

Introduction

- Manifesto of the Kingdom
 - WWJD - What would Jesus do?
 - more like, what is his kingdom like - and since he embodies his kingdom...
 - smaller chunks
 - intention is to try and do it in such a way that we have to engage with the actual text more - and not just with what I think the text is saying!!

Makarios

- Nine times in this brief passage Greek word **Makarios** is used:
 - most translations render it as some variation of **blessed**
 - but we are struggling to find an accurate translation of the Greek sense!
 - concept was easier understood in the 1st century than the 21st century!
 - some versions use **happy** - but that implies an inner emotional state, whereas **blessed** is an outward, objective condition
 - can't use the word **fortunate** - because it is not by good fortune alone that these people have benefited
 - can't use the word **lucky** either - doesn't cut it!
 - **blessed** carries the sense of their being someone who blesses...
- So I was very struck reading this recently in QTs in CEV:
 - "God blesses those people who....."
 - this is a passage about those who God is blessing, in whose lives he is active
 - this is a passage about his power to give, and about those to whom he chooses to give
- This is a passage about who the **real winners** in life are:
 - the ones who truly have significance, satisfaction
 - the ones who are to be congratulated
- **But does that actually ring true?**
 - *look at the actual passage, CEV, on the screen and ask what questions people have about this passage...*

Notes

- All blessings are future tense:
 - except the first and the last - which are of **current** entry into/participation in/citizenship of the **kingdom of heaven**
- v.11-12 also have a "**heaven changes everything**" tone to them
- This is a kingdom where the values have been over-turned compared with anything else we know!
 - this is not a list of the "**usual suspects**" as far as success and significance go!
 - deliberately, consciously subversive!
 - are we so totally devoted to God, reliant on his Spirit's help, filled with gratitude for Jesus' work on the Cross and life within us, that going his way is fine?
 - **and does that change what we regard as blessing?**

Are we:

- depending only on him?
- are we ashamed of our troubles and grief, thinking them a sign of God's displeasure? Or do we look to him for comfort?
- are we humble?
- do we want to obey him more than to eat or drink? (**really?**)
- are we merciful?
- are we pure of heart? pure of motive? pure in our imaginations?
- do we make peace? Or are we content with discord?