

Liberty Online Ministries



Beatitudes Matthew 5



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The Truth About Happiness

Beatitudes: Introduction – Part 1 – Matthew 5:1-12

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’”
Matthew 5:1-3

“Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” – Abraham Lincoln¹

I have not come across too many people who plan and work towards being miserable. People have a desire to be happy. Those who are not happy are not fun to be around. It makes me wonder if happiness can be contagious.

Describe what a happy person looks like to you.

Jesus is concerned about our happiness. I know sometimes we feel like God is a kill-joy, trying to snuff out any attempt to enjoy happiness, but Jesus’ first recorded sermon starts out with the keys to happiness. Now before you write this lesson off as health, wealth, and prosperity preaching, open your Bibles to Matthew 5.

Look at the first word of verses three through eleven. In many versions it will read, “Blessed.” A synonym of the word is “happy.” This passage is a treatise on how to be happy, but before we get too far into the treatise, there is some ground work that we need to do so that we can better understand happiness.

How would you define “happiness?”

We need to get into the original language a little to better understand what “blessed” means. *Makarios* is the Greek word which has as its root *makar*. This means to be happy. Both Homer and Hesiod spoke of the Greek gods as being happy within themselves. Happiness was described as a state of contentment and bliss which is unaffected by circumstances.

Contentment – now that’s a lost word in our society. We need to have the newest cell phone that syncs with the computer, music, and the toaster. We need to have the newest car that parks itself and the washer and dryer that sorts and folds laundry. Happiness, true happiness, involves contentment apart from circumstances.

Why do we find it so hard to be content?

¹ <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/31097.html>

*“For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”
2 Peter 1:4*

Max Lucado, in his book The Applause of Heaven, calls this happiness “sacred delight.” He explains sacred delight as being sacred because only God can grant it and a delight because it thrills. Lucado then explains that since it is sacred, it cannot be stolen, and since it is delightful, it cannot be predicted. He hit the nail on the head.

True happiness is something that does not come from the circumstances around us, but from the Spirit within us.

Why is it important to find happiness from within?

From here on out, we want to understand what God means by true happiness.

The word “blessed” indicates character. There are several passages in Scripture that describe God as blessed (Psalm 68:35; 72:18; 119:12; 1 Timothy 1:11). Jesus is spoken of as being blessed in 1 Timothy 6:15. True happiness is found in the character of God and His Son, Jesus. It flows from them into the hearts and souls of each child of God. Happiness is a part of the divine nature of God.

This leads to our next aspect of true happiness. Since true happiness is drawn from God, then those who do not know Christ cannot find this kind of happiness. 2 Peter 1:4 explains that we are partakers of the divine nature. As we seek to develop the character of Christ in us, we will become partakers of the true happiness that is in His character.

This is not to say that no one can be happy. There are a lot of happy people out there. The happiness spoken of here goes much deeper. It can only be embraced by those who know Christ as Savior. It is a happiness that is not based on an outward attitude or circumstances, but on an inward indwelling of the character of God.

In your own words, how does true happiness differ from happiness as defined by the world?

The world’s perspective is different from God’s perspective, but that should come as no surprise.

Look back to how you defined happiness earlier. Now think about what Jesus says. Those who are happy are poor in spirit, mourners, meek, hungry and thirsty, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and persecuted. It is not the list we would naturally come up with. The world has a much different list. It draws upon the things of the world to bring happiness, but Jesus calls us to draw upon the things of the Creator of the world to bring happiness. That is a huge difference.

“...He who is the
blessed and only
Sovereign, the King of
kings and Lord of
lords...”
1 Timothy 6:15

Solomon was known as the wealthiest and wisest king of all time. He had it all, yet as he reflects back on his life he comes to realize that all is vanity (Ecclesiastes 1:2). John warns us to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15).

The road to true happiness will directly contradict most, if not all, that you see on television and in the world. I can guarantee that the world can provide happiness, but it is a happiness that satisfies the flesh and is short-lived. True happiness lies in laying hold of our Creator and embracing the eternal rather than the temporal.

Blessed are those who look outside of their circumstances to find true happiness.

Do you want to be happy?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



Getting the Scoop on Happy

Beatitudes: Introduction – Part 2 Matthew 5:1-12

“Happiness is in the heart, not in the circumstances.” - Author Unknown

There is a big difference between the world’s perspective on happiness and Jesus’ perspective on happiness. With that said, there is also a difference in understanding the passage in our time and understanding it in the time of Christ.

What are some things that did not exist in Christ’s day, which you just couldn’t do without? Example: Cell phone

Jesus was a revolutionary. He often went against the flow. He did not fit the Messianic mold of the Jews or the religious mold of the Pharisees. He turned from the modernistic mold of the Sadducees and political mold of the Zealots. He could often be found pushing the envelope and thinking outside the box. He was a revolutionary.

What road blocks do you think Jesus would have faced in our society?

Let’s just consider the political and religious context that Jesus was preaching in.

The Jews were looking for a Messiah, but Jesus didn’t fit the bill. Now before you start screaming heresy, understand that Jesus is the one true Messiah, but the Jews did not believe it because they were looking for the wrong Messiah. They were looking for a man that would overthrow the Roman tyrants and lead the Jews to a new and glorious kingdom on earth. They wanted a political leader to reinstate the throne of David. They were looking for government to save them – yeah right!

The Sermon on the Mount flies in the face of the political answers.

There were also those religious leaders that had a hard time getting along with each other. The Pharisees believed that happiness could be found in legalism and the Sadducees thought happiness came from methodology. There were the Essenes who thought the happiness came from separation from the world. Finally, there were the Zealots who resorted to political takeover or violence to find happiness.

Are you guilty of trying to find happiness through religion, modern materials, meditation, or by force? How did it turn out?

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’”
Matthew 5:1-3

We may think that times were better back then, but in many ways they were no different than what we face today. In our time, we have those who see government as the source of happiness. They believe that happiness will come through laws and the right people in the right places. Although it is a help, it is not the source of true happiness. There are those who want happiness through religion. Happiness is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ, not a religion. Happiness does not come through modern or monastery living. Finally, happiness never comes through force.

