

"THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW"

Charity That Pleases God (6:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

- 1.Are you a charitable person?
 - a.If so, are you sure that your charity is pleasing to God?
 - b.Were you aware that some forms of charity actually displease God?
- 2.In Jesus' day, there were religious people who were extremely charitable...
 - a.The Pharisees, for example, would give ten percent to God - e.g., [Lk 18:11-12](#)
 - b.They tithed even the smallest of seeds - [Lk 11:42](#)-- But as indicated in these two cases, not all charity or giving pleased God
- 3.In His sermon on the mount, Jesus taught His disciples to have a righteousness which exceeded that of the Pharisees - [Mt 5:20](#)
 - a.Jesus first contrasted the "righteousness of the kingdom" with what the scribes and Pharisees were **teaching**
 - b.He then contrasted what He expected of His disciples with what the scribes and Pharisees were **practicing**

[In [Mt 6:1-4](#), we find the first of several examples concerning the practice of righteousness. In it, we learn about "**Charity That Pleases God.**" Note first what Jesus taught about...]

I.THE BASIC PRINCIPLE GOVERNING ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (1)

A.CONCERNING THIS VERSE...

- 1.Some manuscripts, upon which the KJV and NKJV are based, have the Greek word **eleemosunen**
 - a.Translated "**alms**", or "**charitable deeds**"
 - b.Which would make this verse refer specifically to almsgiving, or charitable deeds
- 2.Older manuscripts, upon which the ASV and NASV are based, have the Greek word **dikaiosunen**
 - a.Translated "**righteousness**"
 - b.Which would make verse one speaking in general terms, establishing the principle to be applied to ALL acts of righteousness-- Textual support seems strongest for **dikaiosunen**, making verse one an introductory statement concerning all righteous acts

B.THE BASIC PRINCIPLE...

- 1.Stated simply: we are not to do acts of righteousness to be seen of men - [Mt 6:1a](#)
 - a.Note: It is NOT to completely avoid ANY practice of righteousness before men - cf. [Mt 5:16](#)
 - b.Rather, it is to avoid doing them JUST TO BE SEEN OF MEN
- 2.Therefore, it is proper to do good works before men...

- a. When we are trying to secure praise for GOD
- b. But not when we are trying to secure praise for OURSELVES!

C.CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING THIS BASIC PRINCIPLE...

- 1.If, in the innermost being of your heart, you do not mean to please and glorify God, He will not reward you!
- 2.What reward you may have (cf. [Mt 6:2,5,16](#)) will be limited to the praise of men

[Let's now consider how Jesus applies this to the matter of charitable deeds...]

II.CONCERNING CHARITABLE DEEDS (2-4)

A.WHAT "NOT" TO DO...

- 1.Don't be like the "hypocrites" (literally, "actors") - [Mt 6:2a](#)
 - a. Who sound trumpets in the synagogues and streets
 - b. Who are looking to be honored by men
- 2."They have their reward" - [Mt 6:2b](#)
 - a. They receive exactly (and only) what they wanted: the praise of men
 - b. But remember verse one...
 - 1.They have no reward from the Father in heaven
 - 2.Neither in the present or in the future!

B.CHRITY THAT PLEASES GOD...

- 1."Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" - [Mt 6:3](#)
 - a.This involves avoiding not only the praise of others, but self praise as well
 - b.Some thoughts by others on what this metaphor means:
 1. "**The right [hand], [represents] me with my good deed; the left, me with my good opinion about my deed.**" (Lenkski)
 2. "**The expression probably refers to the fact that as much as possible a person must keep his voluntary contribution a secret not only to others but even to himself; that is, he should forget about it, instead of saying in his heart, 'What a good man, woman, boy, girl, am I!'**" (Hendrickson)
 - c.How can one develop the ability to give in this way?
 - 1.Perhaps by giving so often it becomes "second nature"
 - 2.So that you do it without much thought (just as with anything you do often)
- 2.Note: Jesus is not condemning public giving per se - cf. [Ac 2:44-45; 4:34-37](#)
 - a.He is condemning the spirit which seeks publicity
 - b.He is teaching "secret-giving" in the sense of "secret to one's self"

c."The true Christian cares not how much men hear of his public charities, nor how little they hear of his private ones." (Toplady)

C.THE REWARD FOR CHARITY THAT PLEASES GOD...

