

# Kingdom Blessings

## the Beatitudes



Matthew 5:1-12  
Luke 6:20-23  
Luke 6:24-26



# Kingdom Blessings

## { the Beatitudes }

	Matthew	Luke	Woes (Luke)
the poor	5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	6:20b Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.	6:24 But woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.
those who mourn	5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.	6:21b Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.	6:25b Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
the gentle	5:5 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.		
those who hunger	5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.	6:21a Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.	6:25a Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry.
the merciful	5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.		
the pure in heart	5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.		
the peacemakers	5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.		
the persecuted	5:10 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.		
when people insult you	5:11 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 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.	6:22 Blessed are you when men hate you, and ostracize you, and insult you, and scorn your name as evil, for the sake of the Son of Man. 6:23 Be glad in that day and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way their fathers used to treat the prophets.	6:26 Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way.

*all Scripture New American Standard (NASB-Updated)*

*This document © 2018 David S. Lampel.  
See the last page for more copyright and usage details.*

The verses we call the Beatitudes—when we distill them down to the essentials—are nothing less than Jesus calling us to live “other-worldly.”

To many, the counsel to live ‘other-worldly’ sounds as if they are being told to live outside reality—to live with their head in the clouds, to be perpetual navel-gazers. To spend our days floating about the ether, our feet never coming to rest on solid ground. But living according to the eternal kingdom-world places our feet on a foundation much more solid than anything manufactured by this world. There is no greater reality than the reality of Christ’s kingdom. As Jesus himself points out at the end of His sermon.

Read Matthew 7:24-27.

Whenever you read “Therefore” in God’s word, you always want to back up and see what the therefore is there for. In this case,

- Jesus has just made it clear (7:21-23) that not everyone who thinks they belong to Him really do.
- Not everyone who thinks they are or should be in the kingdom of heaven will be.
- Jesus says that prophesying and performing miracles are not enough in themselves; only those who do “the will of my Father who is in heaven” will enter the kingdom.
- Luke puts it more pithily: “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (6:46)

So in v24 Jesus paints a picture that contrasts those who “hear these words of Mine and act on them” to those who don’t.

Living other-worldly means that

- while our feet may be planted on this temporal plane, our heart and soul reside with the Lord.
- while our body is fed by this world’s food, our spirit is fed from above.
- when we are forced to choose between kingdoms, we choose the only one that will last forever.

In this age it can be difficult at times to grasp the reality of such things. They sound hazy, ephemeral—like trying to describe last night’s dream. They seem to have no basis in fact for a world constructed on the foundation of logic and reason.

The truth of the matter is that it is precisely this age that is on shaky ground—even though to those outside the kingdom, it seems the other way around.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18.

Living other-worldly means that

- when this world’s authorities confound you with their facts and figures and absolutes (all of which seem to change from day to day), you can turn with confidence to the only firm foundation there truly is.
- when the latest paleontologist finds a new set of bones that proves incontrovertibly that women evolved from gibbons, but men evolved from gorillas;
- when astronomers inform us that “we now know that” God lives in the Delta Quadrant of the Milky Way;
- when sociologists tell us that all people are essentially good, so it’s unfair to blame the gunman who just sprayed bullets around the Burger King—

—when all the senses want to scream from the overload, the person who is living other-worldly need only turn to the comfortable truth of God living in his or her life.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-7:27; Luke 6:20-49) is not “Christianity’s message to the pagan world.” It cannot be considered “good news” (the gospel) to anyone depending on fulfillment of its demands for entrance into the kingdom. (Just imagine someone outside of Christ, without the indwelling Spirit, trying to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees! [Matt. 5:20]) The Sermon on the Mount is rather a character sketch of those who have already entered the kingdom and a description of the quality of ethical life now expected of them. (Source: Bible Dictionary)

**Time:** During Christ’s first year of ministry

Rough Timeline (Matthew):

- Baptized by John
- Temptation in the wilderness
- Begins gathering Disciples
- Crowds are swelling
- Delivers Sermon on the Mount, beginning with Beatitudes

**Place:** probably one of the foothills around the N Galilean plain (about 80 miles from Jerusalem), perhaps near Capernaum (on the upper, NW shore of the Sea of Galilee). Note close proximity to Cana (site of first recorded miracle).

v1

no contradiction necessary between Matthew’s “mountain” or “hill” (5:1) and Luke’s “level place” or “plain” (6:17)

**Audience**

Not a public discourse intended for a large crowd, but directed toward His immediate disciples and followers and witnessed by the larger crowd. (cf. Matt. 5:1-2 & Luke 6:20)

Some commentators believe that the Matthew Sermon is actually comprised of pieces of a number of different public discourses.

v2

opening His mouth = used in solemn or revelatory contexts [cf., Acts 8:34-35, 10:34. also Job 3:1, 33:2, Daniel 10:16]

Read Acts 8:34-35.

**ON THE WORD “BEATITUDES” ...**

not Biblical, but from the French *beatitude*, derived from the Latin *beatitudo*, which is from the root *beatus*, meaning “perfect blessedness or happiness.”

**ON “BLESSED” ...**

= makarios = a prolonged form of the poetical makar (meaning the same); supremely blest; by extension fortunate, well off :- blessed, happy (× -ier). Here, emphatic.

Original secular Greek: “free from daily cares and worries. ...the condition of the gods and those who share their happy existence.” But then degenerated into just “happy.”

Philo (the Jew; of Alexandria): Only the deity attains to blessedness; He alone is blessed. Men share in this only in so far as the divine nature penetrates the creation.

As with Philo, the source of true blessedness is God Himself.

Read Deuteronomy 11:26-28

Associated with the “joy” of our earlier discussion—true joy, as superior to mere happiness.

“Blessed...refers to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the Kingdom of God.” (Reflected even in the dictionary, which states as its first definition, “holy; sacred; consecrated.”)

Describes those...

- whose path in life remains near to God’s path: Have someone read Psa 1:1
- who place their trust in God: Have someone read Psa 2:12
- whose sin is forgiven: Have someone read Psa 32:1-2
- who believe what God has promised: Have someone read Luke 1:45

For me, O Lord, the world is all too small,  
 For I have seen Thy face,  
 Where Thine eternal love irradiates all  
 Within Thy secret place.  
 And therefore from all others, from all else,  
 Draw Thou my soul to Thee  
 Yea—Thou hast broken the enchanter’s spells,  
 And I am free.

There, in the radiance of Thy blessed Face,  
 Be hushed and still;  
 There, speechless at Thy pierced Feet  
 See none and nought beside,  
 And know but this—that Thou art sweet,  
 That I am satisfied.  
 (Gerhard Tersteegen, 1697-1769)

Now in the haven of untroubled rest  
 I land at last,  
 The hunger, and the thirst, and weary quest  
 For ever past.  
 There, Lord, to lose, in bliss of Thine embrace  
 The recreant will;

(“recreant” = disloyal, traitorous)

**on the two versions...**

Luke's is a subset of Matthew's.

Matthew more "spiritual," while Luke is more "physical" or pragmatic—e.g.,

- "poor in Spirit" (Matt.) vs. "poor" (Luke)
- "mourn" vs. "weep"
- "hunger & thirst for righteousness" vs. "hunger now"

Luke includes corresponding "Woes".

The context:

- Place: in the hill country around the northern end of the Sea of Galilee
- Time: during His first year of ministry
- Audience: a large crowd, but specifically directed to His disciples (12+)
- Jesus sat down, as was customary for rabbis
- "opening His mouth" = He was going to reveal something important

v1

**disciples** = learners

We are all disciples—especially when we gather around God's word. We are to be "Marys," sitting at Jesus' feet. [the picture for me is the Bible school I would attend as a small child, sitting on the floor with the other children, listening to and absorbing the Bible stories told by the kindly elderly lady.]

"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."

**poor** = of one who crouches and cowers, hence *beggarly*, *poor* = i.e. pauper

**spirit** = *pneuma* = a current of air, i.e. breath (blast) or a breeze

**POOR IN SPIRIT**

There are at least three ways to interpret this phrase "spiritually poor."

**1. a dearth of spirit; devoid of spirituality**

We are all born into this world "spiritually poor." We are born in abject spiritual poverty, with our "God space" empty. This describes the world that does not know Christ—the world outside the Kingdom. This verse is not speaking of that; if it were, there would be no distinction—and there would be no "blessed".

**2. Someone in whom there is indeed the Spirit, but He remains un-nurtured, neglected; these are people who are spiritually malnourished—and don't care. But we couldn't possibly refer to these people as "blessed."**

**3. Jesus speaks instead of believers who *know they are spiritually poor in and of themselves alone—and who care.***

*Albert Barnes:* "To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favor from him."

*Charles Swindoll:* one who is "not spiritually self-sufficient; one who has learned to lean; one who knows his or her own limitations; an absence of arrogance and pride... Those who are poor in Spirit don't drop names; those who are poor in Spirit don't feel the need to impress you with where they've traveled, how many degrees they've earned, or who they know."

*John Gill:* "...being sensible of their poverty, they place themselves at the door of mercy, and knock there."

Jesus says that those who are truly blessed are the ones who have acknowledged the emptiness inside their souls, and that it is a space Christ alone is able to fill.

King David knew what it was to be spiritually poor, and he said it eloquently in his 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm.

"Poverty" is the cry of the broken, repentant heart. Though he was the great king of Israel, and could purchase anything he desired—even another man's wife—David later acknowledged his own spiritual poverty.

Read Psalm 51: 5-10, then 16-17.

## ILLUSTRATION OF "SPIRITUAL POVERTY": LUKE 18:9-14

Read Luke 18:9-14.

There is nothing mysterious about Jesus' reason for telling this parable: It was told "to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt."

Place yourself back in the first century. You would see the Pharisee in the same way we see our own, revered spiritual leaders. And you would see the tax collector as a duplicitous politician, an agent of your sworn enemy and oppressor, Rome.

To most Jews, a Pharisee, with his party's emphasis on following the very letter of the Torah and oral law, would be viewed as the pinnacle of righteous living. Whereas a tax collector was considered the lowest of the low. Because they not only collected taxes for the hated Romans, but typically over-charged to pocket the difference, they were on a social level with Samaritans—or even Gentiles.

### Direction/Audience

v10: two men went to the temple to pray, but...

v11: the Pharisee prayed to *himself*. When we pray to ourselves, our words rise no higher than the top of our head.