The Sermon on the Mount had a message for each of these groups of people – “You are wrong!”

So far it has been about whom it was against, now we want to take note at who it was for.

Matthew 5:1-2 explains who Jesus was teaching; “his disciples came to him and he opened his mouth, and taught them.” Jesus was teaching those who were devoted to him. It was not a message intended for the world, but for believers. This is a further indication that true happiness cannot be found apart from a vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

There were others there on the mount. Matthew tells us that Jesus took notice of the crowd. This was not uncommon, as we find Jesus having compassion on the multitudes and feeding the thousands. He was attentive to the needs of the body, and here he allows the body to sit in on the teaching. We know the crowds were listening because Matthew provides their response at the end of the sermon. They were “amazed at His teaching.”

When was the last time you were amazed at the teaching of Scripture? What impression did it leave?

Matthew also tells us that Jesus sat down. Most of us would think nothing of this, but schooling was much different in these times. Now we come to a classroom and sit to hear the teacher. The teacher then sends us home to do homework. The model during Jesus’ time was much more involved. A teacher or rabbi would have people follow him around. It was lifestyle schooling. When a rabbi sat down to speak, it was acknowledged that what was about to be said was official. Jesus spoke from his own authority (Matthew 7:29).

Try to see the picture of what is taking place. Large crowds are following after Jesus as He is going about healing and preaching. His fame is growing and they are coming from all over. Jesus, at some point while walking, looks behind him to see the crowd. He then walked away to a mountainside and sat down. His disciples followed after Him and sat with him to listen. Jesus, through this sermon, laid out what it means to be a part of His Kingdom. He then taught a revolutionary message.

Why was it so revolutionary?

“...for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”
Matthew 7:29

- It shows the absolute necessity of a relationship with Jesus.
- It shows the absolute centrality of Jesus.
- It shows the only way to true happiness.
- It shows the best example of being a living testimony.
- It shows the clear way to please God.

The Sermon on the Mount is Christ's description of kingdom living and the beatitudes are a key to true happiness in that kingdom. Having seen the big picture, it is time to look at each key to true happiness. Oswald Chambers explains it best:

The teachings of Jesus are all out of proportion when compared to our natural way of looking at things, and they come to us initially with astonishing discomfort. We gradually have to conform our walk and conversation to the precepts of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit applies them to our circumstances. The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations— it is a picture of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His unhindered way with us.

Are you ready for a revolution?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
Matthew 5:3

"For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being,' declares the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word."
Isaiah 66:2

Rags to Riches

Beatitudes – Blessed are the poor in spirit – Matthew 5:3

We are a society that loves to hear inspirational, success stories.

It could be a down and out family getting an extreme home makeover or a bottom rung football team working its way to the top against all odds and gaining the victory both in sports and in life. No doubt, there are stories similar to these that flood your mind. These stories may highlight determination and endurance or they may encourage heart-felt emotions of compassion and camaraderie.

How does it make you feel to hear of a success story?

Sometimes it may make us feel left out. Sometimes I wonder if I will ever win something. My brother-in-law won a 62 inch flat screen from a fast food game piece simply because he was thirsty and needed a drink. Some people have all the luck.

Our idea of poverty almost automatically focuses on money and material wealth. If someone is said to be poor, we think they have no money or are struggling financially. Yet, Jesus speaks of another kind of poverty. It is a poverty of the spirit which has far more eternal consequences than does material poverty.

Those who wish to enter the kingdom of heaven need to first become poor in spirit. Salvation is dependant on it.

You may think that is easier said than done. What are some of the reasons that someone does not want to be saved?

It would be safe to say that the root is pride. We are all rich in pride. Pride stands in the way of spiritual poverty. What are some ways that you have shown pride recently?

I say recently, because we are hard-pressed to get through a day or even an hour without some pride creeping in. This is why we need to be poor in spirit, but let's look at what it really means to be poor.

In the Greek mind there were levels of poverty. There were those who were poor and needed financial help from others to sustain living. They were capable of working for wages. Then there were those who were crippled, blind, or deaf. These were considered the poorest and needed to sit in a dark corner and beg. This poverty had a meaning of cowering

*"The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."
Psalm 34:18*

*"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."
Psalm 51:17*

or cringing like a beggar and is the same term used of Lazarus in Luke 16:20. They had no resources in themselves.

Now let's apply this to a spiritual setting. Jesus teaches that the poor in spirit are those who will inherit the kingdom of heaven. In other words, those who are absolutely incapable of anything and are totally dependant on God's grace will lay hold of heaven. Look at Isaiah 66:2, Psalm 34:18, and Psalm 51:17.

After reading these verses, how would you define poor in spirit?

We must come to a point of realizing our complete and utter dependence on Christ for anything and everything. It is at this point that we are able to gain heaven. It really is a rags to riches story. Jesus explains that those who empty themselves and realize their dependence will have heaven, but it is not a future event, rather a present reality. Ephesians 2:6-7 explains that we have already been seated together in heavenly places and are receiving God's grace. The reign of Christ can take place now in our lives.

Today, the poor in spirit have Christ as their King.

But how do we get there?

There are some characteristics of those who are poor in spirit.

1. Dying daily – A person who is poor in spirit continues to humble himself and seeks to glorify God in his life. John the Baptist expresses this in John 3:30 when he says, "He must increase and I must decrease." The poor in spirit will give up anything to obtain Christ.
2. Exalting Christ – Those who are poor in spirit are lost in the wonder of Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:18 speaks of beholding His glory and then being transformed. A prayer of the psalmist was that he would be satisfied with being more like God (Psalm 17:15).
3. Embracing Contentment – Imagine if we were to demand of God to give us what we deserve. We would be given hell, literally. Therefore, anything else should be seen as a gift to be appreciated as He abundantly provides for His children. Ephesians 4:7 explains how grace was given to us. If we are being content, then we are not complaining.
4. Empowering Others – Those who are poor in spirit see the goodness in others as they realize we are all dependant and have need. As we realize our own dependence we are appreciative of the help of others. The church is then empowered to serve as one body (Romans 12:4-5).
5. Practicing Prayer – A beggar will always beg. The poor in spirit see their constant need and will continual be asking, seeking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7). Jesus is telling us to continue to ask, seek, and knock.

