

Weaving the Word

Theirs Is the Kingdom

Part 19 – November 23, 2014

Welcome to a place where we're learning to see the unseen and open our ears to His voice.



Sea of Galilee from Mt of Beatitudes

The *beatitudes* (e.g. blessed are the poor) are generally portrayed as being spoken by Jesus in general terms to a general audience.

Not so.

They'd make *no sense*.

It would be a bizarre formula for earning God's blessing by crying and making people hate you!

No. When He says blessed are *you* who are poor, hungry, crying, and hated **He speaks directly to His *disciples*, and specifically of the suffering that has come, and will come, because of *Him*.**

Matthew and Luke record separate portions of the same sermon.

Luke records: "Blessed are you [*disciples*] who are poor, [*because of Me*] for yours is the kingdom of God" ... **but, if you prioritize your material desires over God's kingdom, there can be no blessing ... at least for that.**

Now, Matthew records the other half of Jesus' play on words: "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." **Keep your focus on your *spiritual* poverty, and you'll begin to see His kingdom. *That's the blessing!***

We can't earn it, but we got'a embrace it! And we'll begin to see our spiritual lack as more important than our material lack; and, **we naturally sacrifice a lesser for a greater.**



Where is heaven?

Can God *leave* heaven?

Did Jesus leave heaven to dwell on earth?

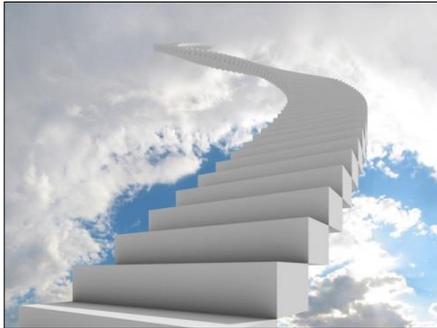
Great question! No. He didn't. Because, God the Father and God the Son are One God. And, **God can't leave heaven ... *because of where heaven is.***

So, where's heaven?

Wherever God is; it's not so much a place as a *presence*.

In fact, If God wasn't there, it wouldn't be heaven ... *it'd be hell*.

The kingdom of heaven surrounds the King of Heaven. It's defined by His rule and reign. It's the presence of His authority.



In the Sermon on the Mount, after the beatitudes, Jesus says ...

“Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool ...” – Matthew 5:34b-35a NIV

While the Father was on the throne in the place above space, His *Foot* came into our world to crush the head of our enemy. (Gen 3:15)

Jesus taught His disciples how to pray long before they understood that **the Father, who art in heaven, and the Son of Man, are One.**

And, **Thy kingdom had come when the King had come to dwell among us.**

And, **Thy will was *being done* by the only One who could do it, on earth as it is in heaven.** The Bread of Life was with 'em daily, teaching, feeding, forgiving, leading, and delivering from evil.

So, when Jesus was teaching on the hillside above the lake, *where was heaven?*

On the hillside, above the lake! Because, where was God?

In the place above space *and* on the hillside above the lake, encouraging His disciples about the suffering that had come, and preparing 'em for what was to come, as *Thy will* was being done.

And, teaching 'em to walk in an unseen kingdom not external, material, or political, but internal, spiritual, and relational. What percentage of your focus is fixed on the former?

He's not giving them a way to earn it; He's helping them see how to embrace it, and walk in it, in accordance with His Spirit.



Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. – Romans 8:5 NIV

We should be at least as intentional about setting our mind as we are our DVR! What's your mind currently set to automatically record?

Jesus had to work hard to reset the minds of His disciples.

Still does.

