

The Beatitudes

Part 1

“Blessed are the poor in spirit”

Introduction.

1. For the next few weeks we will study the 9 Beatitudes found in Matthew the 5th chapter. (Matt. 5:3-12).

Matt 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matt 5:5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

Matt 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Matt 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Matt 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Matt 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Matt 5:10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 5:11 "Blessed are you when {people} insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

Matt 5:12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

2. These 9 Beatitudes are the beginning of perhaps the best known sermon in the world. - The Sermon on the Mount.

- a. Jesus preached some of what we call “The Sermon on the Mount” on other occasions.

- b. Luke records some of this sermon and some beatitudes in Luke 6:17-45.

3. The Beatitudes will reveal how to find true and lasting happiness.

4. In fact, if we will follow the teachings Jesus gave in these beatitudes happiness is guaranteed.

5. It is guaranteed in this world and the world to come.

Beatitudes

1. The word “blessed” comes from the Greek “markarios” [mahr **kah** ree ahs] and means, “blessed, happy”

- a. Happiness is a universal desire.

- b. Every normal man, woman and child desires to be happy.

2. Jesus is teaching us how to be “blessed, happy.”

- Every person I know wants to be happy.
- Many do not know how to find real happiness.

- Men have written many books and articles on the theme of happiness.
- Some of the books and articles, those based on God’s word, are excellent, but many things written by men do not lead to true and lasting happiness.
- Jesus, the Master teacher, teaches us the true way to be happy.

3. Both God and His Son want us to be happy. (Psa. 144:15; Jn.10:10). See also Ps. 33:12

Ps 144:15 How blessed are the people who are so situated; How blessed are the people whose God is the LORD!

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have {it} abundantly.

Ps 33:12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance.

- The Master is guaranteeing happiness to those who follow His instructions in the beatitudes.
 - 1) It is not a maybe.
 - 2) It is promise from the Son of God.
- . The one who follows these instructions is in a blessed or happy condition having the approval of God.
- This happiness is not a worldly happiness, but is a happiness that comes from being right with God.
- It is a joy and inner peace of knowing God is with us now and forever.
- The happiness described is far more than an emotional feeling, but it does not exclude an emotional feeling.

4. What Jesus says about happiness really differs from the advice of the world.

World & Happiness

Education	Drugs & Alcohol	Doing as you please or doing nothing.	Excellence
Wealth	Power	Fame	Sex

5. Each of the beatitudes contains a blessing, a requirement, and a reward.

First Beatitude

MAT 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

- “Heaven” is plural in the Greek text, but it has a singular idea.
- It is referring to God’s kingdom we enter through the new birth and to the heavenly kingdom.
- Jesus promised those who become a part of the kingdom here will be in heaven with Him. (Lk. 10:20; Jn. 14:1-3). See 1 Pet. 1:4.

- The phrases “the kingdom of heaven” and “the kingdom of God” are used synonymously in the Scriptures.

1. **Misconceptions**

- a. The words “poor in spirit” do not mean “poor spirited.”
 - 1) The 10 spies were poor spirited, but were severely punished for their lack of faith and negative attitude.
 - 2) God is not pleased with a pessimist of little faith nor with one who is negative about everything. (Heb. 11:6a).
 - 3) God richly **blesses those who fully trust in Him and His promises.**
 - 4) God uses those who fully trust in Him and His promises to accomplish great things to His glory.
- b. It is not talking about being poor per se. (Lk. 6:20).

LUK 6:20 And turning His gaze on His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

- 1) It was primarily the poor who gathered to hear Jesus preach.
- 2) The poor are often more receptive to the gospel. (Jas. 2:5).

James 2:5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world {to be} rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

- 2) Being poor does not guarantee one’s salvation.
- 4) Lots of poor people will be lost because they refuse to repent and trust in Jesus for salvation.
- 5) The masses, including most of the poor, will be lost (Matt. 7:13, 14), but the poor will be the majority of those saved.
- 6) It will be very hard, not impossible, for the rich to be saved. (Matt. 19:23-26).

Matt 19:23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.
 Matt 19:24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Matt 19:25 When the disciples heard {this,} they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"

Matt 19:26 And looking at {them} Jesus said to them, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

- 7) If these words are literal, no rich person would be saved. They are a hyperbole emphasizing it will be very hard for the rich to be saved because they trust in their riches rather than God.
- 8) The New Testament records there were rich or wealthy Christians. (Acts 10, 16; 1 Cor. 1:26; 1 Tim. 6:18).

