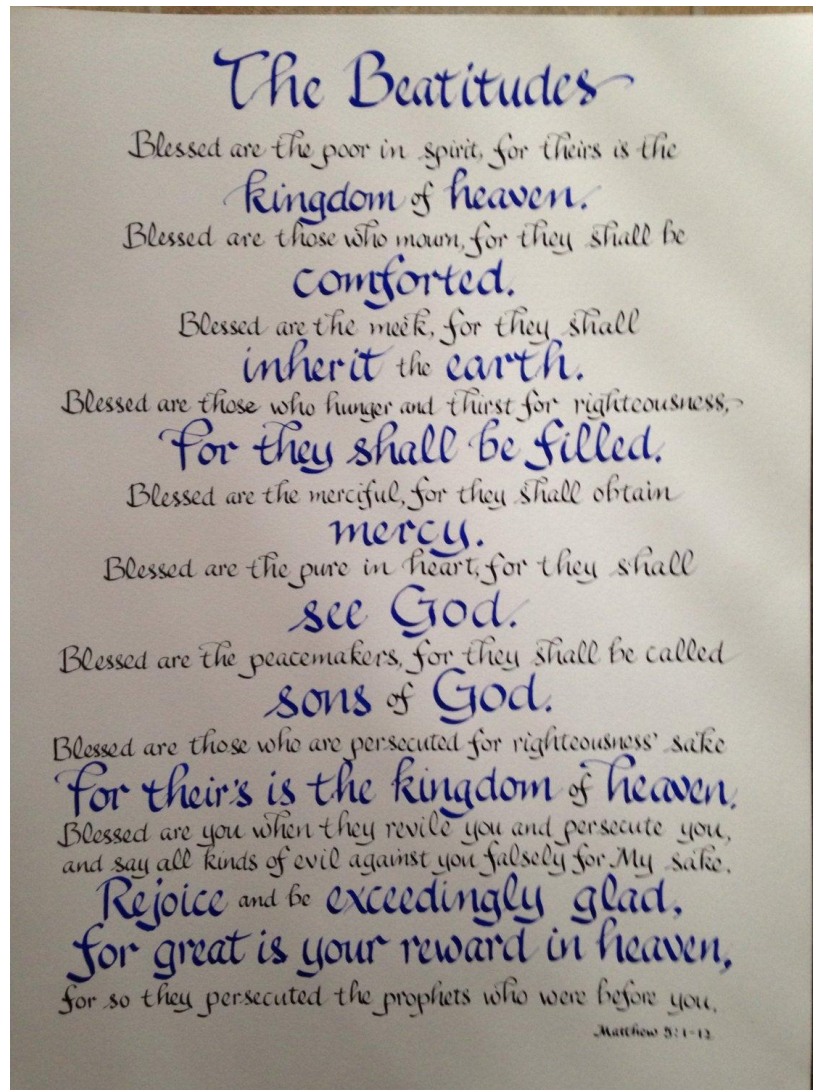


July 25, 2021

"But I tell you..."



I really enjoy checking in on Facebook at least once or twice a day. Don't you? There is so much good advice offered on that site, isn't there? (NOT) It is possible to get advice and direction from people you don't even know about all sorts of things. The world is filled with those who would tell us how we ought to live and its been that way from the beginning.

In the very beginning God told man, "...for when you eat of it you eat of it you shall surely die." But Satan told the couple, "You will not surely die." (Genesis 2:17 and 3:4) Throughout time there have always been those who would advise us on how to live, what to think and what to do. And, there has always been the Word of God showing us his way.

In Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount' he addresses this very issue. In fact the whole sermon is, I think, all about this very issue. Our Lord repeated uses these phrases to show us the contrast. First he says, "You have heard that it was said..." to introduce the world's influence and direction

and then he says, **"But I tell you..."** For all of us, of course, the challenge is, as always, who do we listen to, whose advice and direction do we take.

Beginning with the fundamentals of our faith as laid out in the beattitudes we can, I believe, find this very contrast. Jesus would teach, **"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."** The world would teach, 'Blessed are the arrogant who take what they want.' The world would teach, 'Blessed are those who show no mercy' but Jesus would teach **"Blessed are the merciful..."**

For the faithful there is and will always be this challenge. God, through his Word, would direct our lives along his way and the world will advise us to take another road and both will assure us that blessings will be ours if we follow their way. God has always shown us the way, and Satan has always tried to show us another way. So, who do we follow? Whose words do we hear?

Jesus would teach us that a blessed life will be built on a humble spirit, that mourns for sin, accepts direction with all meekness, hungers and thirsts for God's righteousness, practices mercy, pursues purity, and lives to bring peace. The world would teach us that we should seek power, ignore consequences, reject direction, show no mercy, live for self and use division to dominate and destroy.

So, in our lives who do we hear; whose words do we follow? For those who would follow Jesus every action, every word, every belief must be filtered through the Word of God. Jesus would call us to choose, **"If anyone would come after me..."**