

# Chapter 6

## ***SERMON ON THE MOUNT*** *BEATITUDES*

### **I. Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).**

- A. The Sermon on the Mount is the first of five major discourses or teachings of Jesus in Matthew's gospel. Other major teachings or discourses in Matthew are found in Matthew Chapters 10, 13, 18, and 24-25. (Matthew 5-7, Matthew 10, Matthew 13, Matthew 18, Matthew 24-25)
- B. Jesus gives this teaching as a standard of moral and ethical conduct for all Christians. It is important that we realize that we cannot keep to it in our own strength. It requires the Grace and the Spirit of God continually working in each believer to conform our lives to Jesus' standard.
- C. The sermon on the mount could be called the "Constitution of the Kingdom of God." It contrasts the standards of God's Kingdom with the standards of religion and continually shows the importance of heart attitude over outward behavior.

### **II. Introduction to The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)**

- A. There are eight "Beatitudes" or declarations of blessedness in Matthew 5:1-12. Each Beatitude declares the blessed condition of one who has developed and who manifests a particular spiritual characteristic in his or her life.
- B. The word blessed means a state of happiness or "to be envied." Jesus taught that a Christian who is living according to the Laws and Principles of the Kingdom of God is not a miserable, deprived person, but rather one who is living in a state of happiness.
- C. For each of the Beatitudes we will attempt to define and describe the particular Kingdom of God character quality it represents and then look at its development, application, and benefits in the life of a Christian believer.

### **III. The Beatitudes**

#### **A. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 5:3)**

- 1. To be poor in spirit means to be humble; empty of spiritual pride or spiritual self-sufficiency. To be poor in spirit is the opposite of self-sufficiency or self-righteousness. (Revelation 3:17)
- 2. Being poor in spirit means that we are aware that we have needs: need for truth, need for wisdom, need for God. Awareness of need is a prerequisite to receiving from God by faith. (I Peter 5:6, Romans 12:3, Philippians 2:3, James 4:6)

3. Being poor in spirit means being willing to give up preconceived ideas and respond to revealed truth: truth about God, about the world, and about oneself. It means to be teachable; open to change. "To be unteachable is the essence of heresy."
4. Being poor in spirit does not mean being cowardly, having false humility, or being resigned to abject poverty.
5. The quality of being poor in spirit develops as we realize our inability to meet God's standards in our own strength or goodness and open our hearts to Him in humility and faith to receive His grace and strength.
6. Those who manifest the quality of being poor in spirit are promised the Kingdom of Heaven. That is; first to have the rule of God in our lives, then to inherit God's eternal Kingdom. The person who is poor in spirit enters the Kingdom and inherits the Kingdom. (Matthew 18:3-4)

**B. *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (Matthew 5:4)***

1. To mourn is to feel deep emotion, emotion which is felt intensely and is so strong it cannot be contained. To mourn is to experience sorrow or anguish over misfortune or loss; to have deep regret for sin, failure, or error.
2. To mourn does not mean to be a pessimist, to be bitter about one's lot in life, or to be critical over the shortcomings of others. Those who experience worldly sorrow often become very self-centered, but the person who experiences godly sorrow will develop greater compassion and concern for others.
3. Mourning finds its basis in the values of the Kingdom. Not mourning over material loss but over personal sin, the evil in the world, the lost condition of man, the pain and suffering of others. To sorrow over churches not moving in the power of God's Spirit, people not entering into their ministries, believers not growing and maturing, God's purposes not being fulfilled.
4. Mourning produces depth in a person and the comfort received produces a quality of grace that can be imparted to others. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

**C. *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)***

1. Meekness is gentle strength. Meekness is not weakness; being weak-willed or indecisive. Godly meekness is not a natural human characteristic, but results from acknowledging the authority of God over one's life. Meekness is always commended in scripture.
2. To develop the quality of meekness in one's life requires:
  - a. Determination - decision - commitment. There will always be both inner and outer hindrances to developing this quality of life. We must be determined and committed.

