

# THE BEATITUDES

## Matthews 5:1-12

The Beatitudes have been typically understood as:

- (1) Jesus' Pronouncement of the rewards for the virtuous, committed Disciple
- (2) Signaling reversals for the unfortunate who are defined as the ones who suffer for the cause
- (3) Ethical requirements for participating in the Kingdom of God

The word Blessed means to be fortunate or how happy because of circumstances or conditions. The benefits of living out what is associated with it are first internally then externally. Each of these "Blessed" statements present traits of those who honors and pleases God. They are grounded in Old Testament images and speak to the Kingdom of God as it is revealing itself in a new way. Jesus teaches us that to be one of his disciples, embodying and expressing these traits is a must.

5:3

*Poor in spirit* warns us immediately that the thought here is not (as it is in Luke 6:20) of material poverty but rather those who:

- a. Humbly trust God, even though their loyalty results in oppression and material disadvantage. Psalms 138:6
- b. Dependent on God, not on material poverty as such. Exodus 14:14; Isaiah 41:13
- c. Empty themselves of anything that distracts from a life of obedience. Gal 5:19-21
- d. Control one's thoughts, submitting to the authority of the Holy Spirit Phil 4:8
- e. Lives in the daily realization that all gifts and blessings come from God.

Note: To be Poor in Spirit is to live opposite of pride which is the driving force of many unhealthy and destructive traits and tendencies. Proverbs 16:5, 18; Romans 12:16; James 4:6

Read Psalms 40:17; Isaiah 41:17.

Note that 'the poor' denotes the faithful and persecuted people of God, whom he will ultimately vindicate. This humble, 'unworldly' attitude, which puts its trust only in God (is the mark of the disciple; the kingdom of heaven belongs to (perhaps better 'consists of') such men. They are God's people.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> France, R. T. (1985). [\*Matthew: an introduction and commentary\*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 114–115). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

5:4

2 key words shape this Beatitude.

Mourning means to weep or cry, especially in mourning for the dead. to wail, to lament

Luke 23:27; John 16:20

To experience sadness or grief as the result of depressing circumstances. This leads to the condition of persons who are sad. To grieve for, to weep for, sorrow, grief results from painful and rejecting conditions.

2 Cor 12:21

However, the reference in Matt 5:4 is not to grieving or mourning for the dead but rather sadness and grief because of wickedness and oppression caused by human disobedience and human.

Jesus in teaching this is calling his disciples to embody the spirit of humility.

It involves:

1. Recognition of sin as a condition not just an act.
2. Honest embrace of humanity as sinful thus needing God.
3. The need for repentance which leads to cleansing.
4. The active pursuit of God through Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins.

Read Psalms 51; Luke 18:9-14; I John 1:9

Comforted

Isaiah 61:1-3; Psalms 34:18; 2 Corinthians 1:3

The act of comforting is:

- A. Divine Love
- B. Divinely initiated.
- C. Divinely executed.

This means those who mourned shall be:

1. Pardoned experiencing peace.
2. Restored experiencing purity.
3. Refreshed with joy as sorrow is replaced.
4. Made happy again.

Psalms 73:26

5:5

Read Matthew 11:29; Ephesians 4:2; James 1:21

Three key words that define MEEKNESS:

Mildness, which means to be temperate and moderate seeking to be pleasant.

Gentleness, which means to be tenderhearted and kind.

Equanimity, which means to be mentally calm, composed and evenness of temper.

Note that these manifestations toward men are emphasized as outgrowths of a spiritual relationship to God.

The meekness of the Disciple springs from:

- A. A sense of the inferiority of the creature to the Creator. Job 22:21; 1 Peter 5:6
- B. A recognition of ourselves as a *sinful* creature before the *holy* God. Psalms 51
- C. A desire to live as submissive to the teacher.

5:6

Read Isaiah 32:17; Matthew 6:33

“Hunger and Thirst”

- A. A profound recognition of need
- B. A longing for something better
- C. A strong desire to attain a goal.

Jesus makes the case that the desire for his disciples must be to actively and persistently desire seek RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Righteousness’ here has been variously taken as referring to:

- (a) right (individual) behavior, as doing what God requires. 1 John 2:29
- (b) a just social order as something to be worked for in the present. Proverbs 21:3
- (c) the vindication of God’s people, culminating in eternal life. Matthew 25:46
- (d) the gift of justification. Philippians 3:9

NOTE: This RIGHTEOUSNESS results from the human doing of God’s will *and* God working out his own saving purposes in grace and mercy.