His **disciples** came to him, and he began to teach **them**, saying: “Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [And, they will receive God’s priceless *Holy Spirit*] [Luke has, “Blessed are you who weep”; Jesus deepens the thought] Blessed are **those who mourn**, for they will be comforted. [It’s one thing to weep; it’s another to *grieve*. Jesus wept over those who rejected Him because He mourned *their* loss. (Luke 19:41-42) **Do you mourn?**] Blessed are **the meek**, [not the weak, but the other-centered, soft-spoken, self-controlled person who puts their trust in God’s timing and judgment. **Are you meek?**] for they will inherit the earth. [Luke has, “Blessed are you who hunger”; Matthew records the other half of another play on words] Blessed are **those who hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they will be filled. [Jesus said, “*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*” (Mat 4:4) **Do you hunger and thirst for righteousness?**] Blessed are **the merciful**, for they will be shown mercy. [**Are you merciful, merci-low, or merci-empty?**] Blessed are **the pure in heart**, [the religious focused on the outside; Jesus calls attention to the side that matters most: the inside. **How clean are you on the side no one can see ... accept Him? You can’t improve by trying harder, it only comes by drawing closer**] for they will see God. [Not because they’ll be granted an appointment to meet the President of the Highest Heavens; but because their right heart will dissolve the pride and fear that blinds us, and they’ll develop eyes to see, to reckon, reckon’eyes, that He’s been right in front of their eyes this entire time] Blessed are **the peacemakers**, [not peace-keepers but those of courageous action who make peace and reconciliation happen. **Are you a peacemaker?**] for they will be called sons of God. [“*The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed*” (Rom 8:19)] Blessed are **those who are persecuted because of righteousness**, [**Would they have had any reason to persecute you?**] for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you **when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me**. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, [Matthew closes by reminding us that **Jesus is speaking directly to His disciples**] for in the same way they persecuted **the prophets who were before you.**” – Matthew 5:1-12 NIV

Want to see the unseen? It’s really cool.

It’s so simple, so brilliant, hiding right there in plain sight in the beatitudes.

God’s will was being done; they’re two years out from Jesus saying, “It is finished” and conquering death, and rising in power.

So: “Those who mourn ... **will be** comforted,” “The meek ... **will inherit** the earth,” “Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ... **will be** filled,” “The merciful ... **will be** shown mercy,” “The pure in heart ... **will see** God,” and, “The peacemakers ... **will be** called sons of God”.

Future tense. Rightly so. Two years out.

But, at the beginning and end, the first and last on the list, why's He say: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven,**" and "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for **theirs is the kingdom of heaven**"?

Luke records: "You who hunger ... **will be** satisfied," "You who weep ... **will** laugh," but then, "Blessed are you who are poor, for **yours is the kingdom of God.**" (Luke 6:20-21)

Why is the God's Kingdom the only one in present tense? Or, should I say: *presence tense*.

It's because ... **God's kingdom *had come* and God's will was *being done* ... to save us.**

To lead His lost sheep, not into temptation as He had willingly been led, but to deliver us from evil by fulfilling the Law for us, and freeing us to gratefully follow the gracious Good Shepherd.

Set your mind, and you'll find a great reward just waiting.



Luke and Matthew end by telling those suffering-for-faithfully-following to rejoice, because: "**Great is your reward in heaven**". Well, **If heaven is in His *presence*, what's the Great Reward in heaven gonna be? His person!** Jesus said, "**Before Abraham was, I am.**" (John 8:58)

After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram **[whose name is later changed to Abraham]** in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." – Genesis 15:1 NIV

What Jesus was saying that day, on the hillside, though no one had ears to hear it at the time, was ...

"Blessed are you who suffer for My sake (whether poor, starving, sad, or despised), and you who walk in my ways (of peace, mercy, and purity), and you who crave righteousness, because ... ***the kingdom is here ... because, I'm the King! And, I'm all yours!*** And, I've come to suffer far greater for *your* sake, as your very Great Reward."

You can't *earn Me*. But, you got'a *embrace Me!*

Where's Heaven?

Wherever God dwells.

And, where has His Holy Spirit taken up residence?

So, where's heaven?

If you've set your mind on His authority, you don't have to worry about getting into heaven – it's already gotten into *you*.