

The Sermon on the Mount

The Beatitudes - Part 1 (Matt 5:3-12)

INTRODUCTION:

- I. When Jesus began His ministry, the Scriptures tell us He began preaching in the region of Galilee.
 - A. The message of Jesus was simple, but to the point.
 1. **Mark 1:14-15** – *Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*
 2. **Matthew 4:17** – *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
 3. **Matthew 4:23-25** – *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Great multitudes followed Him*

— from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

- B. The preaching of Jesus was described by Matthew and Mark as the *"gospel of the kingdom."*
 - 1. Jesus was preaching the GOSPEL – the GOOD NEWS – about the coming KINGDOM.
 - 2. This kingdom would be a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM – a kingdom where the Messiah would reign as Lord of lords and King of kings within the hearts of His disciples.
 - 3. Therefore, to SIMPLIFY the gospel of the kingdom and reduce it to its most ELEMENTARY form, Jesus went up on a mountain, followed by throngs of His disciples, and sat down to preach the most profound sermon in the history of the world – a sermon we know today as The Sermon on the Mount.

- II. As we begin to take a closer look at "The Sermon On The Mount," we notice that the first section is what we often call "The Beatitudes."
 - A. But what does the word "Beatitude" mean?
 - 1. The word "Beatitude" is from a Latin word that is often defined as meaning "happiness many times over."

2. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the word means "supreme blessedness or happiness."
 3. This is why 9 of the 10 verses of the beatitudes begin with the word "BLESSED."
- B. Therefore, the beatitudes, which are recorded in **Matthew 5:3-12**, describe the blessedness or happiness of those who possess certain character traits.
1. Since the message of Jesus was often described in the words, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" (**Matthew 4:17**), it's almost as though Jesus was answering TWO QUESTIONS the people might have been asking:
 - a. Who ARE the citizens of this "kingdom of heaven"?
 - b. And what are the BENEFITS or BLESSINGS they receive?
- III. The way I'm going to approach this study of the Beatitudes is going to be a little different from the way most people approach the Beatitudes.
- A. Most people approach this passage by examining each beatitude in detail before moving on to the next.
1. However, the way I'm going to approach this study is to look at the Beatitudes in two separate lessons – from two different perspectives.

- a. In the FIRST lesson, we're going to look at "The Beatitudes" from the viewpoint of: "WHAT ARE THE CHARACTER TRAITS OF CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM?"
 - b. And in the SECOND lesson, we'll look at each of "The Beatitudes" by answering the question: "WHAT BENEFITS OR BLESSINGS DO CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM RECEIVE?"
- C. So, to start, let's read THE BEATITUDES together.
1. **Matthew 5:1-12** – *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. 7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My*

sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

BODY:

- I. So let's begin by looking at the question: WHO ARE THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM? The beatitudes list eight CHARACTER TRAITS that we see in the lives of those who are citizens of the Lord's kingdom.
 - A. The FIRST character trait is being "POOR IN SPIRIT." (v. 3)
 1. To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensitive to the fact that we are sinners, and claim no righteousness of our own – knowing we can be saved only by the grace and mercy of God.
 2. It means we would never have the kind of HAUGHTY and PROUD SPIRIT like the PHARISEE in Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.
 - a. **Luke 18:9-13** – *Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not*

like other men — extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

3. Being "POOR IN SPIRIT" means we have been convicted of our own spiritual poverty, just like the TAX COLLECTOR in the same parable.
 - a. **Luke 18:13** – ... *the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'*
- B. The SECOND character trait of those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven is that they "MOURN." (v. 4)
 1. This means that we MOURN, or are DEEPLY SORROWFUL, over the sins we have committed – over our own sinfulness.
 2. David did this after committing adultery with Bathsheba.
 - a. **Psalm 51:1-4** – *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil*

*in Your sight — That You may be found just when You speak,
and blameless when You judge.*

3. Did you notice the relationship between these first two character traits?
 - a. Unless we're "POOR IN SPIRIT" – sensitive to the fact that we are sinners – we will never be able to "MOURN" over our sins and our spiritual poverty.
- C. The THIRD character trait of those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven is that they are "MEEK." **(v. 5)**
 1. The word "MEEK" means "to be GENTLE, or have LOWLINESS OF MIND, or to be GENTLE and LOWLY IN HEART."
 - a. Vine says: "...it is closely linked with the word humility... it is only the humble heart which is also the meek... " (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
 - b. This is the same word Jesus used to describe Himself:
Matthew 11:29 – *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*
 2. Meekness or gentleness is often confused with weakness or cowardice, but there is no relationship between these words at all.