6. Worshipping God – Paul is a testimony to this in 1 Timothy 1:14 where he proclaims that God’s grace was exceeding abundant. A person who is poor in spirit will continual shout praise to God in gratitude for the exceeding abundance of His grace.

Remember that these are characteristics of someone who is poor in spirit. They are not practices or actions to act out in the hopes of laying claim to spiritual poverty.

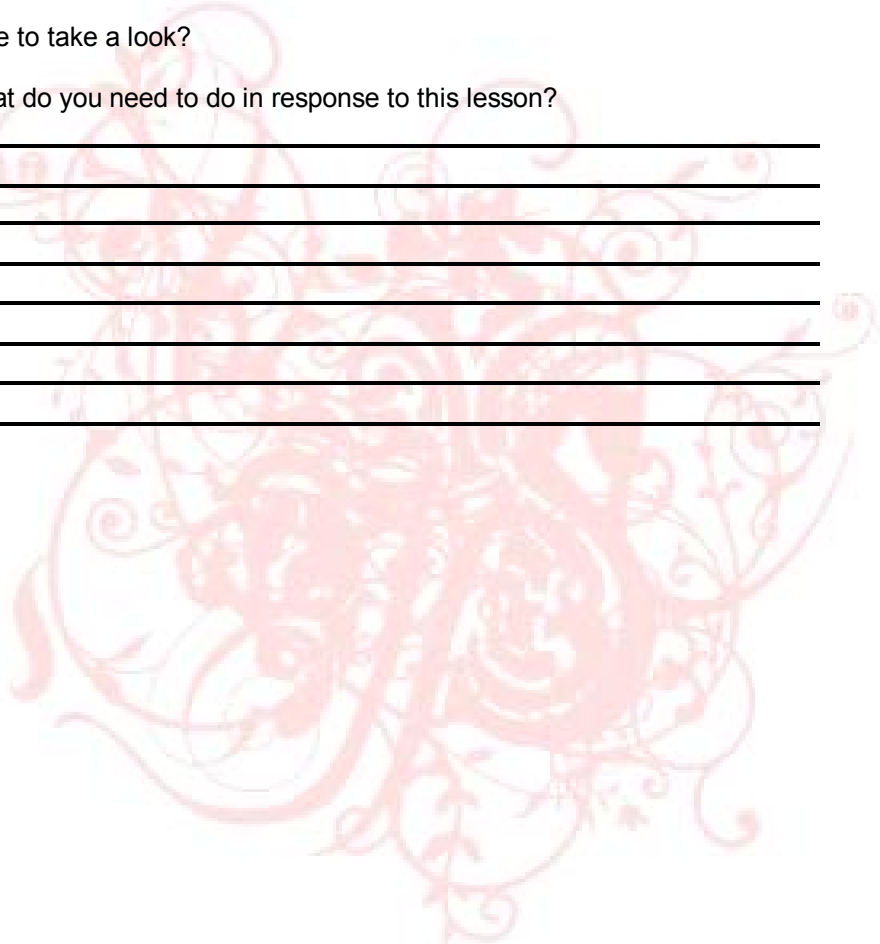
I believe the testimony of Paul can serve as an example for the road to spiritual poverty. Paul had it all in regards to religion. In Galatians 1, he explains his background. He was a strict Jew who advanced beyond those around him. He was an overachiever in religion. He would have been labeled as charismatic and energetic. He was all about church and religion, but there was a change. He records this in verse fifteen and sixteen, “But when God was pleased to reveal His Son in me.” The continual understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ has the power to bring us to our knees and reveal our complete poverty.

I am reminded of the words of a hymn. “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.”

When was the last time you looked in His face and beheld Him as He is? I can almost guarantee you will walk away being poor in spirit, but remember “happy are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

Care to take a look?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



“Happy Are the Sad?!?!?”

Beatitudes – Blessed are those who mourn – Matthew 5:4

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”
Matthew 5:4

My grandfather’s death was the first time I really cried.

I was fortunate to grow up without having someone close to me pass away. It was not until some time after college that I experienced this for the first time. My grandfather passed away and I was called and asked to perform the service. I was convinced I needed to be strong just like my granddad had been. I made it through the service, but it was then that I broke down. I am still not sure what happened that snapped, but I wept like a baby.

Many of you have experienced a similar situation. Why do you think your situation brought you to such mourning?

“When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long.”
Psalm 32:3

The people are different, but the reason is closely the same. The person that has passed away was an intricate part of our lives. It may have been a close friend or family member or someone who has invested in us or in whom we have invested, someone that has changed our lives.

It is this kind of mourning that is conveyed in Matthew 5:4 and is the strongest of the nine types used in the New Testament. Jesus was conveying an intense, internal agony like unto a passionate lament over a lost loved one. David describes mourning in Psalm 32. He explains that he felt as if he was wasting away and his strength was spent.

Through Psalm 32, David explains why he experienced such mourning. It was a result of personal sin in his life, and it is this very reason that brings us back to Matthew 5. Those who mourn are mourning because of sin.

Why should we mourn over sin?

Sometimes people cry because they were caught in their sin or maybe because they do not want to face the consequences, but here Jesus speaks of those who mourn because they recognize their spiritual poverty. They understand that they have sinned against the righteous, loving God. Turn back to Psalm 32 and see the pain that David is going through. Also, in 2 Samuel 12:13, David, through the help of Nathan, finally admits to his sin. He recognizes that he has sinned against the Lord, and in Psalm 51 David laments over his sin.

Our sin and the sin of the world should bring us to our knees in godly sorrow as if mourning over the loss of a loved one. We see Isaiah in this very place of sorrow in Isaiah 6:1-5. Isaiah has a vision where he sees the Lord lifted high and exalted on his throne with angels worshipping around Him. Isaiah recognizes his spiritual poverty and then his sin and is compelled to cry out, “Woe is me, for I am ruined because I am a man

*"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah."
Psalm 32:5*

of unclean lips!" He was mourning over his sin, but his response to it was just as important. He confessed.