- 1."Your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly." - [Mt 6:4](#)
- 2.The reward may be experienced to some degree in this life - [Psa 41:1-3](#)
- 3.Without a doubt it will be experienced on the day of judgment
 - a.For every secret thing will be made known - [Ec 12:14](#)
 - b.We will experience the benefit of the good we have done - [2Co 5:10](#)

CONCLUSION

- 1.Christians who have been blessed materially have been given a charge to be "rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share" - [1 Ti 6:17-19](#)
- 2.But if we desire that our charity will indeed store up "a good foundation for the time to come"...
 - a.We must be sure to practice "**Charity That Pleases God**"
 - b.We must learn to give, not to be seen of men, but to glorify God
 - c.We must learn to give without self-praise for what we are doing

Do our charitable deeds exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees in Jesus' day, not only in quantity, but in the quality of our giving? May the Lord keep us free from the giving of hypocrites!

"THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER"

Joy Inexpressible And Full Of Glory (1:6-9)

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the many blessings available to the "elect" (chosen) of God is a very special kind of joy...

- a. For reasons we shall notice in our lesson, Christians are able to "greatly rejoice" (lit., "leap for joy") - [**1Pe 1:6**](#)
- b. They have access to joy that is "inexpressible and full of glory" - [**1Pe 1:8**](#)
- c. A joy so great, so glorious, that it is impossible to truly express with words!

2. In this lesson, we shall focus our attention on Peter's remarks in [**1Pe 1:6-9**](#) concerning this "inexpressible joy" that Christians are blessed to have

[Notice first that in **verse 6** Peter begins by saying "IN THIS you greatly rejoice..." He is referring to those things which serve as...]

I. THE BASIS FOR INEXPRESSIBLE JOY

A. THERE ARE "PAST" GROUNDS FOR REJOICING...

- 1. We have been "set apart" by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit - [**1:2**](#)
- 2. We have been "sprinkled" with the blood of Jesus Christ - [**1:2**](#)
- 3. We have been "born again" to a living hope - [**1:3**](#)

B. THERE ARE "PRESENT" GROUNDS FOR REJOICING AS WELL...

- 1. We are God's "elect" - [**1:2**](#)
- 2. We are "kept" by the power of God through faith - [**1:5**](#)

C. AND THERE ARE "FUTURE" GROUNDS FOR REJOICING...

- 1. We have an "inheritance" reserved for us in heaven - [**1:4**](#)
- 2. We look forward to the "salvation" which will be revealed in the last time - [**1:5**](#), cf. [**1:9**](#)

[All these blessings (past, present, future) serve as the basis for inexpressible joy. Because of them, we can "greatly rejoice!"

Exactly how great is this joy? In **verses 6-7**, Peter explains...]

II. THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF THIS JOY

A. IT ENABLES ONE TO REJOICE EVEN IN TRIAL (1:6)

1. No matter what degree of suffering one may experience, in Christ there is joy to match it

a. As Peter explains in [**1Pe 4:12-13**](#)

b. As he and the rest of the apostles exemplified in [**Ac 5:40-41**](#)

2. How can Christians find joy in such trials?

- a.Informed Christians understand the purifying nature of such trials
- [**1Pe 1:7**](#); cf. [**2Co 4:17-18**](#)
- b.Knowing what trials can produce, it is possible to be joyful in trials -
cf. [**Jm 1:2-4,12**](#); [**Ro 5:1-4**](#)

B.WHAT KIND OF TRIALS?

- 1.The word "various" includes all kinds
- 2.Primarily, it includes those which come as a result of living for Christ -
e.g., [**Mt 5:10-12**](#)
- 3.But we can also rejoice in the everyday afflictions of life
 - a.E.g., sickness, heartbreak, frustration, approaching death
 - b.For these things also provide an opportunity to test our faith, hope, love, longsuffering and patience

[If one is able to rejoice even in the midst of such trials, surely they have a joy "inexpressible and full of glory"!]

