

A SERMON FROM THE BEATITUDES

MATTHEW 5:1-12 • TV156A

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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Matthew 5:1-12

“And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

I’ll be speaking to you today from the book of **Matthew**. I’d like for you to turn to the **5th chapter of Matthew**. Our message is on the subject: **“A SERMON FROM THE BEATITUDES.”**

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Now, most of all of you are familiar with the Beatitudes in **Matthew Chapter 5: 1 through 12**. In just a few moments I am going to bring a message on that subject: **“The Beatitudes.”**

Now, let’s read from **Matthew the 5th chapter beginning with verse 3**: Our Lord said, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”*

“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”

Now, a clear warning needs to be sounded at the beginning of this message. These Beatitudes do not set forth the way to be saved; this is not the way to be saved. It is not the way to be pardoned nor forgiven of your sins.

Our Lord clearly sets forth the way to be saved; *“it is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Salvation is not by works. Salvation is not by mourning over sin and salvation is not by making peace with your neighbor.

Salvation is not by adopting a meek and humble attitude; salvation is in Christ. The way to be saved from sin, the way to be pardoned and forgiven, the way to become a child of God is *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”*

When the Philippian jailer asked the apostle Paul, *“What must I do to be saved,”* Paul’s reply was; *“believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”*

John 1:12 says, *“As many as received him to them gave he the privilege, (the power, the right), to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”*

John 3:14 says, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

John 3:36 says, *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. He that believeth not the Son shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

So, the way to be saved is not given here in the Beatitudes; the way to be saved is by believing on Christ. It’s by the grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord is speaking here in the Beatitudes not about how to be saved, but He is speaking of those who are saved. In other words, the Beatitudes are characteristics of those who know Christ. The Beatitudes are marks of grace in the soul.

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You see, people who are children of God are not just children of God by profession, but they are children who show a work of grace in the heart, in the conduct and conversation of life.

Faith that saves (true saving faith) produces definite evidences of a new birth. It evidences regeneration and sanctification. Faith that saves produces a change in a person's attitude, personality, and conduct, not just in his doctrine.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 says; *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things become new."*

You are familiar with what James had to say about this, he said; *"faith without works is dead being alone."*

Let that warning be sounded; let that foundation be laid as I bring you this message on the Beatitudes. It is not how to be saved; the Beatitudes concern those who are saved, (characteristics, evidences, marks of saving grace in the soul).

Let's look back at the text and this time I want you to go back to **verse 1**: It says in **verse 1**: *"And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain and he called his disciples unto him and he taught them."*

Many people say that He was speaking only to his disciples in this Sermon on the Mount. I kind of believe that He was speaking to the whole multitude. Actually, the message we preach is to all the people.

We don't have a separate message for the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the wise and the unwise, but all men need to hear this message. All men will not hear it; all men will not receive it.

Isaiah said, *"Lord, who hath believed our report and to whom is the message or the arm of the Lord revealed?"* But, this message is the same; it is the same for you and me. It is the same for the old and young, the rich and poor, or the wise and the unwise. *"Our Lord seeing the multitude taught them saying."*

Now, notice the next thing. It says, *"He went up into a mountain."* Now, the Lord didn't seek an elevated place just to be seen and just to be heard, but it is the King who is speaking here. It is the King who is speaking with authority and the mountain is symbolic of His greatness, His authority, and His majesty.

He gave His law on Mount Sinai. He calls His church *"Mount Zion."* He died on Mount Calvary. He ascended from the Mount of Olives and here He went up into a mountain and sat down as a King sits on His throne and speaks forth the words of His kingdom.

The Father said, *"This is my Son; you hear him."* Now notice the next line: It says; *"He opened his mouth and taught them saying:"*

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Now, God does not express anything in the Word needlessly. The Word of God is a brief Book compared to all that Christ did and all that Christ said. It says in the Scripture that if everything Christ did and said had been written in books, *“the world wouldn’t contain the books.”*

Here, He uses this phrase: *“He opened his mouth and he taught them.”* Now, somebody is going to meekly say, “How could he teach them without opening his mouth? He would have to open his mouth to teach them.”

