

Lesson 1: The Beatitudes

Reference: **Please Read:** Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-26

Theme: The Realities of being a Follower of Jesus – Character and Expectations

Context: Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in the Galilee Region

Introduction:

As was Jesus' custom He would teach the people whenever the opportunity presented itself; since it's the truth that sets us free, and He is full of grace and truth- John 1:14-17; 17:17.

John 8:31-32, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- The word "Beatitudes" comes from the Latin, meaning "Blessings."
- The Greek word translated blessed means "spiritual well-being and prosperity,"
 - o A deep joy of the soul- experiencing a foretaste of heaven on earth
- There are 8 of them in Matthew's account and 4 in Luke's along with 4 woes

The beatitudes are not so much promises for Jesus' disciples as they are a description of their character; as a result of being saved and apart of His Kingdom. Without a doubt, the safest and happiest place for the believer to be is in the center of God's will.

Blessed are the poor in spirit

- Matthew 5:3, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*"
- Not saying, "Blessed are the poor in wallet, financially destitute, and beggars"
- He was not at all advocating a poverty gospel; to be humble one must be broke
- Jesus was anointed by the Spirit to preach the good news to the poor- Luke 4:18-19
 - o that they don't have to be poor anymore, spirit, soul or body
- **Question:** "So what you think Jesus was talking about, being 'Poor in spirit'?"

I believe the reference Jesus was making concerning the "poor" in **Matthew 5:3** was in reference to Isaiah's "poor" in **Isaiah 66:2**- this is all about humility and reverence for God.

Isaiah 66:2

"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."

Isaiah 66:2 NKJV, "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word."

Blessed are those Mourn

- Matthew 5:4, *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted"*
- I believe Jesus is talking about repentance here
- The Old Testament taught on the subject of repentance- Ezekiel 14:6; 18:30-32
- John the Baptist came, preaching a message of repentance- Matthew 3:7-11
- Central theme of Jesus' message was repentance- Luke 5:32; 24:47
- The Early Church continued preaching a Gospel of repentance-Acts 5:31;20:21; 26:20
- It's a core belief in the Christian Faith as taught in the Epistles- 2 Cor. 7:10-11
- It has to be more than just lip service/good intentions- rending of the heart- Joel 2:13
- **Question:** "How would you define repentance, what does it look like?"

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Blessed are the Meek

- Matthew 5:5, *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth"*
- Many confuse meekness as being a doormat Christian- we're not a victim but a victor
 - When we are insulted we don't return in kind- 1 Peter 3:9-14
 - However, we can defend ourselves and families- Luke 22:36
 - Unless of course you choose a better resurrection- Hebrews 11:35
- Meekness is not weakness- it takes a lot of character to walk in love
- The Greek word *praus* for meekness = strength brought under control- self-control
- When challenged, Jesus spoke the truth boldly in love (no push over)- **John 8:12-59**
- **Question:** "How does the world think Christians should act in regards to meekness?"

Blessed are those who Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness

Mt. 5:6, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled"*

- Hunger and thirst represents intense desire or great human need to sustain life
- Jesus makes the parallel towards righteousness and the things of God- intensity
- Our greatest passion in life must be for our God and His Kingdom- Matthew 6:33
- **Please Read: Psalms 42:1-2; 63:1**

Question: "What promise does Jesus give to those who hunger & thirst for righteousness?"

Blessed are the Merciful

- Matthew 5:7, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy"*
- It's a lot easier to show mercy when we realize the mercy God has shown to us
 - o Luke 6:36, *"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful"*
 - o Mercy triumphs over judgment- James 2:13
- **Question:** "What happens if we don't show mercy to others?"
- When the Pharisees criticized Jesus for eating at the tax collectors house, He said...

Matthew 9:12-13,

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Blessed are the Pure in Heart

- Matthew 5:8, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"*
- What makes us pure before God? It's our faith in the blood of Jesus alone- Ro. 3:25
- 1 Timothy 4:8 speaks of training in godliness- purity greatly affected by our thinking
 - o **Question:** "How can we cultivate a pure heart before God"

1 Timothy 1:5, "The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."

Blessed are the Peacemakers

- Matthew 5:9, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God"*
- Before we can become peacemakers, we must first have peace with God ourselves
 - o The world has no peace without the Lord- Isaiah 57:20-21; John 14:27
- Our behavior, character and attitude has everything to do with being a peacemaker
 - o Mark 9:50; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8
- **Question:** "Have you ever found yourself in the role of a peacemaker?"

Blessed for being Persecuted for Righteousness

- **Please Read: Matthew 5:10-12**
- The enemy aims to shut us up through intimidation, threats and fear
 - o The Spirit Baptism gives us power to be a witness and boldness- Acts 1:8
- Actually it's a real honor to suffer disgrace for the Jesus- Acts 5:41; 1 Peter 4:12-19
- Being a Christian will draw resistance, count it all joy- 2 Tim. 3:12; James 1:2-5
- Look at how Paul and Silas responded to being in jail- Acts 5:41-42
- Church history has shown that persecution only makes the Church stronger
- **Question:** "Why would it be a blessing to be persecuted for Jesus?"