

Discussion Guide

February 18, 2024

Sermon Synopsis

There is a great cost in following Jesus. We must be willing to love Him above all others and willingly lay down our lives for Him. While these may sound like a heavy cost, they are nothing compared to what is gained. Jesus assures us that in laying our life down for Him, it is then that we find true abundant life. In fact, there are countless blessings available for all who trust in Jesus and follow Him as Lord. Today we see, in Matthew 13, several of the practical blessings and benefits of being a disciple of Jesus. Those who are close to Jesus and follow Him as Lord enjoy several blessings and privileges that others do not. We pray that the Lord helps you to examine these wonderful blessings to consider how you are embracing and experiencing these in your life.

Matthew 13:1-23

One Liner of the Week

"In laying our life down for Him, it is then that we find true abundant life—countless blessings available for all who trust in Jesus and follow Him as Lord."

Food for the Soul

M: Matthew 13:24-43

T: Matthew 13:44-58

W: Matthew 14:1-21

T: Matthew 14:22-36

F: Matthew 15:1-20

S: Matthew 15:21-39

S: Matthew 16:1-28

Group Question #1

Blessing is a word that has lost a great deal of its strong biblical meaning in modern times. This is true in the culture and in the Church as well. We tend to use the word somewhat flippantly. It's a cheap word. But "blessing" has an unfathomably rich meaning in Scripture. Blessing really is the polar opposite of cursing. Blessing vs. cursing. Benediction vs. malediction. Those who are truly united to God, through Christ, are promised God's blessing instead of his curse because Christ has taken their sin away in His own body "as far as the east is from the west." What a joyful thought! We need to put a clear finger on what that blessing looks like, though. Else we are susceptible to making up, in our own minds, what we think that blessing should be. Does Scripture speak to this? As a group, read Psalm 1:1-3. This is a great and concise summary not only of what blessing really is but also what authentic Christianity is!

Group Question #2

Psalm 1 opens with the word "Blessed". How fitting, don't you think, with regards to our time together? The blessed man is a man who has favor in God's sight. He's born again. She is walking in the light. God has done a miraculous work in him or her. Namely, He has breathed new spiritual life where there was, before, only spiritual death. God has sovereignly poured bountiful grace upon grace toward the Christian by accounting all that person's sin upon His Son, Jesus, who happily bore that sin in His own body on calvary. Not only did Jesus do that, but He also gave as a gift His own righteousness to cover everyone who ever has, is, or will believe this Gospel, this "good news". In verse one, what are three things that "blessed" people are not in the habit of doing? If man is, as the Scriptures say, "spiritually dead" outside of Christ, Who is responsible for this change in the person who no longer does, habitually, the three things mentioned in verse one?

Group Question #3

Verse two contrasts the things that "blessed" people do not do with something that they DO do. Discuss what verse two says as a group. We tend to think, in modern American Evangelical circles that the law is a bad thing. It's all grace, grace, grace. But Scripture is Scripture. It's all God breathed. And, if it is God-Breathed, it is all binding. The law of God is, therefore, binding on all people even, perhaps especially, today. The blessed man or woman is a person who does "what" with the law of God? What is the result for the Christian, the genuine Christian, who does these things? Blessing flows unto them freely! That's what! Verse three articulates what this blessing looks like. Read it again carefully as a group and discuss.