But how can Christians be sure to possess this joy? For it must be admitted that all do not, and there are times when even the best of us do not.

In **verse 8**, Peter alludes to two things which I suggest are necessary to...]

III.POSSESSING THIS INEXPRESSIBLE JOY

A.WE MUST LOVE JESUS...

- 1."whom having not seen you love"
- 2.Jesus is the ultimate source for being able to rejoice in all things - cf. [**Php 4:4**](#)
 - a.He has promised that if we truly love Him, He and His Father will be with us - [**Jn 14:23**](#)
 - b.If Jesus is with us, we can receive that joy which is inexpressible!
- [**Jn 15:11; 16:33**](#)
- 3.But can we who have never seen Jesus, love Him? Yes! - cf. [**1Pe 1:8**](#)
- 4.How can we come to love Him we have not seen? Through a devotional study of:
 - a.The Old Testament, with its prophecies of the Messiah
 - b.The Gospels, with their description of His life, teachings, compassion, suffering, death, and glorious resurrection
 - c.The Acts, with its action-packed portrayal of the Lord working together with His church
 - d.The Epistles, where we learn of many blessings found in Christ, and of His ministry as High Priest interceding in our behalf
 - e.The Revelation, in which we learn of the glorious victory to be won by the Lamb and His followers

B.WE MUST ALSO BELIEVE IN JESUS...

- 1."Though now you do not see Him, yet believing..."
- 2.Through believing in Jesus we can "rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory"
- 3.But such faith is more than a mental assent, or academic knowledge of Jesus
- 4.It involves the key element of faith itself, which is "trust"
 - a.Truusting in His commands to be for our ultimate good
 - b.Truusting in His promises to be fulfilled
 - c.The kind of trust that prompts us to obey Jesus wholeheartedly
 - d.This kind of faith comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**

CONCLUSION

- 1.When we have this kind of faith in Jesus, and when we truly love Him with our whole being...
 - a.A blessing we receive is that "joy inexpressible and full of glory"!
 - b.A blessing that can sustain us till we reach the end (goal) of our faith: salvation!
- **1Pe 1:9**
- 2.And that is because this "inexpressible joy"...
 - a.Is based upon many other blessings: past, present, and future
 - b.Enables us to joyfully persevere through all kinds of trials in this life
- 3.But again, this blessing is only for those who truly love Jesus and believe in Him...
 - a.Do you love Jesus? If you do, you will keep His commandments - **Jn 14:15,23**
 - b.Do you believe in Jesus? If you do, you will do what He says - cf. **Lk 6:46**

Are there commandments of Jesus you have not yet obeyed? If so, why not obey them today so that this "inexpressible joy" can be yours as well!

"THE EPISTLE OF JAMES"

Turning Trials Into Triumph (1:2-8)

INTRODUCTION

1. Perhaps you have seen the bumper sticker: "When life hands you a lemon, make lemonade!"
2. It is easier to smile at that statement than to practice it, but the basic philosophy is sound
 - a. In fact, it is Biblical
 - b. Throughout the Bible are people who turned defeat into victory and trials into triumph
 - c. Instead of being VICTIMS, they became VICTORS
3. The Epistle of James tells us that we can have this same experience today!
 - a. Whether we are dealing with trials on the outside
 - b. Or temptations on the inside-- Through faith in God and Jesus Christ we CAN experience victory!
4. The KEY to turning trials into triumph is to obey four imperatives:
 - a. COUNT - [Jm 1:2](#)
 - b. KNOW - [Jm 1:3](#)
 - c. LET - [Jm 1:4](#)
 - d. ASK - [Jm 1:5-8](#)

[Starting with **verse two**, then, let's look at the first imperative...]

I. COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YOU FALL INTO VARIOUS TRIALS (1:2)

A. NOTICE THAT JAMES ASSUMES THAT WE WILL EXPERIENCE TRIALS...

1. He doesn't say "if" but "when"
2. This is because Christians must expect trials
 - a. So said Jesus - [Jn 16:33](#)
 - b. Paul also - [Ac 14:22](#)
3. The nature of these trials are "various"
 - a. Some trials come simply because we are human
 1. Sickness, accidents
 2. Disappointments, death
 - b. Other trials come because we are Christians - [1Pe 4:12; 2Ti 3:12](#)
4. But because Satan fights us, and the world opposes us, we can expect trials!

B. WHAT IS TO BE THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE? - "COUNT IT ALL JOY!"

1. This was the attitude of:
 - a. The apostles - [Ac 5:41](#)
 - b. Paul - [Ro 5:3; Php 2:17-18](#)

c.The Christians - [**1Pe 1:6-8; 4:12-14**](#)

2.So the first step to turning trials into triumph is to:IMMEDIATELY THANK GOD AND ADOPT A JOYFUL ATTITUDE!

["But how," we may ask, "is it possible to rejoice in the midst of trials?" The second imperative in **verse 3** explains how...]

II."KNOWING THAT THE TESTING OF YOUR FAITH PRODUCES PATIENCE" (1:3)

A.THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING THE VALUE OF TRIALS MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE A JOYFUL ATTITUDE...

1.We are to understand that:

- a.Trials test our faith
- b.Faith tested can bring out the best in us!

1.Just as fire purifies gold - [**1Pe 1:7**](#)

2.Just as training makes the athlete stronger

2.With this understanding, we can have joy in trials because we know that:

- a.Testing works FOR us, not AGAINST us - cf. [**2Co 4:17**](#)
- b.Trials rightly used help us to mature

B.SPECIFICALLY, FAITH TESTED PRODUCES "PATIENCE"...

1.Notice [**Ro 5:3-4**](#)

2.In the BIBLE...

- a."Patience" is NOT a passive acceptance of circumstances
- b.The GREEK word is HUPOMONE

1.From the preposition HUPO (under), and MENO (to remain, to abide)

2.It denotes the ability to exhibit stedfastness and constancy in the face of the most formidable difficulty!

- c.It is a courageous perseverance in the face of suffering!
- d.It is the continuing on even when it is rough, despite the circumstances

3.Such a quality of stedfastness can come only through experiencing trials

4.The value of developing PATIENCE will be seen shortly...

[Having this understanding about what trials can accomplish enables us to have a joyful attitude toward such trials.

But to really benefit from our trials, we must also obey the third imperative found in **verse four...**]

III."LET PATIENCE HAVE ITS PERFECT WORK" (1:4)

A.TO TRULY TURN TRIALS INTO TRIUMPH, WE MUST LET "PATIENCE" DO ITS WORK...

1.Too often, we want to get our trials or difficulties over with quickly
2.But there are times when the best course is to bear up under the trial patiently

- a.Instead of grumbling and complaining...
- b....patiently endure the trial, doing good despite the trial

B.FOR WHEN PATIENCE HAS HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK, IT PRODUCES "MATURITY"!

- 1.The word PERFECT does not mean sinlessness, but "completeness, wholeness, maturity"
- 2.In the New Testament, it is used of those who:
 - a.Have attained to spiritual manhood in Christ
 - b.Have reached full maturity and understanding in spiritual matters
 - c.Are no longer "babes" and immature persons in Christ
- 3.Such maturity comes only when patience has had time to work!
 - a.Consider, for example, an endurance runner in his training
 - 1.To be a mature runner requires letting patience do its work
 - 2.That is, patiently running mile after mile in training
 - b.If we wish to run the race well spiritually speaking, we need to develop patience
 - 1.Which comes only through a form of spiritual "resistance training"
 - 2.That is, trials in which our faith is put to the test!

[Letting patience have its perfect work is not easy. It certainly requires wisdom which enables us to see the value of our trials.

This brings us to the fourth imperative necessary to turn trials into triumph, found in **verses five to eight...**]

IV."LET HIM ASK OF GOD" (1:5-8)

A.IF WE LACK WISDOM, ASK FOR IT FROM GOD!

