

The Gospel According to

Matthew

Lesson #5 – Ch.5:1-16

The Sermon on the Mount – Matthew Ch.5-7

Jesus Gives the Beatitudes – Matthew 5:1-12

Jesus Teaches about Salt and Light – Matthew 5:13-16

Pray and quiet your spirit. Ask the Lord to speak to you through the reading of His Word.

→ **Read Matthew 5:1-16**

At the end of last week's lesson (Matthew 4:23-25), Jesus began His earthly ministry. His fame had gone out all throughout Syria and neighboring regions and many were brought Him: all who were sick, those tormented by devils, epileptics, paralytics... and Jesus healed them all.

Great multitudes followed Him wherever He went. They came from everywhere, and most had an extreme need. Their problems weren't small. They were more than just hungry or poor, discouraged or depressed; these people had *real* physical, mental and spiritual problems and they were looking to this one man, Jesus Christ, believing HE was a miracle worker. They were witnesses to genuine healings and demonic deliverances, and had seen these miracles with their own eyes.

Who among their peers could heal the paralytic or cast out a demon and return to the demoniac a sound mind? Their bodies were full of diseases that had no cure, for which there was no medicine or remedy or doctor's help. In desperation, they sought out Jesus understanding their only hope was in Him. Jesus saw them as lost sheep in need of a Shepherd. His Heart longed to make them whole and give them an understanding of their need for spiritual healing too.

The famous Sermon on the Mount begins here in Ch.5 and follows through Ch.7. As the destitute multitudes push into our Lord, He climbs up on top of a mountain to teach. His disciples and the multitudes follow.

He is seated as One in authority on that grassy knoll and begins to teach a famous portion of Scripture called "The Beatitudes." The Beatitudes could be characterized as "a study on a believer's inner character."


I wonder if they were surprised about the message of His teaching. If Jesus Christ was supposed to be the new King of Israel, they might have expected a speech about political power, military strategy, race or something more significant, but a teaching about inward character? This was probably a surprise. Why was that the focus?

They didn't understand that Jesus never came to set up a literal earthly kingdom. His Kingdom was an eternal one that all believers would one day experience if they followed Him in faith and obedience.

Jesus began at the beginning - at the heart of man. Jesus was and is still more interested in people's souls than anything else. Jesus was the ultimate teacher. He knew just how to make a message unforgettable. The Beatitudes have a progressive sequence that lead the listener from acknowledging his dependence upon God to being submissive to His will, which in truth leads to contentment, growth, and maturity in Christ.

If we could all have a heart that possessed these spiritual attitudes in Matthew Ch.5, we would all be spiritual magnets! If we really thought this way and responded this way, people would long to be our friends and to really know about this Christ we serve. If our church possessed these attitudes, our pews would be full and we would be an awesome witnessing tool to win unbelievers. Jesus Himself taught that this is the way to true happiness. "*Blessed*" are these, which means *truly happy or fulfilled* are the ones that live this way. Oh, pray with me that God works these inner character traits in our hearts.

The word "**blessed**" means fortunate, spiritually prosperous, and inwardly content.

 ***Jesus taught that there was true contentment available to all who possessed these spiritual character traits.***

Let's take the nine "Beatitudes" one at a time and try to get a handle on their meaning, because I know in my own mind they weren't self-explanatory. It took a little digging for me to fully understand their meaning. As you read through them, keep in mind that you are looking at a portrait of Jesus Christ, and He is a model of what we are to hope to be.

1st Beatitude

1. Matthew 5:3 – Jesus' Statement of Truth = "Blessed are the poor in spirit" or "*Fortunate* are those who are poor in spirit" (Emptied of self).

One way to understand it better is to take out the word “poor” and insert the word “humble.”

