

# The Beatitudes

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Third Baptist Church

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# Lesson 1: Chap 5:1-12

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## **Kingdom Blessings**

# How To Understand The Beatitudes

1. They are a code of ethics & a standard of conduct for the believer.
2. They contrast kingdom values with worldly values.
3. They contrast the superficial faith of the Pharisees with the real faith Christ desires.
4. They show how OT expectations are fulfilled in the new kingdom.

## What They Are Not

They are not multiple choice items – we don't  
select the ones we like!

# What Does It Mean To Be Blessed?

- It means more than happiness.
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- It implies the fortunate state of those who are in God's kingdom
  - It means the experience of hope & joy, independent of outward circumstances.

## Verse Breakdown

***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***

1. The "poor" not only refer to literal poverty, but also refers to the lack of arrogance & sense of one's own need.

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2. The pronouncement of blessing rests upon those whose only identity and security is in God.
3. What's at stake is neither economics or spirituality – it's the identity of the people of God

# Verse 3 (cont.)

*"theirs is the kingdom"*

1. Jesus presents the nature of the life of the kingdom he proclaims and represents
2. Jesus has reversed the idea of human kingship and those his kingdom belongs correspond to this reversal
3. Just as the king is meek and poor in spirit, so also are those to whom his kingdom belongs

## Verse 4

***"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted"***

1. Matthew taps into the deep biblical tradition that the true people of God lament the present condition of God's people and God's program in the world.

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2. This community does not resign itself to the world's present condition but laments the fact that God's kingdom & God's will has not yet been done.
3. This text points to the future where God will satisfy the yearnings of his people.

## Verse 5

***"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth"***

1. Meekness here is a synonym for "poor in spirit"
2. It's not matter of a ***particular attitude*** but characterizes those who are ***aware*** of their identity as the oppressed people of God in the world, those who have renounced the violent methods of this worldly power.
3. ***"inherit the land"*** is an end-time metaphor for participation in the renewed earth

# Verse 6

**"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled"**

1. Righteousness is synonymous with justice
2. Righteousness is key concept in Matthew and it denotes **actively doing the will of God.**
3. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are fueled by the coming of God's kingdom and the vindication of right and they actively pursue fulfilling the will of God.
4. This longing is **no empty hope** but it shall be satisfied by God.

## Verse 7

***"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy"***

1. This refers to **concrete acts** of mercy, not an attitude of mercy
2. This idea is shown through the **actions** of Joseph (1:19-25)
3. Mercy is **not a sign of weakness** but an indication that God, at the last judgement, will bestow mercy on those who have extended mercy
4. This is not a practical world reality but an eschatological hope

## Verse 8

***"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"***

1. Purity of heart is not merely the avoidance of impure thoughts
2. Pure in heart ***refers to single-minded*** devotion to God
3. An "undivided heart" requires having something ***big enough and good enough*** to merit one's full devotion
4. Faith in the one God requires that one be devoted to God with all of one's heart

## Verse 9

***"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God"***

1. Jesus' preaching/teaching was anti-militaristic in nature
2. Roman emperors called themselves "peacemakers' and "Sons of God"

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3. Peacemaker does not refer to a passive attitude but ***positive actions*** for reconciliation
4. Military conflict was not part of Matthew's situation, therefore, his aim is the ***reconciliation of conflicting religious and cultural groups***

## Verse 9 (cont.)

1. To be declared "**sons of God**" is not matter of individualistic identity but rather to be accepted as belonging to the true people of God and entering into its inheritance

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2. God will claim the peacemakers as "sons of God" in the last judgement, **not to what people will say** about those who work for peace in this world.

## Verse 10

***"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"***

1. This verse corresponds to verse 3 – refers to those unjustly persecuted because of their **commitment to**  
righteousness/justice
2. Righteousness in Matthew is not an abstract concept - it has Christological foundation in Jesus.

## Verse 11 & 12

1. Begins the transitional section and introduces us to the word "rejoice"
2. The joy to which the disciples are called is not in **spite** of persecution but **because** of persecution

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3. Rejoicing is the joyful acceptance of the badge of belonging to the community of faith – **the people of God who are out of step with the value system of this world**
4. The blessing in verses 3-12 is for the purpose of their **becoming the agents** of blessing to others

# Take-Aways

1. The beatitudes are addressed, not initially to individuals, but to the whole faith community.
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2. Every authentic Christian congregation has persons who are meek, merciful and workers of peace and their presence and activity is a sign of God's blessings and a call to all of us to conform our common life more to these kingdom values

## Take-Away (cont.)

3. Christian faith is a way of living based on a firm and sure hope that meekness is the way of God; that righteousness and peace will finally prevail and that God's future will be a time of mercy and not cruelty.

4. Blessed are those who live this life now, even when such life seems foolish, for they will, in the end, be vindicated by God