

The Beatitudes

Sunday, August 19th, 1990

Matthew 5:1-12

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The Title of my message today is: "The Beatitudes." There are many people who read these words, yet many do not understand them. They are really understood by very few. I want us to look at them in Matthew Chapter 5. I'm going to give you a few moments to turn in your Bible to follow along as I read.

In Matthew Chapter 5 the scripture says, "*And seeing the multitudes, He went up into the mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: He opened His mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that morn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

Now, as I said, these words are very familiar. You may have just read them as I went along or you listened to me read them and you thought, "I've read those many times." Have you really? Have you really read them? Have you really studied them? Have you really enquired into what the Lord is saying here? Let's take a few moments. I want you to stay with me. I'd like to say a few things about this passage before I get into each verse.

These are the words of our Lord. This is Christ speaking. The scripture says, "*Seeing the multitude, Jesus went up into the mountain and when He was set, His disciples came*

to Him.” Who came to Him? The answer is His disciples. The disciples gathered around Him “*And He opened His mouth and taught them,*” He taught His disciples.

The Lord is not setting forth here the way to be saved. This is not what He is teaching. “*We are saved by grace, through faith.*” The blood of Christ saves us, looking to the Redeemer who was sacrificed, crucified, risen and exalted. What our Lord is setting forth in these verses is not the way to be saved. He is setting forth the character of people who are saved. He is declaring here, not the way to heaven; He’s declaring the marks of those who believe on the Son of God. He is teaching us the attitude and actions of people who believe on Him and who are children of God. That is what these verses are all about.

Man is not saved because he is poor in spirit. He is saved because Christ died for him. The men are not saved because He is merciful and because He makes peace. He is saved because God obeyed the law and gave Him righteousness. Christ died on the cross to put away sin. These verses are the marks, evidences, attitudes and actions of those who know God and those who are saved. He taught His disciples.

Now, these verses also are called the “Beatitudes.” That is what I entitled the message. This is what they are called by most people. What does Beatitudes mean? Well, it simply means, blessed of God. These people are blessed and happy. They are highly favored. This is what the angel said to Mary, “*You are highly favored; you are blessed of God.*” They are under His special care and comfort.

Another thing that you will find in these verses are the marks of believers. You will find this; it is absolutely contrary to the principles and opinions of this world. What our Lord teaches here is not what the world teaches. What our Lord is saying here is not the principles and the opinions of the world. This is the exact opposite.

For an example: To be rich, one must become poor. That is what the Word of God teaches. To live to God, we must die to the world. That is the opposite of what the world teaches. To be filled with God is to be emptied of self. To be wise, is to become a fool. To be exalted is to be brought low.

This is not the thinking of the world. I don’t care whether it is a political world, a social world or the religious world. This is not the thinking of the world. Natural men call this foolishness. God calls it blessings and the world calls it foolishness. The Beatitudes and these verses that give us the marks of grace, the characteristics of grace in a believer, are entirely opposite and contrary to what the world teaches. The world won’t understand

this. That is the reason it is to believers. The world cannot understand this kind of thinking.

Let's go back now and start at the very first scripture. *"The Lord went up into the mountain and when He was set, His disciples came to Him."* These were the believers. He opened His mouth and taught them and this is what He said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

He's not talking about people who are poor materially. A man is not blessed and is not an heir of heaven or a child of God because he is poor. Many poor people are some of the most wretched, hateful, evil and corrupt people in the world. So, just because a man is poor materially, does not mean that he is blessed of God.

He is not even talking about people who are poor spiritually. Everybody is poor spiritually. You say, *"We're rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing."* He said, *"No, you are poor, miserable, naked and blind;"* you just don't know it.

Every son of Adam is diseased with sin. Every son of Adam is bankrupt. Every son of Adam is ignorant. Every son of Adam is clothed in rags. Every son of Adam has nothing good, from the soul of his feet, to the top of his head. Now, that is poverty! They are not blessed in that state.

Listen to the Lord, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit."* The word, Spirit, is the key. They are poor in heart, poor in mind, and poor in spirit; the Spirit of God has made them aware of their spiritual poverty before God. They cry with David, *"O God, my sins are ever before me."* David, three times in the Book of Psalms, says; *"I'm poor and needy."* Here, David is one of the wealthiest, wisest, strongest and most powerful rulers on the earth. Yet, he wrote in Psalm 40, Psalm 70 and Psalm 86; *"I am poor and needy."*

Job felt it, he said, *"I abhor myself; I repent in sackcloth and ashes."* Isaiah felt it, he said; *"I am a man of unclean lips. I live in the midst of a people with unclean lips."* The apostle Paul said, *"O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from this body of death?"* The Publican in the temple felt it. The Publican wasn't necessarily, materially poor. He realized the poverty of his spirit, soul and heart in the presence of God. He cried, *"God be merciful to me the sinner."* Our Lord said, Happy, blessed are people who in spirit, mind and heart know something about their sins. *"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

They are going to have the kingdom of heaven preached to them in the gospel. They are going to have the kingdom of heaven in Christ presented to them. They are going to

believe and welcome that gospel. They are going to enter into the kingdom of heaven because, before a man believes on Christ, he will repent. Before he repents, he will be convinced and convicted of sin. There will be a poverty of spirit.

Secondly: *“Blessed are they that mourn; they shall be comforted.”* My friends, this is not mourning over trials. This is not mourning over the loss of a wife, or the loss of a husband, son or daughter. This is not even mourning over development of cancer or trials in the flesh. All men experience these things sooner or later and mourn over them. This is not mourning down at the front of a church. This is not a public, religious show before a religious gathering to be seen of men. This is not even mourning at the last judgment.

What is this? *“Blessed are they that mourn.”* This is mourning before God over our sins. You see; these Beatitudes lead one into the other. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”* When they realize that poverty of spirit, guilt of heart, mind and soul and hand, they mourn. What do they mourn over? They mourn over their sins. They mourn over their unbelief. They mourn over their inability to be Holy.

Paul said, *“The things I would do, I don’t do them. The things I would not do; I do. I love the law of God, but I find another law warring against that law of my mind.”* David said that too, He said; *“Have mercy on me O God according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies. Blot out my transgressions. I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sins are ever before me. Against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.”* That is mourning over sin. They are blessed!

You might ask, “How can a man be blessed who mourns over sin?” The reason is because those who seek the Lord and seek His mercy, weep over sins, and confess their sins, shall find forgiveness. That’s right! They shall be comforted in Christ. *“Blessed are they that mourn; they will be comforted.”* This is not just mourning over sickness and disease. This is mourning over sin.

This is not a public demonstration. *“We have an altar.”* That altar is in the heart and it is Christ. We mourn privately before God. We confess our sins privately. We confess Him publicly but we’re convicted and contrite and broken in spirit privately. Don’t show me your public displays if you don’t have some private convictions.

Thirdly: *“Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the earth.”* Do you see how this moves? They are poor in spirit, and they have poverty of spirit. I have nothing, I am nothing and I know nothing before God.” I mourn over it. I mourn over my sins. Do

you know what the consequence is? This humbles me and brings me down. This will shut my mouth, break my heart and shows me that I am nothing and that I am nobody. This doesn't exalt me or make me proud. This makes me meek.

Meekness and humility are not products of human nature. Meekness and humility are not flowers that bloom in the garden of nature. We by nature are proud, arrogant, and a haughty people. We are vengeful. That's right! We are full of hate, envy, jealousy, and strife. Meekness and humility is the fruit of the Spirit of God. Humility is a heart work. A man cannot put this on himself. Humility is a heart work that makes a man humble, whether he is in poverty or plenty.

