

ARE YOU BLESSED?

by Carl McMurray

There are two words translated by the term “blessed” found in the New Testament. One of these Greek words is *makarios* (3107), which is used forty-nine times, and is the word which Jesus used nine times in the Beatitudes. A simple definition for this word that is often given is, happy, and it does mean this, But, may we suggest that when Jesus used this term, and His apostles, sometimes it meant much, much more.

On one level *makarios* means much more than simply happy because it includes the idea of “contentedness.” An inward contentedness that is unaffected by circumstances would be the deeper happiness that is meant here, rather than just a surface joy in the moment. This deeper happiness that is a state of wellbeing that does not lean on temporary outward circumstances would certainly be the kind of happiness that God desires for His children. No doubt this is what our Lord was speaking of when quoted by the apostle, *“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”* (Acts 20:35 ESV)

Even a deeper level of meaning to the word *makarios*, is pointed out by Greek scholar Spiros Zodhiates. He says that “blessed” is more than just an inner contentedness in that it describes one who possesses the favor of God. It is one whose state of being is marked by fullness from God. This is described by Paul when he writes, *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”* (Romans 4:7-8 ESV) What fullness and contentment must belong to the forgiven man. The one who has sought mercy and obtained the forgiveness that God offers is in possession of God’s favor and dwells there securely.

Zodhiates says finally, *“Makarios is the one who is in the world yet independent of the world. His satisfaction comes from God and not from favorable circumstances.”*

Certainly there is more meaning to this word *makarios*/blessed than simply feeling “happy.” It is an expression of the inner man whose heart and conscience are at peace with God. This man is happy indeed.

- thoughts from J.D. Watson, A Word for the Day