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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2403 ~ Treasures in Heaven.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

When the Lord Jesus presented His Sermon on the Mount as a way of godly living to His disciples and the crowds of people, they had plenty to talk about amongst themselves.

In the first four Beatitudes in Matthew Chapter 5, Jesus taught a contrast between an attitude of God and a fulfilment that would receive: It is the ‘poor in spirit’ who receive the kingdom; those ‘who mourn’ will be comforted; ‘the meek’ will inherit the earth; those who ‘hunger and thirst’ after God’s desires and presence will be satisfied. But in the fifth Beatitude, the theme changes. People are now blessed if they are known for showing God’s nature. Jesus said: “Blessed (or happy) are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”

What is mercy? It’s compassion and concern for the plight of others, irrespective of whatever sin they may have committed. God is our example to follow in mercy. In Psalm 118, it says: “Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.” Sometimes God’s mercy is exceptionally good to those who we think may not deserve it. But all of us are needy for God’s mercy, day by day.

Many years ago in outback Australia, a lovely little girl died. Her father was full of overwhelming sorrow. However, he had not loved God or wanted anything to do with ‘religion’. In his great sadness, he became bitter and spoke against God. Then suddenly an idea flashed into his mind: “I wonder if I could meet my little girl again.”

He picked up a copy of the New Testament but had no idea where to look for anything on that subject. Renewed bitterness surged through his heart and he uttered a strange, half-defiant prayer: “Oh, God, if there is any God, show me if I can meet my little girl again. I’m not going to search for it! If this book doesn’t fall open at the place, I’m not going to bother!”

Most people wouldn’t dare speak to God in such a way. But this man was dealing with a God of mercy and tender compassion in his hour of need. The New Testament opened at John’s Gospel, Chapter 5, where the Lord Jesus was telling how people will be called out of their graves. The man marked the passage with a pencil. He was humbled with this answer and softened towards God. His New Testament became his constant companion and he witnessed to others about what God had shown him. Years later when the man was badly injured in a car accident, his last hours on earth were used to express his trust in his Saviour, and to warn others to “seek Jesus while He may be found”.

This fifth Beatitude, “Blessed (or happy) are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,” says that when we demonstrate mercy to others, we make it possible for God’s mercy to penetrate deeper into our own hearts and lives. The act of giving makes us more able to receive. This produces within us good mental and spiritual health.

We become opposed to wrong attitudes because we’re not made to function effectively with any attitude that is foreign to the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Merciful men and women are to be envied because they get back what they give. The reason for this is that an act of mercy has the power to effect change. Someone’s act of mercy encourages those who see it to be merciful as well. And even if it doesn’t, the giver of mercy is still better off for being merciful. Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan as found in Luke’s Gospel, Chapter 10, is a classic illustration of being merciful.

Jesus' next statement was: "Blessed (or happy) are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." What does the word 'heart' represent? The heart is more than just the seat of the emotions within a person but also, the core of life from which everything comes. The word 'pure' means a heart that is clear and clean of any stain of wrongdoing. Whatever is at the centre of a person's life is what comes out of their mouth. In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 6, it says: "A good person brings good out of the treasure of good things in his heart; a bad person brings out of his treasure of bad things. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."

A Christian's heart is cleansed by Christ when they first become a believer in Him. Then daily confession of sins is necessary to keep a heart pure with the Lord. Our holy God cannot tolerate sin, so if we want His leading in our life, we must ask for forgiveness for anything that our conscience feels uncomfortable about or that the Holy Spirit brings to our memory.

Because believers in Christ are not completely past sinning until they leave this earth, either by dying or by Christ returning, we are never past temptation in our thoughts and feelings. Satan is always seeking a foothold in our lives somewhere. If we give in to a feeling of envy or a moment of pride, Satan has a victory and power over us until we confess this sin and surrender ourselves humbly back to the Lord.

Over the centuries, theologians have grouped three different ways that they think God gives purity of heart to His people. There are those who think purity of heart is achieved by God taking responsibility for it by forgiving and cleansing the believer's sin. They believe that Christ flings His robe of righteousness around a sinner and then God forever, sees the person in the spotless garments of His Son.