2. The word “poor” comes from the word “ptochos” [ptoh **kahs**] that means “poor” or “beggar”

- It is used to describe “Lazarus” (ASV, Lk. 16:20).
- The context certainly indicates the one Jesus described was “a beggar.”

Luke 16:19 "Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day.

Luke 16:20 "And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores,

Luke 16:21 and longing to be fed with the {crumbs} which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores.

- "Poor" [beggar] describes one who recognizes that he is spiritually destitute, and he cannot possibly save himself.
- Morals, education, talent, fame, riches, beauty, power, good works, position, etc. will not save.
 - a. Jesus is teaching we must be humble. (Matt. 18:3,4; 20:27,28). See Prov. 6:16=17; Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.
 - b. The humble know they cannot save themselves by their own merits. (Eph. 2:8, 9; 1 Cor. 1:31).

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God;

Eph 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

1 Cor 1:31 so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

- c. They are also willing to serve in any capacity emulating the example of the Master who washed the feet of His disciples. (Jn. 13:1-16).

1) Jesus washed the feet of His disciples.

2) Jesus then uttered these important words that all need to hear and heed. (Jn. 13:14-15).

John 13:14 "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:15 "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you.

3) Jesus was not teaching the universal practice of foot washing, but was emphasizing humble service.

4) The one who will be truly blessed by God is the one who is a humble servant as Jesus was.

3. Humility is required to enter "the kingdom of heaven" but it is not the only requirement. (Jn. 3:3-5).

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

John 3:4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

John 3:5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

- a. One must be "born of water and the Spirit" to :enter into the kingdom of God."
- b. One must let the Spirit through the word of God convict him of sin and lead him to genuine repentance.
- c. One must be buried with the Lord in baptism and arise from the watery grave to walk in the newness of life. (Rom. 6:4).
- d. The words "born of water" is a reference to immersion.

- e. One cannot be born of something smaller than himself.
 - f. John the Baptist, John's disciples, Jesus, the apostles, the seventy called upon people to repent and be baptized.
 - g. Baptism is essential to salvation. (Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 10:48; Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:26,27; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16).
4. "Kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God" (the church) was "at hand." (Matt. 3:2; 4:17).
- a. It would be established in the lifetime of some who lived at the time of Jesus. (Mk. 9:1).

Mark 9:1 And Jesus was saying to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power."

- b. Acts 1 & 2 shows the kingdom was established on the 1st Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 2:32,33).
- c. See also Acts 8:12; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:28; 1 Cor. 15:24-26; Rev. 1:9.
- d. As already affirmed, "The kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God" are synonymous in the gospels.
 - 1) Matt. 4:17 and Mk. 1:14, 15.
 - 2) Matt. 5:3 and Lk. 6:20
 - 3) Matt. 13:31 and Mk. 4:30-31.
 - 4) Matt. 8:11 and Lk. 13:28.
 - 5) Matthew used the terms interchangeably in Matthew 19:23, 24.

Matt 19:23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the **kingdom of heaven**."

Matt 19:24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

- 6) We find that Matthew used the expression "the kingdom of heaven" almost exclusively whereas the other gospel writers used the phrase "the kingdom of God." This might be because Matthew was emphasizing to the Jews that the coming kingdom was a spiritual kingdom rather than a physical kingdom.
- 7) The heavenly nature of the kingdom is something Matthew understood at the time of writing this Gospel, but not at the time Jesus uttered the Beatitudes.
- 8) Acts 1:7-8 reveals that the apostles were still looking for an earthly kingdom at the ascension of Jesus.

Acts 1:7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

- 8) Jesus stressed the kingdom was spiritual in nature. (Jn. 18:36; Lk. 17:20, 21), and Paul emphasized the same thing. (Rom. 14:17).

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Luke 17:20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

Luke 17:21 nor will they say, 'Look, here {it is!}' or, 'There {it is!}' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

Note: The ASV has "is within you." The Greek "entos" has the idea of "inside" as translated in Matthew 23.

Matt 23:25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but **inside** they are full of robbery and self-indulgence.

Matt 23:26 "You blind Pharisee, first clean the **inside** of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

5. Jesus made many references to the kingdom in this sermon. (Matt. 5:3, 10, 19, 5:20; 6:10, 33; 7:21).

Conclusion

1. Next week we will make a detailed study of the second beatitude. (Matt. 5:4).
2. This beatitude is shocking to both believers and non-believers.
3. It is strange and even crazy to the mind of men that happiness comes from mourning.
4. We will make a careful study of what Jesus means by these strange words.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation

Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)