### Posture

Pharisee, v11: Standing with face and hands raised (Psa 134:2), prob. in a prominent, public spot

Tax collector, v13: Standing apart from the people, with head bowed, beating his breast

### Words

Pharisee: Look at me! See how much better I am than everyone else!

Tax collector: God have mercy on me, **the** sinner.

mercy = be propitious, i.e., "atone for my sin because I, in myself, am unable"

the = in the original Greek it is the definite article "the," i.e., "I am the worst of all sinners."

The arrogant man, always expecting that he is owed more than he has, shakes his fist in God's face and cries out, "I don't deserve to be treated like this!" But the humble man, aware that he is, in himself, bankrupt but for God's grace, lifts up open hands to God and, with bowed head and grateful heart, cries, "I don't deserve to be treated like this."

Read Matthew 23:5-12.

## AN EXAMPLE OF "SPIRITUAL POVERTY":

As always, Jesus Himself is the best example of His teaching.

Read Philippians 2:1-8.

Paul's counsel to the Philippians regarding their attitude and behavior within the Body of Christ is also a good description of one who is "poor in spirit." As we look at these verses, note how important it is to have the right attitude—to be right in our mind. For that is where it begins. vs3-5:

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped...

v3

**selfishness** = strife, intrigue, contentiousness: the idea of being divisive, causing problems in the body by always insisting on your way.  
**empty conceit** = *kenodoxia* (*kenos*: empty, vain & *doxa*: praise, honor, glory) = self-glorification; a desire for praise, conceit, vanity, illusion; *a desire for the kind of glory only God should be receiving*. Translated "boastful" in Galatians 5:26:

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.  
Galatians 5:25-26

**humility of mind** = lowliness of mind, humble in spirit; i.e., not just *behaving* in a humble or modest fashion (which could in itself be self-serving), but actually *thinking* of oneself in this manner.

**regard** = consider

**more important** = higher, more excellent, superior.

v4

KJV most literal: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

**look out for** = take aim at ("this is my goal")

v5

**attitude** = translated elsewhere “adopt [a] view” (Gal. 5:10)

**in** = or among (i.e., either within yourself, or within the body)

why: “which was also in Christ Jesus”

v6

**grasped** = the act of seizing; asserting (power)

v7

**emptied** = to make empty, i.e. (figurative) to abase, neutralize, falsify; make (of none effect, of no reputation, void), be in vain; or, *set aside His privileges as God*

v8

**humbled Himself** = He allowed Himself to be abased, humiliated

**on a cross** = or, a cross kind of death

## CONCLUSION

To be “poor in spirit” is to understand that in ourselves we are utterly unworthy before God, deserving nothing, but that through Christ we are granted the right to stand before Him with confidence. To be poor in this world is to have an empty purse; to be spiritually poor is to have one’s heart filled with God rather than self.

Turn to Luke 6:24.

v24

**woe** = originally, in OT and secular Greek, an onomatopoeic (the word = the sound) exclamation of pain or anger; to howl; pronounced oo-eye'. In the NT, expresses sympathetic sorrow or condemnation. Here the "woe" is not so much a condemnation (as Jesus used it in Matthew 23 against the scribes and Pharisees), but expresses Jesus' "sadness at what He knows is the inevitable end of any who continue to carry on blindly in self-sufficiency."  
i.e., not "I will bring woe upon you," but "You will have woe."

Wealth—or, by extension, a life of comfort or ease—leads easily to a sense of self-sufficiency. But our "sufficiency" is to be in God alone:

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8 nkjv

The apostle Paul fleshes this out in his first letter to Timothy:

Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

v17

**rich** = same as in Luke 6:24

**conceited** = to be lofty in mind, i.e. arrogant :- be high-minded

**fix their hope** = expect; same word used positively in 1 Tim. 4:10

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

i.e., the "rich" who Jesus addresses in Luke 6:24 are not just ones with lots of money, but ones who have "fixed their hope" on their wealth. They have made their bed, and now must lie in it. That's all they can expect; they have forfeited heaven for their bank account.

Self-examination: We can't read this and just turn away, thinking, since it applies only to the rich, and *I* am not rich, then we needn't bother. Some of the poorest among us are guilty of "fixing their hope" on wealth.

How does this happen? What are some ways that we fix our hope on the wealth (or things) of this world?

How is this different from just doing what is necessary to live in this world?

**richly** = abundantly, copiously

**supplies** = to hold near, i.e. present, afford from *para*: from beside, by the side of, by, and *echo*: to have, to hold.

We began this study by pointing out that in the Beatitudes Jesus is calling us to live *other-worldly*. And here is an example of what that means.

v18

**do good** = or, work good

**be rich in good** = beautiful, valuable, virtuous, worthy, excellent

**works** or deeds = an *act* :- deed, doing, labor, work; can also mean behavior.

**ready to share** = also, willing to communicate

v19

literal: "...treasuring away for themselves a good foundation for the future, in order that they may lay hold on the real life."

Some translations (KJV, NKJV) say "...lay hold of eternal life." "Real life" or "life indeed" seem to be better translations, but if "eternal life" then it is the idea of enjoying here and now the kind of life we will have for eternity.

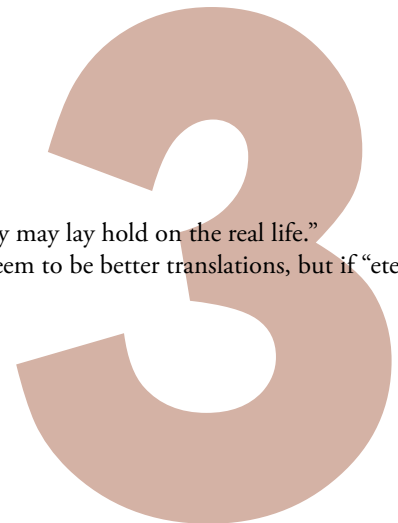
Turn to Luke 6:20

literal Greek = "Blessed the poor, because yours is the kingdom of God."

(the "are you who are" is added to correspond with the original "yours is")

**poor** = same as in Matthew 5

illustration: Poverty is relative (cite comparison of "poverty" in the U. S. and in the third world). Even those we would consider the poorest in our country—the homeless street person—may avail themselves of social services, ministries for the homeless, free meals, etc.





There are many scripture passages that speak of the Lord helping the needy, such as

**Psalms 12:5.**

"Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will set him in the safety for which he longs."

**Psalms 72:13.**

He will have compassion on the poor and needy,  
And the lives of the needy he will save.

But I don't think that is what this verse speaks of. God is near and helps all of His children—those who are wealthy as well as those who are poor. Being impoverished does not grant one special audience before the throne.

However, the poor have the advantage of fewer layers between them and God; fewer distractions; a better view of their need.

**Discuss: Do you think that's true?**

At the same time, in today's social/political climate, poverty can also breed a greater dependency on human institutions rather than on God.

## **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

Note that in both Matthew and Luke the kingdom of heaven/God **is** theirs/yours. (present tense)

**What does Jesus mean by kingdom of heaven/God?**

kingdom of heaven/God = God's way of life, His way of living

*JFB:* "The poor in spirit not only shall have—they already have—the kingdom. The very sense of their poverty is begun riches. While others "walk in a vain show" - "in a shadow," "an image" - in an unreal world, taking a false view of themselves and all around them - the poor in spirit are rich in the knowledge of their real case. Having courage to look this in the face, and own it guilelessly, they feel strong in the assurance that "unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness" (Psa 112:4); and soon it breaks forth as the morning. God wants nothing from us as the price of His saving gifts; we have but to feel our universal destitution, and cast ourselves upon His compassion. So the poor in spirit are enriched with the fullness of Christ, which is the kingdom in substance; and when He shall say to them from His great white throne, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," He will invite them merely to the full enjoyment of an already possessed inheritance."

Those who are poor (in the eyes of the world), but in Christ, are, in fact, rich in the things of His kingdom.

## MOURN/WEEP

Let's look at Matthew first.

**mourn** (Matt 5:4) = to grieve, lament; general sorrow. In secular Greek, used for the external signs of mourning for the dead. In the OT mostly connotes the act of mourning over realized or impending misfortune—even regarding inanimate objects, as in Hosea:

Therefore the land mourns,  
And everyone who lives in it languishes  
Along with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky,  
And also the fish of the sea disappear.  
Hosea 4:3

In the NT, used to express sorrow over the absence of a loved one, or for those who mourned the death of Christ:

Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it. Mark 16:9-11  
(both words “mourning” and “weeping” are used in twenty verses in the Bible)

So to put this into a contemporary context, this word would describe our reaction to the loss of a great leader, or a husband or wife. Or something more personal.

- Jesus says, “Blessed are you who mourn over a marriage that didn’t survive, over a wayward child who is spurning the way of righteousness, a mate who does not yet know the Lord.”
- He says, “Blessed are you who mourn over society’s depravity, over a system that is purposely removing God from every part of public life.”
- And, “Blessed are you who mourn those who have fallen, those who have given their lives in defense of the good, the right, those who have paid a heavy price to protect liberty and justice.”

And let’s remember what “blessed” means: those who mourn will know a distinctive, sacred joy—a peace and joy born only in heaven.

Now turn to Luke.

**weep** (Luke 6:21) = sob, wail aloud, cry out; expresses man’s immediate and outward reaction to suffering. In the OT the thought is that of expressing dependence on God, by addressing one’s cries or complaints to Him in prayer, as in Isaiah 30:

Read Isaiah 30:18-19.

Those who weep now live humbly in complete dependence upon God, since they are conscious of their guilt, and therefore acknowledge that God’s assessment of them is just—as Peter during the trial of Jesus:

Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. Matthew 26:74-75

and the woman at the Pharisee’s house:

And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that He was reclining at the table in the Pharisee’s house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. Luke 7:37-38

So the act of weeping is, in a sense, a form of prayer, or communion. It is the deep and visceral expression of our sorrow—and that which is lifted up to the throne of God. And quite specifically this weeping represents our sorrow over our own transgressions.

- We weep over those times when we rebelled against our Lord.
- We weep over every time we missed the mark, failing to live as He would have us live.
- We weep over the callus that has built up, desensitizing us to His Spirit.
- We weep when we experience the rush of the Lord’s forgiveness and grace.