Not necessarily! Our Lord taught men without saying a word. Our Lord taught men without speaking a word. His life, His love and His looks, taught men. His miracles, His tears, His works; all of these teach men without saying a word.

Then, for centuries, our Lord taught men through the mouth of others; that’s right! It says in the book of **Hebrews chapter 1**: *“God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake to our fathers by the prophets.”*

So, God taught men through the mouth of other men. But here, now, He speaks; He speaks on earth. It says: *“And he went into the mountain and he sat down and opened his mouth and taught them saying:*

“He that hath ears to hear” had better listen to him. He speaks not as the Scribes and Pharisees; He speaks with authority; this is the King. He said, *“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.”* He opened His mouth and taught them.

The first word that He spoke was the word *“blessed.”* We see that over and over again in these 12 verses, *“blessed, blessed, blessed, blessed.”* What does the word *“blessed”* mean?

Well it means this:

First of all: It means marked out for special favor!

You know, when the angel announced to Mary that she would bare a Son and that holy thing would be called the Son of God, the angel said; *“blessed (highly favored) art thou among women, (not over women), among women, (not over men), among men.”*

So, first of all: This word blessed that we are going to be looking at means, highly favored, special favored, marked out for a special favor by God Almighty. Not only that, but honored and esteemed, highly esteemed by God himself.

Secondly: Then it means happy, or finders of happiness!

Paul said in **Romans 4: 7 and 8**; *“Blessed is the man to whom God will not charge sin,”* in other words, happy. He is special; he is marked out for special favor; he is highly esteemed of

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God and he is certainly a happy man: *“Blessed (happy) is the man to whom God will not charge sin.”*

So then, these Beatitudes, all of them begin with the word *“blessed,”* happy, or finders of happiness. Let’s look at seven of them today as the Lord enables us and as we have time.

First of all: He said, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”*

My friends, no one ever considered the poor on this earth as our Lord considered them, as our Lord was identified with them. I am talking about the poor, materially, physically, and so-forth, His birth in a manger identified Him with the poorest of poor.

Even His life, even to the death on the cross, He was poor and *“despised and rejected of men.”* He said, *“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”*

Here, He is not speaking of poverty of flesh; here He is speaking of a poverty of spirit. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”* A man can be wealthy and be poor in spirit. A man can be financially poor and proud in spirit.

So, the Lord Jesus Christ is talking here of humility of heart before God, a lowliness of mind and spirit, an absence of pride and self-esteem.

The *“poor in spirit”* are those who have been made to realize that before God, not necessarily before men, but before God, we have nothing, we are nothing, and we know nothing. We are born poor.

We are born in sin by Adam’s transgression, we were made sinners in Adam; we were born in sin, *“conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity.”*

We are born poor. We are poor by choice. Christ said, *“You will not come to me that you might have life. We love darkness and hate light because our deeds are evil.”*

We are poor by practice. We are living like the prodigal son, off the husk of the world. We wasted our living and we are living now off the husk, like the swine eat. Poverty of spirit; *“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

What is the poverty of spirit? Well, it empties a man of self that he may be filled with the grace of God. This poverty of spirit strips a man of his own self-righteousness that he may be clothed with the righteousness of the Son of God.

This poverty of spirit lays a man at the door of mercy, helpless and hopeless, crying, *“Oh God be merciful to me the sinner.”*

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This poverty of spirit empties a man of pride, envy, jealousy, haughtiness, and bigotry. *“Six things, God said, I hate, yay, seven are an abomination to me.”*

The first one he lists is p-r-i-d-e, pride, a proud look God hates. *“God resisteth the proud and he giveth grace to the humble”*

Our Lord Jesus said: *“He came to preach the gospel to the poor (that is, the poor in spirit).”* That’s where the work of grace begins; it begins where we have the most need, our pride. *“Blessed are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

Second: Our Lord said; *“Blessed, (highly favored, happy, finders of happiness); blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”*

I believe David’s prayer of repentance in **Psalm 51** is a classic example of true mourning over sin. Listen to David: *“Have mercy upon me O God according to thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; blot out my transgressions.”*

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities. Cleanse me from my sins for I acknowledge my transgressions. My sin is ever before me. Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight.”

