



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

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STEWARDSHIP & THE DISCIPLE

Stewards of the Community

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Please read Matthew 5:1-12

The fundamental principle of biblical stewardship declares that God owns everything, we are simply managers or administrators acting on God's behalf. The fact is, we were created in the image of a relational God who has always existed in community: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is for this reason, we are stewards or managers of both the human community (where we reside or work) and the Christian community (the Church).

The value of the Christian community reaches even further than bringing the Body of Christ to strength and maturity. The Church by her character and action, witnesses to the power and presence of God in the world.

A true community doesn't happen overnight. A starting place is the recognition that God has invited us to be responsible for our lives and resources. Therefore, the community is where we learn to strip away our self-interest in order to serve others. It is within community we find each person in the family begins to wrestle with their own place and takes a step toward deeper relationship, then slowly, the community grows. People who would normally never hang out together begin to love each other and even lay down their lives for each other for one simple reason. It is for this reason, the Christian's prayer should be that our physical and spiritual communities become a place filled with people who know each other as brothers and sisters, fellow workers and fellow soldiers of Christ. To the world, we might look like one strange herd, but when the love of Jesus flows through us, they'd want to join in this amazing journey of faith.

It is here that we learn to share what God has given us, whether it be goods or spiritual gifts. It is also here that we learn to serve, though we are sometimes prideful and reluctant. The community helps us grow, too, as it becomes a workshop for prayer, worship and service.



The physical community is vital to the church's mission and witness. In essence, the church cannot exist without the community. In fact, where there is no community, there's no church.

So, when we speak of being stewards of the community, a starting place is the recognition of God's calling on our lives and resources. The truth is, we are not likely to manage well unless we acknowledge that we are stewards/ managers. We are not likely to exercise good stewardship unless we recognize that we are stewards.

As stewards of community in which we reside or work, we do mission in spaces divided by economics, race, religion, gender and discrimination that's disempowering.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to be the community and promote community living. But how can this be possible when we only talk to some and ignore others. The fact is, all of us are stewards of some possessions and influence. We either take care of what has been entrusted to us or we take for granted those things.

How can we be that community and ignore or reject the standard Jesus calls us to live by?

Jesus begins, according to Matthew's Gospel, with what we have come to know as the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is the most familiar collection of sayings from Jesus that is recorded. It is regarded as the Magna Carta of the Christian Faith.

Jesus had just begun to choose his disciples. He summons Peter and Andrew, James and John. They promptly obey, leave their nets, their boats and even their father, and follow Jesus. They were practical men called from a practical process of making a living now set about on a strange and uncharted mission. Jesus took them apart and began to teach them the meaning of discipleship. He begins by teaching the Beatitudes. Jesus was being true to his unapologetic claim to be the Son of God.

The Beatitude comes from the Latin word 'beatitudo', which means blessed, happy, or fortunate. "Blessed," is also translated "happy".

The Beatitudes are often referred to as the *Ethics of the Kingdom*: they place a high level of emphasis on "purity of the heart" and embody the basic standard of Christian living.

The beatitudes point to an awareness of spiritual need, humility, peaceful living, moral living, and compassion as the keys to happiness. These are integral to a prosperous community.

Matthew's gospel, which implies that the followers in Matthew's community were severely persecuted (Matthew 10:16-39) and lived by edicts, rules, and guidelines of the Jewish Law. Therefore, the people would receive these words we call The Beatitudes as encouragement. Matthew highlighted the beatitudes of Jesus as the way to live a highly structured and spiritually conscious life.

Matthew's beatitudes saw Christian witness as the center piece to a happy life. In our busy, high-stressed lifestyles, Matthew's beatitudes can be our means to a happy or blessed life.

The idea is that if you live the way Jesus lays it out, you will be truly happy, truly fulfilled. But, as you know, the best things in life always demand the best we can be and the greatest effort we can put forth.

To live the life of the beatitudes to which Jesus invites us demands nothing less.

In those days, the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion. Rather, "in those days the church was more like a thermostat that transformed the mores of society... If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning..." (Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail")

The Beatitudes therefore re-set the way we even imagine ourselves to be a person and an individual, and we should feel constantly challenged by them— recognizing we fall far short of them — when we have not understood them at all.

The beatitudes challenge the very basis of our existence and how we engage one another in the community including the following:

The beatitudes are first of all eschatological blessings – that is to say they are first of all promise and consolation. The first half of each beatitude depicts the communities present; the second half foretells the community's future.

So, the community's everyday life is guided by contemplation of the world to come. The truth is, our actions today have direct consequences for tomorrow.

The Beatitudes are not just blessings but a call to action.

The Beatitudes stand as a daring act of protest against the current order. Jesus teaches us how to look upon such people as the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and you who when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you (falsely) on my account, with new eyes, and so gain a new perspective on being community. Hence, the Beatitudes testify that it matters deeply whom we call "neighbour" or "member of the community."

The Beatitudes are a call to action to make Jesus present and visible in the community and manifest when the world tries desperately to silence those who have this abiding hope in Jesus Christ.

The Beatitudes are a call to action for the sake of creating the community or world God imagines. These days, we need this reminder -- when our imagination may be limited. When our hope for the future might have been dimmed. When we think what we do and what we say and what we believe does not matter. There is a world to come.

The Beatitudes help us to know ourselves in relation to others - in both affirmation and jealousy. The Beatitudes give us a new way of seeing, a new way of naming, and so a new way of being. We are invited to look again and discern a new reality that is coming into being.

The Beatitudes describe our relationship to the human community and the Kingdom in three ways:

First, the beatitudes are simple rules that address our highest desire: happiness with God results in happiness with one another. For, only God can satisfy the heart.

Second, The Beatitudes describe the path to God for us as individuals and together as Church and community. Through the Beatitudes, we share God's very life as we mature in our relationship within the community.

Finally, they challenge us to live moral lives by putting God first – bearing witness in the community. If we want to know what it truly means to be stewards of community, the Beatitudes offer that guide.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 13. (Sunday) 15th Sunday after Pentecost

September 19. (Saturday)

YLNE mtg – 2:00pm – Council office

September 21. (Monday)

Council Executive mtg – 5:30pm – Council office

September 26. (Saturday)

Council mtg – 9:00am – BT church hall



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

September 13.
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