

THE HOPE CHOICE

MATTHEW 5:4

Sermon Series: Life's Healing Choices

Introduction

- Last Week - *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*-Matthew 5:3 (NIV)
- The Reality Choice: Realize I'm not God, admit I'm powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and my life is unmanageable.

Introduction (cont'd)

- Galatians 5:6 *"It is for freedom that Christ set us free."*
- **The second choice is the hope choice.**
- It is the choice to earnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to him, that he has the power to help me to change.

Introduction (cont'd)

- Matthew 5:4 (NIV), "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*"
- The deepest happiness and blessings in life often come from the things that I would never choose or want in my life.
- God's path to comfort and hope begins with this:

1. An Accurate Understanding

- You see who God really is.
- Romans 8:34 (TLB), *"Who then will condemn us? Will Christ? No! For he is the one who died for us and came back to life again for us and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, pleading for us there in heaven."*

An Accurate Understanding (cont'd)

- Who are you going to trust? Your feelings; or what God has not only said about you but demonstrated toward you.
- Psalm 86:15 (NIV) says *"But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness."*

An Accurate Understanding (cont'd)

- Who is God, really? 2 Corinthians 1:3 (NCV) says this, *"God is the Father who is full of mercy and all comfort."*
- Psalm 23:4 (NIV), *"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."*

2. An Authentic Transparency

- Romans 3:23 (NLT), *"For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard."*
- We spend so much of our life and time and energy hiding from the truth of who we really are.
- Jeremiah 31:3 (GW), *"I love you with an everlasting love. So I will continue to show you my kindness."*
- Human love fades but God's love is everlasting.

An Authentic Transparency (cont'd)

- Psalm 119:76 (NIV), *“May your unfailing love be my comfort.”*
- God’s love is a pure gift.
- Romans 3:24 (NLT) says, *“God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us [there's that freedom word again] by taking away our sins.”*

An Authentic Transparency (cont'd)

- So whatever your circumstances, whatever life is throwing your way right now, hold on to that truth every day of your life: I am loved.
- When I begin to take a look at who I really am there are some truths about me that help me to get a hold of Life's Healing Choices.

An Authentic Transparency (cont'd)

- *Truth #1-I must often have to feel worse in order to feel better.*
- *Truth #2-I must often feel grief in order to experience joy.*
- *Truth #3-I must often feel weak in order to receive power.*

3. An Absolute Dependency

- I trust in God alone to change me.
- 2 Reactions to change:
- *“I just don't have the time or energy right now.”*
- *“I've tried asking God for that, but I always end up in the same place.”*
- So where do I find the power to change?

An Absolute Dependency (cont'd)

- Isaiah 40:28-31 (NLT):
- *"Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know? That the Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. Even youth will become exhausted, and young men will give up. But those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and they will not faint."*

An Absolute Dependency (cont'd)

- It's not me changing for God. It's God changing me through his power.
- Philippians 2:13 *"For it is God who is at work within you, giving you the will and giving you the power to achieve his purpose."*
- *It is God at work in you giving you the will and desire to change.*

Invitation

- Have you been focusing on your feelings, instead of living by faith in what God says about you?
- Have you been covering up who you really are, instead of courageously opening up?
- Have you been trying to change, instead of trusting God to work those changes in you?