3. Those who are meek have the humility and lowliness of mind to realize their spiritual poverty and mourn over their sins.
- D. A FOURTH character trait of those who are citizens in the kingdom are that they "HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS." (v. 6)
1. To "HUNGER AND THIRST" for righteousness is certainly NOT a half-hearted search for the quality of righteousness.
 2. It is the INTENSE DESIRE that David expressed in the Psalms:
 - a. **Psalm 42:1-2** – *"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."*
 3. However the FOCUS of this HUNGER AND THIRST is RIGHTEOUSNESS.
 - a. Thayer defines RIGHTEOUSNESS with the words:
"...integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting..." (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon)
 4. So, Jesus says only those who are meek and have the humility and lowliness of mind to realize their spiritual poverty and mourn over their sins, are those who will truly have an intense desire for integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting.

- E. Not only are citizens in the kingdom of heaven those who "HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS," they are also "MERCIFUL." (v. 7)
1. Vine says MERCY (which some translations render as LOVINGKINDNESS) means to have "pity, [and] compassion for the ills of others..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
 - a. The idea expressed in the word is that we are to have pity and compassion for others AT ALL TIMES – whether they are personally responsible for their circumstances or not.
 2. One of the best examples of mercy is that of the "Good Samaritan."
 - a. After the priest and the Levite pass by the man who had been beaten and robbed, stripped of his clothing and left half dead, it was the Samaritan who had compassion on the man. (cf. **Luke 10:33**)
 - b. But mercy is much more than simply having pity and compassion for those who are misfortunate, it involves DOING something for them.
 - c. And so, Jesus said the Samaritan: **Luke 10:34-35** – "*...went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took*

care of him. 35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.'"

3. However, being merciful ALSO conveys the idea of having a FORGIVING SPIRIT toward those who sin against us. Mercy is choosing to NOT carry out a just sentence against those who deserve to be punished.
 - a. As an example, consider the mercy Jesus showed to His accusers when he prayed on the cross: **Luke 23:34** – *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*
 - b. Also, as in the example of Stephen who was being stoned to death for proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God: **Acts 7:60** – *Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.*
4. But how do we develop this attribute of a FORGIVING SPIRIT?
 - a. The only way we can develop this attitude of FORGIVENESS is to first be meek and have the humility and lowliness of mind to realize our spiritual poverty and mourn over our sins, and to

have an intense desire for integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting.

- b. When we display all those character traits toward God and toward others, the Lord will be MERCIFUL toward us.
- c. It's been said that BEING MERCIFUL grows "out of OUR OWN personal experience of the mercy of God."
- d. In other words, we have been the recipients of GOD'S MERCY, therefore we, in turn, are able to be MERCIFUL toward others.

F. The SIXTH character trait of those who are citizens of the kingdom is that they are "PURE IN HEART." (v. 8)

- 1. Thayer says this phrase means to be "free from corrupt desire, from sin and guilt." (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon)
 - a. It is sometimes defined as "singleness of heart" – meaning a sense of honesty where there are no hidden motive, no selfish interest, and is true and open in all things.
 - b. It is also used to speak of one who is sincere, without hypocrisy.
- 2. I think you can see that it would be impossible for us to be PURE IN HEART unless we were FIRST meek and humble, and truly mourned over our sins, and had an intense desire for integrity,

virtue, purity of life, and are forgiving and willing to extend mercy to others because God has extended mercy to us.

G. And with all the previous character traits, the citizens of the kingdom are known simply as "PEACEMAKERS." (v. 9)

1. Vincent says the word PEACEMAKERS means those who are the "founders and promoters of peace are meant; who not only keep the peace, but seek to bring people into harmony with each other."

