

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

JESUS IS KING



The Beatitudes

Text: Matthew 5:1-12

1. Jesus prepares to teach His disciples. - Matthew 5:1

The previous chapter mentioned that *great multitudes followed Him*, coming from many different regions (Matthew 4:25). In response to this, Jesus **went up into a mountain**.

2. Jesus begins to teach. - Matthew 5:2

This means that Jesus used his voice in a strong way to teach this crowd. He spoke with energy, projecting His thoughts with earnestness.

And taught them, saying: What they heard was a message that has long been recognized as the sum of Jesus' – or anyone's – ethical teaching. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us how to live.

It does not present the political or material blessings of the Messiah's reign. Instead, it expresses the spiritual implications of the rule of Jesus in our lives. This great message tells us how we will live when Jesus is our Lord.

It is clear that the Sermon on the Mount had a significant impact on the early church.

The early Christians make constant reference to it and their lives display the glory of the radical beatitudes.

The Beatitudes: the character of kingdom citizens.

The first portion of the Sermon on the Mount is known as the Beatitudes, which means "The Blessings" but can also be understood as giving the believer his "be – attitudes" – the attitudes he should "be." In the Beatitudes, Jesus sets forth both the *nature* and the *aspirations* of citizens of His kingdom.

3. The Foundation: Poor in Spirit. - Matthew 5:3

Jesus promised blessing to His disciples, promising that the **poor in spirit** are **blessed**.

The **poor in spirit** recognize that they have no spiritual "assets." They know they are spiritually bankrupt.

This beatitude is *first*, because this is where we *start* with God.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven: Those who are **poor in spirit**, so poor they must beg, are rewarded. They receive

the kingdom of heaven, because poverty of spirit is a necessary condition for receiving the kingdom of heaven,

4. The Product: Mourning. - Matthew 5:4

The weeping is for the low and needy condition of both the individual and society; but with the awareness that they are low and needy because of sin. **Those who mourn** actually **mourn** over sin and its effects.

Jesus isn't looking for people who can cast stones. He is looking for people who will mourn their own sin.

5. The Next Step: Meekness. - Matthew 5:5

The main idea behind the word "**meek**" was strength under control, like a strong stallion that was trained to do the job instead of running wild.

In general the people in Bible times considered meekness a weakness.

To be **meek** means to show willingness to submit and work under proper authority. It also shows a willingness to disregard one's own "rights" and privileges. It is one thing for me to admit my own spiritual bankruptcy, but what if someone else does it for me?

6. The Desire: Righteousness. - Matthew 5:6

This describes a profound hunger that cannot be satisfied by a snack. This is a longing that endures and is never completely satisfied on this side of eternity.

Hunger and thirst for righteousness: We see Christians hungering for many things: power, political power, authority, success, comfort, happiness – but how many **hunger and thirst for righteousness**?

7. Blessing to the Merciful. - Matthew 5:7

When this beatitude addresses those who will show mercy, it speaks to those who have already received mercy.

It is mercy to be emptied of your pride and brought to poverty of spirit.

It is mercy to be brought to mourning over your spiritual condition.

It is mercy to receive the grace of meekness and to become gentle.

It is mercy to be made hungry and thirsty after righteousness.

If you want mercy from others – especially God – then you should take care to be **merciful** to others.

8. Blessing to the Pure in Heart. - Matthew 5:8

The phrase **pure in heart** has the idea of straightness, honesty, and clarity.

Christ was dealing with men's spirits, with their inner and spiritual nature. He did this in all the Beatitudes, and this one strikes the very center of the target.

- The heart-pure person can see God in nature.
- The heart-pure person can see God in Scripture.
- The heart-pure person can see God in his church family.

9. Blessing to the Peacemakers. - Matthew 5:9

This does not describe those who *live* in peace, but those who actually bring about peace, overcoming evil with good.

One way we accomplish this is through spreading the gospel, because God has entrusted to us the *ministry of reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:18).

The reward of **peacemakers** is that they are recognized as true children of God. They share His passion for peace and reconciliation, the breaking down of walls between people.

Be a peacemaker today!

10. The Result: Persecution. - Matthew 5:10-12

These blessed ones are persecuted for **righteousness' sake** and for Jesus' sake (**for My sake**), not for their own stupidity or extremism. Sometimes we bring "persecution" on ourselves.

Peter recognized that suffering might come to some Christians for reasons other than their faithfulness to Jesus, and this is not what Jesus addressed here.

See **1 Peter 4:15-16**

In Matthew 5:10 they are persecuted for righteousness' sake; in Matthew 5:11 they are persecuted for the sake of Jesus. This shows that Jesus expected that their righteous lives would be lived after His example, and in honor to Him.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: Why? Because the persecuted will have great **reward in heaven**, and because the persecuted are in good company: the **prophets** before them were also persecuted.

Conclusion: The character traits described in the Beatitudes are not valued by our modern culture.

We don't recognize or give awards to the "Most Pure in Heart" or "Most Poor in Spirit." Though our culture doesn't think much of these character traits, they do describe the character of the citizens of God's kingdom.



GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Do you think this was a common sermon or teaching of Jesus? Why or why not?
2. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? What is the significance of this being the first beatitude?

3. Why is it important to mourn our own sin and not throw stones? Is this common among today's Christians?
4. Do you agree with this definition of meekness? *"To be meek means to show willingness to submit and work under proper authority. It also shows a willingness to disregard one's own 'rights' and privileges."* Why is it so hard to be meek?
5. How do you create a hunger and thirst for Righteousness?
6. Why do you have to be merciful to obtain mercy? How can we show mercy in our world today?
7. Why do you think it is important that Jesus tell us to be pure in heart?
8. How can you be a peacemaker? Can you be a peacemaker and render evil for evil? Take some time to explain why being a peacemaker is so important?
9. Why do you think living the Beatitudes will result in persecution? Why is it important to be persecuted for righteousness and Jesus' sake and not our own radical and selfish intentions?