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- b. Confidence in God and confidence in who we are in God. We accept who God is and who we are in and through our relationship with Him.
  - c. Humility. If we allow pride a foothold in our lives, we will lose the peace and strength of character to remain meek in the face of opposition or provocation.
  - d. Courage. Meekness requires that you stand up for what you believe and for what is right. It takes courage to stand with gentle strength.
3. Hindrances to meekness:
- a. Insecurity: The need to support self-image through the approval of others.
  - b. Pride: To feel that one is superior to others and that one's rights and opinions are more valuable or important than those of others.
  - c. Selfishness: Unsurrendered rights. The need to defend and justify oneself. *But he wanted to justify himself... (Luke 10:29)*
  - d. Wrong expectations: To expect that the Christian life is supposed to be easy without conflict or challenges.
  - e. Fear of man: If we are afraid of the actions or opinions of others it can cause us to flee or back away in fear or to react irresponsibly in anger.
4. Meekness is the ability to rule one's spirit and to exercise self-control in the face of fear, provocation, frustration and anger. (Proverbs 25:28; 16:32)
- a. What does it mean to rule one's spirit in the face of provocation? Is it just to exercise self-control, grit your teeth and go ahead, to grin and bear it?
  - b. Some people control the outside (countenance, words, deeds) by suppressing their feelings and putting on an outward show of peace and calm. This leads to hypocrisy, to becoming "St. Volcano!" Suppressing one's feelings can also lead to bitterness, depression, and even physical illness.
  - c. Ruling one's own spirit means that we do not suppress our emotions and attitudes, but in faith we take charge of them and rearrange and change them so they produce a proper outward manifestation in countenance, word and deed.
5. Practical points on putting Meekness into practice in one's life.
- a. To develop the quality of Meekness requires first that we submit to God. This gives us a position of authority from which we can resist the attacks and temptations of Satan. (James 4:7)
  - b. Meekness requires putting one's expectations in God's hands: God is my

source, God will supply, God will promote. God will also chasten and discipline me as necessary. Learning to trust and be content.

- c. Meekness requires vision and purpose. God will accomplish His divine purpose in me. It will be for my greater good and for the good of all those He wants to bless through me. If I submit and yield myself to God He will bless me in spite of me!

**D. *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (Matthew 5:6)***

- 1. The Bible makes many comparisons between studying and hearing God's Word and partaking of nourishing food. Being instructed in God's Word is to the spirit what eating natural food is to the body. To steadfastly desire with the heart this quality of righteousness is like a spiritual "Hunger and Thirst."
  - a. Normal hunger and thirst is a sign of good health. A healthy person has the instinctive desire for food when his digestive system is empty. A healthy person instinctively thirsts and desires liquid when the body signals a need for fluid.
  - b. When the desire for food and drink ceases it is usually because of physical illness or mental or emotional problems.  
  
Physical illness:       appetite diminishes.  
Sorrow or grief:       appetite diminishes.  
Excessive weariness:   appetite diminishes.  
Eating wrong food:    appetite for good food diminishes.  
Poison in body:        appetite for food is lost.
  - c. Hunger and thirst is a deep instinctive craving and desire. You don't switch it off; you must satisfy it by feeding the body. This principle applies spiritually. (1 Peter 2:2)
  - d. Spiritual hunger and thirst causes aggressive spiritual behavior in a positive sense. Paul declared, "I press on;" Paul exhorted to "Strive for mastery." Jesus said eager people were "...forcing their way into God's Kingdom." (Philippians 3:12; Luke 16:16)
- 2. True righteousness finds its basis in relationship, not in activities. Jesus is our righteousness. His righteousness is imputed to us when we place our faith and trust in Him. "Abraham believed God and it was counted for righteousness." "Not having my own righteousness but that which is by faith." "All our (human, religious) righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight."
  - a. Righteousness is a quality of life, of attitude, of behavior. Not just negative ("don'ts"), but positive ("do's").
  - b. Hunger and thirst after relationship with God. Right standing with God, fellowship with God, harmony with God's ways and purpose. (Psalm

63:1,8; Psalm 27:4; Philipians 3:8-14)

3. The promise: Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness shall be filled. (Isaiah 32:17-18; Philipians 3:7-9)
  - a. God's Word says that the pangs of hunger and thirst, the earnest desire, will lead to satisfaction and blessedness.
  - b. He will fill us with the things we desire most. Good food for the spirit. (Psalm 23; Proverbs 30:8; 1 Peter 2:2)
  - c. He will feed us with spiritual health food. That which is best for us in every way.