Rather than confess we sometimes make excuses for our sin. What are some of those excuses?

The excuses that we give become hindrances to developing godly sorrow. We allow our pride, despair, or even the love of sin to keep us from mourning. We are not willing to give up what God has called us to give up.

What are some things that God has called you to give up? (They may not be sin, but any act of not obeying is sin.)

You may need to take a moment now to pray and ask God to help you release whatever it is that is a hindrance.

For those who took the time to pray, you have just taken a step towards becoming a mourner. Other ways to develop this is through a study of sin in the Bible. Consider some of the responses of people in the Bible. We have already seen David and Isaiah; there are also Jeremiah (9:1), Peter (Luke 5:8), and Paul (1 Timothy 1:15).

There are also those who chose not to be mourners. Saul would be at the top of the list. Throughout his career as the king of Israel he did what he thought was best with little regard for God and then when he was caught he made excuses. There is a drastic difference between the life of Saul and the life of David in regards to sin. They both sinned, but one handled it very differently than the other.

It still seems odd that Jesus would say that those who mourn will be happy, but the happy part is found in the second half of the verse, "they shall be comforted."

How would you describe what it means to be comforted?

Again, we turn to David to understand how someone who is mourning can be happy. In Psalm 32, we say that David was broken over his sin. He even tried to hide it, but that would not work. He finally realized his need to confess and notice the change that takes place in the passage. He confesses in verse five and then sees God as his hiding place or a place of comfort (vs. 7). David then sees God as instructing him or providing guidance (vs. 8). It is always a comfort to know where you are headed. Verse nine has a sense of warning and concern for others who would be tempted not to mourn over their sin, and there is comfort in finding those who will agree with you. David then proclaims the truth

*"You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah. I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you."
Psalm 32:7-8*

about godly sorrow, and there is comfort in knowing the truth. Finally, David closes the Psalm with rejoicing and a shout for joy.

It might be about time that we learn to mourn over our sin and see our sin as rebellion against our loving, merciful God. But remember "Happy are those who mourn, because they will be comforted."

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



"Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth."
Matthew 5:5

Meekness is not Weakness

Beatitudes – Blessed are the Meek – Matthew 5:5

"Happiness is different from pleasure. Happiness has something to do with struggling and enduring and accomplishing." - George Sheehan

Interesting thought. Happiness comes from working hard, working hard at seeing our spiritual poverty, at mourning over our sin, and at being meek.

Of course, our perspective of meekness is much different than Christ's perspective. We see meekness as a mouse that runs at the scent of danger and is easily disposed of when it has become a pest. Even the dictionary defines meekness as "one without strength or courage". Meekness is seen as weakness by those who are strong-willed and risk takers.

Why does our society frown so much at meekness?

How would you define meekness?

Meekness is too often seen as a character flaw rather than a personal strength, but meekness is exalted throughout Scripture.

- Numbers 12:3 - Moses is called meek above all men.
- Psalms 22:26 – The meek will be provided for.
- Psalms 25:9 – The meek will receive guidance from God.
- Psalms 76:9 – The meek will be saved by God.
- Isaiah 29:19 – The meek will increase in their joy for God.
- Ephesians 4:1 – We are called as believers to be meek.
- Titus 3:2 - again, called to be meek.

There are others, but it is evident that Jesus is not the first and only one to call us to meekness. I know it is a hard concept for us to swallow, but even those in hearing distance of Jesus struggled with the idea of meekness. The Jews were looking for a leader who would stand up and take charge. In their minds the meek were not the ones who should inherit the earth, but the outspoken, strong leader should.

Sounds like our society. We often look to the leaders who are strong and can get things done to take charge and lead us. We think strength equals success, but Jesus thought differently.

Why do we look to strong, powerful leaders to take charge?

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”
1 Peter 2:21-23

Most of us have heard the classic definition of meekness – power under control. Peter gives us a glimpse into meekness when he describes what took place at the trials of Jesus, and remember that Peter was there. In 1 Peter 2:21-24 we see that Jesus was being challenged and mocked even though He committed no sin. This is the same Jesus who spoke and the waters were still or broke bread and fed 5,000. The same Jesus commanded demons to depart and the dead to live. Jesus himself showed Peter his meekness or power under control when He told Peter in Matthew 26:53 that He could call down twelve legions of angels to defend Himself.

The Greeks understood meekness to mean mild, gentle, or soft, like a soothing medicine, a gentle breeze, or a trained horse. Each of these things has great and sometimes destructive power when not under control. A medicine can kill a man, a wind can level a house, and a horse can throw a rider to his death.

With this in mind, what are some other examples of meekness?

Power under control. We can easily develop a respect for the meek.

Notice why the meek are happy; they will inherit the earth. This is yet another statement that defies what we consider to be true.

Psalm 37:11 gives us an Old Testament understanding of meekness, and is considered by some to be the Old Testament version of Jesus' words.

“But the meek will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity.”

Have you ever lost control of your temper? Have you ever went shopping and became a victim of impulse buying? Have you ever gone grocery shopping and brought back more than you went for? Have you ever got excited about an opportunity and jumped into it without researching it?

Pick one of the above questions and consider the answer. Did you have regrets? Why?

Now think again about those questions and consider what would happen if you did not give in to the urges. I would think in all the cases you would have been happier. Now carry these questions through life. A person that continues to lose his anger and blow up at friends and family will in the end have no friends or family. The person who gives in to impulsive buying may have lots of stuff, but will also have lots of debt, or is a slave to materialism. Maybe it is the person who jumped into too many opportunities and is now over-stretched and burned out.

These people are not happy and what they “inherit,” I would gladly stay away from.

*“For the Lord takes
delight in his people;
He crowns the
humble with
salvation.”
Psalm 149:4*

The meek have godly happiness here on earth because they practice control and therefore are able to inherit the earth, but it does not stop here.

Only the meek can be saved, therefore as children of God, they inherit the new earth. Psalm 149:4 explains that the Lord will give salvation to the meek.