## CONTEXT

Now if we blend these two—mourning and weeping—into one, just for the purpose of our discussion, we can then consider them in the context of the preceding beatitude. JFB suggests this mourning represents more than just sorrow over tragedy or committed sin.

*JFB*: "...it is that entire feeling which the sense of our spiritual poverty begets; and so the second beatitude is but the complement of the first. The one is the intellectual, the other the emotional aspect of the same thing. It is poverty of spirit that says, 'I am undone'; and it is the mourning which this causes that makes it break forth in the form of a lamentation – 'Woe is me! for I am undone.'"

## AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IN ACTION

Read Isaiah 6:1-5.

Whenever we consider the holiness of the Lord, we realize our poverty of spirit. This produces in us an emotional response of sorrow, weeping, (as with Isaiah) as we consider our low estate in comparison to the purity and righteousness of God. But we don't remain there.

Read Isaiah 6:6-8.

It is important for us to "mourn" over our "poverty of spirit"—to be reminded of our lowliness before the pristine holiness of God. But for the believer it doesn't end there. In Christ, this is immediately followed by claiming the grace and atonement of the cross.

So the sequence is this:

- We come before the throne of God to worship, to realign ourselves in the economy of God.
- As we do, we are reminded of our lowly position in relation to His exalted majesty. ("poor in spirit")
- We are convicted of our transgressions and experience a deep sorrow over our failings. ("mourn"/"weep")
- Through the grace of God we receive His forgiveness.
- Thus revived and renewed, we go forth to serve in His name.

We go through this process many times in our lives, but then there will come a day when even this process will be unnecessary.

Read Revelation 21:3-4.

## BE COMFORTED/LAUGH

**comforted** (Matt 5:4) = to call in or near, i.e. invite; to exhort, encourage, strengthen;

"Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God.  
"Speak kindly to Jerusalem;  
And call out to her, that her warfare has ended,  
That her iniquity has been removed,  
That she has received of the Lord's hand  
Double for all her sins."  
Isaiah 40:1-2

**laugh** (Luke 6:21) = as a sign of joy or satisfaction; here laughter is associated with salvation joy with no thought of triumph over enemies (i.e., laughter of derision or scorn, which this word can also be used for).

Read Psalm 126.

*The Message*

"You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you."

## WOE (LUKE 6:25B)

The words are the same, but now the timing is skewed. If you are not now mourning over your sins, and receiving God's forgiveness through Christ, there will come a day when you will find no relief from the mourning and weeping with which you are burdened for all eternity.

Read Proverbs 1:22-33.

Deep in the heart of every believer is one common desire: “I want to be like Jesus.” For He is not just our Lord, our Savior, but He is our *example*. We need never wonder how to live properly, righteously. We need only pattern our own lives after that of Jesus.

## MATTHEW 5:5

**gentle/meek** = *praus* = mild, i.e. (by implication) humble :- meek. See also <G4235> (*praios*); **praios** = a form of <G4239> (*prau`is*), used in certain parts; gentle, i.e. humble :- meek

*Brown* (secular Greek): “It is a quality shown by friends, while stern harshness may be expected from an enemy.”

*Swindoll*: “‘Gentle’ is strength under control. It is used of a stallion that’s been broken: still strong, all the muscle structure still in that body, but under control. With a pull of the reins that horse obeys.”

*Barnes*: “Meekness produces peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults. It looks upon those who offer them with pity. He that is constantly ruffled; that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard and to raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him. He is like ‘the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.’”

**Discussion:** Why is it so many of us struggle with this? (driving) [because we try to do it on our own]

We can easily associate this with the first Beatitude: Blessed are the poor in spirit..., for it describes someone who is very much aware that he is an empty vessel filled by the grace of God:

*Adam Clarke*: “Our word meek comes from a word meaning a companion or equal, because he who is of a meek or gentle spirit, is ever ready to associate with the meanest of those who fear God, feeling himself superior to none; and well knowing that he has nothing of spiritual or temporal good but what he has received from the mere bounty of God, having never deserved any favor from his hand.”

Early in this study we discussed that the Beatitudes—and the Sermon as a whole—do not represent moral virtues—disciplines of the flesh—but Christian graces that are produced, first, as a result of the indwelling Spirit, and second, as a result of walking in communion with God. We do not gain Christ by behaving according to these precepts, rather we behave this way by accepting Christ as Lord, and walking with Him.

Read Titus 3:1-7.

**malign** = to *vilify*; specially to *speak impiously* :- (speak) blaspheme (-er, -mously, -my), defame, rail on, revile, speak evil.

**peaceable** = not a brawler.

**gentle** = *appropriate*, i.e. (by implication) *mild* :- gentle, moderation, patient.

**every consideration** = *mildness*, i.e. (by implication) *humility* :- meekness. [same as “gentle/meek” in Mat.5:5]

**saved** = i.e. *deliver* or *protect* (literal or figurative) :- **heal**, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.

We’ll return to look more closely at this quality of gentleness or meekness, but let’s continue on into this verse for now.

## INHERIT THE EARTH

Read Isaiah 65:17-19.

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah wrote that at some point in the future God would do away with the present heavens and present earth, and create new versions of each. God would create a new Jerusalem, which would become His throne on the new earth. This new earth would be a place of gladness and joy, where He would delight in His people, and they in Him.

v17

Not only would this be a new place, but those living there (the redeemed) will not remember the old—it will not even “come to mind.”

Read Revelation 21:1-3.

Here the apostle John sees—as if it has already occurred—how Isaiah’s prophecy will come to pass.

vMat 5:5

**inherit** = to be an heir to (literal or figurative) :- be heir, (obtain by) inherit (-ance).

**earth** = soil; by extension a region, or the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe (including the occupants in each application) :- country, earth (-ly), ground, land, world.

This harkens back to God leading the Israelites into the Promised Land—that they would cross the Jordan and inherit the land of Canaan. Here it speaks of the promise of our eternity with God.

Read Matthew 25: 31-34.

There will come a day when we will live on a *new* earth. And just *who* will inherit this land?

Read Psalm 37:9-11,29.

For evildoers will be cut off,  
But **those who wait for the Lord**, they will inherit the land.  
Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more;  
And you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there.  
But the **humble** will inherit the land  
And will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.  
The **righteous** will inherit the land  
And dwell in it forever. Psalm 37:9-11,29 (NASB; emphasis added)

Now, out of all the possibilities for describing those who would live with Him for eternity and possess the “new earth,” in the Beatitudes, Jesus (in His Sermon on the Mount) could have used

- those who wait for (Psa 37:9)
- the righteous (Psa 37:29)

elsewhere

- he who takes refuge in Me (Isaiah 57:13)
- those who leave possessions and family (Matthew 19:29)
- he who overcomes (Rev. 21:7)

Discussion: So why do you think He (in His sermon on the mount) chose to use “gentle” or “meek”?

Perhaps the answer lies in the only place in Scripture where Jesus describes Himself:

Read Matthew 11:28-30.

“Come to **Me**, all who are weary and **heavy-laden**, and I will give you rest. “**Take My yoke** upon you and **learn from Me**, for I am **gentle and humble** in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My **burden** is light.” (emphasis added)

Jesus says:

- Come to *Me*...and *I* = go to no one else for your rest; you will find it only in Me
- take My yoke = by *My* disciple; follow My precepts—but also, you will *belong* to Me (it is a yoke, after all)
- learn from Me = My gospel is the only one; learn from the revelation that I impart
- gentle = as above
- humble = depressed, i.e. (figurative) humiliated (in circumstances or disposition) :- base, cast down, humble, of low degree (estate), lowly.
- burden = an *invoice* (as part of *freight*), i.e. (figurative) a *task* or *service*

Jesus voluntarily suffered the most humiliating experience one could in His time: death on a cross. He *lived out* these words—and He *died* these words. This is who He was: gentle, meek, patient, longsuffering, lowly, humiliated.

And this is how we are saved. This is how we get to heaven. And this is how we, ultimately, inherit the new earth.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” John 14:6

*A letter to God*

Dear God,

Few things in this world are as dependable as the flurry of activity at the bird feeder when it snows. No matter the time of year, a fresh batch of seed will always attract some takers, and there seems to be a direct relationship between falling temperatures and rising interest in a handout. But like polite visitors during the first few minutes of a party, the birds are few in number and peck tentatively at the source of their nourishment.

Let a few snowflakes fall from the sky, however, and quickly the area around the feeder becomes a Convention of the Winged. All good manners are tossed aside as the feeding frenzy begins. It's as if the snow reminds Your feathered creations that they are, indeed, hungry—and that they'd better be about the business of filling their bellies. What the snow has reminded them, of course, is not so much that they are hungry, but that in a very short time all their other sources of food will be covered over by a heavy, icy blanket. They feel the urgent call to fill their bellies to bursting, in case their next meal is some time off.

Man is such an odd creature, Father. Why have You made him this way? You've made man to strive toward something better, to improve himself, but then once he has bettered his situation, he forgets those instincts that brought him there in the first place! What have we gained by rising above our primitive instinct for survival? What have we gained by acquiring such sophistication that we need no longer clamor and strive to be fed?

What have we gained by losing our hunger for You?

In winter, even more than during the rest of the year, those living in the wild have one overriding purpose: to feed their hunger. They expend most of their energy in the singular pursuit of simply staying alive. But for modern man, life has become so easy that we've lost the instinct for hunger—the instinct to want something so badly that finding it becomes our passionate, single-minded pursuit. We build a big, beautiful church, a house of worship to honor Your name—but then we spend all our time gazing upon the expensive edifice instead of Your face. We pave its floor with thick, expensive carpet—but then we forget how to kneel upon it before Your throne. We carry under our arm the latest translation of Your Bible, thick, and bound in rich leather—but we don't take the time to read and learn what You've written there.

I don't want to live that way, Father. I want to keep my hunger. Even if my body has become fat and satisfied, I don't want my heart to forget its yearning. I don't want my mind to forget that You are the source of all it knows.

But I *have* lived that way. It is easy to begin a day without You, and I've become proficient at plowing into each day's activities without first spending time with You. Is my time so much more valuable than Yours that I can keep You waiting while I first tend to my business? I get angry at the doctor who treats *my* time with such callous disregard, yet I so regularly treat *You*—my heavenly Father, my God, my Lord—in the same way.

O God, where did my hunger for You go?

**MATTHEW 5:6**

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**

**hunger** = *peinaō* = from the same as <G3993> (penes) (through the idea of pinching toil; “pine”); to famish (absolute or comparatively); figurative to crave :- be an hungered.

