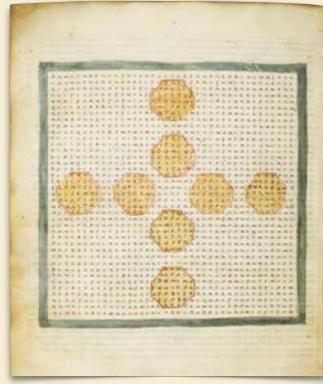


Q&A

on the Beatitudes



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1 *When **ble**s-ed vs. **ble**ss-ed ('blest')? Why is it used one way in one place and the other in other places?*

When translating the **adjective** *makarios* usually pronounced as "bless-ed" (two syllables) when in front of a noun or verb.

- "*Bless-ed* is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 118:26).
- "*Bless-ed* are the poor in spirit..." (Matt 5:3).

1 *When **ble**s-ed vs. **ble**ss-ed ('blest')? Why is it used one way in one place and the other in other places?*

When translating the **verb** *makarizo*, it would be pronounced as "blest" (one syllable).

- "And Leah said, '*Bless-ed*' am I, for the daughters will call me '*blest*': and she called his name Asher" (Gen 30:13).
- "Mary said... 'From now on all generations will call me '*blest*'" (Luke 1:48).

1 *When **ble**s-ed vs. **ble**ss-ed ('blest')? Why is it used one way in one place and the other in other places?*

"Blessed. Uncovering the real meaning of what it means to be blessed by God."

"*Bless-ed*. Uncovering the real meaning of what it means to be '*blest*' by God."

2 Who or what exactly does “Blessed are those who mourn” refer to? What are we mourning for?

The interpretation of this beatitude shifted over time.

- For the first 1500 years, it was understood as penitence and sorrow over one’s sin, as well as the sins of others (e.g., James 4:8-10; Clement of Alexandria).
- Since then, it has broadened to include grief over loss and grief over the state of the world in general.

2 Who or what exactly does “Blessed are those who mourn” refer to? What are we mourning for?

The broader understanding is based on (1) how the language of mourning and weeping is used in Scripture:

- Sorrow at death (Luke 7:32; John 11:35; 1Thess 4:13).
- Jesus’ mourning over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41; 22:62).
- Sorrow and mourning over the state of the world (Luther, Calvin).
- Luke’s version seems to have a broader sense (Luke 6:21, 25).

2 Who or what exactly does “Blessed are those who mourn” refer to? What are we mourning for?

And (2) how Isaiah 61 forms the background of this beatitude.

- “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to comfort all who mourn so that to *those who mourn for Zion* be given glory instead of ashes, oil of joy to those who mourn, a garment of glory instead of a spirit of weariness” (Isa 61:2-3).

2 Who or what exactly does “Blessed are those who mourn” refer to? What are we mourning for?

We mourn because God’s creation is no longer the way it is supposed to be (Ecclesiastes’ sense of *hebel*).

- We mourn over our own poverty of spirit, our own sin and fallenness, our own inadequacies and profound need for God.
- We also mourn for the state of the fallen world: compassion and distress over the misfortune of others, injustice and systemic sin, loss, bereavement and death.

3 Part A: No Persecution in Canada?

In comparison to other countries, Canada is free of persecution.

- Defining “persecution.”
- There may be incidents of discrimination and violence against some Christian groups in Canada, but that doesn’t constitute persecution.

3 Part B: What does a subversive Christian lifestyle look like in a post-Christian Canada?

While Canada is post-Christian, there are still many places where societal values reflect the Judeo-Christian tradition.

- While Christ followers may not stand out as much anymore, *why* we live the way we do and *for whom* we live still sets us apart.
- And while the state or society doesn’t demand allegiance, our cultural idols still demand worship.

3 Part B: What does a subversive Christian lifestyle look like in a post-Christian Canada?

Our challenge is more the subtle temptations to accommodate to cultural values that may be contrary to the values encouraged by the beatitudes and the teaching of Scripture.

- Need discernment and humility and the continual transformation of our minds and lives (Romans 12:2; Colossians 2:8).

The Beatitudes – Final Thoughts

1. ***Blessings, not Requirements.*** The beatitudes need to be placed in the context of grace!
2. ***Bring comfort and consolation.*** The beatitudes function as a Practical Theodicy.
3. ***Focus our hearts and minds on Jesus.*** The Beatitudes point to Jesus as well as to the way of Jesus.