

THE BEATITUDES

A Mentorship Session with Jesus



The Beatitudes – a mentorship session with Jesus

'And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:' Matthew 5:1-2

'One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them.' Matthew 5:1-2

Matthew 5 contains a portion of what is generally called The Sermon on the Mount, with verses three to twelve specifically described as “the beatitudes”. Beatitude simply means the blessedness and in these verses Jesus lists various criteria for those who He defined as being blessed. Interestingly this teaching was not to the crowd, but to His disciples – those already on a journey of getting close to Him. And as we also want to be disciples of Jesus then it will help us to partake of this mentorship session so we can see what it looks like to be blessed from His perspective.

May the Holy Spirit give us understanding and grace as we go through this series.

Day 1 Poor in Spirit

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

What does it mean to be poor in spirit? The term used here for “poor” translates literally to “lacking in anything”, meaning that those who are poor in spirit are conscious of their spiritual need. So we may paraphrase that, “blessed are the ones that are conscious of their spiritual need...”. Here Jesus was referring to people who recognize two critical things. One is that as flesh we really do not have anything to offer God and two is that our sufficiency comes from Him alone.

The person who is spiritually self-satisfied simply does not see the need for Jesus or anything He offers. The revelation that only Jesus can really sustain and satisfy us totally transforms the way we respond to the issues of life, especially in a time such as this where there is so much emphasis on self. This is a very counter-cultural way of living and can only be achieved and sustained by the help of the Holy Spirit.

'I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.' John 15:5

'looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...' Hebrews 12:2

As disciples of Jesus it helps to understand what matters to Him so we can focus on the right things. Recognizing that we should be poor in spirit helps us take our eyes off ourselves and the things that we can physically see and focus our attention on Jesus and the things that really matter to Him. This means that self-reliance is dangerous as our capacity to bear fruit outside of Him is impossible and we cannot do anything that will have eternal impact without Him. For Jesus to highlight the importance of focusing on Him tells us that this is how He expects we should live, regardless of what society says. May the Holy Spirit help us on this journey.

Prayer: Lord Jesus help me to realize how much I really need You. Help me take my focus off myself and keep my eyes on You and what really matters to You.



Day 2 Those who Mourn

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

““You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.” Matthew 5:4 MSG

Mourning and blessing do not sound like they belong in the same sentence, but Jesus shared this to encourage those who are mourning so they know that they will be comforted. Whenever we lose something that really matters to us, very little if anything of what people say or do at that point seems to make any real impact or bring relief, if anything the wrong thing being said may even make us feel worse. Because we will all experience loss of some form at some point in time in our lives, the Bible helps us understand that at such points comfort is available to us by the One who knows how to get to our core and that person is the Holy Spirit.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;” John 14:16 KJV

Bringing comfort is one of the assignments of the Holy Spirit and we are often most aware of our need for Him at times of loss. This doesn’t mean that it’s only at times of mourning that He shows up. Rather for a believer, the Holy Spirit is already with us but we may not really acknowledge His presence for a variety of reasons. But at the point when everything else seems to have failed and nothing seems to make sense, our hearts become more open to receiving the comfort He has for us.

“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.” Psalms 34:18

Anyone who’s ever lost something that matters knows the feeling of bleakness and despondency that can follow such a loss. So the encouragement Jesus gives us is that the comfort isn’t just to make us feel better temporarily, but to refresh us from within, restore our hope, our zeal and our passion to fulfil our God ordained destiny. God. Have you or someone you know suffered loss? Ask the Holy Spirit to show up as Comforter and bring the comfort only He can.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for showing me that comfort is always available to me, especially when I need it most.

Day 3

Meekness

“Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5

When we hear the word “meek”, the tendency is to think of a person who is soft and maybe weak, however Jesus had a very different view of this. From the biblical perspective, the word used for meek means, “the necessary balance of exercising power and avoiding harshness.” This means being meek is understanding the power you carry yet being able to restrain or withhold that power for the benefit of others. This is why Jesus says the meek shall inherit the earth.

So how do we exercise meekness? An example is looking at the life of Moses. When his siblings Aaron and Miriam spoke against him because he’d married a Cushite, God brought a skin disease on Miriam to punish her for her actions. (Numbers 12:1-13). Moses would have been justified if he allowed this, but instead he cried out to God immediately and fervently on her behalf. Moses illustrated meekness by restraining his power to have her punished to allow her be healed. In a world where it is expected to hurt those who hurt us, exercising restraint for their benefit can only be done by the help of the Holy Spirit as we yield to Him daily.