So it would read, “*Fortunate are those who are ‘humble’ in spirit.*”

Jesus’ Promise = “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Let’s look at some verses that will support what a person “humble in spirit” does. Read the following verses and list the descriptions of what a humble or broken spirit might include:

a. 2 Chronicles 7:14 -

b. 2 Chronicles 32:26 –

c. Ephesians 4:2 –

d. Micah 6:8 -

e. James 4:6 -

To be “Poor in Spirit” is to be totally dependent upon God; it *isn’t* to be partly dependent upon God and partly dependent upon our own self-sufficiency. Have you faced your own need for God’s help?

True humility understands that we are in spiritual poverty apart from our Savior. We are in full bankruptcy without the Lord, and because we acknowledge that, we are fully submitted to His will in our lives. We have a full understanding that we are dead spiritually because of sin, and we need a Savior. We need a sacrifice to pay for the wrong we have no way of paying for. Jesus Christ did just that. He paid the price that we should have paid. His payment on the cross makes us righteous in God’s eyes. No

one can come to Christ without first coming to the realization that they are “spiritually poor” or “spiritually bankrupt” without Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

“Poor in Spirit” also means we have become completely detached from **things** and completely attached to **God**.

It takes an attitude of “humility” in order to come to Christ. The believer must be willing to say, “I lay down my life for my Lord and I will serve Him not matter what it costs me or how uncomfortable I may be. I will follow His plans and not those I have written for myself. My will, my intellect, and my heart are all bent toward loyalty to Jesus and His purposes for my life, even when I don’t fully understand.” Those are the words and thoughts of the true follower of true disciple.

Jesus was preaching, “Happiness and contentment are available for all those with a heart attitude of a poor and contrite spirit!”

2. Where does the gaze of the Father’s eyes abide? Isaiah 66:2

It’s a comforting thought to picture our Father in heaven concernedly watching our every move, isn’t it? He loves us intentionally with a Father’s care.



Self-sufficiency stunts spiritual growth. To the one who is independent, growth in Christ is slow. To the one who won’t allow others to see any fault or weakness, spiritual growth is lagging.

3. Are you the kind of person that likes to get the job done yourself, or do you usually implore others to help you with a task? Share.

4. Are you a leader by nature? _____ Do you think your personality by nature makes it harder or easier to submit to the Lord’s rule in your life?

God needs leaders, so it's not a negative thing to have the qualities to lead; it's just something you may need to keep in check. Leaders and doer should frequently "check in" to make sure they have allowed the Lord to lead.

♥ *Today our society almost looks at "helplessness" as a disease.*

First, a person cannot come to Christ unless he becomes as a humble, helpless child and understands he needs a Savior because of his inability to work out his salvation or do anything to cure his sinful state. Secondly, we are helpless in causing our own spiritual growth. Only God can bring spiritual maturity to His children.

It's so easy to plan without praying, to act without truly seeking God in a situation. Most of us are self-sufficient people.

Where self is King, Christ cannot be!

5. Do you sometimes fall into the trap of "getting things done" without first seeking God on a matter?

a. We need to remember that God is all-wise and may have something to say about your decisions and future dreams.

1 Corinthians 1:25 is a good reminder that we don't have it all together.

What part of that Scripture did you need reminding of?

b. Our motives often need correcting. Can we always trust our gut? What lies beneath (Mark 7:21-23)?

With all the evil potential that dwells in the heart of man, it's foolish to make decisions without the counsel of God. Without the Holy Spirit's input, who knows what motives lay behind half of what we do! A good heart-check by the Holy Spirit is so wise before making a move.

Jesus was teaching His inner circle (His disciples) the importance of a humble and contrite spirit. The attitude of self-dependence upon the Savior for everything in life

was vital for them because the disciples were about to face some monumental challenges as they walked with Jesus.

They were going to be asked in the very near future if they could surrender everything to follow their Savior. Every one of Jesus' disciples would eventually come to die for Him except one - that was John. Following their death for Christ, they all received that promise Jesus had made: theirs was the Kingdom of heaven.

