

# The Sermon on the Mount – Part 1 – The Beatitudes | 11/6/16

- Introduction to The Sermon on the Mount
  - Early in the ministry of Jesus Christ we have in the Gospel of Matthew a recording of a sermon or teaching of Jesus.
  - The name “Sermon on the Mount” of course wasn’t stated by Jesus but is something that Christians have used to designate this discourse.
  - What does it contain?
    - This is a beautiful sermon that Jesus uses to teach us about many truths.
    - The Beatitudes
      - A series of blessings that describe conditions of one’s heart that would seem to contradict worldly wisdom.
      - A statement of Christian character.
        - Jesus provides instruction on what the character of the Christian should look like **both on the inside and the outside**.
      - God blesses the gentle, humble and the merciful not the violent, proud and selfish.
    - Jesus shows us a deeper meaning to the law.
      - Jesus provides more clarity to the application of the law, especially to counter the legalism of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
      - He puts emphasis on the relationship between the heart and the law. That you can break the law even in your heart, like in the case of murder or adultery.
      - Jesus tell us that He came to fulfill it, not to abolish it.
    - Teachings on various aspects of Christian behavior.
      - How to give with a heart of humility and not one of pride that seeks glory for their works.
      - How to pray.
      - How to fast.
      - How our possessions relate to our relationship with God.
      - How to deal with anxiety.
      - To love our enemies and to not judge others.
    - Some of the teachings are impossible for us to do and they drive us to seek the grace and mercy of God.
      - Matthew 5:48
        - “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”
    - Salvation
      - Jesus teaches about the narrow gate and the wide road.
    - False prophets
    - False believers
  - Who was it directed towards?
    - Clearly the disciples were there and were subject to His teaching (Matthew 5:1).
    - The sermon today of course applies to the church and all Christians. And by disciples this was not just the 12 (apostles), but Jesus had many disciples that followed His teachings (Matthew 7:28).
      - Matthew 7:28
        - “When Jesus had finished this sermon, the crowds were astonished at His teaching,”

- Regardless of the exact audience that were present that day, Jesus’s teachings apply to all Christians today.
    - The Beatitudes describe the character that should be in the heart and lived out by the Christian.
      - Christians having the Spirit within them and being filled with Him, will express a godly character in their lives that is different from the world.
        - **These Scriptures show us what Jesus expects from us, that as being children of God this is what our hearts will desire.**
      - The Beatitudes reflect the heart of God.
        - Not only are these traits that God desires for the Christian, but these reflect His character.
      - This is quite different than what the Pharisees focused on, they saw their righteousness through their works.
        - But this is not what Jesus focuses on, righteousness **is not shown through works, but instead it’s a matter of the heart.**
        - In fact, Jesus said quite plainly that **one’s righteousness must be greater than that of the scribes and Pharisees.**
          - Matthew 5:20
            - “For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”
      - **The Beatitudes contrast with the “worldly” or fleshly attitude.**
        - **Jesus promotes humility, mercy and meekness. The world promotes pride, selfishness and sin.**
        - The world says that happiness is found in the things of the world, while Jesus says that happiness is found in a holy and righteous character.
      - **The Beatitudes are only obtainable when the Christian places their trust in God.**
    - The significance of the word “blessed”
      - It is not by accident that Jesus used the word “blessed” to lead each of the Beatitudes.
      - Modern Christians and society have used this word so much that its true meaning (especially in this context) may not be immediately be made known.
        - We tell someone “bless you” who did something good for us.
        - We tell someone “bless you” when they sneeze.
        - **The listeners to Jesus however did understand its meaning.**
      - Blessed in this case means “divine joy and perfect happiness”
        - The listeners to Jesus would not have used this word in reference to humans. It was a joy that could only be experienced by the god’s or someone who was dead.
          - **This is the pinnacle of joy that goes beyond human comprehension.**
        - **Blessed described an inner satisfaction or joy that did not depend on any outside circumstances.**
          - Regardless of worldly influences this inner joy would be sustained.
      - **It is a joy that can only be given to us by Christ.**
      - So, it is with this understanding of the meaning of the word “blessed” that we must take when we read each of the verses.
        - That this isn’t just “good advice” or something that we should take lightly.
        - But that by our hearts having been filled with the Spirit and striving to live out these traits in our lives, that we will feel this same joy.
- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. | Matthew 5:3