“The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.” Psalms 25:9

One of the commentaries on meekness states that, “Meekness is a sign to an unbelieving world that Christ is in us.” As we walk in this journey of life, there will be several times we’ll have the opportunity to exercise meekness by restraining the power we have over others so that God’s name will be glorified in our families, our relationships, as leaders, in society at large and as witnesses for Jesus.

It certainly won’t be easy to begin with, especially if we feel there’s a justified negative consequence on the other person/people. But by the help of the Holy Spirit when the time comes to make the decision to choose the meekness route, He gives us the grace to yield to him.

Prayer: Holy Spirit please teach me how to exercise meekness in my everyday life.



Day 4

Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.'
Matthew 5:6

One of the signs of a healthy body is appetite which is why loss of appetite is one of the indicators of ill health. Likewise in the spiritual realm, when we desire more of God's righteousness it means that we have a healthy spirit. When we find that we are not interested in the things of God as we used to be, that should immediately signal to us that something is wrong which we need to attend to. If desire for righteousness is an indicator of spiritual health then it would help for us to understand what it is.

'And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" Matthew 25:40

In the context of this scripture, the righteous are those who maintain right relationships—with God and with the people around them. Jesus cares very much about how we treat others, especially members of the body of Christ. So much so that He says whatever we do to one of them, we do to Him (Matt 25:35-46). This means that it would be impossible for us to truly say we love Him and it not reflect in the way we treat others.

'When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, Lord , I will seek.'" Psalms 27:8

Having an appetite for righteousness means we have a desire primarily for God Himself rather than just His gifts. It's tempting to seek God for the things He offers us because the Lord is gracious and kind and loves to bless us. But the greatest blessing we have is His presence in our lives and our hunger for Him draws this presence into our lives.

'And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.' Jeremiah 29:13

When we seek Him for who He is, we have the assurance that we will certainly find Him. When we hunger and thirst for Him and the things that please Him, we are guaranteed to be filled.

Prayer: Lord give me the grace to hunger and thirst for You and the things that please You because I know You will fill me.



Day 5

The Merciful

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

Mercy can be defined as the discretionary power to pardon someone or to mitigate punishment. Meaning being merciful entails not giving a person the punishment they're supposed to face based on their actions. Many times we ask God for mercy, but here Jesus shows us that He expects us to show others mercy also. And not just once in a while, but to be full of mercy.

“...The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious...” Exodus 34:6

“...that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God...” Hebrews 2:17

In Exodus 34 Moses asked God to reveal Himself and it's interesting to note that the first description God provides is His character of mercy. Likewise Jesus in His position as our High Priest also makes mercy a priority. When we show mercy, we are demonstrating a trait that's in our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus. This means we can't say we are truly like Jesus and keep malice, bear grudges or be happy when people are being pulled down. A heart of compassion is required because it will be impossible for a hard-hearted person to show mercy.

“Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning...” Lamentations 3:22-23

God looks at us through the lens of compassion and so is able to show us mercy daily. Likewise we are to look at others with a heart that is compassionate and willing to show fresh mercy daily. In practical terms it means that we're not to keep reminding people of what they've done wrong and punishing them over and over for past misdeeds. It means when someone offends us we should pause and ask for grace to see them through the lens of mercy and respond from that standpoint. It doesn't mean wrongdoers should necessarily be let off the hook, but whatever decision is taken will be from the point of driving redemption rather than just punishment. There's much to say about the condition of the heart that is merciful and as always we need the help of the Holy Spirit to form this in us as He makes us more like Jesus.

Prayer: Lord give me a compassionate heart so I can show mercy.

Day 6

The Pure in Heart

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

God is holy and His level of purity is so incredible that He cannot condone evil or wickedness. Though we tend to focus on the actions we take, Jesus takes us a step further and places a demand on the posture and content of our heart.

“For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...” Proverbs 23:7

Jesus understands humanity very well and our ability to have good actions but impure hearts. He knows that it's possible to smile and pretend with someone we're keeping malice within our hearts. He knows that we can appear honest while inwardly open to taking dishonest actions if we believe we will get away with it. He knows we can do what's good but only because it'll be to our benefit. So Jesus isn't focused on our actions but the heart.

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.” Psalms 19:14

“... For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” I Samuel 16:7

The psalmist understood the importance of having the right thoughts in the heart in order to have a close walk with God. Jesus was telling us in essence that if we are really serious about having a relationship with Him and see Him move in our lives, then we can't focus only on the externals. Doing so will cause us to miss God's perspective and take us out of alignment, which can cost us dearly.

“casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,” II Corinthians 10:5

There's a constant battle going on in us between our flesh and our spirit and the one we feed more is the one that will be dominant. The same way we should pay attention to what we feed our body with is the same way we should pay attention to nourishing our spirit with the right 'diet'. This is what will shape our hearts and make us malleable to the Holy Spirit's moulding.

Prayer: Thank You Lord for showing me that Your focus is on my heart. Create a clean heart in me and renew a right spirit within me.

Day 7

The Peacemakers

'Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.' Matthew 5:9

The peacemakers are those who work to ensure there is harmony and accord in an area. Being a peacemaker can be direct by stepping into a situation where there's disharmony with the goal to restore harmony. It can also be indirect by not engaging in situations that will ultimately lead to panic, strife or discord.

'By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.' John 13:35

It is impossible to actively walk in love and discord at the same time – one must give way to the other. And one of the ways we walk in love is to ensure that we do not knowingly contribute to negativity. Peacemakers demonstrate their character by their reaction when told something negative about someone or a situation. If it is gossip, do we encourage the speaker to share more or do we actively end the discussion and ensure we don't spread what we have heard? If there is fear and panic, do we add to it or do we bring the peace and calmness of God into the situation? If we share information, is it with the objective of fostering unity?

'For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given... And His name will be called... Prince of Peace.' Isaiah 9:6

'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' John 14:27

Jesus is the Prince of peace and as we get closer to Him and imbibe more of His character, we also begin to carry His peace. Meaning when we show up, peace shows up. This means as a carrier of peace we have the power to change the atmosphere around us and create a haven of peace wherever we go. This doesn't mean things are perfect around us – rather there can be calmness in the midst of seeming chaos. Walking in peace is something that has to be done deliberately until by His grace it now becomes part of us. Then we shall be known as peacemakers.

Prayer: Lord, make an instrument and carrier of Your peace, so whenever I show up, Your peace shows up as well.

Day 8

Reward for Righteousness

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10

Doing what pleases God makes us stand out and not always for our immediate material benefit. In fact Jesus made us aware of the fact that there is a cost to walking in righteousness. It’s important we understand that because we live in a fallen world, walking in righteousness will appear odd and may not necessarily always endear us to others. Some people may be challenged simply by the stand we take and because of that they may choose to retaliate.

“Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn’t find anything to criticize or condemn... “ Daniel 6:4

Daniel wasn’t attacking or maligning his colleagues, but his actions put them under pressure. Have there been times you’ve been put under pressure simply for doing the right thing? We may not face the lion’s den like Daniel did but perhaps we may be passed over for certain opportunities or left out of certain discussions because people will be challenged when we bring a godly perspective. Jesus says we should count this as a blessing because it means we are doing something right.

“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...” Romans 12:2

There’s a perspective we have by virtue of the transformation we are going through as the Holy Spirit moulds us into the image of Christ. Jesus wants us to know that because we aren’t on the same journey as the world, we shouldn’t think and act like the world or expect to always be accepted. More importantly He lets us know that we have a bigger benefit in the world to come so we shouldn’t be discouraged about whatever happens to us on this side of eternity, but be encouraged that our God who sees and knows our heart will reward us accordingly.

Prayer: Lord thank You for letting me know there’s a price to walking in righteousness and for encouraging me that You are a rewarder of them that diligently seek You and walk in Your ways.

Day 9

Reward for standing for Jesus

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:11-12

One of the strangest things Jesus told His disciples is that being reviled and persecuted for His sake is a source of rejoicing and exceeding gladness. We would think it would be the opposite, but Jesus was letting us know what matters to heaven is very different from what matters to the world. By taking a stand for Jesus we signal that we are in direct opposition to the ways of the world and there will be repercussions for doing so. But Jesus also lets us know there is also Great reward waiting for us if this happens.

“So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.” Acts 5:41

When Peter and the other apostles were beaten for preaching about Jesus the Bible says they rejoiced because they were found worthy to suffer shame for the sake of His name. They didn't shrink from preaching Him, rather they continued daily both at the temple and in people's homes. They had gotten to the point where they knew their life was to be lived for Jesus alone.

Today we may not necessarily have to preach in a church but every area of our life is meant to be a platform from which we share the good news about Jesus and what He did for us and how we were translated from the kingdom of darkness into the His kingdom where we have redemption. This is a truth the enemy does all he can to fight. But as we persist and continue to share Jesus with pure hearts and clean hands, we have the encouragement that we have a great reward awaiting us regardless of what may happen on this side of eternity.

Prayer: Lord Jesus thank You for the price You paid for me on the cross and the victory I have through Your resurrection. I ask for boldness to always take a stand for You and the grace to rejoice whenever I face negativity because I stand for You, remembering You have promised that there's a great reward waiting for me.

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