2nd Beatitude

Matthew 5:4 – Jesus' Statement of Truth – “Blessed are those who mourn”
In other words – “Blessed are those who grieve” (grief too deep to conceal).

Definition of “mourn” = extreme sadness over intense loss, hopelessness, despair.

Jesus' Promise = “They shall be comforted”

This mourning or grieving can be a regret we feel over your own sin before God or the sin we see in the world. Sometimes as I listen to the news and I hear the horrific details of rape, incest, murder, homosexuality etc. I just feel heavy with the burden of sin. I have a sense of just being dirty all over! We are accountable both as a country and globally for our political decisions. Ezra lamented over the sins of Israel (Ezra 9:2-4). We should mourn at the ungodly decisions of our nation also.

How is it that the Lord can see it all going on at once - every rape, every act of molestation, every murder through the act of abortion, every theft- and He extends mercy, wanting none to perish eternally.

This ability to grieve over our sin is a gift from God; apart from Him, we wouldn't even realize that we are dead in our sin.

We also mourn as the sins of others affect our lives. We mourn in the death of those we love, we mourn at the death of a marriage, a friendship, or a vital relationship that dies. Grief affects us all, and sin is a destroyer of anything good.

7. Read James 4:8-10. We are called to, Draw _____ and He will draw _____. Cleanse _____ you sinners; and _____, you double-minded.

v.6 Speaks of being sorry for our sin. How are we to mourn?

8. There is a place to unload those feelings of despair and failure when it comes to sin in our lives. How do we do that and become encouraged again (Matthew 11:28-30)?

 **3rd Beatitude**

Matthew 5:5 – Jesus' Statement of Truth = "Blessed are the meek"

Other words = "Blessed are those who are gentle and humble"

Jesus' Promise = "They shall inherit the earth."

(They will receive what God has promised)

Sometimes to understand a word, it's good to look at the opposite meaning of it first.

The opposite meaning for the word "meek" would be:

Self-sufficient

Aggressive

Assertive

High-Spirited

Insubordinate

A "meek" person is not a "weak" person; their spirit is under control. There is power in meekness. A truly meek person has the ability to keep their temper in check, to turn the other cheek when being attacked, or to hold their tongue when being slandered. Their inner strength is never more evident than in these times. They have the supernatural ability to relax in God's ability to direct events as He deems best.

My dad is a meek man. Once again, in saying that, I didn't mean to convey to you that he was a "weak" man, no not at all. He's one of the strongest, steadiest, most consistent men I have even known. In fact, I tell my husband Brad all the time, "Except for you, my dad has been the most like Jesus to me than anyone else in the world." He loves the Lord with all his heart and has been my mother's sweetheart for 70 years(He is 90 years old and their 70th wedding anniversary is this year.)

As a child, I would always pick my dad to go to when I knew good parenting would require some discipline to be handed down. My mom was great, but my dad was consistently meek, but truthfully strong. The discipline was sure, but merciful and always coupled with such assurance of love and acceptance. I told you – he's just like Jesus.

Jesus was the best example of this. Let's look at some places where His meekness was displayed as He held back His power towards those who were aggressively attacking Him.

9. When Judas came with the soldiers to arrest Jesus, one of the disciples was indignant at the fact that they wanted to arrest the Savior. He took out his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest. What was Jesus reaction (Matthew 26:51-54)?

The definition of meekness is one who is tender hearted and humble; one who bears wrongdoing patiently and without bitterness; controlled strength in the face of being criticized or attacked.

The promise Jesus makes to the meek was that they would inherit God's promises.

♥ ***The beatitudes are not something you DO ...they are something you pray that you would BE.***

10. Our attitude in times of suffering is supposed to be one of meekness. Remember – “power under control”!

According to 1 Peter 3:13-17, how are we supposed to exhibit meekness even when others persecute us?