*penēs* (G3993) = from a primary **peno** (to *toil* for daily subsistence); *starving*, i.e. *indigent* :- poor.

**thirst** = *dipsaō* = to thirst

Even in early, secular Greek these words were not restricted to man's physical needs, but extended to the intellectual and spiritual life. They express a passionate longing for something without which one cannot live, e.g., freedom, honor, fame, wealth, praise, enlightenment. This desire is often emphasized by bracketing hunger and thirst together. (Brown) [21 times in Scripture]

**righteousness** = *dikaïosynē* = equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification (from G1342)

*dikaïos* = from <G1349> (dike); equitable (in character or act); by implication innocent, holy (absolute or relative) :- just, meet, right (-eous).

The righteous man in ancient Greece (*dikaïos*) was originally one whose behavior fitted into the framework of his society and who fulfilled his rightful obligations towards the gods and his fellow men, his observance of such obligations serving to differentiate him from the unrighteous. (Brown)

It is important to differentiate Jesus' “hunger and thirst for righteousness” from that which was common under the law: The Pharisee, the Jewish legalist (and, perhaps the modern legalist?) whose prayer might be, “I want to be righteous,” while the prayer of the hungering penitent might be, “I want *Your* righteousness in my life.” Remember the contrast between the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18. The Pharisee's purpose was to appear righteous, to be better than everyone else, while the tax collector wanted only to confess his spiritual bankruptcy and plead for the righteousness of God through His grace.

In a way similar to sanctification, there are two kinds of righteousness: We are *declared righteous*, initially, through belief in the saving grace of Jesus. This is a non-repeating event. It happens once. After that, however, by walking closely with Jesus, and through the ministry of the indwelling Spirit, our lives reflect an increasing degree of God's righteousness.

- No one is righteous in and of themselves:  
Read Romans 3:9-12.
- In Christ we are *declared* (made) righteous:  
Read Romans 5:18-19.  
Read (speaking about Abraham) Romans 4:22-25.
- As we continue in *His* righteousness, we become increasingly righteous—or, it becomes easier for us to live a righteous life:  
Read Proverbs 4:14-18.

How does this happen? How do we become increasingly righteous or good? By *wanting* it. By hungering for it as a starving man hungers for his next meal.

## HUNGERING AND THIRSTING

Read Psalm 27.

This is the prayer of someone who hungers and thirsts for righteousness

v1

**light** = illumination, luminary = the Lord lights my way, He casts His light upon the path of righteousness, and once on that path, He brings illumination of His way to my mind.

v4

**seek** = search out, strive after

**dwell in the house of the Lord**  = live with Him, be where He is

**behold the beauty/meditate**  = to look upon His face and inquire of Him; to take delight in His presence

v8

“You said, ‘Come to Me, live with Me,’ and I replied, ‘Yes Lord, I will do that. I need You. I *hunger* for You.’”

v11

By dwelling with You I will learn the way of righteousness and goodness

v12

cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5

*I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

v13

**goodness** = gladness, beauty

v14

**wait** = a primitive root; to bind together (perhaps by twisting), i.e. collect; (figurative) to expect; to hope strongly, to trust, implying firmness and constancy of mind, to hope for

### Return to Matthew 5

The beatitudes are all of a package; one cannot pick and choose from the list. Each beatitude flows into the next; each flows out of the preceding. One who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is one who confesses his own spiritual poverty, who mourns over failings in his life, and who graciously considers others more important than himself.

In a message on Ephesians, delivered in the summer of 1966, Ray Stedman used the phrase “a discontent with mediocrity” which I believe is pertinent to a study of the Beatitudes. Taken individually or as a whole, the Beatitudes describe believers who are discontented with mediocrity. It describes people who are not content with the promise of eternal life with God. They realize that life with God begins in the here and now, and they are determined that their walk of faith will not be mediocre at all. Perhaps this can be said, as well, about believers who *study* the Beatitudes.

## THE WOE

Luke 6:25a

Woe to you who are well-fed now, for you shall be hungry.

or “have already been filled”

NKJV: are full / NIV: well fed

Jesus has been specifically addressing His disciples (v20), but now He turns to those *not* His disciples. (wealthy, community leaders, Pharisees, Scribes?)

**well-fed/full** = *empiplēmi* = from <G1722> (en) and the base of <G4118> (pleistos); to fill in (up), i.e. (by implication) to satisfy (literal or figurative) :- fill.

*Barnes*: “Satisfied with their wealth, and not feeling their need of anything better than earthly wealth can give. Many, alas! are thus full. They profess to be satisfied. They desire nothing but wealth, and a sufficiency to satisfy the wants of the body. They have no anxiety for the riches that shall endure for ever.”

It is easy to categorize these woes as applying to unbelievers—those outside the body of Christ. But that can be a little *too* convenient.

Even believers can become full of themselves.

Even believers can find themselves depending less on God and more on the things of this world.

Even believers can switch their priorities from riches in Christ to the wealth of this world.

Even believers can forget to mourn their shortcomings, believing they have none.

In the first session of this series on the Beatitudes I said, “The verses we call the Beatitudes—when we distill them down to the essentials—are nothing less than Jesus calling us to live ‘other-worldly.’” And here is a case in point; this “otherworldliness” is not just a distinction between believer and non-believer, but also one between believers who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” and believers who think they are already “well-fed.”

## LUKE 6:21A

“Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied.”

**hunger** = same as in Matthew 5:6

**satisfied** = same as in Matthew 5:6 = *chortazo* = from <G5528> (*chortos*); to fodder, i.e. (genitive) to gorge (supply food in abundance) :- feed, fill, satisfy.

*chortos* = apparently a primary word; a “court” or “garden”, i.e. (by implication of pasture) herbage or vegetation :- blade, grass, hay.

We don’t need to immediately spiritualize this hunger. **Think about it: Are we more or less prone to hunger for God when we are going through hard times—when we might literally “hunger”?**

Turn to Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1. Read vs 51-53.

v53 quotes a verse in Psalms 107.

Read Psalm 107:1-9.

**satisfied** = to sate, i.e. **fill to satisfaction** (literal or figurative) :- have enough, fill (full, self, with), be (to the) full (of), have plenty of, be satiate, satisfy (with), suffice, be weary of.

**thirsty** soul = to run, **run about**, rush; a primitive root; to course (**like a beast of prey**); by implication **to seek greedily** :- have appetite, **jostle one against another**, long, range, run (to and fro).

**hungry** soul = famished.

**what is good** = a good thing, benefit, welfare

**soul** = a *breathing* creature, i.e. *animal* or (abstract) *vitality*

We are satisfied only by the Lord God. Our hunger is filled only by Him; our thirst is quenched only by Him. Our search for righteousness is fulfilled only by Him, for only He is righteous.

Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. (Matthew 19:16-17a NKJV)



Checking the propane level in the winter is as much social occasion as regular maintenance routine. Our tank sits out near the lower gardens, and during the winter months, when the furnace is running, it must be checked regularly. Once the gauge shows the level to be down to twenty percent or lower, the propane man is called for a delivery.

On top of the 500 gallon tank, the valve and gauge are housed beneath a large hinged cap, and every winter this space is shared by a family of mice. It's an ideal shelter against the cold and wind of the winter months. The mice build their nest by carrying shredded leaves up the narrow pipe that leads from the valve down to the ground.

Over the weeks and months of winter, the leaves decompose within the cozy space under the cap, generating heat that keeps the mice warm. Lifting the cap to check the gauge one can actually feel the warmth from the nest—and it's always the polite thing to say a friendly “Hi-howdy” to the nervous noses poking out, wondering who it is disturbing their domestic tranquility.

Over the years I've got some quizzical frowns from the propane delivery men when I've asked them to please not disturb the mice any more than is necessary. They'd just as soon brush away all those messy leaves and get on with the work at hand.

But every time I lift that lid and stare into the tiny eyes of those frightened mice, I'm reminded of the mercy my heavenly Father has shown me. To those small creatures I must seem godlike, towering huge over them, with the power to brush them away with the back of my hand—which is just how we feel sometimes, so tiny and fragile against the towering strength of the One who is truly God.

God's mercy, however, is better than ours. The mice have done nothing wrong—which is why it is so easy for us to show them mercy; they've done nothing to deserve less. But, in a human sense, we seldom deserve the mercy God shows us. We really deserve His condemnation—we deserve the back of His hand. But, through Christ, we receive instead His mercy.

Every winter the mice remain happily content within their cozy nest, snuggled into their organic warmth against the howling winter winds. That is how they spend my mercy. But how are we to spend God's mercy? What are we to do with this extravagant gift?

Our fifth beatitude, in Matthew 5:7, turns this around. As in the story of the mice, we often show mercy because God has *already* shown mercy to us. But here Jesus says,

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

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

the **merciful** = *eleēmōn* = **actively compassionate**; from the root *eleo*

secular Greek (noun: *eleos*) = “the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else”; the reverse of envy at another's good fortune; a technical term for the end of the speech for the defense, in which the accused tried to awaken the compassion of the judges.

secular Greek (verb: *eleo*) = to have compassion, be sorry for, show compassion, be merciful

**Discussion:** What are some examples of times you have felt “the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else”?

- visiting a shut-in, or someone in the hospital

*eleo* and *eleemon* express mercy from man to man, but it is mercy motivated by *God's* mercy to man—as demonstrated in the freeing and healing of Jesus of Nazareth: the God/man Jesus answered in person the cry, “Have mercy on me!”

Read Hebrews 2:17.

## CIRCULAR

shall receive/obtain **mercy** (*eleo*) = passive voice; implied, from God

So this beatitude is *not* saying “Blessed are those who are kind to others, for others will then be kind to them,” but “*Blessed are those who show compassion to others, for they shall know the merciful compassion of their heavenly Father.*” It also, as its neighbors, should be taken in context:

*John R. W. Stott:* “It is ‘the meek’ [referring to the third beatitude] who are also ‘the merciful’. For to be meek is to acknowledge to others that *we* are sinners; to be merciful is to have compassion on others, for they are sinners too.”

I.e., If God can forgive even me, then I can forgive others.

It is difficult to apply this beatitude in a linear fashion, as written. It is, in practice, more *circular*: Most times we show mercy on others because God *first* showed mercy to us—not because we expect Him to in the future.

