

We Are Blessed

Today we start getting into Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*. We are discussing God's promises for those with the right heart attitudes.

Introduction

In our last teaching, we introduced the topic of the *Sermon on the Mount* and said we would be sharing some teachings based on this very important time of teaching Jesus shared with believers during his ministry here on earth. Today we want to discuss Matthew 5:3-12, the beatitudes.

In Matthew 5:3-12, Jesus gives us a list of what we call the "beatitudes." These are statements about the character of people who are blessed by God.

You may find these beatitudes seem somewhat strange. They seem to say that the people who are blessed are the ones who are poor, mournful, meek, and persecuted. But Jesus is not saying that these people are blessed because of their circumstances. He is saying that they are blessed because of their attitude.

The Beatitudes are a description of the kind of heart that is open to God and his blessings. The person who shows these characteristics is the kind of person who is willing to follow Jesus, even when it is difficult.

Let's take a closer look at each of the Beatitudes.

Blessed Are The Poor in Spirit

Matthew 5:3

(3) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The poor in spirit are those who are humble and recognize their own need for God. They are not proud or self-righteous. They are willing to admit their mistakes and their shortcomings.

Humility is a cornerstone heart attitude for a follower of Jesus Christ. Pride and self-righteousness hold the Christian captive and keep back glory from God. A heart that is full of pride separates a person from God. Therefore, a Christian who is humble and fully recognizes their need for God in their life is far more blessed and has a healthier heart attitude than someone who does not.

Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

Matthew 5:4

(4) Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Jesus is not only talking about people who are mourning the loss of a friend or loved one. Those who mourn are those who are grieving over sin or loss. They are not afraid to feel their pain. They are willing to let God comfort them.

The pain and loss we feel when we lose a loved one is always hard. We hold the memories of that person dear. When the Holy Spirit shows us sin in our lives we should have that same feeling of pain. The sin that is separating you from God, needs to go and you must mourn that sin in your life.



God brings comfort to those who mourn the loss of loved ones, and he also blesses those who are deeply sorry for the sin that has been in their life that they repent from.

Blessed Are The Meek

Matthew 5:5

(5) Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

The meek are those who are gentle and kind. They are not violent or aggressive. They are willing to submit to God's will.

I think of the civil rights marches and protests in the United States in the 1960s. Rev Martin Luther King Junior led people in peaceful protests against horrible racial biases. He did not scream or shout at people nor did he allow it of those with him.

We can stand up against injustice without shouting, screaming, or utilizing violence. The meek are not anarchists or violent by any means. They are civil and respectful, and everything they say and do points to Jesus Christ and his love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Mark 5:6

(6) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are those who are seeking after God. They are not satisfied with the status quo. They are always striving to be more like Jesus.

A few weeks ago a man and his dog were found adrift in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. His boat engines no longer worked and he had no way to communicate with anyone to call for help. He was adrift for almost 3 months. He and his dog survived on the few raw fish he was able to catch and the rainwater he collected. When he was rescued he was very hungry and thirsty.

That is the hunger and thirst for righteousness we must seek, and it can only be found in and through Jesus Christ, not in ourselves.

Blessed Are The Merciful

Matthew 5:7

(7) Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

The merciful are those who are compassionate and forgiving. They are willing to extend grace to others, even when they have been wronged.

The best example of this is when we read about the crucifixion of Jesus. While Jesus was hanging on the Roman cross he looked out over all those gathered to cheer his crucifixion and he prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Being merciful is not weak. Oftentimes the mercy we know we should show can only be provided through the strength of the Holy Spirit.



Blessed Are The Pure in Heart

Matthew 5:8

(8) Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

The pure in heart are those who are honest and sincere. They are not hypocritical or deceitful. They have a clear vision of God.

We have taught many times about heart attitudes, and all of these are heart attitudes. Honesty and sincerity are essential to point people to Jesus and draw close to Jesus. This promises all those who are honest and sincere in their hearts will see God.

Blessed Are The Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9

(9) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

The peacemakers are those who are committed to resolving conflict peacefully. They are not afraid to stand up for what is right, but they do so in a way that is respectful and loving.

This is closely tied to being meek. It takes mutual respect and sincerity to civilly resolve conflict and it can be done. Unfortunately, the world does not understand this. Having a heart attitude centered on Jesus Christ is absolutely essential to being civil and respectful in all situations.

The children of God are the ones who can bring peace without violence.

Blessed Are Those Who Are Persecuted

Matthew 5:10

(10) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are those who are willing to stand up for what they believe, even when it is unpopular. They are not afraid to be different. Most of the time this invites ridicule, embarrassment, or worse.

People have lost their possessions, land, and even their lives in some cases as they have been persecuted. But Jesus is not pointing out all persecution. He says the kingdom of heaven will be given to those persecuted for righteousness' sake. In other words, those who are persecuted due to their faith and love of Jesus Christ above all others.

Conclusion

The Beatitudes are a challenging call to follow Jesus with our whole heart and in all our ways. They are a call to humility, compassion, and courage. But they are also a promise of blessing. If we are willing to follow Jesus unashamedly and with our whole heart, even when it is difficult, we will be blessed by God.

The Beatitudes are a challenge, but they are also a promise. If we are willing to follow Jesus, even when it is difficult, we will be blessed by God.

