

Faithbook Series: The Status of My Attitude  
Matthew 5:1-12 (Message Bible)  
February 20, 2011

When Jesus taught truths about God, he could speak in very colorful concrete ways. When he warned about how bad eternal punishment could be, he referred to a dump everybody knew about that was outside the city of Jerusalem. It had worms constantly feeding on the garbage and smoldering fires that burned endlessly. He used that dump to describe how bad an eternity without God would be. When he tried to describe the depth of God's love to save people from eternal punishment, he used everyday situations like the father of a rebellious son or a shepherd who protects the sheep. Jesus took everyday experiences to communicate spiritual truths. This is why we are beginning a new sermon series today playing off the popularity of Facebook.

How many know about Facebook? How many are on Facebook? Facebook is the internet social network of our day. For some people Facebook is replacing phone and email conversations. If you are not on Facebook, let me try and describe how it works. Through Facebook you can set up your personal profile. Your profile tells your status about who you are, like whether your male or female, age, single, married etc, what school you go to or graduated. You can go online and request people to be your friend or people will make a friend request from you. Facebook allows you to communicate with the people you choose as friends as a group all at once. You can give updates about whatever you want to share. People announce the birth of kids, homes they buy or sell. Daniel would post on Facebook and tell when he shot a deer or how many ducks he shot. If you were to go on Facebook and post a picture of the living room you just painted and you have fifty friends on Facebook, they could all comment about how they like your colors or hate your colors. On Facebook we can let people can know what we care about and what's bothering us, etc.

Stories are surfacing in the media how citizens in Egypt used Facebook to spread the word about gatherings for protest and we all know what has transpired in Egypt and the Middle East in recent weeks. However like anything else, Facebook can be misused. People get on Facebook and post risky photos of themselves or use crude language. Recently a story surfaced about a married New York congressman who posted a topless picture of himself on Facebook and wrote in his profile he was divorced and 10 years younger than his actual age. He also recently resigned.

Over the next few weeks we don't want to really talk about Facebook. We want to take some of the everyday experiences that people talk about on Facebook and use that to consider what Jesus talked about in the Sermon on the Mount. **So we are calling this series, Faithbook. We want to take topics Jesus addressed and use them to evaluate our spiritual profile our spiritual status.** Jesus covered various life issues in the Sermon on the Mount. He taught those who would follow him; not just be a fan; but follow him how to live. On Facebook you can change and edit things about you and your profile as life changes as we make choices to get engaged, have babies or whatever. **After hearing the words of Jesus we all will have some need to change and edit who we are and need to become as a follower of Jesus.** The first thing Jesus taught when he began his Sermon on the Mount was about our overall attitude toward life in general.

- So this morning our first Faithbook sermon poses a question; what is the status of your attitude for living?
- Are we sure we are looking at life situations the way Jesus describes in the familiar scripture we call the Be-Attitudes?

**Read Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12 Message Version**

**It's not about controlling life but being under God's control –  
Isaiah 26:3**

Jesus says about eleven times “Blessed are you when..... The

times described aren't very appealing. He said when you have lost something important/mourning, hungry for more of God and people say evil things about you, you're blessed. None of us here look forward to those times and season in our lives. Let me tell you something, if you are on Facebook and someone says something bad about some one else, chances are people will fire back with some terse remark or they will de-friend you meaning you cannot access them anymore through Facebook because you criticized them. The words of Jesus remind us that God is approaching life totally different than we would. Jesus said your blessed, you have something special going on when you're going through those types of experiences.

What Jesus Christ has to offer is what no friend, no spouse no achievement on its owns can give us and that is that **“blessedness,” that internal peace or comfort in spite of what we are going through.** God has always been loving and offering this to those who will trust Him. In the Old Testament portion of the Bible, we have the prophet Isaiah who once said, **“Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace - in peace because they trust in you.” (Isaiah 26:3)** God is eternal and when we are connected to the eternal then the temporary events of this life are limited in how much power they have over us. Blessedness of which Jesus speaks, is **a perspective not about controlling life; but it is about being controlled by the author of life.** Will our hearts and minds be dominated by what happens to us or by the Spirit of God in us as we go through life?

Think of how the Be-attitudes are so the opposite of responses to life disappointments. Many when they go through tough times quit believing in God, say what's the use of going to church, why bother to pray, and the Bible is just another book. Yet when people are giving up and giving in during these types of situations, Jesus said your attitude ought to be that your blessed because life's disappointments do not have to destroy your soul/spirit.

**Blessedness is about God using the pain of life to get our  
attention –  
James 1:2-4**

When Jesus teaches we are blessed in our sufferings, he was teaching **the pain of this life can bring our attention to something greater than even the pain we are going through.** He names all those painful situations and says you are blessed when you go through any of that. We don't really want to be blessed that way though do we?

- We want to be blessed with winning a trip to Disney World.
- We want to be blessed with a promotion and upward mobility.
- We want to be blessed by buying an old picture at a yard sale and then finding an original copy of the Declaration of Independence in the back of it that is worth millions.
- As March madness in college basketball approaches, we want our team to make it to the final four and then win it all.