- 1.He has promised to give it liberally
- 2.And He will not reproach us for making such a request
- 3.Even as Solomon's request for wisdom was well-pleasing to God - 1 Kings 3:7-12

B.WHAT EXACTLY IS THIS "WISDOM"?

- 1.We should be careful to distinguish "wisdom" from "knowledge"
 - a.Knowledge involves information, facts, etc.
 - b.Wisdom is the ability or insight to properly use those facts in the most expeditious way
- 2.Failure to understand this distinction has led many into error!

- a.Many believe that this passage ([Jm 1:5-8](#)) teaches that God will give knowledge concerning His Will in answer to prayer
- b.But knowledge comes only through His Word; we must carefully study it if we would know the Will of God!
- c.However, the WISDOM to properly use His Word can be received through prayer

C.THE WISDOM TO PROPERLY USE TRIALS AND TURN THEM INTO TRIUMPH CAN LIKEWISE COME THROUGH "PROPER" PRAYER...

- 1.Proper prayer is that asked in faith and with no doubt
- 2.Otherwise, the prayer will not be answered by God

CONCLUSION

1.So here is the key to turning trials into triumph:

- a.Having the knowledge and perspective that adversity can accomplish much good
- b.Letting the patient enduring of adversity accomplish its work
- c.All the while using the wisdom God gives in answer to prayer to help put it all together

2.When this is done, even trials can be a source of joy for the Christian!

Have we learned to make lemonade out of our lemons in life?

Note: Much of the material for this outline was adapted heavily from **The Bible Exposition Commentary, Volume 2, by Warren W. Wiersbe, pages 337-340.**

"THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS"

Blessings Involving The Father (1:4-6)

INTRODUCTION

1. As suggested in the [previous lesson](#), the "theme" of Ephesians is "**The Believer's Riches In Christ**"
2. After his brief salutation (1:1-2), Paul immediately begins in 1:3 by praising God for the blessings (or riches) we have in Christ...
 - a. This "doxology" actually continues throughout verses **4-14**
 - b. The spiritual "possessions" that are mentioned in this passage can easily be outlined as:
 1. Blessings involving the Father (**4-6**)
 2. Blessings involving the Son (**7-12**)
 3. Blessings involving the Holy Spirit (**13-14**)
3. In an effort to appreciate how spiritually blessed we are in Christ, we will examine this section (**4-14**) in three separate lessons

[With **verses 4-6**, then, we focus in on "**Blessings Involving The Father**", beginning with the fact that in Christ we are...]

I. CHOSEN BY GOD (1:4)

A. DEFINING THE TERM "CHOSEN"...

1. Comes from the Greek eklegomai {ek-leg'-om-ahee}, and means "to pick out, choose, to pick or choose out for one's self"
2. Related to the idea of "election" which comes from eklege {ek-log-ay'}, meaning "the act of picking out, choosing"

B. THE "TIME" OF THIS CHOICE...

1. "before the foundation of the world"
2. Before the world was ever created, God made His "choice" or "election"
3. Just as with Christ Himself, who was foreordained "before the foundation of the world" - [**1Pe 1:20**](#)

C. THE "OBJECTS" OF THIS CHOICE...

1. The Calvinist believes that this choice was...
 - a. Individual (only certain select individuals have been chosen)
 - b. Dependent solely upon God's gracious and mysterious will, without any foreknowledge of good or evil on the part of those selected
 - c. Unconditional and final (there is no possibility of apostasy)
2. The Arminian believes that this choice was...
 - a. Individual (certain select individuals have been chosen)
 - b. Based upon foreknowledge of those souls who would respond to the gospel and persevere in the faith

- c.Unconditional and final, in the sense that God already knows those who will persevere to the end
- 3.Paul says simply "...chose us in Him (i.e., Christ)", and I understand this election by God to have been...
 - a.General, not particular; corporate, not individual
 - b.The body of Christ, the church as a whole, which God chose for His divine and gracious purposes He planned to carry out in Christ
 - c.And that while in the "corporate" sense this choice is unconditional and final, as "individuals" we must be "diligent to make your calling and election sure" - **2 Pe 1:10**
 - 1.Just as Israel (as a nation) had been chosen by God to receive His blessings
 - 2.But individually, the Israelites also had to "make their calling and election sure"

D.THE "PURPOSE" OF THIS CHOICE...

