

Wil Owens
The Portrait of a Believer; Matthew 5:1-12
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Introduction – To quickly recap last week, what we’re finding as we study the Beattitudes is that these 8 virtues are more than strong suggestions for believers. The Beattitudes are in fact virtues that are present in believers to one degree or another. Jesus is presenting a portrait of a believer.

Jesus is not saying that we have to perfectly demonstrate these virtues 100% of the time or we are not believers. There’s only one man who ever lived out these virtues perfectly 100% of the time, and He’s the one preaching this sermon.

What Jesus is teaching here is that these characteristics are present in various times and at various levels in true believers. The purpose of the Sermon on the Mount as a whole is to distinguish between true faith and false faith. Those who do not possess true faith will not possess these virtues. But true faith will inevitably possess these characteristics.

What we discover today is that the final four virtues are really the outflow of the first four. The poor in spirit recognize their spiritual state of sin against God. They then mourn because of their rebellion against God. This leads them to a meekness when approaching God for mercy, grace, and forgiveness. And once they have tasted the forgiveness and freedom of reconciliation and justification with God, they simply hunger and thirst for more. A wonderful, glorious by-product of being made right with God through the grace found in Jesus Christ, is that true happiness of life is gained. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They shall be comforted. They inherit the earth. They are satisfied. These next four virtues begin to appear in true believers as they begin to live out the new life they have found in Christ.

- I. The Merciful (v7)
 - a. Those who are filled and satisfied, at rest and at peace with God because of receiving God’s mercy, they are the ones who begin to demonstrate mercy to others. They are the merciful.
 - b. The merciful are those who express compassion for those in need and a forgiveness toward those who sin or even who have sinned

against them. Sometimes there is a fine line between being merciful and enabling a person to continue in sin.

- c. Again, all of this flows from our experience of receiving the mercy of God. We know we do not deserve the mercy of God, and yet, through Christ we have received it. Having received undue mercy yields a merciful spirit within us. The more we come to know the mercy of God toward us, the more inclined we become to be merciful toward others. But if you feel you deserve the blessings of God, you won't be a merciful person.
 - d. Merciful towards our spouses, towards our children and family members, towards our fellow believers, towards those who are apart from Christ, even towards those who would seek to do us harm.
 - e. It's not always easy and it's not always instant. Sometimes we have to work through our feelings and hurts and frustrations. But we've been given new hearts in Christ, and those hearts have been filled with mercy. If we didn't deserve it and yet received it, then we are compelled to be merciful to those we may think or feel do not deserve it either. Freely we have received, and freely we give.
 - f. Now only true believers work their way towards being merciful, and what we find when we let go of hurt and bitterness and anger and thoughts of superiority, we find that we are continuing to receive mercy. God is being merciful toward us even when we sin by temporarily withholding mercy from others.
 - g. That makes the soul happy in God, and it also makes us merciful. These virtues feed on each other. The more mercy we receive, the more satisfied in life we are, therefore, the more mercy we are willing to extend to others. And the cycle continues for believers.
 - h. There is a direct connection between being meek in v5 and being merciful in v7. And there is also a direct connection between hungering and thirsting for righteousness in v6 and being pure in heart in v8.
- II. The Pure in Heart (v8)
- a. Just as there are two types of righteousness, there are two ways that we are pure in heart. There is the initial righteousness in which we are declared by God to be right with Him. When we embrace Christ as Savior, His righteousness is counted to us as our sin was counted

to Him. So we are justified by faith – declared to be right with God through Christ. Then from that legal standing of being declared not guilty by God, we are given the desire to please and honor and glorify God in this life, so we hunger and thirst to live right with God and right with others. Initial righteousness produces ongoing righteousness.

- b. Pure in heart works the same way with a subtle distinction. There is the initial purity of heart that occurs when we are cleansed of our every sin at conversion. Colossians 2:13-14 says that when God made us alive in Christ, He forgave us of all our trespasses and canceled our record of debt. He wipes our record clean in Christ. That's the initial purity of heart of the believer.
- c. Then there is the ongoing purity of heart. We will continue to sin in this life, and when we do, we come to the Father in confession and repentance and He cleanses us. 1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- d. But there's something more here in purity of heart. V8 is not just a repeat of v6. Purity of heart entails more than just repenting and confessing our sins. It speaks to the Spirit working in our lives over time to get down to those hidden corners of our hearts where those hidden sins lie. It gets down to the why of our sin. Down deep where pride and anger and selfishness and lust and discontentment dwell in the shadows. God has a way of dragging all that wretched stuff that we don't want to see or deal with right up unto the light where we have to deal with it.
- e. And purity of heart also includes the desire and the pursuit God places in our hearts to render our lives as worship to Him even if it means dealing with that horrible, wretched, embarrassing darkness deep in our hearts.
- f. In other words, the Christian life is a lifelong, ongoing journey of being purified before God deeper and deeper. Sanctification is the process whereby God is making us ready for heaven!
- g. Now listen carefully, the impulse within us to follow the Spirit's leading and conviction to this deep cleansing – what compels us to strive for purity of heart is that we know we are going to see God!

The reward for purity of heart is also the heart's greatest motivation for purity!

- h. 1 John 3:2-3 – Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like him, because we shall see Him as He is. V3 – And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as He is pure.
 - i. The promise of seeing our Savior is also our motivation to live pure and be pure before Him!
 - j. Those people are happy!
- III. The Peacemakers (v9)
- a. To be at peace means that the enmity between two parties has been extinguished and reconciliation has occurred between the two parties that used to be at odds with one another. When that reconciliation occurs, there is peace.
 - b. That is precisely what has happened between us and God when we come to Christ. The enmity between us and God has been extinguished by the sacrifice of Christ and now we are reconciled to God and are at peace with Him.
 - c. Those who have found peace with God work to bring others into peace with God and into peace with one another.
 - d. 2 Cor 5:17-20
 - e. The peacemakers are the sons and daughters of God, and that's why they are blessed, that's why they are happy – they are sons and daughter of God.
- IV. Those who are Persecuted for Righteousness Sake (v10)
- a. Those who live for God will eventually suffer in some way because of their faith in Christ. Vv11-12.
 - b. Jesus told us didn't He – if the world hated Him, it will hate us also.
 - c. But we can rejoice and be glad even when we face all manner of persecution for our faith because persecution for the faith actually confirms our faith! It actually has the opposite effect. Instead of ripping away our joy, it reinforces our joy because it reaffirms our faith. You're not persecuted for the faith unless you're in the faith!

Conclusion