There are several questions to ask ourselves in seeking to be meek.

1. Are you Spirit-controlled? Galatians 5:22-23, Philippians 4:8
2. How do you respond to God's Word? John 15:10
3. Do you seek peace? 1 Thessalonians 5:13
4. Do you accept correction? 2 Timothy 3:16
5. Are you strong-willed and controlling? 2 Timothy 2:24-25

We are called upon to be meek, to practice Spirit-control. Paul warns the believers at Philippi, in chapter 4 and verses 5-7, to practice meekness or power under control because it will keep us from worry and allow God's peace to guard our hearts and minds.

It does make sense. Those who are meek will not jump ahead or out of turn, they will not practice sporadic control, but they will quietly and gently walk through life, careful to measure all things and in the end experience happiness and a huge inheritance.

Meekness is strength.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

Eat, Drink, and Be Happy.

Beatitudes – Blessed are the hungry – Matthew 5:6

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”
Matthew 5:6

It is amazing to think through all the selections we have when we walk into the grocery store.

There is a cereal aisle, a beverage aisle, and an ice cream aisle. There are different brands, different flavors, different sizes, and different packages. It can be very confusing and overwhelming. To make matters worse, there are two scoops of raisins in every box even though there are different sized boxes. I am still working on that one.

We have a hard time fathoming this particular beatitude because there is so much stuff in the world today. We hunger and thirst after possessions and materials. We crave relationships and religious experiences. We seek after more money, more power, and more prestige.

We have the opportunity to take our fill on everything, but only one thing truly satisfies, and it is the very thing that many of us do not feast on.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

What are some of the things that we have labeled as needs (but really aren't)?

Why do we find it so easy to run after these perceived needs and forget our need for God?

Ambition and drive are not a bad thing. It is okay to have ambition, and it can be used in many ways. A pastor can be ambitious in evangelism. A CEO can be ambitious in research and company planning. A student can be ambitious in his or her studies. There are those, however, who pervert ambition: Lucifer, Nebuchadnezzar, Saul, Judas, Hitler, and the list continues.

What do you think righteousness means?

Jesus uses words that describe an intense hunger and thirst. This is not just a casual feeling of hunger like when you miss breakfast. This is a hunger that comes from intense craving and need. Again, some of us have a hard time grasping that kind of hunger unless we have practiced the spiritual discipline of fasting.

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”
Romans 4:5

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification...”
1 Thessalonians 4:5

There is another side to this. Not only is it an intense craving, hunger and thirst are the basic needs of man. There is a daily need to eat and drink. Health professionals will tell us that we can go about three days without water and seven days without food, but most of us eat at least once a day. If we skip a meal, we realize it and may even grab a snack to “hold us over.”

Yet, when we miss time with God, we figure we can catch up the next day. Before we realize it, several days have gone by and we have only prayed here and there to “hold us over.” Jesus explains that we can find happiness when we hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Righteousness is the condition acceptable to God or right living as outlined in Scripture. We were declared righteous (Romans 4:5), but there is also the aspect of sanctification through which we are being made more like Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Sanctification is a work in progress. Paul explains,

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6).

Think of when you were first saved. Is there anything since then that you have given up because you knew it was not right?

There is this aspect of doing what you know is right, but let’s remember what Jesus said. Those who crave or are starving for righteousness will be happy. This is embracing a mindset that you are continually searching the Scriptures to understand how to better imitate Christ. It is not listening to the occasional sermon or walking forward from time to time. This is daily hunger to be more like Christ.

Some days are harder than others. Some days we are able to really seek after God, but other days it seems there is just a dry desert before us. Look at the result of hungering after God. You will be satisfied. The word used here means to be completely satisfied. It is not a satisfaction that does not alleviate the hunger and thirst, but leaves you wanting more. You are satisfied, but wanting more. Consider the following verses:

Psalm 107:9 – “For He satisfied the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

Psalm 34:10 – “they who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.”

Psalm 23:1 – “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

Jeremiah 31:14 – “My people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord.”

John 6:35 – “Jesus said, ‘I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger’.”

Describe the last time you were satisfied from God. How did you feel?

It comes back to cravings. What are you craving? There is the temptation to find satisfaction in things other than righteousness. There is also the temptation to satisfy the craving with what you choose. You take only the parts of Scripture that you can stomach. You leave other parts alone because you know it will demand a change that you are not prepared to make.

There is only one way to satisfy. Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Eat, drink, and be happy.

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



Mercy! Please!

Beatitudes – Blessed are the merciful – Matthew 5:7

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”
Matthew 5:7

Have you ever played “Mercy”?

It is that game where you hold hands with someone and then try to twist and turn their hands until they shout, “Mercy!”, admitting defeat. Sometimes it is called “Peanuts” or “Uncle”. It is a game that can be played in many different ways, like slapping, punching, etc., but the basis is still to take turns inflicting pain on each other until someone gives.

I am almost sure a guy made it up so that he could prove his manhood or something like that.

I am not sure why it carries the name “mercy” because it is not mercy. Mercy is not pushing someone to their limits, waiting for them to give in or inflicting pain to show dominance or victory. That is not mercy; that is cruel and in some areas would be considered torture.

How would you define mercy?

Jesus proclaims, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”

I am not sure if your mom ever told you that to receive mercy, you need to give it. I am not convinced that is true.

Is it too much to say that we are completely self-centered from birth and only an act of God (salvation) will save us from our self-centeredness?

I am convinced of this every time I drive my car in the city. We may be as merciful as possible and still get kicked in the teeth. This is not new to our society. In Jesus’ day, Roman philosophers claimed that mercy was a disease of the soul and a sign of weakness. It was not uncommon for a father to have his new baby drowned simply because he did not like what he saw. Slaves could be killed with no repercussions. It sounds horrible, but we are guilty of that same attitude of self-centeredness.

Jesus makes a statement that flies in the face of His society and ours.

The term translated “mercy” means compassionate or loving. True mercy is a genuine compassion with a pure motive that reaches out to people in need. Mercy is compassion in action.