Some think that God imparts the gift of purity to those who dearly desire it. This group think that there is an experience awaiting all believers, usually after conversion, whereby, through a crisis experience, God imparts the gift of purity.

And others think that purity of heart is developed by slow but steady improvement in surrendering one's life to Jesus' Lordship. Whenever the emphasis is placed on any one of these points, however, problems arise.

The phrase 'to see God' is more to do with seeing God now on earth and not just in heaven later. The pure in heart are aware of a reality which most people miss. They're sure of God and the good works He is accomplishing in a sinful, broken and angry world. Seeing God at work must be connected with purity of heart, for we must see and sense God first in our own inner being before we can see Him and sense Him anywhere else.

Seeing God means seeing God in everything! Many Christians relate to how they have been spared from accident or injury by not being in the 'wrong place at the wrong time', even if only by a slim margin. They praise God and give Him the glory for His hand of protection on them.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount provoked a lot of thought and questions among the people at the time, and they continued discussing all the possibilities of what His words meant in their own homes.

[DRAMA - The Bible In Living Sound.](#)

The ordinary people in Israel listened to Jesus but many remained unsure if He was really Israel's Messiah or not. They also tried to respect the Temple leaders and their teaching. While the Temple leaders declared that Jesus wasn't the Messiah, those ordinary people who had received healing from Jesus knew with certainty that Jesus had the power and authority to be the Son of God. Sometimes the Temple leaders prevented healed people from entering the Temple to worship, and as no one wanted this to happen, most ordinary people were cautious about what they said about Jesus.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus also taught: “Blessed (or happy) are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” If Jesus couldn’t make peace with the scribes and religious teachers, what did He mean then by this saying? In these times the Bible speaks of “wars and rumours of war” worldwide. Important people fly back and forth from country to country trying to negotiate peace settlements between hostile nations. Their efforts often seem futile to the rest of the world. Some Christians say that there will be no peace on the earth until it is imposed on people by the Prince of Peace, who is the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns to earth.

A genuine peacemaker in the Biblical sense first has to make peace with God in their own heart and mind before they can help others. Making peace with God was only made possible by Jesus leaving heaven for us and shedding His blood on a cruel cross so that all people of the world can have their sins forgiven. This proof of incredible love by God Himself made peace between Himself and repentant individuals. It became the redemption price of all who are willing to believe that Jesus was and is the Messiah, the way for knowing God.

So I ask of you: “Have you been redeemed? Have you accepted Christ’s sacrifice on the cross for you personally?”

If so, that’s good – your mission now in life is to be a peacemaker and share His peace and hope with others. As we make peace with God, a change comes about in our own lives and is reflected among those around us. We have become peaceable in our nature.

The Christian Gospel can be summed up in this verse of Scripture from 2 Corinthians, Chapter 5: “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself... and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.”

The last of Jesus’ beatitudes was: “Blessed (or happy) are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

The inevitable result of bringing our attitudes into line with Christ's is that our lives become a silent judgment on others. Men and women don't like to be judged or think they could be, so they show their negative response through persecution, rejection and unfairness. But Christians need to honour Jesus' perfect standards, no matter which society we find ourselves in. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to put on Christ's very nature and abide in His loving and righteous standards without fear, no matter what we might face for doing so.

Persecution is one of the proofs that we are true disciples of the Lord Jesus. Many Christians may never understand that those who reject Christ in their lives will also reject those who follow Christ.

Those who fear persecution need to understand that when the world rejects you, it's not you personally whom they are against, but Christ, who is alive and being seen in you. Fear of persecution and pain takes away any great desire to witness to others and must be confessed and overcome in the power of God's Holy Spirit. When our fears aren't dealt with, there's a danger of compromise and a watering down of our convictions in the hope we can save ourselves from persecution. But if we try to save our lives for ourselves, we will ultimately lose them. Our lives are to be lived for Christ. And in dying to our fears and even our lives, there is eternal gain.

In 1 Peter, Chapter 2, it says: "Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." Even how we respond to persecution shows what Spirit is inside us. In Luke's Gospel, Chapter 6, Verse 31 it says: "Do for others just what you want them to do for you."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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