

The Meaning of the Beatitudes

Introduction

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

1. Jesus gathered His disciples, sat them down on the mountainside, and began teaching them within the hearing of the masses of people.
 - A. Jesus began His teaching with eight statements of correlating blessing, instruction, and promise, which have come to be known as the **beatitudes**.
2. The Beatitudes, are a set of teachings delivered by Jesus Christ during the Sermon on the Mount.
 - A. These verses outline a series of blessings highlighting the qualities and attitudes valued in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - 1) “Beatitudes” is derived from the Latin word “beatus,” meaning blessed or happy.
 - 2) Each Beatitude begins with “Blessed are,” followed by describing a specific virtue or circumstance that leads to divine favor.
2. In awe and wonder, the disciples marveled at Jesus’ explanation of the beatitudes, knowing that the importance of the blessings!

Jesus' Meaning of the Beatitudes

1. (V.3) **“The Poor in Spirit”**
 - A. **“Poor in Spirit” can mean lowly, afflicted, helpless, powerless to solve a problem, lacking wealth and education, or begging.**
 - B. **One must be willing to admit their own utter spiritual destitution. They must be broken and contrite over the realization that they possess absolutely nothing to commend themselves to the Father and have no right to His Kingdom.**
 - 1) **The poor in spirit feel a deep sense of spiritual destitution and comprehend their nothingness before God.**
 - 2) **The kingdom of heaven is theirs because they seek it and, therefore, find and abide in it.**
 - a. **Could there be a problem in your life today that is beyond your control? Bring it to God and seek His help.**
 - b. **God promises to help the poor in spirit.**

2. (V.4) “Those who mourn”

A. This means “to wail.” This is deeper than just sadness.

- 1) It is despond and despair.**
- 2) A separation from God because of sin causes mourning in our soul that is too deep for words.**

B. It is only when we acknowledge and embrace the mournful state of our sinful hearts, that we can find the comfort of our Redeemer.

- 1) Our Godly sorrow leads us to repentance.
2 Corinthians 7:9-11**
- 2) One shall be comforted by the discovery and appropriation of God’s pardon.**
- 3) This beatitude covers all those who are led by mourning to a discerning of sin and who so deplore its effects and consequences in the world as to yearn for and seek the deliverance in Christ.**
 - a. God promises to comfort those with a heavy burden of disappointment or loss in life.**

3. (V.5) “Are the meek”

A. Meekness means humility. A gentleness of spirit or a mild disposition.

- 1) A meek person is one who trusts God and accepts today’s circumstances as God’s best for them.**
 - a. Even if situations in their lives are painful, frightening, or frustrating.**
- 2) Two of the most powerful people in the Bible, Jesus, and Moses, were considered “meek.”**

Numbers 12:3 (Now the man Moses was **very humble**, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

Matthew 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for **I am gentle and lowly in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls.

B. Jesus chose to surrender His rights and submit to the Father’s will, He poured Himself out for those He came to save, He became a servant even unto death so that the power of God could be displayed through Him.

- 1) Through His meekness, He literally saved the world.**
Philippians 2:6-11

C. It is only through the surrender of our will to the Father’s that we can experience the power of meekness.

4. (V.6) “Hunger and thirst for righteousness”

A. Individuals who eagerly (or crave) righteousness. Righteousness is holy and upright living, conforming to God’s standard.

1) This likens to David’s outcry in Psalm 42:

Psalms 42:1-2 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. **My soul thirsts for God**, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

B. Many today, like those on the hill listening to Jesus’s message, desire to tap into Jesus’s power for personal needs like healing, prosperity, or wisdom.

1) But Jesus knew that the only thing that would truly satisfy their souls, and ours, is the righteousness of God.

C. Jesus is God’s righteousness. He came to earth as the bread that gives life to the world, and those who partake in His living water never thirst again.

1) When we seek God’s Kingdom and righteousness first, He promises to take care of all our other needs
Matthew 6:33

5. (V.7) “Merciful”

A. These individuals are kind, even to those who treat them without respect.

- 1) They possess a forgiving spirit.**
- 2) Even though we don’t deserve it, God is a merciful God and for that we can be so thankful.**

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; **Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him;** And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

B. Mercy is an active virtue that Christians can show each other because we have been given mercy.

- 1) Since God has forgiven our offenses, we should forgive others and show mercy.**

6. (V.8) “The pure in heart”

- A. This is the person who approaches life with innocence and blamelessness.**

Psalms 73:1 Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart.

- B. To be pure in heart is to have a single-minded devotion to seek God and yield to His ways.**

1) To expand on this thought, Jesus later reiterated the first and greatest Old Testament command to His followers, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).

2) Because no one can boast of a sin-free heart, God sent His Son to redeem us. When we cling to Him, He purifies our hearts and makes us whole.

- C. The pure in heart are free from evil desires and purposes. They can see and experience God’s presence because they are free from self-righteousness and arrogance.**

7. (V.9) “The peacemakers”

A. These are people who WANT peace. They do not stir up fights or arguments.

1) They do not look for reasons to complain or to say bad things about others.

James 3:18 Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace **by those who make peace.**

B. The Hebrew word for peace means much more than just absence from strife. It means completeness or wholeness.

1) Apart from Christ, it's impossible to live at peace with others because He is our completeness.

Ephesians 2:14-16 For **He Himself is our peace**, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, **thus making peace**, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

C. The term includes all who make peace between men as individuals or as communities.

8. (V.10-12) “Persecuted for righteousness’ sake”

- A. These are individuals who are teased, harassed, harmed, or bothered by others because they choose to do what is right.**

John 15:20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, **they will also persecute you**. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

Luke 6:23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For **in like manner their fathers did to the prophets**.

- B. Jesus followed this last beatitude with several verses that expand on the idea of persecution to include insults, lies and enduring all kinds of evil for His namesake (Matthew 5:10-12).**
- C. Persecution was a familiar concept to Jesus’s disciples in that day. Through Christ’s strength, they daily bore the burden of horrific oppression and torture for the sake of the Gospel.**
- 1) Tho somewhat rare in the U.S., in other parts of the world Christian persecution is considered one of the largest human rights issues of our era.**

- D. The apostle Paul wrote:**

2 Timothy 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus **will suffer persecution**.

- 1) Unfortunately, this is something we can count on. It is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when and how much.**
- E. Those who suffer because of their loyalty to the kingdom of heaven are blessed by being bound more closely to that kingdom for which they suffer.**

Conclusion

- 1. It is evident through these beatitudes taught to us by Jesus, that He desires that we become the very best that we can be.**

- 2 When we become “in His character” then it will be evident to ourselves and others when we are “out of character.”**

- 3. I truly believe these characteristics can be developed into each one of our lives because as we read each one of these beatitudes, we see that Jesus is speaking to His audience as if these collective traits were attainable and theirs for the taking.**
 - 1) May we strive daily to take them and apply them to our lives!**

1 John 3:1-3

