



Jesus Changes Everything

When Jesus stood on a hill and looks out on the multitudes before Him, He knew that the words He would speak would have a huge impact on every one's life that day and in the days to come. Jesus begins by telling them that the Gospel was for all the losers, all the broken, all those who haven't normally been included, but who are now included. They are seen, they are loved, they are welcome. At this very moment God is reordering the way things work and what the world looks like. For the people who were hanging on His every word these were life changing words. He came for the poor in spirit, the people who don't get it, the impoverished, those whose spirits are crushed, those on the B team, the spiritual zeroes, those who keep stumbling. He came for everyone who mourn, who's hearts are broken and their lives devastated. He was there for the grief-stricken, the meek, the unnoticed, the passed-over, the bullied and marginalized. For all who feel discriminated against, or lacked power and choice, He is with them. He stands with the hungry and thirsty, and He speaks out about injustice and He brings peace. Our God still meets us in our poverty, sorrow, struggle and says to us, "I am on your side." I always felt I

needed to climb a ladder and claw my way to the top but that isn't the case with God. He was at the bottom of the ladder to bless me. Knowing that God met me in my mess, changed how I saw others who were in the middle of their own messy, broken and hurting lives. I started to judge less and I could see myself in others who were struggling, and I could share the grace I had received with them.

God wants us live in the world but He calls us to be different. He wants us to show mercy to others in the same way He showed mercy to us. This is what God wants His church to be. A place that is merciful and a place where all are welcomed and loved. I asked God many years ago to let me see people how He sees them, and to give me a heart for everyone. It's a big step for us to look at our everyday lives and ask if we are being forced to go with the flow.

But just think what would happen if we listened to God and refused to go with the flow but instead became a voice for those who have no voice, for the homeless or the woman at work on the receiving end of sexual jibes or the guy at school who's getting bullied. We stop short often because we are afraid that if we speak out, we might suffer for it. Now it's possible that it might just happen but Jesus' words from the hill are still speaking: "You are blessed, God is on your side." The Beatitudes are about receiving grace so that in our own poverty, brokenness, weakness and longing for justice we can hear the amazing, exciting announcement that God is on our side. I know that I had to do a lot of soul searching in order for me to fully receive His mercy. I had to stop beating myself up, perhaps you need to do that as well. Let God heal our divided hearts, so we can receive His gift of peace. When we do and we allow God to restore or reset our lives we will be able to live and believe the prophetic call to; "Love God with all our heart and soul and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves."

