’s charter for holiness; paradoxical promises that are a call for man to see things in light of their proper perspective. It is turning they are turned upside down. These eschatological promises (pointing toward the end) have in them the exponential value of eternity. They are the law of the new covenant; the new order in which God makes saints out of those followers who wish to be “set apart”, and it is in the beatitudes that we discover the key that unlocks the mystery to be better missionaries for Christ.
- A. The Beatitudes are rudimentary in understanding not only conversion, but also the essence of mission. JP II stated: *“The missionary is a person of the Beatitudes. Before sending out the Twelve to evangelize, Jesus, in his ‘missionary discourse’ (cf. Mt 10), teaches them the paths of mission: poverty, meekness, acceptance of suffering and persecution, the desire for justice and peace, charity - in other words, the Beatitudes, lived out in the apostolic life (cf. Mt 5:1-12). By living the Beatitudes, the missionary experiences and shows concretely that the kingdom of God has already come, and that he has accepted it”* (RM, 91).
- i. We are in mission because we have been commissioned. That is to say, we have been “sent” (mission) “with” (cum) the Redeemer.
 - ii. As the virtues are about a transition from the stone to the heart, they are about the “I” moving into the “we”. The Beatitudes emerge as missionary, because they are fundamentally about other-centeredness!!
 1. John Paul II sums it up well in his opening encyclical on Christ. He stated: *“Man must, so to speak, enter into him (Christ) with all his own self; He must appropriate and assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself”* (RH, 10).
 - iii. A further Consideration of what blessed means really draws out the essence of what lies at the heart of the Beatitudes.
 1. The Aramaic language of Jesus help us to understand Jesus’ teachings in a deeper way. If we look further back, we discover that the original word was “ashray,” from the verb “yashar.” “Ashray” does not have this passive quality. Instead, it means *“to set yourself on the right way for the right goal; to turn around, repent; to become straight or righteous.”*
 - iv. Essentially speaking, the Beatitudes are a call to be in solidarity with the human condition. In the words of PBXVI: *“This is not a new ideology but a teaching that comes from above and touches the human condition - - precisely that which the Lord, becoming incarnate, chose to assume -- to save it.”*
- B. The first Beatitude is essential to a life of blessing and beatitude, because the way in which poverty steers all other virtue (Benedict XVI, 76). That being said, let us briefly consider the traditional grades of poverty to uncover a more whole understanding of this overarching principle.
- i. **The material negative:** dehumanizing and a social condition to be endured: moral indifference... *“passing by on the other side”* (Lk.10:31).

1. Tares and wheat in the Church...tares and wheat in the poor. We serve them because Christ said so... *“you did it unto me”*.
 - a. Here, we have the call to see our encounters with the poor as providential—for both you and the poor. We ought to ask the deeper question. How is God calling me to serve him in this moment...reflect.
- ii. ***The material positive***: liberates and raises people: poverty as an evangelical idea to be cultivated...less is more. Christ’s life was a model of austerity.
 1. From the crib to the cross...Christ was born in poverty, he lived in greater poverty, and died in extreme poverty—an existential truth and lesson of Christianity.
 - a. *“Is there any greater poverty of God than to take the form of a slave...is there any greater humiliation than to share in our nature?”*—Gregory of Nyssa
- iii. ***The spiritual negative***: absence of spiritual wealth: the poverty of the rich...The Rich Young Man. What is going on there?
 1. Money as an end in itself...reflect upon Christ’s seminal message on money.
- iv. ***The spiritual positive***: Composed of humility and personal entrustment. The finest blossom of the tree of biblical poverty: the wealth of the poor.
 1. The hinge that all the other Beatitudes hang.