- What does it “not” mean.
  - It does not mean that one is simply literally a poor person with no earthly possessions. While there are some relations and at times there is a connection with poverty this is not the case here.
  - It does not mean that one is to think of themselves as worthless or that they have no value all.
- The poor in spirit reflects one’s spiritual poverty, when it relates to how we see ourselves when we are apart from God.
  - It is to recognize that by ourselves apart from God we are hopeless and lost.
  - **That we spiritually can do nothing without Christ, there is not self-earned or self-made righteousness.**
    - This is the usage and meaning of poor used frequently in the Old Testament
      - Psalms 86:1
        - “Listen, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.”
          - David wasn’t poor in a monetary sense, but he was spiritually.
      - There is no salvation on our own.
      - Romans 3:9-12
        - “what then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: **None is righteous, no, not one**; no one understands; no one seeks for God. **All have turned aside**; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”
    - **It is humility in its truest form.**
    - **Jesus gave a parable as an example of those who are poor in spirit.**
      - **Luke 18:9-14**
- The worldly perspective says to put your trust in yourself.
  - That the happiness to life is found your fame, your possessions and what you accomplish.
    - But that is fleeting, true happiness comes when one truly humbles themselves before Christ.
  - **The poor in Spirit are the ones who inherit far more than any worldly possessions.**
- The poor in spirit will see the kingdom of heaven because of God’s grace
  - This underlines the truth that our salvation is only by the grace of God, because we on our own cannot be justified on our own.
- **How would you describe the feeling when you realized your own spiritual poverty?**
- **Why is this a foundation for faith and salvation?**
- **In what way, does understanding this truth effect your dependency on Christ in all other aspects of life?**
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. | Matthew 5:4
  - At first glance, we usually take this to mean a simple act of compassion to those who mourn over a loss that has caused us to grieve.
    - **What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you hear that someone is mourning?**
    - This is certainly true, God will be there to comfort us in our time of sorrow due to the loss of something we loved, or perhaps circumstances in life.
    - However, there is yet another deeper mourning that Jesus would consider us to be blessed.
  - **To be blessed for our mourning, reflects sorrow that is felt when one’s sins are truly realized.**



- To be meek or gentle does not mean that you are weak.
- It is the opposite of being out of control, to be meek or gentle means that you **are empowered by the Holy Spirit to have self-control.**
- The meek or gentle will quietly submit themselves to God, humbly obey His commands and are gentle towards all men.
  - Titus 3:2
    - “to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.”
  - The one who is meek is rarely provoked and if they are they are quickly and easily pacified.
  - The meek would rather show forgiveness instead of revenge.
  - The meek will willfully submit to the Father.
- Meek is power under control.
  - The word translated “meek” was used by the Greeks to describe a horse that had been broken. The horse obviously had great power, but was under control.
- To be meek is a character trait of Moses and Jesus Christ.
  - Numbers 12:3
    - “Now the man Moses was very meek, **more than all the people who were on the face of the earth.**”
    - Moses who is one of the most revered and respected Old Testament Christians we find there was no one on earth who showed greater meekness than him.
  - Matthew 11:29
    - “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for you souls.”
  - Since Jesus and Moses were both meek, this tells us the significance of this character trait in the Christian.
- Christians must seek to be meek as Christ and Moses.
  - There is a reason that Jesus and Moses were meek, there is a reason that Jesus said blessed are the meek.
- **How does being meek or gentle affect your Christian walk? Does it impact how you handle your relationships in the world? Does it impact showing the world a true Christian witness?**
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. | Matthew 5:6
  - Jesus now tell us that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied, that is those whom truly seek God for righteousness will find it.
  - So, what is righteousness?
    - Righteousness in Scripture when used to describe mankind, describes a Christian who is upright before God.
    - **It is used in different ways though, sometimes referring to one who has received salvation. In others, it is the results of our changed heart, attitude and minds because of the work of the Spirit.**
      - It’s putting our changed heart into action.
    - Luke 1:5-6
      - “In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.
    - Luke 2:25

- “Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.”
  - Romans 6:13
    - “Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.”
- One who has a hunger and thirst for righteousness seeks a closer relationship to God.
  - They desire to obey Him and following in His commandments.
  - They desire to know more of Him, to truly be filled with Him.
  - It is to be a slave to righteousness
    - Romans 6:18
      - “and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness”
- God is in Himself righteous and He bestows it upon the Christians, this is not something we can gain ourselves. It is given to us by God.
  - It is important to understand that righteousness is not obtained on our own, but that it is given to us by Christ. This was the problem that the Pharisees had, they thought they could receive righteousness through their works.
    - Romans 10:3
      - “For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness”.
    - Matthew 23:27-28
      - “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like white washed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. **So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.**”
  - But true righteousness comes from our faith in Christ and it is inward focused.
    - Philippians 3:9
      - “and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.”
- Those who seek will be satisfied.
  - Jesus tells us that those who seek His righteousness will be satisfied.
  - The Spirit gives us a hunger for Him, to be like Him and to want to obey Him.
  - A Christian cannot help but to have this hunger in their hearts for Christ, and God will fill that hunger.
  - **This satisfaction that comes from God allows us to experience the divine “blessedness” or joy that only Christ can provide.**
- Have you experienced this hunger for righteousness? How would you describe it?