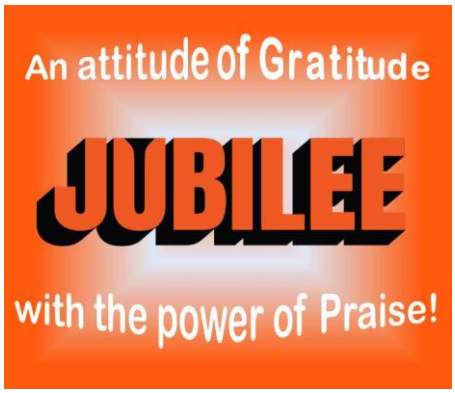


11/09/26

Having coached soccer and basketball for decades, one of the first things that you learn is the importance of fundamentals. No matter how good a player, or a coach for that matter, may become, everything about the sport is based on fundamentals. The fundamentals are the basic foundation that you build from regardless of how good you may become. As a simple example, in soccer, when you strike a ball, where your plant foot, the foot that you place your weight on as you swing through the ball, is a primary indicator of the direction the ball will take, regardless of where you want it to go,

In basketball, a similar thing is true. As you take a shot, following through with your wrist and finger tips causes a rotation of the ball that greatly increases the odds that your shot is true. What does this have to do with you? The Kingdom of the heavens has fundamentals, a foundation of things that are simply true, and they cause things to work the way that they're supposed to. Let's stay here for a minute.

In sports, a thing called "the process" is now all the rage, kind of brought to prominence by Nick Saban, the legendary coach of Alabama football. But what does that mean, "the process". The idea is to break away from the concept of having "goals". I never cottened much to that concept myself, but it has dominated the self-help and business success aisles at bookstores for years. But back to "the process".

The idea is that if you focus your attention on the immediate task at hand and apply the fundamentals properly, the *outcome* will be successful. You're not looking ahead or behind, you're focused on executing the proper fundamental in the moment with the confidence that, if you execute properly, the outcome will, more likely than not, be favorable. This works because it is also a precept of the Kingdom. Jesus instructed us to seek first and foremost The Kingdom of God and His righteousness, so that all that we need will proceed to or be added to us. We're not to be concerned with later because all we can do is now. And if we get now right all the time the favorable outcome is, more times than not, assured. That's what Jesus said in Mt 6:33-34, which is also a part of The Beatitudes, the "declarations of happiness" that we looked into yesterday.

These Beatitudes, as they are called, form fundamental principles, foundational precepts, of The Kingdom of God, and as we noted, they astonished the crowds that heard them. Jesus was talking things they'd never heard, and doing it with authority that gave credence to His words. That's why He said, **"Whoever hears these words of mine and performs them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock."** (Mt 7:24) And when the rains come, (and they will), and the floods rise, (and it will), and the wind kicks up, (and it will), your house will stand. Because you've been practicing the fundamentals, the foundation is sound. When you focus on what you're doing and do it right, the good results pile up!

Jesus went through an eye-opening view of anger, adultery, oaths, love, forgiveness, prayer, actions and reactions in conduct and relationships, and it was blowing their minds. They'd not heard such before, yet they are powerfully true. And because His Spirit lives in you, they are possible to do. And He began by setting this up with a pronouncement of "happiness" for the people who were properly positioned to receive it. He was going to give the fundamentals to those who possessed the right attitude, And that's one of the things that we spent time with yesterday, specifically verses 3-9 of Matthew 5.

I came to see a common key as I dealt with a proper picture of these words: lacking spiritual arrogance; humility rather than pride; pure motive and intentions; and of course, being hungry to be in the state of Him who is how he ought to be. The common key? It's all about God and others, it's not about me! **"Be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect."** (Mt 5:48)

Love never fails!

Mark