

Sunday Morning Message

July 21, 2019 (finished on August 4)

Blessed – Part Two

Topics – Sermon on the Mount; Beatitudes

Text – Matthew 5:1 - 12

Congregational Reading – Matthew 5:3 - 12

Introduction

Last Sunday morning, we began a two part message on the topic of the Beatitudes, which are found throughout the Bible, but have a particularly significant concentration here in the gospel of Matthew, in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

The word, “blessed” (μακάριος – *Makarios*) means, “Oh how happy.” If there is any people on Planet Earth who should be happy it is God’s people. We have a lot to be happy about.

In the Bible, there are thirty-one Beatitudes, or “blessed are” statements throughout both the Old and the New Testaments, which describe certain conditions that will produce happiness. Today, the world is desperately searching for things that will make them happy. They are in pursuit of happiness.

Sometimes they pursue happiness through possessions.

Sometimes they pursue happiness through pleasure.

Sometimes they pursue happiness through perversion.

But, real, lasting happiness and joy can only come from God.

About one-third of all of the Beatitudes (or “blessed are” statements) in the Bible are found here in Matthew 5, in the Sermon on the Mount. Three of the Beatitudes found in the Sermon on the Mount are repeated in a similar form in Luke 6, in a similar message that Jesus preached that is known as the Sermon on the Plain. Luke’s gospel also contains five other “blessed are” statements besides three that Jesus gave them on the Sermon in the Plain. Mark’s gospel does not contain any Beatitudes. John’s gospel contains only one:

"Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

The Psalms contain five; three of which I’ll mention here:

"Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah." (Psalm 84:4)

"ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart." (Psalm 119:1-2)

There is one Beatitude included in the Proverbs.

"Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways."
(Proverbs 8:32)

Paul records only one out of all fourteen of his Epistles:

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans 4:7-8)

In Revelation, there are three.

Back in the Sermon on the Mount, we see the greatest concentration of these Beatitudes, and in them, we see the same similar patterns found in the Beatitudes found in the rest of the Bible.

Read through Matthew 5

The Sermon on the Mount is found in Matthew, chapters five thru seven, and contains what I call "rules for the redeemed." The principles found in the Sermon on the Mount go far beyond what was commanded in the Law of Moses. (See Matthew 5:27 – 28; 38 – 39 for examples.)

The principles in the Sermon on the Mount give us a code of conduct for a people who have been saved through faith in Christ's shed blood on the Cross of Calvary, and who are surrendered to the Will of God and filled with His Holy Spirit. These principles will someday be the rule of law in Christ's future Millennial Kingdom. The principles found in the Sermon on the Mount will not save you, but they will show you how saved people should live.

One theologian said that these Beatitudes describe the inner qualities of a follower of Christ, along with promises of future blessing.¹

Last week, we looked at the first three:

I Poor in Spirit (v. 3)

II Mourning (v. 4)

III Meekness (v. 5)

This week, we will consider the remaining six from this Sermon on the Mount:

IV Hungering and Thirsting for Righteousness (v. 6)

True righteousness can only be found in a relationship with God, and it is both positional as well as practical. All born-again believers are positionally righteous:

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God [which is] by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, [I say], at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. (Romans 3:20-26)

¹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: King James Version*, Expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 1423.

The Apostle Paul said:

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:" (Philippians 3:7-9)

All believers are positionally righteous, but all believers should also manifest a practical righteousness because of their relationship with Christ.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Believers ought to have an intense desire for the things of God; a hunger, a thirst. We all know what it feels like to be hungry or thirsty.

Illustrate – baseball game against lake Riviera in 100 degree heat.

When was the last time that you hungered and thirsted after God.

This lost world cannot hunger and thirst after God; they can't even understand God:

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

Illustrate – when I first got saved.

V Merciful (v. 7)

Notice that these Beatitudes also illustrate the principle of sowing and reaping. Here we see that if a person sows mercy to another, he will reap mercy when he needs it.

Illustration – Many times I deserved judgment but received mercy.

Someone defined mercy as not receiving what we deserve. Jesus is merciful – He does not give us what we truly deserve. We deserve judgment. We deserve Hell. He gives us mercy.

Why don't you and I try to be more like Jesus and be merciful to the people around us who also deserve judgment. You do not have to get even. Let God take care of the settling of scores:

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

VI Pure in Heart (v. 8)

Pure in heart = clean on the inside:

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John 15:3)

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus 3:5)

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

Complete cleansing of sin can only come through salvation. So here again we have the concept of positional and practical holiness.

This verse has to do more with the practical side, particularly our thought life. Your actions on the outside begin in the heart.

Parallel Verses – Matthew 5:28; Matthew 12:34 – 35; Matthew 15:10 – 20

What do you spend your time thinking about? Philippians 4:8 – 9:

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." (Philippians 4:8-9)

What do you put into your eyes and ears? Job made a covenant with his eyes (Job 31:1). David said that he would set no wicked thing before his eyes. (Psalm 101:3)

Notice that when you set your heart to think about the things of God, you will see God. If you are saved, you are positionally pure in heart, and you will someday see Jesus Christ in Heaven; but if you are pure in heart now in your thought life, you will see God working in and through your life right now.

VII Peacemaker (v. 9)

This one is similar to the merciful.

Peacemakers = opposite of troublemakers; means makers of peace; to harmonize

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." (Psalm 119:165)

*"When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."
(Proverbs 16:7)*

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:6)

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." (Romans 14:19)

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it." (1 Peter 3:8-11)

The fruit of the Spirit is ... peace

Things that hinder peace: the flesh; uncontrolled anger; pride; the tongue

*"Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."
(Proverbs 26:20)*

VIII and IX Persecuted (vs. 10 – 12)

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12)

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:6-9)

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Peter 4:12-16)

See Acts 16:1 – 25 – Paul and Silas in Philippi – they sang praises to God.

"And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." (Acts 5:40-42)

Illustration

One of the most inspiring examples of courage in the history of the church was the martyrdom of Polycarp, who was burned at the stake for his faith. The aged Polycarp had been arrested by the Roman authorities and brought to the arena for execution in front of the cheering crowd. The proconsul pressed him hard and said, "Swear, and I will release you. Revile Christ." Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong; and how can I now blaspheme my King that has saved me."²

Illustration – David Gibbs illustration about woman who lost her husband and was dying of cancer.

Conclusion

We have not done an exhaustive study of all of the Beatitudes, but we have seen enough to make some generalizations. Happiness is not found in any of the ways the lost world is seeking it. Last week we stated:

² Michael P. Green, ed., *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: The expositor's illustration file. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).

Happiness is found in Surrender

Happiness is found in Suffering

Happiness is found in Saturation – immersing yourself in God.

True Happiness begins with Salvation – forgiveness of your sins; understanding what you have been saved from and what you have been saved to. If you are saved, you are not going to Hell.

"Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Romans 4:7-8)

The bottom line is that you won't be happy pursuing happiness, you can only be happy pursuing God. God is the source of true happiness and fulfillment in life.

Possessions and pleasures can't give you happiness.

The bottle won't bring you happiness.

That new job or promotion cannot give you happiness.

That pet sin will not help you; it will only bring you misery.

Happiness only comes from God, and it begins with a relationship with Him. Do you know Him?