

BLESSED BY GOD – THE BEATITUDES (Final)

Over the past two Sundays, we've looked at the first two beatitudes from the list found in Matthew chapter five, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and, "Blessed are those who mourn." Now let us consider the remainder of the Beatitudes which as a unit serve as a sort of preamble to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. As a reminder, these blessings describe the kind of character anyone must have in order to be blessed by God. These kinds of blessings only come by one having a proper attitude towards sin and a desire to follow after righteousness. Jesus is addressing the multitude from the standpoint of being a follower of Him, that is, a Christian (5:13-16, 44-48; 6:33; 7:13-27). In other words, one cannot expect these blessings unless and until He obeys the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; 10:16-17).

Matthew 5:5 reads, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*" We must be gentle and lowly (Psalm 37:5-11). Meekness is not weakness. It is really the ability to keep your strength under control and remain submissive to a higher power. The world says that we should pursue power, but we have enough Donald Trumps and Hillary Clintons in the world, don't we? It should not be the aim of a child of God to gain this world's wealth, power, and all the trappings that go with it. Yet, there is a sense in which the Christian will inherit the earth or land. How? Well, not literally, because the physical earth is the Lord's (Ps. 24:1; II Pet. 3:10), but the Christian will inherit the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13). We develop this attitude of meekness by following Christ's example (Matt. 11:27-30).

Matthew 5:6 reads, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.*" We must develop a desire for truth and righteousness if we are going to please God. The world says to do things your way, like the Burger King motto (not just have it your way, but be your way), that is, live by your standards, meet your personal needs. Thus, many people develop their own hand-made religious code and do what works for them. Solomon warned, "*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*" (Prov. 14:12). God alone can fill our real need for truth (Prov. 23:23; Jude 3; Phil. 3:7-11).

Matthew 5:7 reads, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*" We must be kind, helpful, and forgive others (Psalm 41:1). The world encourages a "dog eat dog," "only the strong survive" mentality. Remembering that we are in need of God's forgiveness and mercy will generate a merciful heart in ourselves. We forgive because we've been forgiven (Eph. 4:32).

Matthew 5:8 reads, "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*" We should be "transparent," that is, without guile (Ps. 24:3-4; 51:10). The world says it's okay to deceive others if it will help you get ahead; put on appearances, lie when you need to. This, the world believes, is acceptable. But if we want to see God, we must be pure (I John 3:1-3).

Matthew 5:9 reads, "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons (children) of God.*" We should always strive for peace with everyone else. The world says, "I'm okay, you're okay," and, "if you're not ok, well, that's your problem. I'll just put my earbuds on and disappear in my music." We live in a world that is so hardened to sin and those abused by sin. But if we want to be God's children, we must behave like Him and be the one who takes the first step towards reconciliation with our enemies (Matt. 5:43-48; Rom. 12:9-21; Heb. 12:10-11). - **SAS**

Matthew 5:10 reads, "*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Doing what is right is not always popular, and often evil people will

make you suffer for it. As a result, you must develop the right attitude towards persecution. The worldly way is to be anybody's dog who'll hunt, avoid taking a stand for anything unpopular, be politically correct, get along with everybody, and compromise when you have to. But here's a question: Do we want to go to heaven? Jesus later admonishes, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it"* (Matthew 7:13).