



GOING DEEPER

The Good Life: Matthew 5:1-3



The world's message of happiness (or how to be blessed) is to 'follow your heart' or 'be true to yourself'.

Jesus begins describing groups of people who are "blessed," using a word that could also be translated "happy" or "fortunate." How do we react to these different words: blessed, happy, fortunate? How are they alike, to us? How are they different? Would we rather be blessed, or happy, or fortunate? Why is that?

Would it make a difference to say "Blessed are the pure in spirit," "Happy are the pure in spirit," or "Lucky are the pure in spirit"? And so on. What difference? Why, do we think?

Luke 18-9-14

The problem is we often miss the shocking nature of this parable because it's become so commonplace. We tend to immediately associate the Pharisees with self-righteous hypocrites and tax collectors as the model of righteous.

But in Jesus' day it was reversed. It was the Pharisees who were the models of righteous and the tax collectors who epitomized sinners. When Jesus told this parable it was a shock to his audience and surely made a lasting impact.

In what areas of life do you 'have confidence in yourself'? Is this good or bad in light of Luke 18:9?

Do you think this problem of self-righteous people is as much a problem today as back then?

How do you address God as you pray?

Which person would you be more comfortable being around? The Pharisee or the tax collector?

Final Thoughts This Week on this Passage: We have a tendency to think higher of ourselves than we ought to. We see ourselves through rose-colored glasses. But the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector forces us to take off those glasses and see who we really are.

The wrong way to approach God is by your own good works; the right way to approach God is as an unworthy sinner, pleading for mercy.

Notes and Reflections: