

THE MARKS OF GRACE

MATTHEW 5:1-12 • TV-228B

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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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.”

I want you to open your Bible with me to the **Book of Matthew**. I’m going to speak on the subject: **“THE MARKS OF GRACE,”** or the **“MARKS OF GRACE IN A MAN’S SOUL.”**

This passage of Scripture in **Matthew 5** is called by some, *“The Sermon on the Mount.”* It is called by others in the first few verses, *“The Beatitudes.”*

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I want to read these verses, **Matthew 5: 1 through 9** and bring you a message on the “**Marks of Grace.**”

It is true that our interest in a sermon depends largely upon two things:

First of all: Who preached it or who is preaching it?

Secondly: What is the man’s subject?

Our interest in a sermon or message depends largely upon those two things: Who is doing the preaching? Does he have any authority or experience? Does he have any understanding or wisdom?

Secondly: What is the subject? Is it a subject in which I am interested?

This sermon here was preached by the Lord Jesus Christ. John, on the Isle of Patmos turned to see who spoke with him. He wanted to know who was speaking. The important thing about this message, the sermon that I am going to read from was preached by our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the Master who is speaking.

The Lord’s subject; “The Sermon on the Mount, or the Beatitudes,” is not on how to be saved. He is not telling men how to be saved, how to be justified, or how to be redeemed, but He is setting forth the evidences or marks of those who have saving grace in their heart.

This is what Christ is dealing with. We are saved by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not saved by our works but by His work. We are not saved by our merit but by His merit. We are washed in the blood and redeemed by the grace of God. We are born of the Spirit of God and are “*accepted in the beloved.*”

The Lord is not showing us here in the Sermon on the Mount how to be saved. He is giving us the marks or the evidences of saving grace in the soul.

He begins this message with the word “*Blessed.*” He says, “*Blessed are, blessed are, blessed are.*” The word “*blessed*” means to be happy. It means to be highly favored of God. That is what the word “*blessed*” means, highly favored of God.

Notice this; He puts this happiness, these blessings and this favor of God, in the present tense. He does not say, “Blessed shall be the poor in spirit.” Or, “Blessed shall be the meek. Blessed shall be the peace makers,” as if everything was going to be given to us in the sweet by and by like pie in the sky and nothing here.

He says, believers are blessed right now, present tense; “*Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the peace makers.*”

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We call these seven statements and blessings “The Beatitudes.” What does the word beatitude mean? Well, it means a great pronouncement of happiness and blessings upon those who are described. The Scripture says, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”

You see, the Lord says, “Happy, highly favored, right now, are *the poor in spirit.*” That is what we have to find out, who the “*poor in spirit*” are. You can’t claim the blessing if you don’t fit the requirement. You can’t claim the blessing if you don’t, to some degree, fit the one to whom the promise is made.

“*Blessed, (happy), are the poor in spirit.*” This is the great pronouncement of happiness, blessings, and favor of God, *for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”

There is one more thing of great importance before I get into the message. These principles which Christ sets forth here in the Beatitudes in **Matthew 5: 1 through 12** are totally contrary and totally opposite to the principles and the wisdom and the ways of this world. That is exactly right!

What our Lord says, the character that He blesses, the world despises. The attitude that the Lord praises, the world condemns. The conduct that the Lord honors, the world ridicules. It is the exact opposite.

The principles and the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount which are evidences and marks of grace in the soul tell whether or not a man walks with God. These principles and this nature and these blessings are opposite of the wisdom, teachings, and principles of the world in which you live.

What does the world say? The world says, “Blessed are the rich; if I could just have all the money that I want. If I could just have the finest home and car, I would be blessed and I would be happy.” That is what the world says, “blessed are the rich.”

The world says, “Blessed are the famous.” People run around getting autographs of fellows that sing, fellows that play ball because they are famous. They are on top of the world. They have everything that they want.

The world says, “Blessed are the powerful, the strong. Blessed are the young. Blessed are those that have everything.”

Our Lord declares “*Blessed are the poor and the meek and those that hunger and thirst.*” Our Lord says, “Would you be rich in grace and become *poor in spirit*?” That’s the opposite of what the world says.

The world says, “Would you be rich; then get all that you can get and get it anyway that you can get it. Just walk on folks while you are going up the ladder. Just do what you want to. If you set your mind on something, reach that goal no matter how you do it; the end justifies the means.”

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This is not what Christ said. What He said was, “Would you be rich, then become *“poor in spirit?”* Would you be filled with grace, then become empty of self?”

What’s today’s principle? Today’s principle is teaching wisdom; “You’re ok; and I’m ok.”

We have to have a positive mental attitude. We have to look upon ourselves as conquerors. We have to build up our egos. Our Lord said, “Would you be filled with God’s presence and grace? Become empty of yourselves.”

Would you live to God? Christ said, “Die to the world.” Would you be lifted up, would you be exalted? Then, come down. The gifts of God are on the lower shelves and not on the top shelves. You have to come down in repentance, down in the dust, and down with sinners. Those are the ones whom God blesses.

Would you receive? Then give. That is not the philosophy of this world. The whole philosophy of our Lord’s grace and truth is contrary to what this world says. You have to remember this as I try to teach you what we call “the Beatitudes,” blessings and happiness, true happiness, those which are highly favored of God.

Let’s touch lightly on seven Beatitudes. Let’s ask the Lord to give us some understanding. It is His Word. Like I said, the Master is talking here. This is the Master’s message; this is not my message; this is His message. I’m just repeating it in your hearing.

First: in **verse 3**, the Master taught His disciples and the people from the Mount. He said, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*” He said, “*Blessed*, (happy, highly favored), *are the poor in spirit.*”

He doesn’t say, “Blessed are the poor in purse or the poor in material things.” There is no blessing in being poor. I was raised awfully poor. I was raised as some of you were back in the depression. You people in West Virginia know what the depression did.

It is no blessing to be poor. It is no blessing to be in want materially. Our Lord is not saying, “Blessed are the poor in purse or material things” because some people who are poor are very vicious. Some people who are poor are very dishonest and very evil. There is no blessing in poverty itself.

That is not what Christ meant when He said, “*Blessed are the poor.*” He said, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit,*” in attitude concerning themselves and in an assessment of themselves.

They may be blessed with good health. They may be blessed with strength. A man can be strong and still be poor in spirit. A man can be blessed with material things and still be poor in spirit. A man can be blessed with friends and material comfort and still be poor in spirit.

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You see, those who are poor in spirit know that in God's sight they are nothing. They know that in God's sight and before Him they have nothing, know nothing, and are nothing. They are "*poor in spirit*" before God.

Their language is the language of Paul in 1st **Timothy** when he said; "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.*" He said again, "*I am less than the least of all the saints.*" He also said, "*I am not worthy to be called an apostle.*"

You see, that is a correct assessment of Paul. There's no pride or arrogance there. Listen to what he says over in **Romans 7**; "*O wretched man that I am. The things that I would do I do them not. The things I wouldn't do that is what I do. I find that when I would do good evil is present with me.*" He had a real conflict with that. Their cry is, "*God be merciful to me the sinner.*" Show mercy to me, mercy to the miserable.

My friend; "*it's the Lord's mercy that we are not all consumed,*" you, me, and everyone else. "*Blessed are the poor in spirit (and the poor in heart). The Lord is nigh unto them of a broken heart.*"

There are two things that are totally opposite; pride and faith. I don't know how in the world that people today in religion who claim to have faith, who claim to believe the Bible and believe God, are so arrogant, haughty, and so proud. They are so conceded.

Our Lord said of true believers, "*Blessed are they, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" What is the kingdom of heaven? It is the Gospel, the blessings of the Gospel. Being an heir of the Gospel you are an heir of God's Kingdom.

I will tell you this; before God exalts you, He will bring you down. Before God lifts you up, He will strip you. Before God clothes you with His grace, He will strip you of your own pride, haughtiness, arrogance, and self-righteousness.

You will come down before God declaring that you are nothing; have nothing, that you know nothing, and that you are as dependent as a miserable sinner on the grace and mercy of almighty God though Jesus Christ our Lord.

Second: In verse 4, "*Blessed are they that mourn; they shall be comforted.*"

I'm quite confident that everyone of every age, if they aren't mourning now, they will. They will groan and mourn under the burdens of this flesh. There are even small children, young people, men and women, who mourn under sickness and trials.

Every son of Adam bears the consequences of Adam's fall. We do mourn and we groan. We will someday mourn in trial, in sorrow, in suffering, sickness and death. We all have to die some day.

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Our Lord is not speaking here of a mourning in the flesh, a groaning in the flesh. *“Blessed are they that mourn.”* How do they mourn? They mourn and grieve over their sins before God. That is what they grieve over and that is what they groan about and mourn over.

“Blessed are they that mourn (over their sins before God) for they shall be comforted.” He said, *“If we confess our sins; He is faithful and just to forgive us.”* That is mourning over sin, to face them, to acknowledge them, to admit them, weep over them, mourn over them, and to cry before God, *“Lord forgive me.”*

Those that mourn shall be forgiven; *“He is faithful and just to forgive us. He that hideth his sin cannot prosper, but whoso confesseth his sin shall find mercy.”*

David, in **Psalm 51**, mourned over his sins. He mourned over the nature of sin. He said, *“In sin my mother conceived me. I was shapen in iniquity.”*

He mourned over the acts of sin. He said, *“My sins are ever before me.”* He even mourned over his best deeds. As Isaiah said, *“Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”* *“Blessed,”* happy to be envied, highly favored of God is that person who has found a place apart to mourn before God over sin. They are going to be comforted.

Do you know what their comfort shall be? Their comfort shall be in Christ, a substitute, a sin-offering, and a sacrifice because *“there is therefore, now, and no condemnation (no judgment) to them who are in Christ Jesus. Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect; it is God that justifieth?”*

Yes, we know our sins. We admit them, we confess them and we mourn over them. We have laid them at the feet of Christ. Through His sacrifice and through His sin-offering and meritorious death, He has put our guilt away and *“there is therefore, now, no condemnation in Christ.”*

Third; read verse 5: *“Blessed are the meek.”*

I want you to listen to me; true humility and meekness is not a product of human nature. The flower of meekness does not bloom in the garden of the human heart; it is a fruit of the Spirit of God. *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, faith, and meekness.”*

Let me give you an example:

You go to the back door and there is a beggar there. He is ragged, dirty, diseased, broke, and hungry. You come back in and you say to your husband or wife; *“there is a beggar at our door. He is such a humble man; he is such a meek man.”*

Well; in his state he has every reason to be humble. He has a reason to be meek; he is broke. He is homeless; he is jobless and he is hungry. He is totally, completely and dependent on you. He is a meek man.

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Wait a minute! Let him suddenly become rich. Let him suddenly become of greater position than you with greater authority and then you will know whether he is humble or not. He may just be the most arrogant man on the block.

You see, true meekness and true humility is a heart work performed by the Spirit of God and true meekness and true humility manifests itself in riches or in poverty, in failure or success, in weakness or in strength.

It is easy for a 115 lb. fellow to be meek especially if he is surrounded by three or four men weighing 300 lbs. He better be meek. You see, the bully is always bigger. He is always stronger.

The man that flaunts his riches is a man that has plenty. When he becomes poor; he becomes meek. Paul said, *"I know how to abound and I know how to be abased."* It is a lot easier to be meek when you are weak.

True meekness is seen when a man is strong, when a man is on top. That is when you find out whether he is humble or not. When he has charge, when he has authority, when he has the money, when he is batting 350, when he has knocked 40 home runs, you will find out if he is meek or not.

You see; true humility ascribes all that I have to God. *"What do you have that you didn't receive? If you received it then why do you boast as if you didn't receive it?"*

True humility does not envy the gifts of other people and the graces of other people. True humility rejoices in what I am and what I have; *"by the grace of God I am what I am."* Why should I envy you? God made me like I am. He intended for me to be what I am.

True humility has honest thoughts toward self and charitable thoughts toward others. True humility condemns us and what we find in ourselves and forgives others.

True humility has a teachable spirit. Find me a man that can't be taught and I will show you a proud, arrogant, man. True humility can be taught. You can say, "I'm just a child Lord; teach me."

True humility is motivated by an awareness of God's love and grace to me. *"The love of Christ constraineth me."*

Our Lord said, *"Blessed are the meek; they are going to inherit the earth,"* the new heaven and the new earth. The meek are those whom God has humbled. *"God is nigh unto them of a broken heart. He saveth such as be of a broken heart and a contrite spirit."*

Fourth; verse 6: *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst."*

They tell me that hunger and thirst are the greatest passions; they are the strongest when all is said and done. *"These people hunger and thirst after righteousness and they shall be filled."*

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Righteousness; doesn't refer to our righteousness (the best we do) because our righteousness in His Word is called "*filthy rags*," "*Man at his best state is all together vanity*."

He certainly is not talking about the righteousness in which Israel trusted, in which Paul condemned. He said, "*They go about to establish their own righteousness. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness*."

What kind of righteousness? I'm talking about that righteousness which was imputed to Abraham by faith. "*It was imputed to him by faith*." That is the righteousness, that righteousness which was promised in **Romans 3** when God said; "*What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh; God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh*."

"What the law saith it saith to everyone under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world be guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified but there is a righteousness manifested."

That is the one that I am talking about, that righteousness of God in Christ. "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth*." That is that righteousness accomplished by his obedience, "*by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*," that righteousness which was purchased by His death.

"He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." That is what we hunger, thirst, and desire, above all things, that righteousness of God which is purchased and procured by the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

His righteousness makes us holy before God, leaves us without sin and justified before the Law. He says, "*They are going to be filled*." Those that want that righteousness are going to have it.

Those who hunger and thirst for it will be filled with hope and will be filled with the joy of it. They will be filled with the peace of it and they will be filled with the assurance of it. One day they will partake of the benefits of it; they will be filled.

Fifth; verse 7: "*Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy*."

What are we talking about when we say, "*Blessed are the merciful?*" Well; I think it means just what He says, "*Blessed are the merciful*;" blessed are those who are merciful to the bodies of men and women.

They pity the needy. They pity those that are poor and those that are going under great burdens and trials and help them. They are merciful to the bodies and to their needs. They are sensitive to the needs of other people; they are merciful.

They are not only merciful to the bodies of people but they are sensitive to the feelings of other people. "*Blessed are the merciful*" who are merciful to the hearts of other people; they care. They

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have love, compassion, and pity for everyone, for their feelings. They encourage one another; they reach out to others.

Blessed and merciful to the souls of men are those who faithfully minister the Gospel to the souls of men, who go as missionaries, evangelists and pastors. They support those who go, those that send the Gospel to others. They witness and they care for the souls of men.

You see; they are merciful; they have feelings. A person who is merciful has pity, compassion, and affection. He cares for people's physical sufferings. He cares for their mental and emotional suffering. He cares for their soul's suffering and he does what he can to relieve all three.

Sixth; verse 8, *"Blessed are the pure in heart."* I looked at this for a long, long, time. *"Blessed are the pure in heart for they are going to see God."* I thought that there is no one living with any sense who will claim to be pure in heart. There certainly is no believer, no one who knows the Scriptures who will claim to be pure in thought, motive, attitude and heart.

What did He mean when he said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart?"* They are not pure in themselves; they are purified by His grace and His mercy. Their hearts are pure in that they have *"been washed and made white in the blood of the lamb."*

Our Lord said, *"Though your sins be as scarlet; they will be as white as snow."* That is pure! *"Though they be red like crimson; they shall be as white as wool."* That is pure! We have been purified by His blood. Our hearts have been purified from our *"dead works to serve the living God."*

Our hearts are pure in the sense that we sincerely love Christ. Peter said to Him, *"Lord; you know that I love you."* That is a pure love, a genuine love. That is a sincere love. *"You know that I love you."* He was pure in his confession and in his profession.

Then, their hearts have a pure and sincere love for others. John said, *"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren."* There is no question about that; *"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."* I know His love is there in the *"pure in heart, for they shall see God,"* They see Him now by faith through the Word, *"through a glass dimly and then face to face."*

Seventh: verse 9, *"Blessed are the peacemakers."*

Only our Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. *"He made peace with God through the blood of His cross."* These peacemakers publish the Gospel of peace. They promote peace among men and they themselves are of a peaceable disposition.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God!"