When was the last time someone showed compassion for you?

Mercy can be seen in many ways, and one of the primary ways is forgiveness. Forgiveness flows out of mercy. Think about a time when someone has wronged you. It may have been something small or something that changed you. The enemy would have you to think that

*“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”
Ephesians 2:4-7*

they should pay you back for what they did. They owe you, but instead you realize that you have been guilty of the same thing, or at least you are not perfect, so you have compassion on that person. You come to a point of needing to forgive them.

You have shown mercy. You have given them something they did not deserve. It is very similar to what the cross did for those who are saved.

Ephesians 2:4-7 explains the role of mercy in the life of the believer. God had mercy on mankind and provided a way of salvation while we were dead. God showed us compassion and mercy by not giving us what we deserve – that is eternal damnation.

When was the last time you thought of this mercy? What is your response to God for saving you?

Sometimes I am silent, and sometimes I am able to sing praises, but it helps me to realize how poor I am.

So if mercy is compassion in action, it does come down to what we can do for others. Physically, we have the opportunity to minister in unending ways. There is giving to the needy or feeding the hungry. There are so many ways to show compassion or mercy. It could also be giving forgiveness to someone that you have been holding a grudge with. It may be forgetting a debt that is owed you.

Is God prompting you towards some action of mercy?

There is also the spiritual ministry of mercy. There is the caring aspect of mercy that has a compassion on sinners. Jesus expresses this from the cross in Luke 23:34 and then Stephen does the same when he is being stoned in Acts 7. There is a sharing aspect of talking with people about the truth of the Word of God (Jude 22-23). The final aspect of mercy is prayer. Your prayer is an act of mercy because it releases God's blessing (James 5:17).

It might cross your mind that there is sacrifice involved. I would be wrong to say there wasn't. Remember, you are a self-centered species. Any attempt to be merciful will cause us to sacrifice. I could mention the sacrifice that Jesus made, but Jesus says himself that those who show mercy will receive mercy and in the end have joy.

When it comes down to it, God gives me mercy, I show others mercy, then God gives me more mercy which in turn is joy. If this were a math problem, then no matter what I sacrifice or lose, I will never be in the negative.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”

I like the way God does math.

"But Jesus was saying,
'Father, forgive them;
for they do not know
what they are doing.'"
Luke 23:34

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”
Matthew 5:8

Inside Out

Beatitudes – Blessed are the pure in heart – Matthew 5:8

Coffee can leave stains.

Have you ever been given a coffee cup that looked clean on the outside, but when you looked inside it was stained and nasty? Maybe you have pulled a dish out of the cabinet, but had to stick in the sink because the inside was still dirty with crusted food.

On Fridays, my family has family, Friday, fun night. We make homemade pizza and play games and just have a fun time. My wife makes homemade dough and when I get home I begin to slice up the fresh vegetables to put on the pizza. Sometimes it is fresh pineapple, ham, and bacon or maybe a deluxe pizza with fresh toppings. We layer it and top it off with cheese. Sound good?

There has been an occasion where I would find a jar of pizza sauce in the fridge. It looked good from the outside, but when I opened the lid, the smell alone let me know what was in it. Is pizza sauce supposed to be fuzzy?

People can be like the sauce jar or the dirty dish. We look good on the outside, but the inside is nasty.

What is your response when you find out someone is not who they make themselves out to be?

Often times I am in shock wondering why they are so different. Jesus explains that “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.” Jesus was addressing the issue of hypocrisy. Pharisees and spiritual leaders prided themselves on showing others how “religious” they were. In fact, later in his sermon, Jesus talks about the hypocrites who pray in public just so that they can be seen by others. Hypocrisy is an epidemic that is sweeping the globe. They are everywhere:

Doctors who smoke cigarettes, referees who take bribes, clergy who commit adultery, tax accountants who cheat on taxes, politicians who say they tell the truth, pastors who view porn, etc.

Jesus was addressing these people by explaining that the road to happiness can only be walked by those with a pure heart. Man has a tendency to measure himself by his fellow man. If I can find someone else who is worse than me then I am in good shape. We seek to justify our less than pure actions by finding someone else who is worse.

What was the last time you justified your actions by comparing them to someone else?

*"The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart."
Luke 6:45*

1 Peter 1:16 gives us the standard we are to follow – holy. Jesus gave this same standard later on in his sermon. He said, "Be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

Using this standard, with 10 being perfect, how would you rate your purity? _____

Before you start to melt away into discouragement, let's look at what Jesus means by the pure of heart. To be pure is to be free from filth and sin or to have a heart of single devotion. Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The purity is not an outside matter, but an inside issue.

Remember the jar of sauce? That jar can be as clean or pure as possible, but it will not amount to much if the inside is full of fuzz. The heart is seen as the inner man. It is more than just the seat of emotions. It is the control tower of the individual. Proverbs 4:23 tells us that above all other things we need to guard our hearts. The real person is the one that exists in the heart no matter what is on the outside (Matthew 5:18-19, Luke 6:45).

The heart is the control tower.

When things do not go your way or a crisis hits you, how do you respond?

Some people would challenge this and say that pressures bring out the worst in us, but the truth still remains that the worst was in us to begin with. Sometimes we will respond to something in a way that shocks us. We ask, "Where did that come from?" It came from within.

Have you ever caught yourself wondering where a response came from? What made you respond that way?

So if you want to change what comes out, you need to change what is inside.

I have always said that the Bible is God's instruction book for life. This is true in regards to the pathway to purity. Here is how it runs:

- Step One: Recognize your spiritual poverty.
- Step Two: Become broken over your sin.
- Step Three: Become meek and Spirit controlled.
- Step Four: Become hungry and addicted to righteous living.
- Step Five: Practice mercy in the lives of others.

It is a five step process, and if you missed it, it is the first five points of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Each builds on top of the other. Jesus tells us in John 15:3 that it is the Word that cleanses us and makes us pure. We cannot purify ourselves any more than that jar of pizza sauce can become less fuzzy (Proverbs 20:9).

