

**BLESSED ARE THE
POOR IN SPIRIT
MOURNERS
MEEK
HUNGRY
MERCIFUL
PEACEMAKERS
PERSECUTED**

THE BEATITUDES

Matthew 5

Sermon on the Mount - The Beatitudes - Part 1

Most of us have heard of the "Beatitudes". We know they are out there, and we know that Jesus said them, but we're not really sure what they exactly mean. When we think of them, we know they contain information about being "poor in spirit" and being "peace makers" and things like that, but most of us have not examined them and asked the Lord, "God, how do

you want this teaching to change my life?"

I think one of the reasons we sort of just hear them and move on to the next thing is because they seem to promote ideas that are the polar opposite of what the world has to say about living. We subconsciously think, "This is wonderful and an ideal way to live, but it is unrealistic. If I do this, the world will grind me to powder."

So let's jump into the text and let's listen to the words of Jesus.

The Beatitudes

5 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

*³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.*

*⁵ Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.*

*⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.*

*⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.*

*⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.*

*⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.*

*¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.* ¹² *Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:1-11 NKJV)*

I once heard a teaching that said, "The BE attitudes are there to tell us how to 'be'". Well, that is fun to say, but the word "beatitude" comes from the Latin word *beati* that was translated from the original Greek word *μακάριοι (makarioi)*, which means "blessed, happy, or "rich". The group going to Israel in March will see the cave where Jerome translated the Greek and the Hebrew into Latin during the third century. He chose this word in Latin and we derive our Anglicized word from that Latin word.



POOR IN SPIRIT - Finding ourselves broken beyond our own help

So what in the world does Jesus mean when He says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven*", and how can that impact my life and help me and you to be all that God wants us to be? There is much discussion about what it means to be "poor in spirit".

Some say that Jesus is speaking of a virtue of being financially broken or financially poor. They point out that Jesus taught in other parts of scripture that the worldly riches can and often do separate us from focusing on the most important things. Remember how He said that it is difficult for a rich man to enter into heaven. But, that is not what Jesus is talking about here. He is talking about being "poor in spirit". He is not talking about being poor in your pocket book.

Jesus says that being "poor in spirit" is key to having the Kingdom of God. Jesus is saying that an initial stage in obtaining the Kingdom or living in "the Kingdom" is to come to the end of ourselves. He is saying that salvation comes when we realize that we are broken sinners in desperate need of something beyond ourselves. We are in great need of something greater than our own resources to be inheritors of the Kingdom.

Jesus is saying that our own resources can not create an abundant life for us here, nor can they save us and take us into eternal life. Our own means and methods cannot and will not earn the salvation that He offers. When we begin to have God's perspective, we become less preoccupied with ourselves and we become more invested in others. That is what Jesus is talking about when He says, "²⁵ *For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*" (Matthew 16:25 NKJV)

In thinking of our eternal condition, to be poor in spirit is to recognize our spiritual brokenness before God. It is understanding that you and I have nothing of worth to offer God really other

than ourselves. Being poor in spirit is admitting that, because of our sin, we are completely destitute spiritually and we can do nothing to deliver ourselves from our dire situation. Jesus is saying that, no matter your status in life, you must recognize your spiritual poverty and deficiency before you can come to God in faith and receive the salvation He offers.

The Kingdom of God does indeed mean living on earth with God's priorities in your life, but likewise it means to be with Him for eternity. The Apostle Paul wrote the little church in Rome telling them that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God". (Romans 3:23) and he also reminded them that the consequence of our fallen sinful state is eternal death or separation from God. When we understand this, we can step out in faith and realize that we can receive His gift to us, His death on the cross, and we enter into the Kingdom of God.



BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN - THEY WILL BE COMFORTED - He will dry away every tear

Being "blessed" and being in mourning do not seem to go together. Some Bible scholars say that this only applies to His disciples and closest friends. Nothing in the text seems to support that idea in my mind. I think Jesus is saying that when we enter into Kingdom living, there will be much which causes us to mourn.

First, we will mourn our own brokenness and our own spiritual condition. Likewise, when we walk in the Spirit we become acutely aware of the result of sin in the world around us. We grieve the evil that goes on

in the world a little differently than the heathen/unbelievers do. I know as a pastor, I can easily become overwhelmed by the difficulties of those whom I serve. When my sheep suffer, I feel it on a different level than I've ever felt at other times in my life. When people are going through suffering, they sometimes ask me "why" is this happening to me, and instead of trying to figure out "why" I have just learned to point to "who" it is that can carry us through this suffering. I've heard it said if God has brought you to it, He will lead you through it.