**Jesus taught we are blessed because the painful times reveal to us how much God can be at work in us.**

- We cannot know how much faith we have until we face the times of uncertainty.
- We cannot know how much of God's love we have until we face a moment where we can be like God and respond to those who are different from us or disappointed in us and seek to love them.
- We cannot really see whether we are a forgiving person like Jesus until we experience being wronged and offended.
- We cannot really know if we are generous until we don't have much; but we are faced with an opportunity to give.
- We cannot see God's wisdom in us until we are falsely accused and choose our response if any carefully.

The times when God is able to truly get our attention are the painful vulnerable times of life. **James 1:2-4 states that we face**

**our trials with a spirit of joy because that produces endurance, and when endurance has its full effect, that produces maturity and we lack nothing.** When our attention is given to God we live life differently.

Story: One of the members sent me a story a few weeks ago about a man who was driving an expensive car, a Jaguar. Out of nowhere a brick hit the passenger side of the man's car. The guy stopped and then saw the boy who had thrown the brick. He ran to him, grabbed and shoved him up against a wall asking what in the world he was doing? The boy was crying and explained that his brother who uses a wheelchair had rolled over the curb and the wheelchair tipped over and his brother was too heavy for the boy by himself to get the brother back up into the wheelchair. He said no one else would stop as they passed in their cars so he threw the brick to get someone's attention and help.

The driver looked and saw the brother on the ground. He helped get the boy get back into the wheelchair, even took out one of his own expensive handkerchiefs and cleaned up the boy's skinned elbows. The brother who through the brick thanked the driver for his helped and then pushed his brother on down the sidewalk.

The story goes that the driver of that Jaguar never fixed the dent in the side of his car. He said he refused to fix the dent as a reminder not to go through life so fast someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention. The painful events of life can be used to get our attention to listen to God. I would never say God brings evil on us but we tend to just reap what we sow; **but God uses the painful like that brick to help us see his love and hope will not let the painful destroy us.** Jesus can take the dent in our hearts and souls as a time to not just have our attention on the hurt; but on what God can do during the hurt.

**Blessedness is about valuing the internal condition over external circumstances – Philippians 2:5**

Blessed means we come to realize that the condition of our internal souls is more important than our external circumstances. There is an old Eagles song entitled, "Already Gone." One of the lyrics from song states, **"So often time it happens, we all live our life in chains, and we never even know we have the key. ~The Eagles, "Already Gone"** What really ties us down, binds us up, makes life a prison is when our focus is just on this life. When we decide our worth, our success, our happiness our effectiveness on external circumstances were going to be disappointed. We focus too much on external situations than eternal truths and hopes. Philippians 2:5-11 is that great passage of scripture where **Paul says, even though Jesus was equal with God, he took on the form of a slave.** Not second in command, not as long as things worked out well, he took on the form of slave and suffered. He put the internal and eternal priorities over this life. I'm not saying its easy. I wrestle, fuss, and feud with that truth like anyone else; but it still is the scriptural truth calls us to come to terms with keeping a Christ-like view in this world and be blessed. It's the difference whether we'll live our life in the emotional chains of bitterness or not. You think it can't be done?

**Illustration:** There was a man by the name of Viktor Frankl who was psychiatrist during the reign of Adolf Hitler. Frankl and his family were sentenced to a concentration camp. He wrote about being marched in the cold of night with little clothing and probably in bare feet across the concentration campgrounds. He was terrified, demoralized but something changed in his spirit as they marched him at gun point across camp. As he was being marched along by the soldiers, he began to think about his wife and how much he loved her and she loved him. And in spite of walking in the cold with the barrel of a rifle in his back, his heart was not dominated by the fear of his captors. His heart was dominated and freed by the love he shared with his wife. Viktor Frankl would go onto write the book entitled, Man's Search for Meaning and

develop a psychological treatment strategy partly based on his own life experience. He came to understand that our hopelessness in life is when we can find no meaning in to our tragic circumstances. He was not a Christian and might have been Jewish, maybe no religious faith. But how much more should we who believe God is with us and within us be able to keep our attitude, our view and perspective to be blessed.

**Blessedness is about correctly choosing what we make our ultimate importance – Luke 10:27**

But blessedness comes to those who make a decision to choose. The decision is not about **what we can control in this life it is about staying true to the one who can be in control of us.** The be-attitudes are about trusting our status in this life based on who God is and what God wills. You may never be the most popular kid in school. You may not have the largest amount of friends on Facebook. You will achieve some of the goals you wish or others expect out of you; but even if you do, that will not assure that your content. The internal assurance is based knowing God in a personal way through Jesus Christ. Jesus was once asked what it is the greatest commandment and he said, “To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind...” There is no substitute for that relationship. There is no force that can overpower that relationship.

**Conclusion**

You notice on the Facebook background the picture or image of Jesus. The Bible teaches in Romans 8:29 we are to be conformed to the image of the God’s son” Jesus Christ. We are to conform our lives to him. Today lets just consider our view of life, the status of our attitude especially in the disappointments. On Facebook you can constantly update your profile as life changes. Based on the words of Jesus, how do our attitudes about life, God, involvement with other Christians in the church, and being a real

follower of Jesus need some updating some changes? Its start with your genuine prayer to God, right now. Let's pray.