I know a lot of people who are in poverty that are meek and humble. It is easy to be meek when you are weak. Let's let that fellow pick up a little money, a new job, or get a little authority. This is when you will find out about his true humility. When he is on the bottom of the ladder, he can show a lot of humility. You let him be up here giving orders and you will find out what a smart aleck he is and how arrogant he really is. True humility is the same whether you are on the bottom or the top. True humility, is whether you are in pleasure or plenty, weakness or strength, failure or success. See what I am saying?

Paul said that, He said; *"I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. But, I have learned, whatsoever state I am to be content."* True humility describes all I have and all I am to God. *"Who makes you to differ?"* Do you have a little more than someone else? Who gave it to you? You didn't earn it; God gave it to you if you have it. He makes rich and He makes poor. He raises up and exalts and brings down. He sets kings on their thrones and unseats them. He kills and He makes alive. I the Lord do all these things. What do you have that you didn't receive? Now, if you received it, why do you boast in glories if you didn't receive it?

True humility does not envy the blessings of others. True humility is kind and generous. True humility is a broken, contrite spirit before God. It is the same, no matter where any man is. Do you see that? *"Blessed are the meek; they will inherit the earth."* They are going to inherit the new earth. They are going to inherit the new heaven and the new earth. They are blessed of God. They are highly favored.

Fourthly: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit."* By the grace of God, and through the Word of God, he has found out what he is. He has shut his mouth. The Lord has stripped him, broken him, and brought him low in the dust. The Lord has brought him to see that he has nothing, is nothing and can do nothing to please God. It makes him mourn over his sins and it humbles him.

Do you know what is next? *“Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness.”* Knowing that I have none, I want it. Knowing I can produce no righteousness and that I have no righteousness, God demands it, and requires it. I hunger and thirst after that which will please Him. He said, *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be filled.”*

You can't start here; you have to start back yonder. You have to be poor in spirit, mourn over sin, and meekness. You have to keep your mouth shut and *“Let all the world become guilty and every mouth be stopped before God and hunger and thirst for righteousness.”*

Now, this righteousness is two-fold. This righteousness for which we hunger and thirst is two-fold. First of all, it is that holiness and that righteousness that God requires. *“Without which no man shall see the Lord.”* That is what we have in Christ. *“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”*

That is what Paul was seeking when he said, *“O that I may win Christ and be found in Him. Not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.”* That is the righteousness I must have. This is what I hunger and thirst for. This righteousness clothes me and *“Presents me spotless and unblameable, unreprouvable in His sight.”*

Secondly, I said that this was two-fold. We hunger for the righteousness of inward grace. That's right! That is the characteristic of the believer. He wants to be perfect before God. He wants to walk before men in such a way that God will be glorified. He wants more joy and faith, love, patience, gentleness, and kindness, grace and mercy. These all make up the fruit of the Spirit.

Neither of these righteousnesses comes by the law; that holiness and that righteousness before God is mine through the love of Christ. *“He loved me and gave Himself for me.”* That is how it comes. It did not come by law, but by His love for me. In that second growth in grace, love and righteousness, comes by my love for Him. Paul said, *“It is the love of Christ that constrains me.”* That's right! It is not by law but by love. His love brought me a perfect righteousness. His love and my love for Him make me want to be like Him. They will be filled.

I heard a fellow on television the other day talking about that mansion that he is going to live in. He was talking about all those streets of gold, the walls of jasper, large pearls and all of these things. He talked about all the mansions that they were building for him.