So, maybe Jesus is saying that when we develop a more Christ-like heart we will empathize more and more with the suffering of those around us and the suffering in the world. He promises us that when we experience that suffering, brokenness, hardship, and heart break, we WILL BE COMFORTED. Later in His ministry, Jesus explained that the parakletos, the Holy Spirit of God, would be put into the heart of every believer as a comforter. Paraclete (**Greek:** παράκλητος, Latin: paracletus) **means** advocate or helper. In Christianity, the **term** "paraclete" most commonly refers to the Holy Spirit. Literally the Greek word means "one running along side of us".

We are reminded over and over in these beatitudes that Christian living or Kingdom Living is very very different than the way the rest of the world operates. True joy is never found in

selfish ambition where we're just chasing after what is good for "me and mine". Often serving the Lord takes us to experience certain sorrows and difficulties that are foreign to the world. I have told many of you that "loving people costs you something". It will cost you your time, your talents, and your treasure. But, in giving these you will be blessed and you'll "gain your life". We are not told that serving Him will enable us to avoid sorrows, but rather we are told that He will be there to comfort us through those sorrows.

Unfortunately much of living on earth involves sorrow. We are told that heaven will be a place where there is no more pain, sorrow, and suffering. The old southern gospel song "Where would I go but to the Lord" was written by JB Coats down in Mississippi as he lay comforting an old black neighbor who lay dying.

Where could I go, where could I go
Seeking a refuge for my soul
Needing a friend to help me in the end
Where could I go but to the Lord

Jesus is saying to all of His followers, "Whatever is that causes my followers to mourn, they can be assured that they will find comfort and rest in Me." That is a promise.



BLESSED ARE THE MEEK - THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH

The world says that those with aggression, forcefulness, and drive will become the rich and the blessed. The world's idea is that if I am intent enough on getting my own way and making good for me and mine, then I win. We've all heard the hollow life motto "He that dies with the most toys wins." Well the truth of the matter is that "He that dies with the most toys still dies." A person with a meek spirit lives with a totally different

priority system than those who live for themselves.

Meekness is the character trait of those who have the power and might to have their own way, but choose to lay self aside to gently attend to those around them. That is an absolute picture of being like Jesus. Scripture tells us that Moses too was a picture of meekness. (Numbers 12:3) The key to understanding the underlying meaning of the word in Greek is to understand the breaking in of horses. Imagine a huge powerful untrained horse. The beast is filled with spirit, energy, drive, and passion. The Greeks used this word "meek" to put that passion and power under control.

Even the ancient Greeks like Aristotle the Great teacher and philosopher described the great virtue of meekness. Aristotle said that courage fell between recklessness and cowardice. He said that meekness could be defined with respect to anger. The **praus (meek)** person, is the person who feels anger that is justifiable and right. It is anger directed perhaps toward the right person at the right time and in the right way, but it is powerfully under control and is self-restrained.

It would be like a king who is powerful enough to destroy all of his enemies, yet who chooses to be merciful. It is the perfect godly combination of gentleness and strength. Meekness is not weakness and indifference, but strength with gentleness. The Jewish concept is a little different than the Greek concept as it focuses more on the side of humility. It is the person who sees themselves as the lowly man submitted to the guidance of God regardless of where that guidance might lead. So if we combine the Hebrew thought with the Greek thought we see **perfect obedience blended with perfect control. With these two working in combination we see what a God-controlled life looks like.** The Apostle Paul describes this heart attitude in his letter to the church in Phillipi.

2 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but ^[c] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, (Philippians Chapter 2)

This brings us up through the first three "beatitudes". Being poor in spirit means understanding just how very much you need God in your life. Those who understand what they don't have are in fact very rich. Then the promise follows that when the sorrow of life comes, regardless of where it comes from, we have a promise that God will not leave us or forsake us, and will in fact comfort us and wipe away our every tear. Jesus finishes this part of His sermon telling us that those who may in fact be powerful, but choose to restrain that power blessed and rich. They are so rich in fact that they are the beneficiaries and inheritors of the "land". They are no longer exiles, but have a place, a plan, and a purpose in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let us pray

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by

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