One old song writer wrote these words:

**“Lord; let me mourn for nothing but sin
And after no one but thee
And then I would, oh that I might
A constant mourner be.”**

My friends; *“The sacrifices of God are a broken heart, a broken and a contrite spirit. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. The Lord saveth such as be of a broken heart.”*

Paul knew something about this; he cried in **Romans 7**: *“O wretched, wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord; the victory in Christ is mine.”*

But, he never ceased to mourn. Throughout his life he said, *“I am less than the least of all the saints.”* On one occasion, shortly before his martyrdom, he said; *“Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.”*

We never cease to be sinners saved by the grace of God. We never cease to be sinners who mourn, a constant mourning, over our sins. Now, true poverty of spirit will lead to mourning over sin.

Third: *“Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth”*

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My friends; there is a vast difference in meekness and weakness. There's a difference in meekness and compromise. There's a difference in meekness and cowardice.

We are exhorted in the Scriptures to be "*strong in the faith.*" We are taught in the Word of God to be "*bold in the Lord.*" We are commanded in the Scriptures to "*contend earnestly for the faith.*"

But, the believer is a gentle person; that's right, a gentle person. Our Lord said, "*Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*"

The believer is a gentle person. Blessed is the man who cares for the feelings of others. Blessed is the man who cares for the burdens and trials of others.

I don't know where we got the idea that a Christian, a believer, is supposed to be an unbending, stern, unyielding, unforgiving, defender of the law; it is not so. The Christian is a tender-hearted and gentle person.

He is not weak, not cowardly, not compromising, but meek in spirit. The meek are self-sacrificing. His greatest happiness is in making someone else happy. The meek are a quiet spirit, a people with a quiet spirit, a patient and long-suffering attitude. "*Blessed are the meek.*"

Do you see how these Beatitudes lead from one to the other? "*Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn over sin.*" When a person knows that he is nothing and has nothing, he mourns over his failures, his poverty of spirit. It leads to mourning over sin and that leads to meekness.

There's no one who will forgive like the man who has been forgiven. There is no one who will show mercy like the man who has received mercy. There is no one who will be long-suffering and patient like the man who is a participator in the patience of God.

Fourth: "*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness; they shall be filled*"

It can be called "*righteousness.*" This can also be called holiness or sanctification. It is two-fold: They that hunger and pant and thirst and yearn for righteousness or holiness; it is two-fold: I want a two-fold righteousness:

First of all: The righteousness that they hunger for and seek is the righteousness of God or righteousness before God.

Now, Paul writing of the Israelites, said: "*Brethren; my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.*"

"*I bear them record; they have a zeal for God but it is not according to knowledge: For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God are going about to establish their own righteousness,*" in other words, through their works, their laws, their deeds, their ceremonies,

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and their morality. They were trying to establish righteousness before God, before His holy throne, before His holy law.

It can't be done! Christ is our righteousness. Christ is our righteousness and our sanctification. *"We are accepted in the beloved. By the disobedience of one we were made sinners, (that's Adam); by the obedience of one (that's Christ) we were made righteous."*

"God hath laid upon him our sins who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." That's where it is found, in Christ. His obedience is my obedience. His holiness is my holiness. His acceptance by the Father is my acceptance, for He is my representative.

Now, I want that righteousness. I must have it or perish. *"Without this holiness no man will see the Lord."*

Secondly: The other righteousness is a personal righteousness or a life of godliness or the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, long-suffering, temperance, and so-forth, a growth in grace and a knowledge of Jesus Christ but, neither of these righteousnesses come by law or by works.

The righteousness of God comes by the love of Christ and the righteousness inwardly, comes by love for Christ. *"The love of Christ constraineth me,"* His love for me and my love for Him. His love for me gives me a perfect righteousness before the Father. My love for Him leads me to walk in his steps.

So, *"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for righteousness; they will be filled."* They are seeking the right thing, not their righteousness but His, and they will be filled.

Fifth: *"Blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy"*

When I think of mercy I think of God; *"He is plenteous in mercy. He delights to show mercy."* But, mercy is not only a characteristic of God; it is a characteristic of the sons of God. It is a characteristic of saving faith.