“Oh Lord, make me like You. What I often see inside myself is so disappointing.” Like Paul I can say, “I do what I don’t want to do and what I want to do, I don’t do!” My flesh apart from your Holy Spirit’s anointing is strong and willful. Fill me Lord to walk in these ways and resemble Christ in doing so. I pray boldly that you bring me opportunities to practice what you are working in my heart. Give me a new name along with my new disposition, that others would see your work and give you the glory!” Amen

♥ **4th Beatitude**

Matthew 5:5 – Jesus Statement of Truth = “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

Other words – “Blessed are those whose greatest aim is to do what God requires of them.

Jesus Promise = “They shall be filled.”

(God will satisfy them fully)

♥ Those whose strongest desire is to be pleasing to the Lord will be completely satisfied!

This is not a promise to satisfy the desire for earthly things; it’s a promise of contentment of heart.

11. What do you hunger for? Do you have a deep need to be thin, popular, or financially elevated? Happy are those whose greatest goal, whose deepest concern, is to be pleasing to the Lord over everything else. After reading these questions, is there an area out of control that you need to give to Christ?

12. Job was content even after his great losses. What was Job hungry for in his times of trial (Job 23:12-14)?

3. Do you have a favorite Scripture that spiritually fed you when you were in a trial? Share:

Those whose aim is to please God, those who love His Word and those who are obedient to His call in their lives will be totally satisfied, and content at heart!

 **5th Beatitude**

Matthew 5:7 – Jesus Statement of Truth = “Blessed are the merciful”
In other words – “Blessed are those who show mercy”

Jesus’ Promise = “They will be treated with mercy.”

Someone who has the spiritual character trait of mercy totally identifies with another person’s hardship. They feel so much compassion for that individual and their heartache; it’s almost like going through the experience themselves. They are tender-hearted and endure the sufferings of others right alongside them. Their soul aches when another’s heart is breaking. They are not one to overlook or ignore another in pain. These people are the ones you want to visit while you are in the hospital and when you are in a season of intense emotional pain.

Their promise from the Lord is that when they are enduring suffering, they will in turn be treated with compassion and mercy from others and from the Lord.

If we are detached and disinterested in other people’s problems, then they will be detached and disinterested in ours. What a feeling of isolation that would be if this was everyone’s attitude!

Share a time when someone met you in your pain. How did that encourage you?

14. This principle of mercy is shown all throughout Scripture. What does Psalm 18:25 say about God’s attitude toward those who show mercy?

15. What does the Psalmist say the Lord will do for those who are merciful to the poor (Psalm 41:1-4)?

16. According to Isaiah, when does our light break forth like the morning, and when is the glory of the Lord our rear guard, and when does our righteousness go before us (Isaiah 58:6-11)?

If we will extend our souls of mercy to the hungry, the afflicted, the needy, and forgive our enemies, then our lives will be like a well-watered garden whose waters do not fail. He will give us a full life even in the emptiest of places!

17. Who came to mind that you need to attend to? Who needs your encouragement? Write yourself a note here to give them a call...

 **6th Beatitude**

Matthew 5:8 – Jesus' Statement of Truth = "Blessed are the pure in heart"
In other words – "Blessed are they that are undivided and totally loyal to the Lord."

Jesus' Promise = "They shall see God."

God sees the motives behind what we do (1 Samuel 16:7).

Those that are truly pure in heart don't live on both sides of the fence. They don't serve the world and the Lord at the same time. They are the same at home as they are at church.

The phrase that comes to mind is "the real deal." We all know how that is. Scripture says a house divided against itself will fall. You cannot serve God and mammon. It won't serve you well to be a pretender. The truth always comes to light eventually.

The Message version of this verse says, "When your inside world, your mind and heart are put right, then you can see God in the outside world."

I love the way that is put!

When our hearts are holy before Him, He allows us to perceive things in the Spirit. We can see like Christ sees.

It's interesting that in Jesus' day no one except the King's favorites or best of friends were ever able to stand in their presence, face to face. It was reserved only for a few chosen intimate ones. Scripture says His chosen ones, you and I, will see Him face-to-face! You are soooo wanted by the Lord, dear one! Thank you, Jesus!