**We love, because He first loved us.** 1 John 4:19

Nevertheless, God's word makes clear that He *does* show favor to those who demonstrate mercy and grace to others.

**Discussion:** Does this happen in the here and now, or is this just a reward promised for a glorified future?

Here is the illustration: God pours His mercy into us; as a result, we show mercy to others; as a result, God pours into our lives even more mercy. It is as if "mercy" were some tangible object we can hold in our hand—or put in our pocket. And like Jesus' loaves and fishes, it never runs out! As we spend it, He just pours in even more.

King David, at least, declared that the Lord's favor was not limited to a future promise.

Read Psalm 18:24-25.

*Richard Chenevix Trench* (1807-1886, Archbishop of Dublin and biblical scholar): "According to the view given in Scripture, the Christian stands in a middle point, between a mercy received and a mercy yet needed. Sometimes the first is urged upon him as an argument for showing mercy—'forgiving one another, as Christ forgave you' (Col\_3:13; Eph\_4:32); sometimes the last—'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy'; 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven' (Luk\_6:37; Jam\_5:9). And thus, while he is ever to look back on the mercy received as the source and motive of the mercy which he shows, he also looks forward to the mercy which he yet needs, and which he is assured that the merciful...shall receive, as a new provocation to its abundant exercise."

Let's look at a negative example of this mercy first.

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

This is the familiar story of the slave who was forgiven much by his master, but who was unwilling to forgive even a little of a fellow slave.

Now let's look at a more positive expansion of this call for us to be merciful.

Read Colossians 3:12-14.

v12

we are chosen ones, selected out, and we are already loved by God  
thus we are to demonstrate—from out of our heart

**compassion** = mercy

**kindness** = usefulness, moral excellence

**humility** = lowliness of mind; modesty

**gentleness** = meekness, mildness (as in the third beatitude)

**patience** = forbearance toward others, longsuffering

v13

we are to

**bear with one another** = to hold oneself up against, i.e. (figurative) put up with :- bear with, endure, forbear, suffer.

**forgive each other** = freely, generously forgive

**just as** = just (or inasmuch) as, that :- according to, (according, even) as, how, when.

the Lord **forgave** = same as above

v14

**Beyond** = upon; over and above; on *top* of this stack place love

**perfect** = or mature

**bond of unity** = lit., *the uniting bond of perfection*: a joint tie, i.e. ligament, (figurative) uniting principle, control :- band, bond.

These qualities are the proving mark of "the new self who is being renewed [renovated]" (3:10)—all based on and because of what Jesus has already done for us, as well as what He will do for us in the future.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Discussion: What does “pure in heart” mean to you? What thoughts do you have when you read this verse?

There are two common interpretations of this beatitude: one, that the purity of heart referred to here is an inner moral purity, in opposition to merely an external piety; two, that the pure in heart are those who are undivided in their loyalty to Christ, without deceit, without guile. Neither of these excludes the other—in fact, some might say that each *requires* the other—so we will be examining both. This week we will be considering the first interpretation.

Ritual cleanness and uncleanness in the Jewish law emphasized how one could be rendered “unclean” by coming into contact with external objects or influences:

- mold in the house: Lev. 14:33-57
- touching an unclean animal or insect: Lev. 11

or by coming into contact with certain natural bodily fluids:

- the discharge or seminal emission of a man: Lev. 15:1-18
- the discharge or menstrual flow of a woman: Lev. 15:19-33

And if you think the Pentateuch goes into excruciating detail on all of these, you should read the *Mishnah*, which expands beyond all comprehension the minutest detail of these laws.

The Talmud comprises two elements, the Mishna and the Gemara. The Mishna is the oral law as it was known up to the end of the second century A.D. The Gemara is the interpretation of the oral law which the scholars of Babylon and of Jerusalem produced between the beginning of the third century A.D. and the end of the fifth century.

The Mishnah was an early form of the Jewish oral law or tradition. It was gradually compiled into written form between the 2nd century B.C. and the 2nd century A.D. This oral law became known as the “fence” or “hedge” (Hebrew, *gd*) around the written law. The Jews developed this complex system of oral laws as a safeguard to make certain the strict observance to the written law and thus to prevent future punishment and exile at the hands of their enemies for failure to keep God’s commandments. The Pharisees were the great observers of the oral tradition.

But Jesus declared that the externals were not nearly as important as the *internals*. And in Matthew 23 He makes His point with dramatic clarity.

Read Matthew 23:25-28.

v27

**uncleanness** = *akatharsia* = the opposite of “pure” in the beatitude; *impurity* (the quality), physical or moral.

Jesus in His teachings repeatedly emphasized the internal over the external. To Him it was the condition of the *heart*, not whether—or how—one had washed one’s hands before eating.

Read Mark 7:1-8.

v3,5

Note: “tradition of the elders”

**impure** hands = *koinos* = from <G4862> (sun); *common*, i.e. (litin) shared by all or several, or (ceremonial) *profane* :- common, defiled, unclean, unholy. [note: The New Testament was written in *koiné* Greek—the “common” language at the time.]

Jesus paraphrases Isaiah 29:13 to the “hypocrites,” saying, “You are the ones Isaiah spoke of when he prophesied...”

Then the Lord said, “Because this people draw near with their words  
And honor Me with their lip service,  
But they remove their hearts far from Me,  
And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,  
Therefore behold, I will once again deal marvelously with this people, wondrously marvelous;  
And the wisdom of their wise men will perish,  
And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed.”  
Isaiah 29:13-14

They had actually replaced the words of God, in the original law, with the words of the law's commentators, making them more important.

v14 implies that the Pharisees have departed, and Jesus once again addresses the general crowd. After that He gets alone with His disciples and expands on what He has just said publicly.

Read Mark 7:14-23.

v15

**defile** = *koino-o* = from <G2839> (koinos); to make (or consider) profane (ceremonial) :- call common, defile, pollute, unclean.

v19

**is eliminated** = goes into "a place of sitting apart"—i.e., a privy, or drain.

As far as true purity is concerned, Jesus is saying that the food we eat is nothing. He sees it in purely practical, physiological terms: We eat the food; some is used to sustain us, while the rest is eliminated. No harm, no foul. This has nothing to do with our spiritual purity before God and man, for it bypasses the heart entirely.

What *does*, however, is what comes *out* of our mouth. What can render us "impure" or "unclean" is that which proceeds *from* us, because it reflects the condition of our heart and mind.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

**pure** = *katharos* = of uncert. affin.; *clean* (literal or figurative) :- clean, clear; innocent.  
in **heart** = *kardia* = the *heart*, i.e. (figurative) the *thoughts* or *feelings* (*mind*).

Perhaps no other beatitude is so dependent on its predecessors—and how right is the Lord's order.

Purity of heart is not of man's making, but is God's gift to the one

- who is poor in spirit
- who mourns
- who is gentle and merciful
- and who hungers and thirsts for righteousness

King David did not say "I will clean myself with hyssop, and I will be clean," but said

[You] Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
[You] Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Psalm 51:7

“Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they shall see God.”

## HYPOCRISY

Read Psalm 24:3-6.

v4

**clean** hands = innocent

**pure** heart = choice, clean, clear

pure **heart** = inner man, mind, will

**soul** = living being, life, self, person, **desire, passion, appetite**, emotion

**falsehood** = or shav, shav; from the same as <H7722> (show) in the sense of desolating; **evil** (as **destructive**), literal (ruin) or moral (especially guile); figurative idolatry (as false, subjective), uselessness (as deceptive, objective; also adverb in vain) :- false (-ly), lie, lying, vain, vanity.

**sworn** = to “seven oneself,” i.e. swear (as if by repeating a declaration seven times) :- adjure, charge (by an oath, with an oath), feed to the full [by mistake for <H7646> (saba`)], take an oath, × straitly, (cause to, make to) swear.

**deceitfully** = in the sense of deceiving; **fraud** :- **craft**, deceit (-ful, -fully), false, feigned, **guile**, treachery

Blessed are those who have not committed violence with either their hands or their heart. Blessed are those whose lives are marked by honesty, morality, shunning that which is evil or self-serving. Blessed are those who tell the truth—who do not say one thing with their lips, while holding something else in their heart.

Revisit the passage in Matthew 23.

Read Matthew 23:25-28.

Discussion: Specifically, of what offense is Jesus accusing these scribes and Pharisees?

**hypocrites** = *hypokritēs* (hoop-ok-ree-tace') = an actor under an assumed character (stage-player), i.e. (figurative) **a dissembler** [to conceal under a false appearance; disguise].

“It was a custom for Greek and Roman actors to speak behind large masks with mechanical devices for augmenting the force of the voice; hence the word became used metaphorically of a dissembler, hypocrite.” (*Vines*)

Jesus is the only one who uses this word in the NT—18 times in Mat., Mark & Luke.

When someone is “pure in heart,” their actions match the motives of their heart.

Purity of heart means that one is single-, not double-minded.

*Swindoll*: “This is an absence of duplicity, this is an absence of deception, this is the presence of pure motives. Blessed are those who aren’t duplicitous and deceptive, who really are what they appear to be when you get to know them.”

Read Hebrews 10:11-18.

Read Hebrews 10:19-25.

v22

**sincere** = truthful, true

**full assurance** = entire confidence

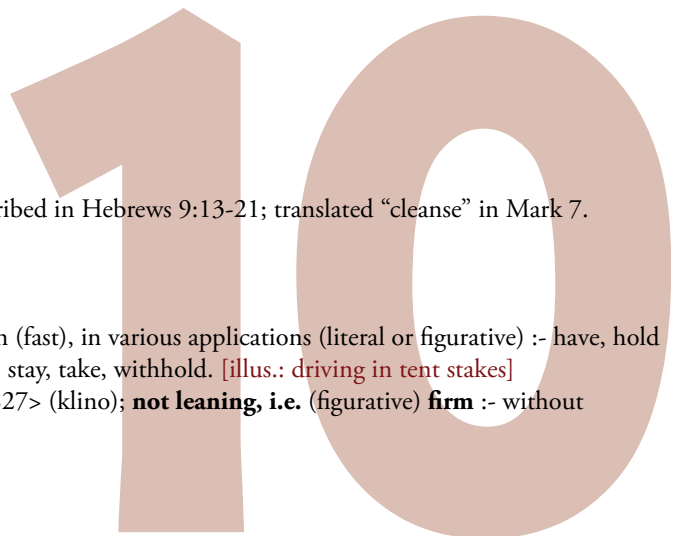
**sprinkled clean** = I.e., cleansed as with the blood of sacrifice, as described in Hebrews 9:13-21; translated “cleansed” in Mark 7.

