

# The Beatitudes

What is a “beatitude”?

- The word is not found in the Bible
- From the Latin, *beatitudo*, meaning *blessedness* or happiness
- Greek: *makarioi* = *blessed, fortunate, happy*
- “Blessed are” statements of Jesus

When did Jesus speak them?

- Sermon on the Mount introduction
- Setting for the Sermon: audience = primarily the 12, but large crowds followed; about one year into his ministry, near Capernaum on Sea of Galilee?, all in one sermon or parts of sermons put together by Matthew?—a good chunk of what Matthew records is found in parts of Luke’s gospel on other occasions, including the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)—could they be the same sermon preached on a mountain plateau?
- Other “beatitudes also (Matt. 11:6, 13:16, 16:17, Luke 10:23, 11:28, John 13:17, 20:29

Comparison of Bible Translations—Matthew 5:1-12

Now that you’ve read the Beatitudes, which of the following is correct?

- The Beatitudes are:
- A) Things we need to do to earn God’s blessing
  - B) Blessings we have already because are God’s children**
  - C) Things we need to do to experience God’s blessing

**\*Jesus describes a heavenly happiness, a happiness of the highest kind that comes from having a relationship with our God in Christ**

What can we gain from a study of the Beatitudes?

- 1) A deeper appreciation for the blessings we enjoy as a child of God
- 2) Personal growth in holy living (sanctification)—out of love and thanks to God
- 3) Experiencing blessings from God in even greater measure

## **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

1. What does it mean for a Christian to be poor in spirit?

Recognize our sins and unworthiness before the holy God.

Understand that we rightly deserve to be condemned by him.

Take a realistic view of our efforts to live in a way that pleases God—we fall WAY short!

Admit that even all our righteous acts are like filthy rags before the Lord.

AND recognize the blessings they have from God: faith, forgiveness, salvation—grateful!

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who did or did not exhibit this attitude?

The Pharisee & the Tax Collector, John the Baptist (unworthy), the proud Pharisees

*Luke 18:9-14*

*Matthew 3:13-17*

*Matthew 23:23-28*

Asaph

David

*Psalms 73 esp. v. 16-17, 21, -22*

*Psalms 32:1-5*

3. Why are believers like this?

We know we wouldn't have those things without Jesus! Understanding Jesus and what he has done for us creates this “poor in spirit” attitude.

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

We do not have a prideful, self-centered attitude when it comes to our standing before God.

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian's desire to be poor in spirit?

That sinful nature automatically thinks of self, wants to take credit, wants to participate in making things right with God.

6. What is the result of being poor in spirit?

We have the kingdom of heaven! We live by faith and we have what God promises!

7. How was Jesus perfectly poor in spirit?

He did not have sin of his own to acknowledge, but did carry the burden of ours before our heavenly Father. He accepted a position under his Father as he came to be our Savior and bear our sin. You can see his submissiveness in his prayers to his Father and his willingness to carry out the plan of salvation.

8. What does that mean for us?

It means that our Savior was perfect in this respect, paying for the many times we are not. His perfection brings us righteousness and as a result, the poor become rich. That IS happiness!

Luther: *“Blessed are the spiritually poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

He speaks of the glory theology of both the Pharisees of Jesus' day and the Muslims (Turks) of his day and how this beatitude would have struck them to the heart! He also makes it clear that the words “spiritually poor” discount the notion of earthly poverty being a sign of Christian faith.

## **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “**

1. What does it mean that a Christian mourns, i.e. what kind of mourning is this?

Mourning over sin—our own sin. It also includes mourning over the devastating effects of sin in our world and the impact it has on us and others. Ultimately, it would include grieving over death, which comes as a result of sin.

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who did or did not exhibit this attitude?

King David

Martha

Judas

Peter

*Psalm 51*

*John 11:20-27*

*Matthew 27:3-5*

*Matthew 26:69-75*

3. Why do believers mourn?

Because we are human, we experience the pain and difficulty of sin in our lives.

Because we are believers, we express sorrow over sin and its evidence around us and in our lives

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

General mourning over trials and difficulties in life have no solid answer for the non-Christian. Death brings a mourning that can find no true relief and answer either for the unbeliever. Believers, on the other hand, find comfort in God and his Word and promises.

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian's proper mourning?

We are sometimes tied more tightly to the things in this world than we are to God. In our grief we sometimes search for our own solutions, instead of turning the One who can solve all our problems and fill all our needs. Our grief can be so bad that we even doubt the promises of God.

6. What is the result of our mourning?

Believers will be comforted. The comfort comes in these promises: “You are forgiven.” “I am with you always.” “I will work things out for your good.” “You will be with me in heaven.” “In heaven there will be no more crying or pain or death.”

7. How did Jesus mourn perfectly?

Jesus mourned over the sins of others Luke 13:34 “O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem...”

Jesus grieved the effects of sin in the world around him John 11:32-36 Lazarus' death  
Jesus expressed human emotion, but it was not sin-tainted and it was not hopeless mourning

8. What does that mean for us?

We have forgiveness through Jesus' perfection for the times when we improperly mourn. His example allows us to see mourning in the proper perspective and encourages us in this life.

Luther: “And he wants to teach his Christians, when things go badly for them and they have to mourn, to know that it is God's good pleasure and to make it theirs as well, not to curse or rage or despair as though their God did not want to be gracious. When this happens, the bitter draft should be mixed and made milder with honey and sugar. He promises here that this is pleasing to Him; and He calls them “blessed,” comforting them here, and hereafter taking the sorrow away from them completely.”

## **“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”**

1. What does it mean that a Christian is meek?

A Christian is gentle and patient, not demanding and not putting their wishes above those of others. They “turn the other cheek” and “go the extra mile.”

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who did or did not exhibit this attitude?

Rebellious Absalom, James & John Peter Peter  
*2 Samuel 15:1-6 Luke 9:51-56 John 18:10-11 1 Peter 3:15-17*

3. Why are believers meek?

It is the Lord’s desire for us. It shows that we are different from others, which we hope makes an impression so that others ask why we are that way. Then we can share God’s gospel. It expresses a confidence in the Holy Spirit who does the work in us and through us and in God as the one who judges.

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

The unbelieving world glorifies self, promotes self, demands rights, tramples on others. You can see how the believer stands out in this crowd when displaying meekness!

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian’s attitude of meekness?

We want to look out for ourselves and demand to be heard and seen to the exclusion of others. We don’t like being wronged—we take it personally, instead of “taking it” for God.

6. What is the result of being meek?

They will inherit the earth. The earth is ours because God directs all the events of this world with his people in mind. God uses all things in this world to benefit believers. He daily provides earthly things for his children to sustain them. Ultimately, we will inherit a new heaven and a new earth when Christ comes again.

7. How was Jesus perfectly meek?

He could have annihilated those who opposed him as he conducted his earthly ministry. He could have kicked the disciples out of service and training with him for having their own interests in mind. He could have fought back against the temple guards, the religious leaders, Pilate, Herod, the Roman centurions and demanded payment for sins FROM them instead of giving it TO them.

*Hebrews 2:9-17 Matthew 26:51-54*

8. What does that mean for us?

Jesus was perfectly meek, paying for the many times we are not. He also sets the standard for meekness for us to follow as his children.

Luther: “There stands the decree: “The meek shall inherit the earth.” Just take a look for yourself at the queer characters who are always arguing and squabbling about property and other things. They refuse to give in to anybody, but insist on rushing everything through headlong, regardless of whether their quarreling and squabbling costs them more than they could ever gain. Ultimately they lose their land and servants, house and home, and get unrest and a bad conscience thrown in. And God adds his blessing to it, saying: “Do not be meek, then, so that you may not keep your precious land, nor enjoy your morsel of peace.” But if you want to do right and have rest, let your neighbor’s malice and viciousness smother and burn itself out. Otherwise you can do nothing more pleasing to the devil or more harmful to yourself than to lose your temper and make a racket.”

## **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

1. What does it mean that a Christian hungers and thirsts for righteousness?

To be chiefly concerned about being righteous through faith in Christ. Understanding that Jesus has made them righteous, they want to live righteous lives, God-pleasing lives in order to be in tune with God's will and to thank him. This is the Christian's top priority; all worldly concerns are secondary.

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who did or did not exhibit this attitude?

The Bereans    The Disciples    The Unbelieving Jews    Ethiopian Eunuch    Sons of Korah (choir)  
Acts 17:11-13    Luke 24:44-49    John 5:24-40    Acts 8:26-39    Psalm 42

3. Why do believers hunger and thirst for righteousness?

The sinful nature makes us aware of our sins and guilt reveals our need for righteousness. God's Word shows us Jesus and the Holy Spirit drives us to desire him as our Savior. That same Holy Spirit works in us a love for God and his will and urges us to live according to God's Word, i.e. a righteous life.

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

Unbelievers reject the gospel of salvation and righteousness in Christ. Christians, by the Holy Spirit's work, embrace the righteousness found in Christ and the opportunity to grow in righteousness or sanctification. Christians make worship and the Lord's Supper and Bible study a regular part of their life. The unbeliever sees these things either as foolish or perhaps just unimportant for them.

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian's hunger and thirst for righteousness?

We want to earn our own righteousness before God. Sometimes in small ways, by our service to God or his church; sometimes in not so subtle ways as we are prompted by extreme guilt and want to "make up for" our sin. Sometimes we don't appreciate Christ's sacrifice as we ought to; it becomes commonplace. We don't always make full use of opportunities to grow in righteousness. We don't always see it as so important and vital for the Christian that we urge others to worship and study God's Word.