*“Who can say, ‘I have
cleansed my heart, I
am pure from my
sin’?”
Proverbs 20:9*

Oswald Chambers says that “purity is the outcome of sustained spiritual symphony with God.”²

A pure heart comes from spending time in the Word of God and allowing the truth to expose sin and cleanse us, and as a result the pure in heart will see God. In the Greek this is understood as a continuous, reflective action. It could be read as “they shall continually see God for themselves.”

It is a pure heart that separates those who see the church and think “What a great church!” from those who see the Savior and think “What a great Christ!”

What do you see?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



² Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost For His Highest*, Barbour Books, OH, March 26th

Make Peace, not War

Beatitudes – Blessed are the peacemakers – Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”
Matthew 5:9

“Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. As a peacemaker the lawyer has superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.”
- Abraham Lincoln - 16th president of US (1809 - 1865)

Peace is something many of us cry for, but few of us reach for.

I am not talking about peace in times of war. I respect and admire the men and women who give themselves to keep peace. I am not talking about the police forces that risk their lives each day to provide a safe environment.

I am talking about the peace between neighbors and church members, between siblings and parents, between co-workers and clients. Peace is hard to come by.

Is there someone that you are not at peace with right now? Why?

A brief look into the history of man shows that we have a hard time living in peace. In part, Satan is to blame, but man has contributed much as well. There really has never been a time where the entire world experienced peace. We prefer to make war, not peace. Whether it is a nation or your neighbor, we would rather defend our own and fight to the end than make peace. What is wrong with us?

Why is it that we are more inclined to dig in our heels and fight to the end rather than make peace?

Peace is boring, or at least that is what Satan would have us to believe. James explains why we do not have peace when he states, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?” Let me put it in our terms. Why do we not have peace? Because we are self-centered little punks.

I know that sounds harsh, but it is the truth.

Think of the last time you had a conflict with someone. What ways were you thinking of yourself?

“...Live in peace with one another.”
1 Thessalonians 5:13

“Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”
Hebrews 12:14

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
Romans 5:1

Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. In fact, it is peacemakers that are happy. Paul calls us to live in peace with one another (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

Ken Sande in his book The Peacemaker says:

Peacemakers are people who breathe grace. They draw continually on the goodness and power of Jesus Christ, and then they bring his love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom to the conflicts of daily life.³

How often can you say that you walk into a conflict with this attitude?

The author of Hebrews tells us that peace and righteousness are intertwined (Hebrews 12:14). The goal of the peacemaker is to help see their part in the conflict and then resolve the conflict based on the truth of God’s Word. In reality, two people cannot be at peace until they recognize and resolve the wrong attitudes and actions that have caused the conflict between them. Then, they must bring themselves to God for cleansing. Being a peacemaker is essentially the result of a holy life and the call to others to embrace the gospel of holiness.

If we considered holiness as the goal, how would it affect our conflicts?

It all comes back to God. God is all about peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16). This may be hard to grasp because much of what the Bible says has caused conflict. Think about why, though. The Word of God is truth, and if we want to be self-centered then we will have issues with what the Bible says. God wants to have peace with his creation, but that peace only comes through Christ (Romans 5:1).

So, those who are peacemakers have made the trek through the beatitudes. As we experience purity of heart, we will be in a position to be a peacemaker, which is a ministry God desires all of His children to have.

“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18).

God made peace with each believer and then in turn each believer is to help others seek peace with God and each other. Those who seek to be peacemakers shall be called sons of God.

Is there someone in your life right now that you know you are not at peace with? What do you need to do to make peace?

Peacemaking seeks to bring man to a point of recognizing he is an enemy of God, but helping him to see that he can be a friend of God.

³ Ken Sande Peacemakers, Baker, Michigan, 11.

“Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!”
2 Thessalonians 3:16

Why are these peacemakers so happy? God explains that they shall be called sons of God. They are at peace with their Creator.

Although we may never have complete peace on earth, those who commit to being peacemakers will have a peace from within that will come to fullness in the kingdom of God.

Are you a peacemaker?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

Recommended Resource: [The Peacemaker](#) by Ken Sande



In Jesus' Name

Beatitudes – Blessed are the Persecuted – Matthew 5:10-12

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
Matthew 5:10-12

Movies are hard to handle when the finish is what nobody expected.

There have been a few movies that get you sucked in and then at the end something happens that was completely unexpected. It throws you for a loop and then you think through the movie to see if there was anything that could have helped you guess the ending.

I think these beatitudes are a lot like that.

“Blessed are those who have been persecuted.”

This is not quite the ending I would have imagined. I pictured something more like the last chapter of Revelation where we can catch a glimpse of the glories of heaven. Jesus had something else in mind. The path to happiness comes to persecution.

How you ever made fun of someone because they were happy? Why did you do it?

We have all had times where a friend is “on cloud nine”. They are so happy and excited and they want the world to know. Sometimes I am tempted to try and burst their bubble of happy thoughts and bring them back down to earth. Call it what you will, but it boils down to jealousy and self-centeredness.

What does our world have against being happy?

Why does the road to happiness lead to persecution?

Many of us would like to think we are being persecuted. If the cable goes out or the dog makes a mess on the carpet, we think it is persecution. You may think that when the car breaks down that it is persecution, but it is really because you neglected to pay attention to the “Check Engine” light that has been flashing for months.

Jesus qualifies the persecution when He says it is because of righteousness and because of Him. The persecution He speaks of is like the saints of old who were burned at the stake or thrown to the lions simply because they claimed to be Christian. There were others who were beaten and mutilated simply because they would not stop preaching the gospel. The word persecuted has a sense of to be followed or pursued with the intent to cause suffering, and in this context it is because of Christ.

“Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
2 Timothy 3:12

Who is a Bible character that suffered persecution in the Old Testament?

Paul tells Timothy that everyone who lives a godly life will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12). He also tells a church they should not be surprised because persecution is a part of the Christian life (1 Thessalonians 3:3-4). Jesus says that a person is either for Him or against Him. This is what brings the persecution. The world and Satan are opposed to everything that seeks to glorify God and live righteously. Anyone who would join in worship to God will be seen as enemies of the world.