**E. *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. (Matthew 5:7)***

1. Real mercy is a God-quality, not a purely natural human tendency. Some people are more merciful than others, and some people have a "gift of mercy," but in Christ the divine quality of mercy can be fully operational in each one of us. God is merciful. God keeps covenant and remembers mercy.
  - a. God's mercy to sinful humanity, God's righteous judgment set aside by His mercy. God's greatest expression of mercy is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ because of our need for a Savior.
  - b. In our covenant and maturity emphasis, we must be careful not to forget that God's mercy is the only basis for our salvation. We are nothing, have nothing, there is no hope outside the mercy and grace of God.
2. Mercy is defined as forbearance from inflicting punishment deserved on an adversary or lawbreaker.
  - a. Related terms are: grace, kindness, compassion, forbearance, forgiveness. I have omitted sympathy and pity as these can too easily become negative.
  - b. Mercy is the compassion that causes one to help the weak or the poor or the sick.
  - c. Mercy is compassion and concern that motivates to action. Mercy is only pity until it is expressed in actions of mercy.
3. Mercy is at its best when:
  - a. It is shown to those who really deserve the judgment or punishment they are about to receive.
  - b. One is fully justified in exacting the punishment but refrains from punishment.

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- c. Mercy is shown to one who has really hurt you and it is in your power to “get even.”
4. In order to show mercy one must receive mercy. How does one obtain mercy from God?
  - a. Be in an attitude of repentance before God. A grace-receiving relationship with the Lord. Recognize one’s need and God’s grace freely offered and received through faith.
  - b. We come to the Lord in the confidence of faith to obtain the mercy we need. God’s throne is a “Throne of Grace.” (Hebrews 4:16)
  - c. One obtains mercy when one shows mercy. One receives forgiveness as one forgives. (Matthew 6:14-15)
5. Mercy is not compromise; being wishy-washy or failing to establish clear standards on scriptural principles. Mercy does not ignore sin and wrong or pretend it hasn’t happened.
  - a. Consider the illustration of parents and children: If parents fail to establish and enforce standards of conduct, that is not being merciful to the child. If parents allow a child to disobey and violate the rules without applying scriptural correction, they are not showing mercy but rather the Bible says they **hate their child**. (Proverbs 13:24)
  - b. Lack of clearly defined and enforced standards produces frustration and insecurity. The key is clear, strong standards implemented with compassion.
    1. Identify and accept the person who has done wrong. Love the person, deal with behavior.
    2. In exercising necessary discipline, one must never attack or demean the child or person. Point out the wrong and hurt caused by the behavior. Then deal with the behavior redemptively and correctively, but not destructively.
6. God prefers mercy to religion. God says He would rather see people showing mercy and compassion than doing religious activities. (Micah 6:8; Isaiah 58:6-7; James 1:27)
7. When we refuse to show mercy to others (even when they deserve judgment), we actually place ourselves in the prison of our own judgment. (Matthew 18:34)
8. Releasing others from judgment releases us from bondage. *“He that cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass, for every man has need to be forgiven.”* George Herbert
9. We establish the standards by which we are judged by our judgment of others.

