Everyday Exilic Ethics #1 Pastor Rick Baker

April 3 2022

Exiles of Grace and Faith

Matt. 5:1-6

Where are we? *What do we see when we see the crowds?*

We are living between the extremes of full-blown **self**, as the measure of morality, and resurgent fundamentalism that puts fences around the **self**.

The values (“righteousness”) of the present society are formed by the authority of inner feelings. *To those who wish to remain “religious”, scripture is being re-interpreted through the lens of self-experience versus objective exegesis (i.e. truth from text—original and intended meaning).* The highest meaning of community presently is to affirm individual self-expression. All authority is sourced in inner feelings, personal consent, and the “social imaginary” (the way society sees the world versus the way it is).

*Christianity is on its way to being considered the dangerous, lunatic fringe.* (Carl Trueman; Strange New World, 2022)

The values of traditional religion (recent society) were formed and based upon authority external to the individual—the authority of God and of Holy Scripture. *Those religions that have failed have mostly done so by using religion as fences for the flesh rather than life-giving words for soul transformation.*

Jesus stunned the audience of his day by warning them that “unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly NOT enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:20) Carnal fences don’t fix fallen souls.

**“THE KING’S SERMON”**

Context: A world in the despair of sin needing a Saviour

Authority: ALL—to establish a kingdom of subjects who will LIVE SAVED

Setting: Leaves His healing ministry to attend to His teaching ministry—*from temporary fix to eternal solution*

*Now it will come about that in the last days the* ***mountain*** *of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the* ***mountains****, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it, and many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the* ***mountain*** *of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may* ***teach*** *us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.”* (Is. 2:2-4)

To the people in social and political exile, to those in the margins, people who lack and suffer deprivation, Jesus offers gifts (blessings) of grace from God to broken people.

The Great Reversal –*How Jesus describes the blessed*🡪

1. **Those poor in spirit**. (5:3)

*For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the contrite.* (Is. 57:15)

Before disciples have anything to give, they have much to get from the Lord (cf. Ex:20:1-3)

Justification has to precede sanctification.

The good news of the gospel –those always left behind can find a place in the Kingdom Jesus is building...”THEIRS is the kingdom of heaven” –presently and exclusively!

1. **Those broken-hearted** (5:4; Is. 61:1-2; Amos 6:6)

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good new to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners; to proclaim the favourable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn,...* (Is. 61:1-2)

Those who think deeply about the state of man and God and all the disappointment He endures—now in mourning over our sin and the sin of others.

The church isn’t crushed due to a lack of fences and rules, but because of a “defective sense of sin and a defective doctrine of sin.” (M.Lloyd-Jones, 1959)

The comfort of God Himself is promised.

1. **Those who are found at the back of the line, the humble, gentle, meek, little** (5:5; Ps. 37:11)

*But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.* (Ps. 37:11)

Genuinely value grace because there is no pretense of deserving.

Free of malice and vengeance because they genuinely have a completely honest view of themselves and their unworthiness.

A gift from the Giver to those who were never takers—THIS EARTH!

1. **Those ravenous for righteousness** (5:6; Is. 61:3)

*Giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.* (Is. 61:3)

Their ravenous hunger for the right ways of God in your own life and in this world—justice; for His will to be done frees them from a hunger (desire) for sin. (cf Matt 6:33) 🡪 personal holiness and social justice

Starving on swine food, he became ravenous for the real food and turned back to his Father—fattened with righteousness (filled)

The Kingdom is “near”—it is breaking in everywhere—all pointing to the reality of Christ and His good news—the fullness of these blessings is the final agenda—get in on this now.