

BEATITUDES

Jesus preached a powerful sermon on a mountain side that many refer to as “The Sermon on the Mount.” The themes of His sermon could be seen as pictures of a kingdom lifestyle. Just about everything that He says is upside down in comparison to the way the world operates. In chapter 5, Jesus shares some attitudes and outlooks that are common in the life of the kingdom of God. As disciples who want to follow Jesus and be conformed to His image, we should desire to take on these attitudes.

Read Matthew 5:1-11.

Discuss: What do you think it means to be “blessed” in light of what these attitudes call us to?

The Beatitudes

Poor in Spirit

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.” v.3

Poor in Spirit means recognition of spiritual bankruptcy, an understanding that we don’t have anything to offer God spiritually that would merit His acceptance of us. The more we grow in grace, the more we understand our sin and how much we need a savior. This should create humility in our hearts and Jesus says we are blessed when we have that attitude.

Mourning

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” v.4

A mournful person is truly broken over their lack of righteousness before God. Before a person can come to repentance, they must mourn over their sin against God. The world would tell us to never embrace a truth that makes us uncomfortable, but Jesus says you are blessed when you mourn over sin because God will comfort that person in His grace and mercy.

Discuss: What are the challenges in embracing an attitude of lowliness and humility before God?

What helps us grow in humble attitudes?

Meekness

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” v.5

Meekness is described as power under control. A person who understands who they are before God doesn't need to assert their authority or power over others. They treat others with respect and do not feel the need to “strong arm” what's theirs, believing that God will give them their inheritance as a co-heir with Christ. Meekness does not mean weakness. It just means a refusal to lord authority over others.

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

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

To hunger and thirst for something is to long for it. Jesus says that we should long for righteousness. It should consume our hearts and minds to want to live a life of godliness. The world would tell us to hunger and thirst for power, pleasure, or control. However, the problem is that none of those things

ultimately satisfy. Jesus says we are blessed with a longing for righteousness because we will be satisfied.

Discuss: What kinds of things do we typically hunger and thirst for? Describe what a life of hungering for the things of God would look like.

Merciful

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.” v.7

Being merciful to others flies in the face of what feels natural to us. Our hearts and the world around us tend to operate on an “eye for an eye” standard. Jesus calls us to extend the kind of mercy to others that we have been shown from God.

Pure in Heart

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

Purity in heart is one of the marks that the Holy Spirit has regenerated our hearts. When we have a desire to wrestle with our sin and to honor God in our ambitions, we demonstrate a pure heart before God.

Peacemakers

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

The kingdom of God is first about bringing peace between God and man through the cross of Christ. Secondly, it is about bringing peace between man and man as well through the cross and indwelling Spirit of God. Peacemakers seek to share good news with those that are enemies of God because of sin,

and they aim to reconcile differences and tensions with others on earth.

Persecuted for the sake of righteousness

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." v.10

In our culture, any kind of suffering or harsh treatment is a thing to avoid at all costs. However, Jesus says that our attitude about suffering harsh treatment for being committed followers of His is a commendable blessing.

Discuss: How do we grow in the purity of our hearts?

Forming the Beatitudes

Scripture says that as we behold the glory of Jesus in the gospel, we become transformed into His image from one degree of glory to the next. In other words, as we go deeper into study of the life and attitudes of Jesus, our hearts will grow these same attitudes. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Measure yourself against these attitudes and search the scriptures for places that Jesus has displayed them. As you meditate on and memorize these demonstrations, ask for God's mercy to grow those desires in you. Replace any attitudes that are contrary to them with the truth of God's word and apply grace to respond accordingly.

Personal Application

Consider which of the attitudes of the kingdom you seem to have most often.

Consider which of the attitudes of the kingdom you lack the most.

What changes will you make in order to help form those attitudes in your heart and life?