Much of the pressure that we experience in God's judgment may be self-inflicted. "How come they get away with that?" Maybe they are mercy-showers and are reaping what they have sown. (Matthew 7:1-2)

**F. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)***

1. Jesus continually emphasized heart attitude and condition over outward indications of religion. While the Jews had a strong commitment to avoiding things they felt would contaminate them, Jesus told them they were pure in body, not heart. They not only failed to see God, they crucified Him.
2. Purity of Heart precedes "seeing God," just as repentance precedes "saving faith." We cannot "see" or perceive God while our "vision" is clouded by: Wrong motives, impure attitudes, impure feelings from impure behavior, contaminated perception, prejudice, opinions, error.
  - a. To be pure in heart means having a right relationship with God. We are cleansed of sin, rebellion, and those things which stand between us and God and we enjoy fellowship with Him.
  - b. To be pure in heart is to be whole hearted; not half-committed, not double minded.
  - c. To be pure in heart is to have right motives. Wrong behavior (mistakes, wrong judgment) with a right motive is better than right behavior with a wrong motive. **If the motive and intent is pure (right) the behavior will eventually come into line.** Wrong doctrine with a right spirit is better than right doctrine with a wrong spirit.
3. How can we be Pure in Heart? In order to approach God - ascend - abide in His presence our hands must be clean (words and deeds) and our heart pure (motive attitude). Pure heart produces clean hands! (Psalms 24:3-4; 1 John 3:2-3) This approach to God, to abide in His presence, to enjoy fellowship with Him requires:
  - a. Repentance and faith. We turn from our own ways in repentance and turn to Him in faith and trust
  - b. We develop and maintain a whole hearted commitment and response.
  - c. We embrace the purifying and refining process. We are changed by seeing God. (Isaiah 6:1-8; 2 Corinthians 3:18-19)
  - d. We examine our motives and intent.
  - e. We bring our thoughts, words, actions in line with truth.
4. Some of the ways we "See God" are:
  - a. Seeing the need for God; our own need for Him, others' need for Him.

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- b. Seeing His care and provision; learning to recognize God's "fingerprints" as He touches our lives with His love and care.
- c. Seeing Jesus in the Word - His divinity - His character.
- d. Seeing Jesus in others; recognizing His grace at work in the lives of others; discerning the body of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:16)
- e. Seeing God and experiencing His reality by revelation; life transforming spiritual experiences with God

**G. *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9)***

1. Peace is not just the absence of conflict; but is rather a positive quality that is able to override conflict. Peace is harmony, quietness, calm, rest. Peace is harmony in relationships. God is a peacemaker, a reconciler, a restorer. When we manifest this quality, we will be called the children of God. "You're just like your Father." His peace growing and showing in us. (James 3:18)
2. In order to be peacemakers we must have:
  - a. Peace with God. The enmity that sprang up as a result of man's sin and severing the relationship must be healed through reconciliation, restoring of the relationship.
  - b. Peace within oneself. How many battles are fought unnoticed? Many storms rage in human minds and hearts. Until we have peace we cannot impart peace to others.
  - c. Peace with others. God wants His people to live at peace with one another and then to impart the quality of peace into other relationships that have conflict.
  - d. Peace with God is a pre-requisite to peace within oneself. Peace within oneself is pre-requisite to being a peacemaker.
3. What is a peacemaker?
  - a. One who is reconciled - at peace - in right relationship with God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)
  - b. One who wants to see others reconciled, living in harmonious relationship to God, to himself, to others.
  - c. One who is not contentious, argumentative, critical, tale-bearing. Looks beyond faults and sees needs.
  - d. One who is willing to be aggressive, to take a strong stand, even to suffer, in order that the quality of peace can be brought into relationships and situations.