 **7th Beatitude**

Matthew 5:9 – Jesus' Statement of Truth = “Blessed are the peacemakers”
In other words – “Blessed are those who make peace.”

Jesus' Promise = “They shall be like God when doing so.”

Someone who tries to make peace cooperates instead of competing or fighting. They strive to prevent contention or strife. They use their influence to reconcile opposing parties, and are never more like God when doing so.

20. The person that wants to have a sweet life and see goodness will do what (Psalm 34:12-13)?

21. When we aren't men pleasers but God pleasers, who else will be at peace with us (Proverbs 16:7)?

Do you find yourself at a place of unrest with someone you love? May I suggest to you that God may want to use you to be that bridge builder?

22. What are we called to do when we know we have offended someone (Matthew 5:23-24)?

23. Is it always possible to be at peace with everybody? See Romans 12:18.

24. When we can't seem to build that bridge no matter how hard we've tried, what are we to do next (Matthew 5:44-45)?

These virtues are signs to others that we are sons/daughters of heaven. They are so important because we are ministers of unconditional love to a world that demands revenge and personal rights.

8th Beatitude

Matthew 5:10 – Jesus' Statement of Truth = “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake”

In other words – “Blessed are those who are persecuted for doing what God approves of.”

Jesus' Promise = “Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

We are not to provoke persecution by snide remarks or cynical attitudes toward unbelievers, but if we are persecuted simply for doing what God approves of, then it is just a reminder that we are children of another Kingdom. We are not of this world and this really isn't home. Believers must keep a soft heart while maintaining a hard outward shell towards criticism. We can't fall apart every time we are ridiculed, slandered or persecuted for our beliefs. A mature believer must at times hold to their convictions without becoming offended, knowing God will bring honor to His name and to their personal testimony.

25. What does Paul say will happen to ALL who desire to live like God wants us to(2 Timothy 3:12)?

John MacArthur says this about persecution: “Imagine a man who accepted a new job in which he had to work with especially profane people. When at the end of the first day his wife asked him how he managed, he said, “Terrific! They never guessed I was a Christian!” As long as people have no reason to believe that we are Christians, at least obedient and righteous Christians, we need not worry about persecution. But as we manifest the standards of Christ we will share in the reproach of Christ. Those born only of the flesh will persecute those born of the Spirit.”

26. According to Matthew 5:11-12, we have a _____ waiting for us in heaven for undertaking that persecution!

→ Read Matthew 5:13-16. – Salt and Light -

“You are the light *of the world*. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:13-16)

Those are powerful metaphors. Salt is a preservative that works only when it penetrates into food, and becomes useless when contaminated by other chemical substances. It must remain pure to do its job. Jesus says that Christians, likewise, must penetrate society while keeping themselves from being influenced by sin in the world.

Similarly, light penetrates darkness. To know the truth and fail to stand for it, Jesus says, is as senseless as lighting a lamp and putting it under a basket.

In other words, we don't just live out our faith inside the walls of our churches and of our homes. We're not to be of the world, but we're to be in the world. We're citizens of an earthly kingdom as well as a heavenly one. (Focus on the Family)

Christians must pursue godliness and christlikeness if they want any chance of influencing others for Christ. People are smart and they can see through a phony in a split second. God isn't calling believers to be perfect, but to be honest, open and active in the process of maturing in their spiritual journey of becoming like Jesus.

Wrapping it up and making it personal!

How did this lesson speak to you? I was certainly convicted many times, but encouraged through the promises at the same time. So that it isn't so overwhelming, pick one of the beatitudes that you would most like to see become a part of your spiritual character. Boldly ask the Lord to bring to you circumstances that will enable Him to manifest this trait through you with the power of the Spirit.

Pray that you will be watchful and ready in season and out to respond to the need He puts before you. Make a note this week in your lesson, and don't forget to share with your group your experience.

Have a blessed week!