**pure** = same as in Mat 5:8

v23

**hold fast** = from <G2596> (kata) and <G2192> (echo); to hold down (fast), in various applications (literal or figurative) :- have, hold (fast), keep (in memory), let, × make toward, possess, retain, seize on, stay, take, withhold. [illus.: driving in tent stakes]

**without wavering** = from <G1> (a) (as a negative particle) and <G2827> (kline); **not leaning, i.e.** (figurative) **firm** :- without wavering.



## HOLY SIGHT

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall **see God**.”

Just as “pure of heart” can be interpreted in two ways—goodness, morality, as well as an absence of hypocrisy—so too can we “see God” in more than one way.

The Jew, hearing this, would certainly have thought, immediately, of how, under the law, anyone—or *anything*—that was not pure could not enter the temple. An animal that had a defect could not be offered for sacrifice; anyone ceremonially unclean could not enter the temple. They could not “see” God.

**see** = *horao* = properly **to stare at** [compare <G3700> (optanomai)], i.e. (by implication) **to discern clearly** (physical or mental); by extension to attend to; by Hebrew to experience; passive to appear :- behold, perceive, see, take heed.

Already by Homer’s time [c. 900 BC] this word had the meaning of to conceive or experience, and even be present at or participate. In a figurative sense it means to understand, recognize, consider, attend to. (K. Dahn in Brown)

In the OT [Septuagint], *horao* means to see with one’s own eye, become aware; figuratively, it comes to be used of intellectual or spiritual perception.

Those who have a pure heart have been given the grace to see God in the here and now. Our “purity” comes not from ourselves, but from the pure, spotless Lamb, and along with salvation itself, believers are given the ability to

- to *understand* God and His written word; to discern His righteous path from the wrong
- to be *aware* of Him, to see Him in His creation where others cannot

But we can also interpret this word literally. Matthew Henry makes an interesting point:

*Matthew Henry*: “The happiness of seeing God is promised to those, and those only, who are pure in heart. None but the pure are capable of seeing God, nor would it be a felicity to the impure. What pleasure could an unsanctified soul take in the vision of a holy God? As he cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, so they cannot endure to look upon his purity; nor shall any unclean thing enter into the new Jerusalem; but all that are pure in heart, all that are truly sanctified, have desires wrought in them, which nothing but the sight of God will sanctify; and divine grace will not leave those desires unsatisfied.”

As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness;  
I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.  
Psalms 17:15

Read 1 John 3:1-3.

v2

*and it has not appeared as yet what we will be*

While still in flesh, while still upon this earth, we know not what will be our form for eternity. But we do know this:

*We know that when He appears, we will be like Him...*

Turn to and have someone read [Philippians 3:20-21](#).

Have you ever noticed how when you are in a foreign land, looking at faces that are very different from your own, you very often miss the subtle differences in features that are readily apparent to other inhabitants of that land?

*...because we will see Him just as He is.*

When we get to heaven, we will be able to see all the subtlety in the Lord’s face, because we will be *like* Him. We will, at long last, see Him as He is!

v3

Those “keeping their eyes on the prize,” as it were, are fully involved in the process of sanctification. They are “pure in heart” because *He* is pure in heart.

So, in a manner of speaking, this beatitude is circular, folding back on itself: Because we see God where others do not, because we have our hearts fixed on the hope of seeing Him face to face, we are in the process of purifying our hearts. In this state we are blessed, because we *will* see God.

I don't know how old I was, but I was young enough to be wearing a silly play suit—a pastel, almost feminine one-piece number with short sleeves and short pants. It was summer, and I was in our backyard, near the point where the upper lawn sloped down to our large garden plot. If I was young enough to be wearing such a thing, I was yet old enough to be embarrassed by it. But so long as I was alone in the backyard I could live with my mom's choice of apparel for the younger of her two boys.

Quite unexpectedly, however, I found myself no longer alone. Around the corner of our house came my friend and schoolmate Lew Miller. Lewie (as we called him back then, before he became the owner of the largest electrical/plumbing supply company in town and a civic leader) seemed unfazed by my rather girlish attire. He was there to deliver a May Basket to me—which was the sort of quaint tradition children followed back when tires had tubes. I was mortified that Lewie had caught me in my dainty play suit, but his mind was on something more important.

Oddly enough, his thoughts were on the future. "You're lucky," he said to me, serious beyond his few years. "Your dad doesn't have a business you'll have to take over when you grow up." At that time, my dad was an electrician for the M&StL Railroad, while Lewie's dad owned the aforementioned electrical/plumbing supply house. Obviously my friend was feeling the pressure, even at that young age, to follow into his father's business. And my friend Lewie was prescient. He did indeed take over the supply house when his dad died, and I did not become an electrician.

Every family has a "business." In some cases it is obvious: a parent or grandparent has created a going concern, and at least some of the children are expected to come into that business to continue it into the future. In other instances a parent has, over many years, developed a respectable and profitable trade skill, and hopes that one or more of his children will take up the same trade and "make his dad proud." Often, however, the family "business" is simply to uphold and sustain its unique character. Parents want their children to uphold the honor of their family, doing nothing that would tarnish its reputation in the community.

God's family through Christ is no different. Every believer is expected to follow in the footsteps of the Savior, who, better than anyone else, understands the family business: His kingdom.

Every Christian is expected to come into the family business. In fact, whether he realizes it or not, every believer is already on the books. Employment is not optional. Every Christian's life is a testimony; it brings either honor or shame to the family name. The family's name is "Christ." Its members are called "Christ-ians."

Even though my dad didn't have his own business for me to continue, I still bore the responsibility to uphold our family name. For all of his life, my dad was a hard worker, a responsible family man, a respected member of the community. Though he was not an educated man—to support his family, he had left school after the eighth grade—he always did what he could to educate himself and improve his station. Dad was active in our church, and was the head usher for many years—back in the day when ushers actually ushered.

As his son, I bore the responsibility to uphold my family's good name. Brought up in a relatively small town, most people with whom I came into contact knew whose son I was. My behavior mattered. I didn't ask for that responsibility; it came with my birth.

At our second birth, our birth into the family of God through Christ, we are given a new last name: Christian. We are born into Christ's kingdom, with all its benefits and responsibilities. As children of the King, we bear the obligation to uphold the good family name—not to bring shame and dishonor upon the family.

I cannot recall anyone in my hometown, when I was growing up, who wished ill upon my family. Where we were known, only good will and respect was afforded. But the same cannot be said about the family of my second birth. This fallen world bears no affection or good will toward the family of Christ. Indeed, it does everything it can, under the authority and influence of its king, to denigrate Christianity.

While we tread the soil of this earth, it is our burden to stand for its good name—to be about the family business in purity of heart, guided and empowered by the Spirit. As we labor in His name, we are to deal honestly, forthrightly with not only our brothers and sisters in faith, but with everyone who is not yet part of the family.

For we have the honor of bearing the Master's name.

---

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Read Isaiah 52:7; Read Isaiah 9:6-7

Discussion: What is the nature of this "peace" the prophet Isaiah speaks of?

Read Matthew 10:34-36  
(cf., 1 Corinthians 1:22-25; Luke 12:51-53)

Discussions: How do we reconcile these passages?  
(cf., Ephesians 2:13-18)

**peacemakers** = *eirēnopoios* = *pacificatory*, i.e. (subjective) *peaceable* :- making peace; an adjective used here only as a noun.

In the Septuagint, *eirene* is used to translate the Hebrew *shalom*.

**shalom** = completeness, soundness, welfare, peace; from <H7999> (shalam); safe, i.e. (figurative) well, happy, friendly; also (abstract) welfare, i.e. health, prosperity, peace :- × do, familiar, × fare, favour, + friend, × great, (good) health, (× perfect, such as be at) peace (-able, -ably), prosper (-ity, -ous), rest, safe (-ty), salute, welfare, (× all is, be) well, × wholly.

“The disciple who is perfect in the sense of bringing the wholeness which comes from God alone and which is intimately bound up with His presence is one who brings peace in the fullest sense of the term shalom.” (H. Beck, C. Brown in Brown)

What “peace” are we responsible for?

- It can't be making peace between God and man; only Christ can accomplish that through an individual's belief in Him. [Ephesians 2:13-18; Colossians 1:19-20]
- It can't be making peace for the world; this world will never be truly at peace—nation with nation—until Christ Jesus rules over it.
- It can't be making peace between individuals; we cannot *make* someone be at peace with someone else.

We *are* responsible for the peace we have within ourselves and, more important, the peace we demonstrate to others.

Romans 12 seems to encapsulate what it means for believers to live at peace—to live as “sons of God” making peace.

[Read Romans 12:9-21](#)

This is set up by vs1-2. [Read Romans 12:1-2](#)

v2

**prove** = or approve

**acceptable** = well-pleasing, fully agreeable

**perfect** = *telios* = complete, mature (full man)

v9

**without hypocrisy** = genuine, sincere

v10

**devoted** = from <G5384> (philos) and storge (cherishing one's kindred, especially parents or children); fond of natural relatives, i.e. fraternal towards fellow Christian :- kindly affectioned

**give preference...** = “outdo one another in showing honor”; *Msg*: “practice playing second fiddle”.

v11

**not lagging behind...** = not idle, lazy, or troublesome

**...in diligence** = from <G4692> (speudo); “speed”, i.e. (by implication) despatch, eagerness, earnestness :- business, (earnest) care (-fulness), diligence, forwardness, haste.

**fervent** = to be hot (boil, of liquids; or glow, of solids), i.e. (figurative) be fervid (earnest) :- be fervent.

v13

**contributing** to the needs of the saints = from <G2844> (koinonos); to share with others (object or subject) :- communicate, distribute, be partaker.

**practicing** hospitality = better: **pursuing**; a prolonged (and causative) form of a primary verb *diō* (to flee; compare the base of <G1169> (deilos) and <G1249> (diakonos)); to pursue (literal or figurative); by implication to persecute :- ensue, follow (after), given to, (suffer) persecute (-ion), press forward.

v16

**associate** with the lowly = from <G4862> (sun) and <G520> (apago); to take off together, i.e. transport with (seduce, passive yield) :- carry (lead) away with, condescend; i.e., “**accommodate yourself to lowly things**”.

v18

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at **peace** with all men = from <G1515> (eirene); to be (act) peaceful :- be at (have, live in) peace, live peaceably.