There is a way to escape persecution. This is to stop being Christian and love the world, but the very nature of this passage says you will not be happy.

Happy are those who are persecuted.

Those who are persecuted will suffer insults, lies, and all kinds of evils. This will not be a continual persecution, but Jesus does say “whenever”. It is the idea that as the believer continues to live a righteous life he will cross paths with those who will despise righteousness and persecute him. It is not as much the individual but the righteousness that people attack because it exposes their own sin.

Jesus understands this is a hard concept to grasp, and continues to explain that attitude we are to have in persecution. He says that we should rejoice and be glad.

Why is it often hard to rejoice in persecution? What are some responses that we have instead of rejoicing?

Jesus helps us to see that we are not rejoicing for the persecution as much as we are rejoicing for the reason of the persecution. Remember, the reason is because God’s righteousness is being seen through you. As a result, Jesus explains that there will be a reward in heaven. There is a time issue here. The persecution is only temporary, but the heavenly reward is eternal.

Also, there is the aspect that we are not alone in our persecution. Jesus explains that the prophets before us endured persecution as well. You are not a lonely sufferer for God, but a child in the midst of many who have suffered for the Savior. There is encouragement in company.

In the end, there is the blessing of those who are persecuted gaining the kingdom of heaven. Live righteously and take the persecution of the ungodly in stride because in the end, you will be given the kingdom of heaven.

How can seeing the end result help endure the present persecution?

“...So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.”
1 Thessalonians 3:3-4

One final note, did you notice that Jesus spent a little more time on this one? It is almost as if we needed the extra encouragement. It is as if Jesus wanted to let us know that He is there and knows what it is like to be in the midst of the persecution. It is an “I’ve been there, done that, and you can do it too” attitude.

Peter said it this way, “For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, for you to follow in His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

I am ready to follow. Are you?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



Be My Attitude

Beatitudes – Blessed are you – Matthew 5:3-12

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”
Matthew 5:3-7

“Those who can laugh without cause have either found the true meaning of happiness or have gone stark raving mad.” – Norm Papernick⁴

Happiness is something that many of us seek in life. The world would have you to believe that happiness comes from fame, glory, and power. The world wants you to find happiness in self-gratifying events and activities. Trying to find happiness in the world is like trying to keep water on a hot day. No matter what you have it will eventually dry up and you will be left with nothing.

What are some of the things in which you have tried to find happiness?

The world cannot develop genuine happiness. It will always fall short, but Jesus, through His sermon, explains what it is to have happiness. The first four beatitudes deal with inner attitudes. As we seek to become poor, mournful, meek, and hungry we will place ourselves in a position to show mercy, be pure, be peacemakers, and endure persecution.

Here is the progress:

- **Spiritual Poverty** – This is where the path starts. Each individual who seeks happiness needs to come to the point of realizing that they are spiritually poor.
- **Mourners** – Once a person realizes they are spiritually poor, then they develop a sorrow over their sin. They realize that their sin is what attacks happiness.
- **Meek** – After a person begins to weep over their own sin, they develop a realization of the depth of God’s love and grace upon their lives. They surrender to be God’s tool, committed to God’s agenda.
- **Hunger for Righteousness** – The reality of who we are (poverty), why we are who we are (sin), and what God has done (meek) drives the individual to hunger and thirst for their God. This hunger comes from a deep desire and need for the food and water that truly satisfies.
- **Merciful** – As a result of seeing God for who He is and realizing who we are, there is a deep desire to show mercy on fellow man because of the plague of sin that affects us all. As we give mercy to others, God gives more to us.
- **Pure in Heart** – Mercy for others because of sin and the reality of the effect of sin continue to drive the believer to God. The believer wants to be cleansed of the plague of sin and filled with His Spirit.
- **Peacemakers** – As the believer becomes pure of heart, he has a desire to see others make peace with God. Hence, peacemakers will be ready always to share the gospel.
- **Persecuted** – Those who seek to share the gospel and help others find peace will undoubtedly be persecuted because of the nature of the gospel. Those that live in unrighteousness do not want to come face to

⁴ <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/35958.html>

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."
Matthew 5:8-11

face with righteousness so they persecute, which only perpetuates their unrighteousness

- **The outcome of this step by step progression is true, life changing joy that God gives.**

Why is it that the world's happiness is easier to reach for than the happiness God supplies?

You may be thinking right now that true happiness is hard work. Well, you're right. In fact, it is impossible. No matter how hard you try you will never find true happiness. Isn't that encouraging?

Think back to the very first attitude. It is the realization that we are spiritually poor. We cannot find happiness on our own. It will always slip through our fingers. It is only in God and through God that happiness can be found. Somehow each beatitude puts the attention and focus on God, because it is He who deserves all the glory.

- **Spiritual Poverty** – God is the source, I am not.
- **Mourners** – God is the standard, not my own standard of right and wrong.
- **Meek** – God is the center, so I must decrease.
- **Hunger and thirst** – God is the provider, only He can satisfy.
- **Merciful** – God is love, so I show love.
- **Pure of Heart** – God is the Healer, to cleanse my heart.
- **Peacemakers** – God is Peace, so I seek peace.
- **Persecuted** – God is King of Kings, so I will stand for him in the face of persecution.

No matter how you slice it, true happiness is seeking an understanding of who God is and how I relate to God.

This understanding goes against all the world would have us to believe. The world says happiness is fixed on self. In fact, we would be tempted to find happiness in ourselves. It is an attitude of trying to gratify ourselves and make ourselves happy. It is a lost cause. There will never be happiness in making ourselves happy.

No one has said it better than John:

"He must increase, and I must decrease." John 3:30

Lord, Let this be my attitude!

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?



Other studies are available at
www.libertyonlineministries.com, including:

By Faith – (Hebrews 11)

One Another

The Armor of God – (Ephesians 6)

The Road to Happiness – Beatitudes (Matthew 5)

Strengthening Your Moral Fiber – Moral Purity (Proverbs 7)

One Plus One is One – Marriage as God intended it to be

The Marks of Genuine Godliness – Integrity (Psalm 15)

Practical Faith – (James)