2-19-1967

Who Receives Christ's Blessings?

John Allen Chalk

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/hot_docs/38

This Manuscript is brought to you for free and open access by the Herald of Truth Records at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Herald of Truth Documents by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.
WHO RECEIVES CHRIST'S BLESSINGS?

NUMBER 786
TRANSCRIPT OF THE
Herald of Truth
radio programs

HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

radio program

P. O. Box 2439
Abilene, Texas 79604

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

WHO RECEIVES
CHRIST'S BLESSINGS?

NUMBER 786
TRANSCRIPT OF THE
Herald of Truth
radio programs

HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST

radio program

P. O. Box 2439
Abilene, Texas 79604

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
Who Receives Christ's Blessings?

God's Old Testament people were blessed by Him in the following manner. "Jehovah bless thee, and keep thee: Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). Men of faith in every generation have asked God's blessings on their endeavors. Even those of little faith in God have pleaded for His blessings on varying, and, at times, opposing projects and efforts. This concern has given rise to a question almost as ancient as man himself: "How do I receive God's blessing in my life?"

To properly answer this question we must first consider the prior question of man's relationship with God. Adam and Eve were instructed by God, "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17). But the account of their disobedience is familiar to us all. They deliberately chose to eat of the forbidden fruit, the result of which was pain for the woman, hard labor for the man, and physical and spiritual death for both of them (Genesis 3:14-19). Chapter three of Genesis closes with this sad statement, "So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Genesis 3:24). Disobedience separated man from his God.

Later in man's history wickedness, evil, corruption, and violence filled the earth. Man's moral and spiritual rebellion, save for Noah's righteous family, caused God to say, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth" (Genesis 6:13). What followed in judgment on evil was the flood described in Genesis 7.

Many years after this world-changing event God revealed Himself more distinctly than at any previous time. Moses, leading the descendants of Abraham, was called to the top of a mountain in the Arabian desert, Mt. Sinai. There the Ten Commandments were given to the Jewish people through Moses, which with further legislation from God, became the Law of Moses or the Old Covenant between God and the Jews. Paul, in the New Testament, explains why this law was given. "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made; ..." (Galatians 3:19). This "seed" Paul had earlier defined as Christ, the fulfillment of God's original promise to Abraham that his descendants would bless all nations (Galatians 3:16; Genesis 12:1-3).

Yet the Old Testament law of Moses did not effectively answer the question we are considering. In showing that God's promise to Abraham was not canceled by the Ten Commandments which came later, Paul asks, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law" (Galatians 3:21). Earlier in the same Epistle the apostle wrote that "a man is not justified by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16). The New Testament repeatedly describes the universality of sin. From Romans 3:9 we read, "for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin." From Romans 3:20 we hear, "because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin."

Man can enjoy a relationship with God, however, in the very midst of recognizing the reality of sin and its
Another blessing of Christ in the beatitudes is eternal life in God's presence. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). The Apostle John says that we shall see God, those who are His children. Even though we do not know the exact form our spiritual bodies will take, "We know that, if we that shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is" (I John 3:1, 2). Such a hope causes us to live pure lives, John says in the next verse (I John 3:3). The Old Testament Psalms promise that only the clean and pure will see God and sit in His presence (Psalms 24:3, 4; 51:10, 11).

Christ also blesses us in the beatitudes with the promise of complete satisfaction of all our needs. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled," promises spiritual satisfaction (Matthew 5:6). "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," speaks to our social and spiritual needs (Matthew 5:7). "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth," fulfills our material needs (Matthew 5:5).

Finally, Christ blesses us with membership in God's family. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9). God's family is the church, Paul explains in II Timothy 3:15. We become God's children through faith and baptism, Galatians 3:26, 27 teaches. When we are reconciled to God through Christ we make peace with God and come into a peaceful relationship with all our fellow believers. The result of this process makes us "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

But our initial question remains unanswered. We have stressed the opportunity that all men this day have to enjoy God's blessings in Christ. We have specifically talked about four blessings Christ offers us in the beatitudes of Matthew 5. But the original question, "Who receives these blessings of kingdom-citizenship, eternal life with God, satisfaction of all needs, and membership in God's family?" remains unanswered. In the few remaining moments listen carefully as we turn to the Bible, to Matthew, chapter five, for answers to this all-important question.