When we behave this way—when this becomes our way of life—we are upholding the family name. We are behaving as Christ, the one whose name we bear as Christ-ians. We are behaving as—and will “be called”—“sons of God”.



“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Read 1 Peter 3:13-17.

**...suffer for doing what is right...**

Here in the United States we have typically spiritualized passages like this, interpreting them more often in the abstract. When a Christian in the U.S. speaks of “suffering,” more often than not he refers to verbal or political intimidation rather than physical pain. In our next lesson we will look closely at the type of “suffering” more common to Americans. This week we will not soften the word “persecuted” or consider it in the abstract. We will take what Jesus says literally, and concentrate our attention on *physical* persecution.

### Somalia

David Abdulwahab Mohamed Ali was born and raised in Somalia until he was forced to flee to Yemen following the political turmoil that engulfed his home country.

Like almost all Somalis, David was also a Muslim. He was exposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ when he was living as refugee in Yemen. In 1995, he committed his life to Jesus Christ. But living as Christian in Yemen was difficult for him and he was forced once again to leave for another country. This time he headed to Ethiopia, where Christians make up the majority of the population. After long years in exile, he traveled back to his native Somalia to visit his family and friends. His relatives must have observed the change that David had undergone. They wanted to know if he was still a Muslim.

On April 22, 2008, at 4:30 PM, one of David’s cousins led two other members of the Islamic extremist group Al-Shabab to David and asked him if he was a Muslim or an infidel. He answered, “Neither.”

They asked, “Then what are you?” He answered, “Waxaan ahay Masiixi,” which means, “I am a follower of the Messiah.”

At this, David’s cousin was enraged and humiliated. In Somalia’s strict Muslim society, David’s conversion to Christianity brought enormous shame on his family. His cousin’s response was to pull out a gun and shoot David. The other two extremists did the same, and the three continued shooting David until their Muslim “honor” had been avenged.

### China

His close friends say he’s barely recognizable. Shi Weihai, a 37-year-old Christian bookstore owner and father of two who was arrested in 2007, released in January of 2008, and re-arrested two months later, has physically deteriorated in prison. Though his bookstore operated legally, it made the unfortunate mistake of being located too near the Olympic Village for the comfort of Chinese authorities who labeled Shi a “dangerous religious element” out of fear that he might cause a stir during the Olympics in August. Held illegally, as he has never had a hearing, Shi has not been allowed visitors of any kind and has been denied medical care for his diabetes.

### Saudi Arabia

In August 2008 a heartbreaking story of a girl that came to Christ emerged from Saudi Arabia. The girl was the daughter of a man who works for the Saudi religious police, an entity which is responsible for ensuring the observance of Islamic law in the Saudi Arabia.

This girl came to know about Jesus and decided to follow Him after she joined an evangelism-oriented Christian internet chat group. As the daughter of a member of the religious police, she must have known the risk she was taking. However, nothing could prepare her for what her father would do.

Upon learning of his daughter’s conversion, the father violated the most fundamental human relationship by cutting out his own daughter’s tongue and burning her to death.

### Iran

Abbas Amiri had served in the Iraq-Iran War and had gone on a pilgrimage to Mecca as a devout Muslim. Despite his devotion to his country and his religion, Mr. Amiri became a Christian. He and wife Sakineh Rahnama started to host house church meetings at their residence. The couple and the Christians congregating in their house were meeting on July 17, 2008, when the Iranian secret police raided the house. The police started indiscriminately beating all the Christians there and then detained six women, seven men and two minors.

Upon finding out about Mr. Amiri’s pilgrimage to Mecca and his military service in the Iranian armed forces, they intensified their physical attacks on him. Mr. Amiri could not withstand the beatings and was taken to the hospital after falling ill. He passed away on July 30, 2008. Following the death of her husband, Sakineh died on August 3 due to her beatings and the grief of losing her husband.

**persecuted** = *dioko* = In secular Greek, literally to chase, pursue, run after, drive away. In the LXX, used primarily of pursuit by hostile soldiers, or by anyone whose intentions are hostile.

This same Greek word is also translated “pursue” and “press (on)” in a positive or benign sense.

Read Hebrews 12:14 and Philippians 3:12.

**Question:** What is the earliest recorded instance of persecution “for the sake of righteousness”?

**Answer:** Cain killing Abel (Genesis 4:3-8).

And then throughout the rest of Scripture, God records how His people met suffering and death for His sake.

Read Hebrews 11:35-40.

This is, perhaps, the toughest Beatitude. How in the world can Jesus say that we are “blessed” if we are being persecuted?

*Barnes:* “We are not to seek persecution. We are not to provoke it by strange sentiments or conduct; by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech that are unnecessarily offensive to others. But if, in the honest effort to be Christians, and to live the life of Christians, others persecute and revile us, we are to consider this as a blessing. It is an evidence that we are the children of God, and that he will defend us.”

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-12.

How are we blessed in and through and because of persecution? What do those who are being persecuted have to hold onto? Let’s look for the answer in Psalm 37.

## PSALM 37:1-22

v3

**trust** = to hie for refuge

**cultivate** faithfulness = or feed securely, or feed on His faithfulness; associate with

v5

**commit** your way = to roll (literal or figurative) :- commit, remove, roll (away, down, together), run down, seek occasion, trust

v6

NIV: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

v7

**Rest** in the Lord and wait **patiently** for Him = Be still in the Lord and wait longingly, expectantly for Him

v9

those who **wait** = *eagerly* wait

**inherit** the land = take possession of = “...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

v11

**humble** = the poor, the afflicted

**inherit** = as above

**delight** themselves = to be soft, delicate, dainty

abundant **prosperity** = completeness, soundness, welfare, peace

v13

“For He sees his day is coming” = God sees around the bends in the road

v15

“Their sword will enter their own heart” see Psalm 7:15-16

He has dug a pit and hollowed it out,

And has fallen into the hole which he made.

His mischief will return upon his own head,

And his violence will descend upon his own pate.

v18

**inheritance** = as above

v20

**glory** of the pastures = valuable (objective or subjective) :- brightness, clear, costly, excellent, fat, honorable women, precious, reputation. = the beauty (i.e., flowers, blooms) of a pasture

**vanish** = are consumed = to end, whether intransitive (to cease, be finished, perish)

v22

those **blessed** by Him will **inherit** the land

We are approaching the end of the Beatitudes—and they don't seem to be getting any easier. Some commentators consider Matthew 5:11-12 to be of a piece with 5:10. Both deal with persecutions. I prefer to separate them—not just because of time constraints, but because they address different kinds of persecution and different kinds of rewards.

Read Matthew 5:11 and Luke 6:22.

Read 1 Peter 4:12-16.

**fiery ordeal** = same as used in 2 Peter 3:12

...looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

Our ordeals—our persecutions—when suffered “for the name of Christ” are the mark, the confirmation that the Spirit of God dwells in us—that we belong to Him.

Matthew: v11

**people** = they

**insult** = *oneidizo* = from <G3681> (oneidos); to defame, i.e. rail at, chide, taunt :- cast in teeth, (suffer) reproach, revile, upbraid.

*Brown (Dictionary of NT Theology)*: “In [the Beatitudes] the meaning of *oneidizo* comes near to that of *empaizo*, which originally meant to behave childishly, to make fun of [or mock], and then to ridicule.”

Read Matthew 27:27-31.

**persecute** = (same as last week) = to chase, pursue, run after, drive away.

**falsely** = to utter an untruth or attempt to deceive by falsehood :- falsely, lie.

say...**evil** against you = **hurtful**, i.e. evil (properly in effect or influence, and thus differing from <G2556> (kakos), which refers rather to essential character, as well as from <G4550> (sapos), which indicates degeneracy from original virtue); figurative calamitous; also (passive) ill, i.e. diseased; but especially (morally) culpable, i.e. **derelict, vicious, facinorous**; neuter (singular) mischief, malice, or (plural) guilt; masculine (singular) the devil, or (plural) sinners :- bad, **evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked**.

**because of** = on account of, for the sake of

Luke: v22

**hate** you = to detest (especially to persecute); by extension to love less :- hate (-ful).

**ostracize** you = to mark off by boundaries from, i.e. set apart:— hold...aloof; limit, exclude, appoint, etc. :- divide, separate, sever.

Read John 9:18-23.

What were these parents afraid of? Of being ostracized in their community, of being excluded from the synagogue.

**insult** = same as above

**scorn** = to expel, to drive, cast or send out; eject.

your **name** = a name, authority, cause; “name” (literal or figurative) [authority, character].

Read Luke 21:16-17.

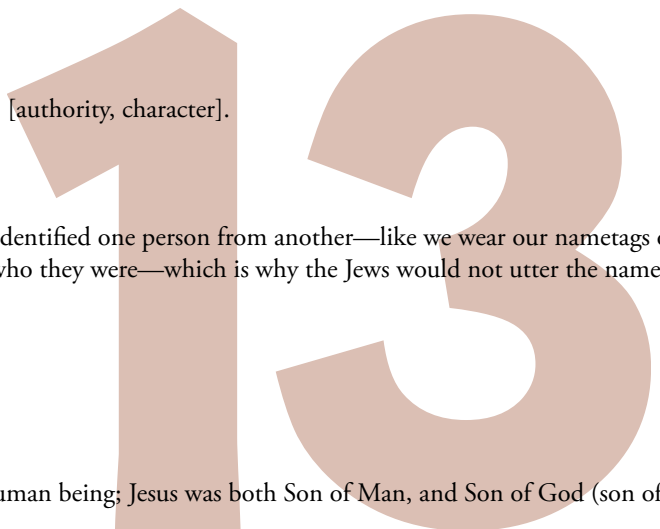
In Biblical times a person's name was not just some label that identified one person from another—like we wear our nametags on Sunday morning. A person's name represented the essence of who they were—which is why the Jews would not utter the name of God

[Saul on the road to Damascus]

They didn't hate the *name* “Jesus”—they hated *Jesus*.

for the **sake of** = on account of, because of

the **Son of Man** = son of *anthropos* (anthropology) = man-faced, human being; Jesus was both Son of Man, and Son of God (son of *theos*).