- 1."that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love"
- 2.The goal of God's choice in eternity was to produce a people in Christ Jesus who would be:
 - a."holy" - set apart for a special purpose
 - b."without blame" - free from condemnation
 - c."in love" - walking before God in a "sphere" of love - cf. **Ep 5:1-2**
 [In Christ Jesus, then, we are blessed to be God's "chosen" people (cf. **1Pe 2:9**). How God was able to carry out the "purpose" of His choice when all He had to work with were sinners will be explained in **verses 7-12**.]

But first we also learn that in Christ Jesus we have been...]

II.PREDESTINED BY GOD (1:5-6a)

A.DEFINING THE TERM "PREDESTINED"...

- 1.From the Greek word, proorizo {pro-or-id'-zo}, meaning "to predetermine, decide beforehand"
- 2.Thus this verse speaks of that which God "predetermined beforehand"
 -- WHO was it that God "predetermined"?

B.THE SUBJECTS OF GOD'S "PREDESTINATION"...

- 1.Paul simply says "us"
- 2.As with election, I understand Paul to speaking of the church as a whole
- 3.As B. W. Johnson says: "The whole line of argument is general instead of particular." (The People's New Testament)
 --WHAT was it that God "predetermined"?

C.THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S "PREDESTINATION"...

- 1."adoption as sons"
 - 2.Quoting Johnson again: God has "foreordained that we, the church of Jesus Christ, should be adopted as his children."
 - 3.As Wiersbe points out, the word "predestination" refers primarily to what God does for saved people: "Election seems to refer to people, while predestination refers to purposes" (The Bible Exposition Commentary, Vol. 2, p. 11)
 - 4.So it is here, that Paul reveals that which had been predetermined beforehand was the church (all those who are saved) would be "adopted" into the family of God
- WHY did God "predetermine" this?

D.THE BASIS OF GOD'S "PREDESTINATION"...

- 1."according to the good pleasure of His will"
- 2.Putting it simply, the idea "pleased" God!
 - a.It is something He wanted to do
 - b.And by His Divine Will He has made it possible!

[What should our reaction be to all this? To praise God for His glorious grace ("to the praise of the glory of His grace")! For it is His "grace" by which we can now be...]

III.ACCEPTED BY GOD (1:6b)

A.DEFINING THE TERM "ACCEPTED"...

- 1.Comes from the Greek word charitoo {khar-ee-to'-o}, and means:
 - a.To be highly favored
 - b.To peruse with grace, compass with favor
 - c.To honour with blessings
- 2.It is used in [Lk 1:28](#) in reference to the virgin Mary ("highly favored one")
- 3.Like Mary, those in Christ are "highly favored" in God's sight!

B.THE BASIS UPON WHICH WE ARE "ACCEPTED"...

- 1."in the Beloved" (Jesus Christ)
- 2.As emphasized in **1:3** and throughout verses **4-14**, all these blessings are "in" and "by" Jesus Christ:
 - a.God chose us "in Him (Christ)" - **1:4**
 - b.God predestined us to adoption as sons "by Jesus Christ" - **1:5**
 - c.God has made us accepted "in the Beloved (Christ) - **1:6**
- 3.Therefore it is by our being "in" Christ that we are privileged to be "highly favored" by God, and showered by these wonderful blessings!

CONCLUSION

- 1.And what should our reaction be?
 - a.To praise God for His glorious grace! - cf. [Ep 1:6](#)

b.Offering such praise is a form of "spiritual sacrifice" by which we can say "thank you!" - cf. [He 13:15](#)

2.How can God afford to be so gracious to those who are sinners? Our [next lesson](#) will examine how in detail, but notice [Ep 1:7](#)

a.Have you experienced this redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins?

b.To learn how, carefully read [Ac 2:36-41](#)...