

## **PART III: MORE HAPPINESS**

### **RECAP & INTRO**

Last week we declared a week of happiness! I hope you've had a week filled with MAKARIOS. Did you?

Anyone wants to share their experience of a MAKARIOS week? [may be 2 people]

But who remembers why we declared a week of MAKARIOS?

[Any answers?]

We agreed that this was for 2 reasons

1. Happiness/MAKARIOS is a product of character
2. Happiness is a promise of Christ – He promised his heavenly Kingdom for the poor in spirit. He promised comfort those who mourn. He also promised the earth for those who are meek. *And by the way, I hope you had a meek week knowing that meekness is not weakness.*

*Please say it with me..*

**MEEKNESS IS NOT WEAKNESS**

*And no overcompensating if you find yourself in situations demanding meekness out of you.*

### **THIS WEEK**

I come back to you to declare that we have another week to enjoy Happiness because happiness is a product of character

So this is a week for ..... MORE HAPPINESS

## **BACKGROUND**

I thought it necessary that we pursue more details on the aspect of happiness as product of character.

Before I address the next set of the beatitudes, it may be important for us to see how they are all connected. In fact, it is **John Stott** who commented and said: *That the 1<sup>st</sup> four beatitudes reveal a spiritual progression. To begin with, we are, we are to be “poor in spirit”, acknowledging our complete and utter spiritual bankruptcy before God. Next, we are to “mourn” over the cause of it, our sins. Thirdly, we are to be “meek”, humble and gentle towards others, allowing our spiritual poverty to condition our behavior to them as well as to God. And fourthly, we are to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Real confession of sin must lead to hunger for righteousness.*

### **Three Pillars**

And there are three pillars of this that we need to delve into this week.

In fact, each of the three beatitudes addresses 3 areas of our Christian character that you and I need to STANDOUT in more and more as we see the day approaching:

The three are:

- 1. Ambition**
- 2. Attitude**
- 3. Action**

Let's read the text

### **Matt 5:6-8**

*6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

## I AMBITION (5:6)

In 5:6, Jesus talks of “those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. “Hungering and thirsting is a rather descriptive term for AMBITION.

To have an ambition as a Christian is a normal thing. A person without ambition and lacking motivation has a problem. A big problem.

Such a person needs to discover he has worth. There is NO person who is worthless because we are all created in God’s image.

And we’re also created to fulfill a particular purpose, a God ordained purpose.

It is because of this that we have to agree that it is proper to have an ambition. It is part of God’s design

### **But:**

This ambition can also be perverted

There are several examples in the Bible that demonstrate that perversion of ambition is possible.

One such example is Lucifer, one of God’s most glorious creation, a master piece. He was beautiful and magnificent. His driving ambition according to Isa 14:13-14 was to be like God!

### **Isa 14:13-14**

*13 You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."*

Lucifer was a power hungry being. Anyone who is hungry for power for its own sake is a victim of perverted ambition.

Guess what: You will bump into these power hungry people in the big arena of national politics, or in the small arena of the local church. You will find them everywhere - bullies in school, teachers in classrooms, Matatu drivers, etc.

God rejects this inclination to perverted ambition.

See how God responded to Lucifer's perverted ambition

“But you are brought down (Isa 14:15)

There was another person - the rich man in Lk 12.

He'd done well in business and his main worry was *What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops? (Lk 12:17)*

### **Let's read a bit of his story**

#### **Lk 12:17-20**

*16 And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. 17 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' 18 "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. 19 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." ' 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*

Brothers and sisters, God is going to give some people the ability to gain wealth, and others will not have as much of this ability. And this is where the problem lies: “Wealth always brings problems along with it.” This is the problem:

**Those who have money have problems knowing what to do with it. And those who do not have money encounter problems trying to get it.**

This rich man's problem was not power. He didn't even have an issue with wealth per se. He was simply pleasure –hungry! He was hungering and thirsting after fun. In short, he was being eaten up with the burning desire to have a good time.

Now listen to how God commented on this kind ambition.

God used ONE word to describe him: “FOOL!” (Lk 12:20). What more can one add to this kind of description if it is coming from God.

Friends, when a person's ambition is perverted to power –hunger, God bring him down. And when a man's ambition is completely devoted to pleasure – seeking, God calls him a fool and then brings him down.

What a disaster that can be!

I'm sure some of you are already profiling some people in your mind who in your view should be called by God FOOLS and then brought down! Well, so long as you're not the one, you may be safe for now.

In the Book of Daniel, there is another example of perverted ambition.

King Nebuchadnezzar was a very successful king, at least according to human standards. But he was hungry for more fame. He really loved the praise of men so Daniel decided to counsel him:

*27 Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue." (Dan 4:27)*

Listen to how the king responded to Daniel's advice:

*30 he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"(Dan 4:30).*

This does not sound very humble at all!

But God says, "No, you won't"

See the full version in **Dan 4:31-32**

*This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass for you until you acknowledge that the most High is sovereign over kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."*

This is quite a tough reproof from God to someone whose ambition was perverted.

