

# I BECOME

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*Presented at Trinity Community Church, San Rafael, California, on Sunday, January 22, 2012*

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Becoming is the pathway of being. It's how you get from point A to point B in personhood.

Being is what God made you for; becoming is how you get there.

When Jesus described the ideal person, in terms of being, he gave us the Beatitudes.

## Matthew 5:1-10

*One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, <sup>2</sup> and he began to teach them.*

<sup>3</sup> *“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

<sup>4</sup> *God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

<sup>5</sup> *God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.*

<sup>6</sup> *God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.*

<sup>7</sup> *God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*

<sup>8</sup> *God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.*

<sup>9</sup> *God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.*

<sup>10</sup> *God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

There's a reason these are called the *Be*-attitudes and not the *Do*-attitudes. The first six of the eight describe *conditions of the heart*, the seventh describes the aim of the activities of such a person, and the last describes some of the treatment such a person may expect. It's all about *personhood*—what sort of a person you are and what sort of a person you ought to be.

I should guess that we are all familiar with the tension between what we ought to be and what we are. Does anything frustrate you more than your failures to live up to your ideal of personhood? Does anything frustrate you more?

Now, humor me for a moment, as I unveil the inner workings of a sinful mind—my own: I know that the failure of *other people* to live up to my ideal is aggravating, but, at least, it can be easily explained: they're so immature, or they're just jerks. But *my own* inconsistencies? A complete mystery! I suspect you get my point.

All too often we are confronted with evidence of not being the very person we want to be and intend to be and, indeed, are earnestly trying to be.

The distance between what sort of person you are and what sort of person you ought to be is called *becoming*.

Becoming implies possibilities.

Becoming suggests growth.

Becoming hints at developmental change.

Becoming is my *destiny*.

Of course, like most things, becoming has both positive and negative possibilities.

Its first occurrence in the Bible is in the second chapter. God made a man's physical form from the earth's dust and breathed into him the breath that is life—and man "**became** a living person" (Genesis 2:7). Humanity's essential destiny has been recorded, and it is this: to live before God, in His glorious presence.

The second occurrence is also in the second chapter. In answer to what the man lacked, what he required to make him whole, God made from his rib a woman, fashioned to be his perfect counterpart. This explains why a man now leaves his birth family to be joined to his wife, and, as the Scriptures declare, "*they shall **become** one flesh*" (Genesis 2:24). Humanity's ultimate destiny has also been recorded, and it is this: to live in unity and intimate fellowship with God and one another.

The third occurrence also happens in the same chapter, and here things take a major shift, introducing the *negative* possibilities of becoming. The story began in the couple's first home—Eden's garden—that beautiful and bounteous planting of the Lord. Of all the trees and fruits in the garden only one was off limits. In a moment that has come to epitomize what it means to be human today, Eve was persuaded to ignore that single limitation and try for herself something forbidden, and she persuaded her husband to do the same.

And God's reaction has been recorded for all time: "*Behold, the man has **become** like one of Us, to know good and evil*" (Genesis 3:22). This was literally a matter of biting off more than we could chew! The results are more than we can bear; sin is killing us. Without a Savior there would be no real hope at all. Science and technology only take us in circles; as we solve some problems we create new ones. There is only one way out (and there always has been): leaning on God's mercy to follow Jesus Christ.

Why? Because Jesus Christ is the Great Restorer! He restores what was lost in the fall of man. He restores our original destiny. He makes it possible to live—fully live—in the presence of God. He makes it possible to be united in love and faithfulness—with God, with your spouse, with your children, with your neighbor.

When God entered our world as a human—Jesus from Nazareth—He sought to tell people about His plan to restore all things. However, "*He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to **become** children of God. They are re-born—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God*" (John 1:11-13).

"*He gave the right to **become** children of God.*" Our original destiny was reinstated. We have wandered far from the path, but Jesus is leading us home again. You and I have the right to become the children of God. This is the result of our faith in Jesus. Right now, we are children of God by faith. And, if we hold on to our confidence until the end of our lives, we will become children of God indeed.

We are only children of God today *by faith*, which is the substance of things *hoped for* and the evidence of things *not yet seen*. It is appropriate to rely on Jesus' restorative power every day and to conduct our lives in this confidence. But it is foolish presumption to imagine that the work is complete—a fact to which our inconsistent behavior testifies plainly.

Now, Jesus' work on our behalf is complete—our salvation has been bought and paid for. But His work within us is ongoing—our sanctification is a lifelong process.

*“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has **become** a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!”* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We have the *right* to become God's children—because of Christ's saving work—and we have the means—the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit which have been given to us, but we must add an equally necessary ingredient—persistent, obedient faith. Without that, it's all a pipe dream, a religious fantasy.

But with that—with persistent, obedient faith—each day will bud and blossom with fruitful possibilities. Here are some prophetic examples from the Bible:

*“So they will say, ‘This land that was desolate has **become** like the garden of Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited’”* (Ezekiel 36:35).

*“The parched ground will **become** a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land”* (Isaiah 35:7).

*“The smallest family will **become** a thousand people, and the tiniest group will become a mighty nation. At the right time, I, the Lord, will make it happen”* (Isaiah 60:22).

The possibilities are real, but there are dangers along this path, as well. There will be tests of your faith and faithfulness that you must overcome.

Jeremiah warned that prophets may become windbags, if God's word does not remain in them (Jeremiah 5:13). He also warned that pastors may become dull-hearted, if they cease to seek the Lord (Jeremiah 10:21).

Jesus warned us not to abuse authority, as so many do, saying, *“Whoever desires to **become** great among you, let him be your servant”* (Matthew 20:26).

Paul warned that we might lose our connection to Christ, the Source of love, and become like *“a loud gong or a clashing cymbal”* (1 Corinthians 13:1). And we have been urged to keep Jesus in the center of our thoughts, lest we *“become weary and give up”* (Hebrews 12:3). Paul also advised, *“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may **become** blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life”* (Philippians 2: 14-16).

At the risk of understating it, *becoming is important*. Being is my present state, but *becoming* is moving forward to my future. I want to hear the seventh angel blow his trumpet! Why? I'll tell you. John revealed that future moment, for which I hope, with these words:

*“Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices shouting in heaven: ‘The world has now **become** the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever’”* (Revelation 11:15).

I want to be there on that day! I want to hear that trumpet sound! I want to witness that global transformation!

And becoming is the means of being.

I believe. I belong. I become.

What are you becoming today?