(Vincent's Word Studies in the New Testament)

a. In other words, PEACEMAKERS do everything within their power to bring together warring factions so that peace and tranquility may prevail, and then work hard to maintain that peace and tranquility after it has been established.

b. The apostle Paul described this quality in these words:

Romans 12:18-21 – *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

2. The only way we can become a PEACEMAKER is to first be at peace with God.
 - a. Because we are filled with the peace of God, we must live in peace with all men, if possible, and work to keep and to make peace where peace is threatened or lost.
 - b. Those who are citizens of the kingdom are those who truly follow in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace, and preach the gospel of peace to those who are lost in sin.
- H. Those who possess all of these character traits – being poor in spirit and mourning over their sins, who are meek and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and who are merciful peacemakers – can expect to be "PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE." (v. 10)
 1. But what is so incredible about these who are being persecuted is that they don't try to AVOID being persecuted for the sake of righteousness.
 - a. The tense and voice of the verb (passive perfect) may be regarded as permissive – meaning, these are those who have ALLOWED themselves to be persecuted, or who have WILLINGLY ENDURED persecution.
 - b. The idea is that they did not flee from it but willingly submitted to when it came to them.

2. The way they are persecuted is explained in **verse 11**, and includes being reviled or reproached, and slandered falsely – all for Jesus' sake.
 - a. The word "RIGHTEOUSNESS" in **verse 10** – "*being persecuted for righteousness' sake*" – is the same word back in **verse 6** where we are told to "*hunger and thirst for righteousness.*"
 - b. This means we will be persecuted because we are RIGHTEOUS – or because we refuse to compromise our convictions because our life is characterized by "...integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting..."

CONCLUSION:

- I. When we look at the character traits of those who will be citizens of the kingdom of heaven, we notice a very distinct relationship between the character of the citizens of the kingdom with the character of the King.
 - A. Jesus manifested every one of these character traits in His own life.
 1. He was poor in spirit – humble, and absent of any proud or haughty spirit.

2. He was One Who mourned – not for His sins, because He never committed any, but Who mourned and had compassion over the sins of others.
3. He was meek, gentle and lowly in heart.
4. He hungered and thirsted after the righteousness of God – having an intense desire to do the will of His Father in heaven, even to the point of willingly dying on the cross.
5. He was merciful – demonstrating His lovingkindness over and over throughout His life (perhaps the greatest demonstration of all aside from dying on the cross was the way He showed mercy and lovingkindness to the woman in John chapter 8 caught in the very act of adultery).
6. He was the very essence of being pure in heart – free from corrupt desire, sin and guilt.
7. He was also a peacemaker – coming to this earth to bring everlasting peace to all mankind through His spiritual kingdom and through the offer of eternal peace in heaven.
8. And without question, Jesus was persecuted for righteousness sake.

B. Therefore, since Jesus was the very personification of the character traits mentioned in the Beatitudes, we need to become partakers of these same traits in our lives if we want to truly be His disciple.

1. The apostle Peter put it this way:

a. **2 Peter 1:2-4** – *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

2. The apostle Paul said we must have the same MIND as Jesus Christ.

a. **Philippians 2:5-8** – *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

- II. Have you become obedient in all things? Have you become a partaker of the divine nature seen in the life of Jesus Christ?
 - A. In our next lesson on the Beatitudes we will be focusing our attention on the blessings we RECEIVE if we are truly partakers of the same divine nature we see in Jesus Christ.
 - 1. But remember that the "blessedness" Jesus speaks of in the Beatitudes is only seen in the lives of those who have truly become Christ-like in their own lives.
 - 2. Is that you? Do you manifest the character traits of those who would be citizens of the kingdom of heaven?
 - 3. If not, there are a couple things you can do.
 - a. You can begin becoming a partaker of the divine nature this very morning by becoming obedient to the gospel of Christ – surrendering your life to Jesus Christ by coming to Him in complete faith and obedience.
 - b. Or you can return to being a partaker of the divine nature this very morning by coming back to Christ – confessing any sins in your life that separate you from your God, and being fully restored.

Les and Donna: