

THE BEATITUDES
(Matthew 5:5-7)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Last week we saw how the Sermon on the Mount was given for any group of disciples waiting for the Millennial Kingdom to be set up. The Beatitudes in particular are ethical and moral teaching for all disciples until they inherit the earth and rule over it in the yet future kingdom. The whole Sermon on the Mount pre-supposes that one has experienced the new birth through faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour. This is moral and ethical teaching for God's people, the elect of God; that is, those who have united with Christ and His cause.
- B. Each Beatitude begins with the word "blessed" or "happy," indicating that true happiness is spiritual realm. Happiness is not something that is external but internal, not from within man but given by God.
- C. The Beatitudes also tell us what to look for in a true disciple of Jesus Christ. They speak of how the professing Christian can prove, give evidence or demonstrate that he is a real child of God. The Beatitudes give the birthmarks by which the true subjects of the kingdom may be identified.

NOTE: The Christian is all together different from the world. He is a new man, a new creation and belongs He is an enigma to the non-Christian man.

NOTE: If you are not problems and enigmas to the non-Christian around you, then this tells us a great deal about your profession of the Christian faith.

- D. The Beatitudes speak of virtues Christians are to show forth, but these are not a matter of natural disposition. All Christians everywhere are to demonstrate these characteristics. No matter what a person's natural psychological temperament, he is meant to show forth these spiritual qualities. These virtues can only be produced by the Spirit of God. God alone can change man's natural inclination of selfishness to think spiritual thoughts and do spiritual acts.

II. REVIEW

- A. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" -- This is speaking about spiritual poverty in which man sees himself as nothing before God. It is emptying ourselves of self-confidence, self-importance and self-righteousness, and allowing Christ to fill us with his infinite power.
- B. "Blessed are they that mourn: -- This Beatitude has direct reference to bereavement because of spiritual failures. The Christian becomes grieved over the sin in his life and cries out to Christ for deliverance. This is cleansing from the power and pollution of sin in our daily experience.

III. MEEK "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

- A. Happy are those who are meek. Meekness does not mean weakness. It is not a Casper Milquetoast or a human mouse oppressed with a feeling of his own inferiority; it is not

lack of backbone or a spirit of compromise. Moses was said to be meek (Num. 12:3) but he was certainly no “pussyfoot.” Our Lord Jesus was said to be meek and lowly; yet he drove the moneychangers right out of the temple with a whip. Meekness has to do with a spiritual attitude of yieldedness and submission to God.

- B. The world says, “Blessed are the aggressive, for they shall be successful.” They say it is the man who asserts himself, push himself, and backslaps and gold bricks that gets ahead. Yet, Jesus says it is the meek that shall be happy and really blessed of God.
- C. Meekness is a spirit of humility before God and gentleness towards all men. Meekness is an honest evaluation of one’s self and seeing his place in the total plan of God. The truly meek person is not proud of himself, does not demand anything for himself and is not constantly defending himself. He sees himself as a humble servant of the King of kings and Lord of lords.

NOTE: John Bunyan put it perfectly, “He that is down need fear no fall.”

- D. Those disciples who prove the genuineness of their conversion now shall inherit the earth with the Lord Jesus Christ when He shall establish His kingdom over the earth. Contrary to all natural reasoning, the Bible teaches that it is only those who trust Christ and display in the life meekness that will succeed in the end, for they will inherit the earth.

IV. RIGHTEOUS: “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

- A. Notice carefully our Lord does not say that the person who has attained unto righteousness shall be happy but those who desire to attain unto righteousness shall be blessed. Why? No man has ever reached complete righteousness in his life but he is to push on and become more righteous or holy in his daily experience.

NOTE: Righteousness is referring to sanctification. The happy person is not only one that mourns or grieves over his sin but longs to be more holy or Christ-like in his spiritual walk. It is a positive appetite growth in grace, in prayer, in knowledge, in faithfulness and in Christ likeness.

NOTE: There are those people, even in churches, who appear to be moral but have a secret hatred of grace. They have no burning passion to change and become more Christ-like.

- B. To hunger and thirst speaks of appetite. There must be a great spiritual appetite on the part of Christians for holiness of life or they will never have it. The consuming passion, the single desire, and the supreme goal of life is for righteousness, or a desire to be positively holy. **NOTE:** Righteousness is to have right qualities in the life. It is doing right and rightness is found in the Bible. Doing right means we must be willing to change when we see that something we do, hold or think is contrary to what God’s Word teaches. It is judging all things by God’s standard of holiness rather than man’s standard of relativity. (cf. Psa. 42: 1,2)
- C. The world says, “Blessed are those that are ambitious” but Christ says the real happy

people are those who keep on hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

NOTE: There are many unhappy Christians today because they are seeking happiness through experience. Christians are not meant to hunger and thirst after experiences or even after happiness itself, for that will lead only to frustration. If Christians want to be truly happy and blessed, they must hunger and thirst after righteousness.

- D. It takes time, effort and concentration to develop positive practical holiness. To become Christ-like a person must often think, will and act in ways contrary to what his human nature, culture or background has taught him. He must stretch spirituality.
- E. The reward for hungering and thirsting after righteousness is happiness and a satisfaction in great degrees of one's spiritual desires, or Jesus says, "For they shall be filled." The ultimate experiencing of holiness will be in the Millennial Kingdom when righteousness and glory shall reign supreme under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, we can have in part now what shall be completely ours in the yet future kingdom.

NOTE: In this life we will never be fully satisfied nor our thirst fully quenched. We shall be satisfied only to have our thirst break out again. We are fulfilled only if we keep drinking. (Jn. 7:37-39)

V. **MERCIFUL:** Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

- A. The word mercy emphasizes misery. This virtue is very close to love and to grace. Mercy is related to the miserable consequences of sin; there is a sense of pity plus a desire to relieve the suffering. Mercifulness then is a gracious disposition toward our fellow creatures and fellow Christians. It is a spirit of kindness and benevolence, which sympathizes with the sufferings of the afflicted, and reaches out to help. The heart is not only stirred but the hand moves to render help.
- B. The world says, "Blessed are the strong and most fit." Yet Jesus says those that will be really happy are those who show compassion upon the sick, afflicted, poor, unfortunates, mourners, dull-witted and under-privileged.

NOTE: There is so much suffering and misery in the world and only the Christian can understand it, for he knows the world is under the dominion of Satan and ruled by sin. He has compassion for all men because he knows that at the root of all suffering and misery is sin. Since the Christian has been delivered the misery of sin through the death of Christ, he can empathize with the world who are slaves to sin.

- C. Christians must have a spirit of compassion towards those who are in misery and suffering; yea, even those who oppose our gospel are to be objects of our mercy.

NOTE: The Christian does have social responsibilities to help all men in need. The parable of the Good Samaritan still holds true for all Christians, for we do have an obligation to help those in physical need about us.

- D. Most people do not realize that mercy is a by-product of Christianity. There were no such things as hospitals, orphanages, and homes for the elderly, city missions and so on until Christ and Christians appeared on the scene. Christians, throughout the years,

have sought to be merciful to others with the hope that love and compassion would cause the less fortunate to respond to Christ as personal Lord and Saviour.

NOTE: My heart is saddened when I think of how many fundamentalists today will have no part in Christian social action to the world. Little do these men realize that up until 1912 evangelical Christians led the way in almost all the social action that took place. After the liberal-fundamental controversies in the early part of the 20th century, the liberals left the gospel of individual redemption through Christ and taught only a social gospel. The fundamentalists held to the true gospel of salvation but left its social responsibility out of reaction to liberalism.

NOTE: Oh, how we need “born again” Christians to break out of their stereotyped mold and have compassion upon the masses! If we can show them that we love them, perhaps many will listen to the good news of Christ that He will save all that come to him through faith. Our social concern is for the sake of the true gospel and Christ’s kingdom.

- E. Those that show mercy, shall obtain mercy in a spiritual way now, and will be completely under the mercy of Christ, when He sets up His kingdom over this earth.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. For you here this morning without Christ in your lives, I want to remind you that there is mercy in this world because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world. When he came into this world, He healed the sick, mended the blind and showed compassion on men to deliver them from their physical afflictions. But Jesus Christ came into this world for a more specific purpose than to help men socially and that was to save sinners from the misery of sin, which is ultimately eternal punishment. God had pity on the world and sent his Son to die that all in this world who trust in Christ might have eternal life and the forgiveness of sins.
- B. If you are here this morning without Christ, God sees you in all your misery and will show his mercy on you through Christ. But there is no hope that you will ever be saved until you admit you are a sinner and miserable and turn to Jesus Christ for deliverance. The Bible clearly states that salvation is by God’s mercy. It says, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . .” Titus 3:5*