

## The Basis of Blessing (Part 2 of #2)

Matthew 5: 3-12

Tonight I would like to continue our study on the passage that is commonly referred to as the Beatitudes. Remember this is a Latin term that literally means “*happiness or bliss.*” Our Lord uses the word **blessed** nine times in this discourse. He is clearly emphasizing the presence of blessing for those who seek to know Him. This has the idea of “*spiritual joy and satisfaction that lasts regardless of conditions; that carries one through pain, sorrow, loss, and grief.*”

As we discovered last week, many of the blessings Jesus speaks of appear to be contradictions, but we must remember that God’s economy is much different than ours. Much of what the world considers a blessing is based upon circumstances or material possessions. The Lord speaks of blessing in regard to our relationship with Him and the abundance that He gives. This world will never understand and most will never receive the blessing that Jesus offers, but we can rejoice in what we have received in Him.

I want to quickly review the blessings that we considered last week and then continue to examine the passage as we seek to discover the **assurances** our Lord promises concerning : **The Basis of Blessing**.

**I. Blessed are the Simple** (3) – This refers to those who are poor in spirit; those who have recognized their need for the Lord and their inability to achieve His righteousness of themselves.

**II. Blessed are the Sorrowful** (4) – There seems to be little blessing or comfort in mourning, but those who have come to the place of sorrow and grief over their sin are truly blessed. Those who have realized their need of salvation and came to a place of repentance and sorrow for sin are blessed.

**III. Blessed are the Submissive** (5) – Jesus reveals our need for humility and submission before a holy God. Where being poor in spirit recognizes our need of salvation, our meekness recognizes the holiness of God and causes us to humble ourselves before Him.

**IV. Blessed are the Seekers** (6) – What a promise and encouragement our Lord reveals here. He promises those who are hungry for His righteousness can be filled with His abundance. There is no reason for a child of God to be hungry in the Lord. We can continually be filled.

The first four beatitudes deal exclusively with the inner man, our heart and our desires toward the Lord. The remaining four that we will consider tonight reveal the outward manifestation of those attitudes and desires of the heart.

## **V. Blessed are the Sympathetic (7) – Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.**

The first outward manifestation Jesus speaks of regarding those who are blessed is mercy. The word means “*to show kindness, compassion, benevolence, and forgiveness; to extend mercy.*” It has the idea of “*forgiving those who are wrong; showing empathy; it is coming alongside someone and feeling their burden with him. It is a deliberate effort, to understand and meet one’s need by forgiveness and mercy.*”

- This was a concept that was completely foreign to many in Jesus’ day. He was dealing with the seed of Abraham, those who were proud of their lineage and had little mercy or compassion for those who were different. They were strict in their adherence to the law and had little sympathy for those who lived or behaved contrary to their traditions. They had no desire or compassion for the Gentiles or even the Samaritans. They were proud that God had chosen them and were content to see His wrath on everyone else.
- We need to realize that this was also during the time of Roman occupation. The Jews had little tolerance or mercy for those of Rome. It was a hard time and often mercy was viewed as a sign of weakness. Occasionally it was acceptable if one thought he might receive mercy in return, but it wasn’t readily shown or displayed by the vast majority.
- Things have not changed much in our society either. We are not living in a barbaric society, and yet many times mercy is not shown. It is especially troubling to see a lack of mercy within the church. Church members can be some of the most unmerciful people you will ever meet. Many today feel as if all is well within their lives and homes and they see little need for those around them. We can come to church and worship the Lord, rejoicing in our salvation, and never be moved by the needs of the lost around us. We need to show mercy and compassion for those who need the Lord.
- When you think about it, mercy is one of the divine attributes of our Lord. Where would any of us be tonight had He not shown mercy? It was that mercy that withheld the judgment and condemnation that we deserved. Had Christ not been merciful, we would all be destined for an eternal hell. I pray that we will seek to be merciful as our Lord is merciful.

## **I. Blessed are the Simple (3)**

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## **III. Blessed are the Submissive (5)**

## **IV. Blessed are the Seekers (6)**

## **V. Blessed are the Sympathetic (7)**

**VI. Blessed are the Sincere (8)** – **Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.** Those who are poor in spirit, recognizing their need for the Lord, become pure in heart. The heart speaks of much more than the organ that circulates the blood. It refers to the inner man, the attitudes and desires of the heart, the emotions, and even the will. This is speaking of who we are on the inside, the passions that drive us and make us who we are.

- Jesus reveals that those who are pure in heart will see God. The word **pure** means “*to be unsoiled, unmixed, unpolluted; to be cleansed, purged, forgiven; to be holy; to have a single purpose, that of God's glory.*” It also has the idea of “*a vine that has been pruned and purged so that it is ready to bear fruit, having all of the deadness cut away.*”
- Surely you would agree that we need pure hearts before the Lord, pure motives, desires, attitudes and actions. All of our being needs to be clean and pure before Him, unmixed and unpolluted of the world. We will never live a life that honors the Lord if our hearts are not pure. What we possess on the inside will eventually be revealed on the outside. The inner man dictates the actions of the outer man.
- As I thought of this the characteristic of being unmixed spoke profoundly to me. I rejoice that the Lord saved my soul, but I realize that my flesh was not saved. I live in a body that does not desire the things of God. In fact, it seeks that which is contrary to the will of God. If I am to be of pure heart before the Lord, I must not allow my heart to be mixed with the desires of the flesh. I must crucify the flesh daily, take up my cross, and follow the Lord.
- A pure heart is beneficial to the believer. **The pure in heart shall see God.** That is an interesting phrase. It certainly has application for the future glory that the redeemed will behold in heaven, but it also has application for now. The phrase reveals a continuous action and it literally means that “*we can continuously enjoy the presence of God even now.*” Those who are pure in heart enjoy an intimacy with God. We have the glorious privilege of fellowship with Him. I don't know about you, but I desire a pure heart so that I might see God and experience His presence. It is through a pure heart that we are able to commune with Him daily.

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**VII. Blessed are the Serene (9)** – **Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.** Here Jesus reveals another attribute that one will possess and exhibit when their lives are lived pleasing to the Lord. Those who walk with Him will seek peace with all men. We know that peace and serenity are contrary to man's fallen nature. Because of our sin, peace is often hard to achieve. We find that with the first of God's creation peace was lost. Cain killed his brother in anger rather than seeking to make peace. The Bible is filled with accounts of war, murder, deceit, and rebellion. All of this is a result of sin.

- Peace has been sought after as long as men have inhabited the earth, but it has always eluded them. Even in our modern society many call for peace, but it is never fully achieved. Every day upon this earth there is conflict, rebellion, war, and division. These are all character traits of sin and are tied directly to the fall of man.
- As children of God we are expected to rise above the passions of the flesh and seek to make peace. That is what God desires of us. We are expected to live in harmony with those around us. Our Lord set the example that we are to follow. As He was falsely accused, condemned, and crucified, He never opened His mouth. He endured the torment and the shame without so much as a rebuke. That is not to say that He was weak or inferior, but that He was resigned to the will of God. We need that same attitude and resolve to live according to the will of God for our lives.
- We need to understand that the peace Jesus speaks of goes beyond unity and lack of division. It also speaks of the purity and holiness of the believer. The only way that men will ever agree and live together without division and strife is to dwell together in the holiness of God. We don't have the ability or the desire to dwell peacefully without the help of the Lord. We need His help if we are to maintain peaceful relations.
- Also we must not assume that the only way to achieve peace is to flee adversity. There are times when we must stand our ground in truth and love to promote and ensure peace. We cannot flee from adversity and abandon truth and expect to have peace. We may be called upon to help mediate a situation in order to achieve peace.

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**VIII. Blessed are the Shunned** (10-12) – Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. [12] Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Lastly Jesus speaks of the blessing for those who are persecuted and mistreated for the gospel's sake. This is one of those that is difficult for us to embrace. I have no doubt that each of us like to be accepted. We like to be welcomed and cared for. It isn't within our nature to want to be alone.

- The truth is that the world doesn't care for those who seek to serve the Lord. You will be cast out, separated, spoken evil of, and even hated for the cause of Christ. The world will not embrace those who live for the Lord. **2 Tim.3:12 – Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.** It isn't a question of "if," but "when" this persecution will come.
- This should really come as no surprise for us. The world hated our Lord. He came as God in the flesh, providing for the needs of men, to offer Himself upon the cross, and yet He was despised, rejected, hated, slandered, and crucified. Should we expect the world to offer any less for us? **Jn.15:18-19 – If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.** As these persecutions come, we must remember to whom we belong. We are only enduring a small portion of what our Lord endured.
- The world has no problem with those who live according to its desires. Men don't despise those who walk in the same way, but those who go contrary to the grain. It is hard to endure, but suffering hardship for the Lord should come as a blessing. If the world has a problem with your stand for the Lord, then you have made an impact on their lives. We ought to rejoice that we have lived for the Lord in such a way that someone has noticed.
- Individuals and churches that face persecution have been noticed for their devotion to the Lord. I would like to think that I am living close enough to the Lord for someone to notice! You won't enjoy the acceptance of the world, but you can expect sweet fellowship with the Lord.

We have been privileged to study a portion of the message that our Lord delivered there upon the Mount. Surely His message has spoken to our hearts. Are we willing to heed His words and embrace His teaching or are we content to live our lives as we please? I pray that we will consider our lives in light of His holy expectation and seek to be more like Him each day that we live.

If there is a need in your life the Lord stands ready to help you. He is waiting for you to come and seek Him. Why not listen to His voice and come to Him today?