It is true that Jesus intended that we should have ambition. That's why he said that we must hunger and thirst for righteousness. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that we hunger and thirst for the right things so we don't get caught up in perverted ambition like Nebuchadnezzar and the others we mentioned earlier. If we are to be God's men and women in a sick society, what should be our overriding ambition?

It should not be hunger for power, fun, or fame. Instead it should be to:

- i. Possess righteousness
- ii. Practice righteousness
- iii. Promote righteousness

In case you are wondering how sick our society is and badly we need enough people to STANDOUT and hunger and thirst for righteousness, listen to Mahtama Gandhi speak to his generation then:[SHOW SLIDE ON 7 BLUNDERS]

## **7 WONDERS OF THE WORLD THAT LEAD TO VIOLENCE**

1. Wealth without work
2. Pleasure without conscience
3. Knowledge without character
4. Commerce without morality
5. Science without humanity
6. Worship without sacrifice
7. Politics without principle

If you want to be a happy man/woman that STANDSOUT in his generation for the sake of God's Kingdom, don't be caught in any of the 7 blunders.

Instead, commit to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

## **2. ATTITUDE**

The next attitude calls for a certain attitude in all of us who are committed to STANDOUT as children of God: “Happy are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” (Matt 5:7).

“Mercy” is compassion for people in need. **Richard Lenski** helpfully distinguished it from “grace”: *...mercy always deals with what we see of pain, misery, and distress, and grace always deals with the sin and guilt itself. The one extends relief and the other pardon; the one cures, heals, helps, and the other cleanses and reinstates.”*

Interestingly, in this beatitude, Jesus does not specify the categories of people he has in mind to whom his disciples were to show mercy. He’s probably implying that we’re to show at all times irrespective of the situation.

Indeed, our God is a merciful God and he shows mercy continuously and citizens of his kingdom must show mercy too.

The problem is that the society we’re living in is very unmerciful. The world prefers to insulate itself against the pain and calamities of men. It finds revenge delicious and forgiveness, in comparison, tame.

But those who show mercy find it.

The church of Jesus Christ is supposed to be full of kind people, reproduced by a merciful God. Are you and I known as kind people? Or are we only interested in our own small world, our own concerns, our own circle?

Here is what a kind or merciful person looks like.... I mean in terms of attitude

He will be concerned more for others than himself

He will STANDOUT from the crowd because of his concern. Any one comes to mind?

Please allow me to emphasize here that if you have been given the gift of mercy, you must STAND OUT and save this nation from the unmerciful lot. This country needs what I’d like to call **MINISTERS OF MERCY OR KINDNESS**

Why do I say so?

- So many people go to bed hungry daily when some of us throw away food because it went stale before we could get to eat it
- There are so many bright and needy students who will never make it to the next level of their education
- There are so many abandoned children who lack a place to call home. Of course some are in children's homes waiting for the day a good Samaritan will show up. Here is the challenge: Do you have capacity to adopt a child? Are you wondering what to do? This is the word for.....extend mercy right away...go ahead and adopt for it will be counted to you as righteousness.

The time is now

### **Here at NCWW**

- Here at NCWW, a group of willing men & women have made a commitment to help the children with cancer admitted at KNH. If you are a minister of mercy, kind sign up and join the Haba na Haba team. Talk to Stella
- We have some men in this church who are running and boys' mentorship prog at MUGUGA Green P School called Boys to Men. Again, this is an act of mercy
- Some of our members don't have jobs or any form of income. Do we have any ministers of mercy who can extend some love and help to these people?
- Sometimes I wonder what would happen if people began to extend mercy for the real sense of the word. For instance, if we were to bring dry food items, clothes, shoes, etc. Don't you think some people in our community will "feel" the attitude of mercy? Just thinking aloud.

**“Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy”**

## **3.ACTION**

This 3<sup>rd</sup> Beatitude calls for ACTION. It is action based on Jesus' truth that “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (Matt 5:8). Purity in heart means singleness of heart and purpose.

Action springs from motivation and our actions must be evaluated in the light of what motivated them. Ananias and Saphira did what on face value looked to be a magnificent thing. Why were they condemned?

They wore the facade of total dedication but in reality, they were not completely sincere. They kept part of the money they'd sold the property for.

One of the saddest things in our society today is that we evaluate people by external standards, without any knowledge of their motivations. In this Beatitude, Jesus was saying in effect, "Your actions will be blessed when they are more than just actions - when they are motivated by what's right and true. When you act with integrity and sincerity, then you are pure in heart.

When began this series, I challenged us to be men and women who can **STANDOUT** and **DARE TO BE DIFFERENT**.

To this, we committed to:

**START** where we are

**SPEAK OUT**

**STAY THE FULL COURSE**

I pray and trust that most of us are getting challenged enough even today to the extent that we're ready to take **ACTION**

Here is an example of a man who seem to have embraced what we're taking about even without knowing it..

**Illustration: Video of Magufuli**

## **CONCLUSION**

Are you ready with the right ambition, attitude and action?