The man who shows no mercy is not an object of mercy. The man who does not forgive has never been forgiven. Our Lord taught us to pray: *"Forgive us of our debts as we forgive those who are indebted to us."*

John Wesley was crossing the Atlantic Ocean from England to Georgia, to the United States, to the state of Georgia. On the ship with him was the governor of Georgia who had been to England. He was on his way back.

One of his servants had stolen some of the governor's wine and the governor was going to have him flogged; he was going to have him beaten. John Wesley went to the governor of Georgia and asked him on behalf of the guilty man to show mercy.

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He said, "Show mercy to this man. He was wrong; he made a mistake but temper your justice with mercy. Show mercy to him." To which the governor replied, "Sir; I never forgive; I never forgive."

John Wesley replied to the governor of Georgia, "Then sir; I hope you never sin because you will never be forgiven."

My friends; that is just so; it's not just preaching, it is truth, it is the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. "*Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.*"

Sixth: "*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God*"

Our Lord always deals with a man's heart. He wasn't saying, "Blessed are the pure in walk and blessed are the pure in deed and blessed are the pure in actions."

I know that our walk and our deeds and our actions spring from our hearts. "*Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" This is where God aims; He always aims for the heart.

Other religious leaders and so-called messiah's and so-forth, are content with men's ears; "lend me your ears." God says, "*My son; give me your heart.*"

Others are content with the actions and works of men but our Lord Jesus Christ always aims for the heart. He says, "*Keep thine heart; out of it are the issues of life.*" He said, "*God looks not on the outward countenance but God looks on the heart.*"

He says, "*I will give you a new heart.*" He warned the religious Pharisees; "*Be careful of cleaning the outside of the cup and the platter and neglecting the inside.*" He said; "*Cleanse first that which is within that the outside might be clean also.*"

"*Blessed are the pure in heart;*" they have pure motives. They have pure and sincere attitudes. They have a pure and sincere attitude toward God and toward themselves and toward others. We are not without sin; we are in Christ; in Christ there is no sin. In Christ we have a perfect righteousness but there is a purity of motive and a sincerity of purpose. That is what he is talking about.

"*Blessed are the pure in heart; they are going to see God.*" It's not just the man in the long, religious, robes. It's not just the man with the doctrine and principles outwardly and the ceremonies and rituals.

It's the man whose heart has been vitally joined in saving faith to Christ Jesus who has a heart that's pure in its motive and sincere in its desire; "*blessed are the pure in heart.*"

I don't know what your religion consists of (mere outward deeds) but faith is a heart work. Repentance is a heart work. Salvation is a heart work.

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Seventh: *“Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God”*

The peacemaker is a son of the King of Peace. The peacemaker ends a quarrel. He doesn't start it or carry it on. The peacemaker extends a hand of friendship and fellowship. The peacemaker avoids discord and dissention.

He follows the words of His Master as much as is possible. *“Live at peace with all men. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.”*

As I said; these Beatitudes follow a pattern. Do you see how they must be brought together as one? Happy, highly favored, blessed, highly esteemed of God are the people of whom these things can be said.

It begins here; now watch it; it begins: *“Blessed are the poor in spirit;”* a poverty of spirit leads to mourning over sin. *“Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.”* That mourning leads to meekness, a genuine humility of spirit.

Why should I lord over another? Why should I judge another? Why should I be critical of another when I am guilty of the same sin, maybe not outwardly but at least inwardly?

This meekness of spirit leads to what? It leads to a hunger and a thirst for righteousness. If I have no righteousness I need it; I not only need it but I desire it. I know that I must have it; I must have the holiness of God.

“Who shall stand in his presence, he that hath a pure heart and clean hands?” I need it. I hunger and thirst for righteousness and this righteousness will make us merciful toward others. God's been merciful in giving to me His righteousness.

“Who maketh thee to differ? What do you have that you didn't receive?” This merciful spirit gives us a right heart toward God and toward others, a pure heart. This heart purged from malice and bigotry will lead me to be a peacemaker which is called *“a child of God!”*

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