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4. Here are some characteristics of an effective peacemaker. (James 3:17)
  - a. A peacemaker is peaceable: not an irritable, grouchy, testy sort of person. An air of consistent calm and peace about him. He desires to produce peace in and for others.
  - b. A peacemaker sees the necessity of producing peace on God's terms. He knows the principles of God's Word. He has learned Bible principles that can be quickened by the Holy Spirit to impart peace to others.
  - c. A peacemaker is willing to produce a confrontation when necessary to bring reconciliation. He doesn't just "let things slide" and hope that problems will go away. He produces confrontation but with faith that the answers he shares will produce life.
  - d. A peacemaker is tactful: He can use words - strong words - but use them carefully and gently so that they produce life and not death. Not an abrasive, confrontational, challenging person who flares up and becomes defensive or attacks other people and puts them on the defensive.
  - e. A peacemaker is not motivated by desire for selfish gain. No personal axe to grind. He doesn't take sides in a conflict, but remains neutral, and maintains communication with both parties in a conflict.
  - f. A peacemaker is loyal to the body of Christ. He sees peacemaking as strengthening the Church, beneficial to all the body. He doesn't sow discord or build up one at the expense of others.
  - g. A peacemaker is able to keep confidences but also to discern when information must be passed along to leadership for the benefit of all. When a person cannot keep confidences he disqualifies himself from peacemaking. If he betrays confidences, he can bring great personal hurt to people. He must not promise a confidence he can't keep.
    1. He must not be hungry for "gory details." When involved in a conflict situation and people are pouring out their problem the peacemaker must ask himself or herself, "Do I need to know all this detail?" He must not be motivated by curiosity.
    2. Cannot become a dumping ground for other people's garbage. May have to admonish people to keep the information relevant.
  - h. A peacemaker has the character and the strength to be free from sins of the tongue such as gossip, criticism, backbiting, and slander and to deal with and confront these sins in others.
  - i. A peacemaker is approachable. Conveys to others an air of acceptance. "I value and accept you as a person." Willing to listen without passing judgment. Able to comfort - calm – encourage.

- j. A peacemaker has a calming influence on others. He or she doesn't react to situations and provocation but remains steady and focused. The peacemaker stays calm and is able to calm emotions of others so that rational discussion is possible.
- k. A peacemaker recognizes when the situation has reached the point when others should be brought in or when church discipline may be necessary.

**H. *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:10-12)***

1. Persecution is a fact of life for the committed Christian. The level and intensity of persecution varies according to many factors. Most of us are privileged to live in a society where there is no official persecution of Christian believers but we must never forget that persecution is taking place right now. In many areas of the world people's lives are at risk for their faith in Christ right now.
2. Persecution may not always involve physical suffering. It can be pressure from family to renounce one's faith in Jesus Christ, or pressure from peers or social group. Persecution can happen in the work place or community and even if it does not put one's life at risk it may involve the loss of friends, status, or privileges.
3. Jesus tells us that the persecution that results from righteousness is blessed. Peter writes that we are blessed if we suffer persecution for doing good. There is no blessing if persecution is the result of foolishness, cockiness, or weird behavior. (1 Peter 3:14,17)
4. We are to be persecuted (when we are persecuted) for the same reasons as the prophets. Declaring God's truth and confronting sin and error will sometimes produce confrontation. Living a righteous life style and taking a stand for truth will sometimes produce confrontation. But we are not to seek or provoke persecution, rather we are to seek the Kingdom of God.
5. Our response to persecution is very important. Persecution can be like a purifying flame, dealing with our motives and attitudes. Wrong responses include developing a martyr complex or becoming bitter and complaining. The right response is to "Bless them that curse you, bless and curse not."
6. Jesus said that when we experience persecution for the sake of our faith, for the sake of righteousness, and for the sake of God's Kingdom we can rejoice! We must see the eternal values and the eternal perspective. **"You're not home yet!"**

**QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION**

*Chapter 6 Sermon on the Mount 1: Beatitudes*

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1. In this lesson the statement is made that the Sermon on the Mount could be called the “Constitution of the Kingdom of God.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? In thinking about these questions consider: What is a constitution? What does it contain? What does a constitution teach us?
2. The Beatitudes talk about things like “Being poor in spirit,” “Mourning,” and “Meekness.” Each of the eight qualities presented in the Beatitudes is described as leading to a state of “Blessedness.” How is it possible that seemingly negative things such as mourning and poverty of spirit can produce blessedness for us?