Read Matthew 5:11 & Luke 6:22.

Last time we emphasized how that persecution was righteous—blessed—only if we were receiving it as the result of standing for His name's sake. Let's begin this week by examining the corresponding “woe” in Luke 6:26.

Read Luke 6:26.

## LUKE 6:26

Blessed are you when men hate you... (v22)

Woe to you when all men speak well of you... (v26)

**woe** = [as in vs24-25] originally, in OT and secular Greek, an onomatopoeic (the word = the sound) exclamation of pain or anger; to howl; pronounced oo-eye'. In the NT, expresses sympathetic sorrow or condemnation. Here the “woe” is not so much a condemnation (as Jesus used it in Matthew 23 against the scribes and Pharisees), but expresses Jesus' “sadness at what He knows is the inevitable end of any who continue to carry on blindly in self-sufficiency.”

i.e., not “I will bring woe upon you,” but “You will have woe.”

**well** = also translated *beautifully, commendably*

The NKJV is a slightly better translation:

Woe to you when all men speak well of you,  
For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

The paraphrase, *The Message*, seems to take it too far:

“There's trouble ahead **when you live only** for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them.

Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.” (*The Message*)

It is not necessary for this approval to be your intended goal. Jesus is saying that you will have woe in your life if you are living in such a way that is agreeable to the world. The inimitable brother of Jesus puts the point without sugar coating.

Read James 4:4.

Our purpose as believers is not to seek either the favor or hatred of others, but to live our lives in obedience to Christ.

## MATTHEW 5:12

Read Matthew 5:11-12. [Note in v11: what they say about you must be *false*]

Here is the contrast between the woe of being treated as were the *false* prophets, and the blessedness of being treated as the *true* prophets.

**rejoice** = a primary verb; to be “cheer”ful, i.e. calmly happy or well-off; impersonal especially as salutation (on meeting or parting), be well :- farewell, be glad, God speed, greeting, hail, joy (-fully), rejoice.

**be glad** = properly to jump for joy, i.e. exult :- be (exceeding) glad, with exceeding joy, rejoice (greatly). [NKJV: exceedingly glad]

In Matthew the meaning of these terms seems to be reversed for our vernacular. We think of “rejoice” as being more exultant than “be glad,” but, in the original Greek, it is the other way around.

**reward** = a primary word; pay for service (literal or figurative), good or bad :- hire, reward, wages.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:9-10.

Let's be sure we understand the difference: Those who are *not* in Christ will receive judgment—the only verdict/penalty allowed: an eternity away from God in hell. Those who *are* in Christ, will not be judged in the same way, but they will receive rewards based on their “deeds in the body”.

But don't think of this in earthly, human terms, imagining that those receiving greater rewards in heaven will be happier. These rewards are sometimes referred to as “crowns”:

Read James 1:12.

Read 1 Peter 5:4.

So we receive these crowns. But look what happens to those crowns once we are in heaven:

Read Revelation 4:4,9-11.

In earthly terms we think of rewards as possessions—something to keep, perhaps hoard. But in heavenly terms, our rewards become the raw material of our worship and praise. No one will be better than anyone else because of their rewards. Our focus in eternity will be not on what we have, but on what we have to give to the Lord.

## LUKE 6:23

The key words in the Luke version are translated closer to how we would understand them.

**be glad** = “rejoice” in Mat.

**leap for joy** = a different Greek word from Mat., but with a similar meaning = to skip; to jump, i.e. sympathetically move (as the quickening of a fetus)

cf. Luke 1:41

When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby **leaped** in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

**great** = much or (more often) many. [as in many crowns]

So when we are getting grief from those around us because of our stand for Christ, we need not be cowed, we need not feel sorry for ourselves. We can take heart and rejoice—we can leap for joy—because we are in good company; this is how they treated Jesus and the prophets before Him. Beyond that we can look forward to the day when we have the privilege of worshipping God with the crowns we have collected as a result.

## THE BEATITUDES: TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

---

### KEY POINTS

#### Audience

The Beatitudes are directed not toward the world at large, but toward disciples of Jesus—those sitting at His feet to learn from Him how they are to live.

The Beatitudes do not represent moral virtues—disciplines of the flesh—but Christian graces that are produced, first, as a result of the indwelling Spirit, and second, as a result of walking in communion with God. We do not gain Christ by behaving according to these precepts, rather we behave this way by accepting Christ as Lord, and walking with Him.

#### Living otherworldly

The Beatitudes are the Lord's template for living "otherworldly"—beyond and above the limitations of this world. It means that

- while our feet may be planted on this temporal plane, our heart and soul reside with the Lord.
- while our body is fed by this world's food, our spirit is fed from above.
- when we are forced to choose between kingdoms, we choose the only one that will last forever.

#### "Blessed"

"[The word] 'Blessed'...refers to the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the Kingdom of God." Only the deity attains to blessedness; He alone is blessed. Men share in this only in so far as the divine nature penetrates the creation. (Philo)

#### A Package

There is an organized progression to the Beatitudes

The beatitudes are all of a package; one cannot pick and choose from the list. Each beatitude flows into the next; each flows out of the preceding. For example, one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is one who has confessed his own spiritual poverty, who mourns over failings in his life, and who graciously considers others more important than himself.

### APPLICATION

Let's focus on application. For each of the beatitudes, let's ask the question: *How would someone live who \_\_\_\_\_? or How would someone live who knew they were blessed because they were \_\_\_\_\_?*

#### Filled with a consecrated joy are those who...

[Matthew 5:3] know they are spiritually poor apart from Christ.

*John Gill:* "...being sensible of their poverty, they place themselves at the door of mercy, and knock there."

[5:4] cannot live comfortably with their sin, and weep over those times they have fallen short or missed the mark.

*JFB:* "...it is that entire feeling which the sense of our spiritual poverty begets; and so the second beatitude is but the complement of the first. The one is the intellectual, the other the emotional aspect of the same thing. It is poverty of spirit that says, 'I am undone'; and it is the mourning which this causes that makes it break forth in the form of a lamentation – 'Woe is me! for I am undone.'"

[5:5] are humble, and keep their strength or power under control for the sake of others and the name of Christ.

Barnes: "Meekness produces peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults."

[5:6] crave the nourishment only God can give.

Taken individually or as a whole, the Beatitudes describe believers who are discontented with mediocrity. It describes people who are not content with the promise of eternal life with God. They realize that life with God begins in the here and now, and they are determined that their walk of faith will not be mediocre at all.

[5:7] take the compassion shown them by the Father and extend it to others.

This beatitude is *not* saying "Blessed are those who are kind to others, for others will then be kind to them," but "*Blessed are those who show compassion to others, for they shall know the merciful compassion of their heavenly Father.*"

[5:8] give themselves over to God for His purity and are not hypocrites.

Purity of heart is not of man's making, but is God's gift to the one

- who is poor in spirit
- who mourns
- who is gentle and merciful
- and who hungers and thirsts for righteousness

[5:9] live peaceably, as Christ, as a Son of God.

We are responsible for the peace we have within ourselves and, more important, the peace we demonstrate to others.

[5:10] have suffered physically for doing what is right.

*Barnes:* "We are not to seek persecution. We are not to provoke it by strange sentiments or conduct; by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech that are unnecessarily offensive to others. But if, in the honest effort to be Christians, and to live the life of Christians, others persecute and revile us, we are to consider this as a blessing. It is an evidence that we are the children of God, and that he will defend us."

[5:11] have been ostracized, marginalized, lied about because of their faith.

Our ordeals—our persecutions—when suffered "for the name of Christ" are the mark, the confirmation that the Spirit of God dwells in us—that we belong to Him.

### **We are blessed because we...**

[5:3] have a share in God's Kingdom—both now and for eternity.

[5:4] are sustained by His encouragement and strength.

[5:5] will rule with Him on the New Earth.

[5:6] will be well fed, filled to overflowing, with His righteousness and goodness.

[5:7] will know the tender, merciful compassion of the Father.

[5:8] will not just see God one day in His heaven, but are able to "see" Him—to discern His presence, to understand His word—now.

[5:9] are eternal heirs—members of His family.

[5:10] will inherit everything in His holdings.

[5:12] will receive from the Lord Himself our crowns of reward for a life well-led—and these rewards will become the building blocks of our worship before His throne.

## USE & COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Permission is hereby granted for copies to be made of this Bible Study so long as the following conditions are met:

- All copies will include the page with copyright notice.
- Copies will not be made for, nor distributed to, other churches or institutions. Copies may be made or printed for use in an immediate class (i.e., the teacher distributes copies to his or her class members)—particularly if individuals do not have access to our web site. Where possible, please recommend to individuals that they download their own free copy at our web site ([HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM](http://DLAMPEL.COM)).

- This Bible Study, or copies thereof, will not be sold or leased to others.

Our Bible studies, while distributed at no charge, are copyrighted. We appreciate your cooperation in following these few guidelines. If you have any questions regarding the use of these notes, please contact David S. Lampel at 515-462-1971, or leave an inquiry at our web site.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Our first priority is to ensure that our resources get into the hands of those who wish to use them—and always for free. We do not charge for any of our resources. Our first and most important payment comes from the Lord—in the privilege we have of serving in His name.

But if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, and you would like to contribute to this work, we want you to know that

your gift will be very much appreciated, and will be put to work covering our expenses. To express our appreciation, we have prepared some special “thank-you” gifts for those who contribute. Send a request for address information via our “Contact Us” link at

[HTTP://DLAMPEL.COM](http://DLAMPEL.COM).

## BIOGRAPHY

We are David and Linda Lampel, and we live in a large country house in the rural area outside Winterset, Iowa, in the middle of the United States. Our home is surrounded by fields of corn and soybeans, and by dense woods that are home to deer, raccoons, possums, wild turkeys, woodchucks, coyotes, and myriad birds of all shapes and colors. The tranquility and beauty of this place contribute to what we do. In fact, we believe that the Lord brought us to this home because He knew that here we would best be equipped to serve Him and others.

Both of us work at home—Dave with his writing, and Linda (now retired) with her baking, needlework, and crocheting projects that are given to charities. Now that she has been unshackled from the business world, Linda has expanded our gardens, and has returned to baking all our bread—and spending more time with our family of four cats. The Lord has given us a good life, and we are most grateful to Him—especially for our 47 years together as husband and wife.