Let me tell you something! Someone asked Charles Spurgeon one time, “If God would give you anything you wanted, what would you ask for?” He said, “I would ask for holiness, perfect, infinite, immaculate, holiness. I want to be like Christ.” That is what Paul wanted when he talked about heaven. He said, *“To depart is to be with Christ.”*

That is what the thief said on the cross. He didn’t know anything about a big castle, a big palace, or streets of gold. He said, *“Today, thou shalt be with Me in paradise. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and holiness; they shall be filled.”*

Watch the next line, *“Blessed are the merciful.”* Do you see it moving along? The scripture says, *“They shall obtain mercy.”*

The Master is not saying here that men obtain mercy by showing mercy. That is not what He is saying at all. He is saying that men who show mercy are men who have received mercy and know something about it. They have been made objects of God’s mercy. They can say with the apostle Paul, *“I have obtained mercy.”*

He taught us to pray that way. He said, *“Forgive Me of My sins, as I forgive those who sin against Me.”* God doesn’t forgive me of sin because I have forgiven somebody else. But He says, *“If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”* You show, by not forgiving others that you haven’t been forgiven. You do not know anything about forgiveness. You have never experienced forgiveness. The reason is because this is the mark of an object of mercy. He shows mercy. This is a mark of a man who has been forgiven. He forgives.

You see; mercy is an attribute of God and it also an attribute of His people. When a man forgives, he shows that he knows something about it. When a man shows mercy, he shows that he has been made an object of mercy. He knows something about the Father of mercy.

The governor of Georgia, way back in the 1700’s, the 18th century, was on his way from England back to Georgia on a ship, a sailing vessel. On board that ship was one of the Wesley brothers. I’m not sure if it was Charles or John, but it was one of the Wesley brothers. He was on that ship with the governor of Georgia. One of the deck hands, one of the sailors, stole some whiskey out of the cabin of the governor of Georgia. The governor caught him and was going to have him flogged. He was to take his clothes off and he was to be lashed with a whip.

Mr. Wesley came to the governor and said to him, "I appeal to you to show mercy to this man and forgive him." To which the governor of Georgia, replied; "I never forgive." Mr. Wesley said, "Then, I hope sir, you never sin, because the man who cannot forgive, will never be forgiven."

Poor in spirit, which makes us mourn over our sin, makes us meek and humble. It makes us hunger and thirst for God's righteousness that we receive and makes us merciful to others. It makes us understanding, patient and kind with people.

You see; if a man has received his sight, having been blind, he is going to be more patient with those that are blind. *"Blessed are the pure in heart; they are going to see God."* There is no one listening to my voice today that knows the Word of God and knows himself who will claim to be pure in heart.

Are you pure in heart? Do you know anybody that is pure in heart? This fellow preaching to you is not pure in heart. We're not pure from all thoughts of sin and imagination of sin. So, what does the Lord mean here when He says, *"Blessed are the pure in heart?"* Listen to me, the believer's heart, in some ways is pure. First of all, his heart is pure before God in that his heart has been purified and sprinkled with the blood of Christ. That's right!

Secondly: The believer's heart has been purified from dead works to serve the living God. He knows that works won't save, law won't save, obedience won't save, but Christ saves. His heart has been purified and purged from dead works.

Thirdly: The believer's heart has a pure, sincere love for Christ. This love is not hypocritical. This love is not feign, it is genuine and it is pure. The believer, purely and truly loves other believers. This is genuine! *"Blessed are the pure (genuine) in heart, they are going to see God."*

Watch this: *"Blessed are the peacemakers; they will be called the children of God."* Only Christ is the King of Peace. He is the King of Salem. He is the only one who can give peace or bring peace. He said, *"My peace I give unto you."* His children are men of peace. They have a peaceful disposition. Yes sir, they do! Contrary people are not children of God. God's people have a peaceful disposition. They labor to make and keep peace with others.

I know that most churches in the country are just divided and in battle. That doesn't mean that they don't know God. *"As much as lieth within you, live peaceably with all*

men.” The believer will end the quarrel. The believer will extend the hand of friendship. The believer seeks unity and reconciliation. The believer avoids dissention and discord.

Let me tell you this: I read this one time; a troublemaker is usually in trouble with God. A grudge barer bears his sins. A man who seeks revenge is a man who has never sought the Lord. *“Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God.”*