Christ first describes the recipient of God's blessings as "the poor in spirit." William Barclay has an expanded translation of this phrase that reads like this: "the man who has realized his own utter helplessness, and who has put his whole trust in God" (p. 87, Daily Bible Study Guide, Matthew, Vol. 1). This was our Lord's attitude on the night before His death when He prayed, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

The blessings of God are also given to them "that mourn." In Barclay's explanatory translation again we read, "the man whose heart is broken for the world's suffering and for his own sin" (p. 90, Barclay, op. cit.). So the Christian actually rejoices in tribulation because he knows that such creates steadfastness, approval of God, and hope (Romans 5:3-5). Suffering tests and increases the strength of our faith (I Peter 1:6-9).

A third type of person who receives God's blessing is "the meek." An enlarged description of "the meek" suggests "the man who is always angry at the right time and never at the wrong time, who has every instinct, and impulse, and passion under control because he himself is God-controlled, who has the humility to realize his own ignorance and his own weakness" (p. 93, Barclay, op. cit.). Paul explained that he found the strength in Christ to endure or accept every possible situation and condition of life (Philippians 4:11-13).

Then there are those "that hunger and thirst after righteousness" who are blessed of God. These are the individuals who "long for total righteousness as a starving man longs for food, and a man perishing of thirst longs for water" (p. 97, Barclay, op. cit.). We will receive that for which we properly "ask," "seek," and "knock." Jesus promises (Matthew 7:7, 8). Paul instructs us to "think" on the things that are "true, honorable, just, pure, lovely," and "of good report" (Philippians 4:8).

Christ also blesses "the merciful" in the beatitudes. This is "the man who gets right inside other people, until he can see with their eyes, think with their thoughts, feel with their feelings" (p. 100, Barclay, op. cit.). Jesus understood and forgave the sinful woman at Simon's house (Luke 7:47-50). Because of such "mercy" Zaccheus returned with interest all the money he had unjustly exacted from the taxpayers at Jericho (Luke 19:1-10). This is the quality of God's attitude toward us, as sinners (Luke 6:36).

Then Jesus also promises His blessing — the blessing of God — to "the pure in heart." Or again in Barclay's words, "the man whose motives are absolutely pure" (p. 103, Barclay, op. cit.). Some of the Jewish rulers believed Jesus to be the Christ but "they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God," and they never confessed Him (John 12:43, 44). Correct beliefs with wrong motives will never lead to acceptable actions!

The beatitudes also offer Christ's blessing to "the peacemakers." These are "those who produce right relationships between man and man" (p. 106, Barclay, op. cit.). Peace is a basic element in the kingdom of God, Paul explained in Romans 14:17. Peace is a trait common to...
all citizens of that kingdom (Galatians 5:22, 23). "The peace of God" that guards the hearts of Christians affects and influences those with whom Christians live and work (Philippians 4:6, 7).

Finally Christ calls "blessed" those that "have been persecuted for righteousness’ sake" (Matthew 5:10). Wrongs we commit do not produce persecution. They create only justice and retribution (1 Peter 4:14-16). When we suffer for Christ and for His “name” which we wear, then we are persecuted (Acts 5:41).

“The eight qualities here set forth, when blended together . . . make up the character of those who alone are accepted by the divine king as His subjects (3, 10), who alone can see Him who is invisible (8), and who alone are worthy to be His sons (9).” (p. 61, R. V. G. Tasker, Tyndale Commentary, N. T. Vol. I).

In other places in the New Testament outside the beatitudes, Christ blesses all who will openly and honestly listen to His teaching (Matthew 3:16). He blesses those who will not stumble at following Him (Matthew 11:6). New life awaits you, and is given according to New Testament instructions, to those who believe in Jesus Christ and who are willing to turn from all sin openly confessing Jesus as Lord and Saviour. This prepares you for baptism for the remission of sins and the removal of all guilt (Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9; Romans 6:3, 4). This “new life” awaits your surrender — your obedience — to Christ. What follows this greatest of all changes in your life is described in the beatitudes. Life in God’s kingdom as a member of God’s family, receiving the satisfaction of all real needs, in full possession of a living hope of eternal life with God, awaits those who live by the beatitudes of Jesus Christ.

John Allen Chalk, dynamic evangelist and long-time radio speaker, is the first full-time speaker on the Herald of Truth radio program. He began his work with the Herald of Truth on January 1, 1966. Previously, Chalk was the featured personality in a 13 week Herald of Truth television series.

A native of Lexington, Tennessee, he began preaching at 15. Chalk and his wife and two children now live in Abilene, Texas where he spends full-time working with the Herald of Truth.

He is a graduate of Tennessee Tech and has written a book, “The Praying Christ and Other Sermons” and two tracts. Chalk was nominated for the Outstanding Young Man of Tennessee in 1964 and was named Cookeville’s Young Man of the Year in 1965.