6. What is the result of hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

They will be filled. Holy Communion and God's Word in worship and study will assure them of their righteousness in Christ and will motivate and prepare and urge them to live that righteousness.

7. How did Jesus hunger and thirst for righteousness perfectly?

In the gospels, we see him in prayer, seeking his Father's will. We see him in the synagogue or temple on the Sabbath. We hear him reading the prophets and quoting the Old Testament. He celebrated the Old Testament ceremonies and celebrations. He did not ever break his Father's will or go against his Word.

8. What does that mean for us?

Jesus has worked salvation for all the times we let our sinful nature take over and do not truly hunger and thirst for righteousness. He also sets the example for us, showing us what it really means to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Luther: Luther puts strong emphasis on the righteous life that we live by faith, not focusing so much on the righteousness we have in Christ. He disparages the monks who run to the monastery for worldly reasons (not wanting to make a living, can't stand to see the world's sin, etc.) and not because of a hunger or thirst for righteousness. He notes that we ought to have "a hunger and thirst for righteousness that can never be curbed or stopped or sated, one that looks for nothing and cares for nothing except the accomplishment and maintenance of the right, despising everything that hinders this end." His focus is really on doing that as we serve God and seek to make righteous the world around us. The "being filled," to Luther, is seeing that our work in the Lord is not vain.

## **Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

1. What does it mean that a Christian is merciful?

Mercy = showing compassion on the lowly, those in need. Christians look for and recognize situations where they can be merciful in word and action.

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who did or did not exhibit this attitude?

Joseph to his brothers Unmerciful Servant (parable) Good Samaritan (parable) Dorcas  
Genesis 42-45                      Matthew 18:21-35                      Luke 10:30-37                      Acts 9:32-43

3. Why do believers show mercy?

A Christian recognizes and appreciates God's mercy in Christ by which they have forgiveness and faith. Therefore they show mercy or kindness to others.

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

Unbelievers may show some human decency and compassion, but theirs is not a reflection of God's merciful behavior towards us. They also only relieve physical distress. The gospel empowers the Christian to respond to the needs of others with mercy. Christians can bring both physical and spiritual aid.

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian's merciful attitude and actions?

Instead of defaulting to a merciful attitude, we often first think that a person is deserving of their troubles. We may not make the time to listen to someone's difficulty or help them. We may think that we are better than people of a lower status (job position, income, lifestyle).

6. What is the result of being merciful?

The merciful will be shown mercy. We may be repaid with mercy in this world, but we will ultimately receive the greatest act of mercy from God when he recognizes the faith in Christ that prompted such acts of love on our parts and grants us eternal life.

7. How did Jesus exhibit perfect mercy?

Matthew 17:14-18                      He always associated with the "lower" status  
Merciful to man whose son had a demon                      crowd, e.g. prostitutes, tax collectors, needy  
Also the many instances of Jesus healing the blind, lepers, etc.

\*Most importantly was the mercy he showed in serving as our Redeemer—showing love for undeserving sinners who had no way to live with God—Ephesians 2:1-9

8. What does that mean for us?

Jesus worked forgiveness and salvation for all the times we are not merciful to others. We are at peace with God because of Christ's mercy. Jesus also stands as our perfect example of mercy that we might follow him.

Luther:                      "As St. James also says (James 2:13): "Judgment without mercy will be spoken over the one who has shown no mercy." At the Last Day, therefore, Christ will also cite this lack of mercy as the worst injury done to Him, whatever we have done out of a lack of mercy. He Himself will utter the curse (Matt. 25:41, 42): "I was hungry and thirsty, and you gave Me no food, you gave Me no drink. Depart from Me, therefore, you cursed, into eternal hell-fire." He warns and exhorts us faithfully, out of sheer grace and mercy. Whoever does not want to accept this, let him choose the curse and eternal damnation. Think of the rich man in Luke 16; daily he saw poor Lazarus lying before his door full of sores, yet he did not have enough mercy to give him a bundle of straw or to grant him the crumbs under his table. But look how terribly he was requited; in hell he would gladly have given a hundred thousand guildens for the privilege of boasting that he had given him even a thread."

## Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

1. What does it mean that a Christian is pure in heart?

“...speak and act without ulterior motives or concealed selfish interest. What you see in them is what you get from them; and what they say, they mean. What they promise they will do (People’s Bible on Matthew, p. 66).” Latin equivalent of the Greek and Hebrew phrases = *sinceritas*—sincerity, not selfish, honest, true and open. The motivation for this is the love of God, our Savior.

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who did or did not exhibit this attitude?

Nathanael	David	Asa (King of Judah)	Solomon	Ananias & Sapphira
John 1:43-51	1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 9:4	1 Kings 15:14	1 Kings 11:4	Acts 5:1-11
	Acts 13:22			

3. Why are believers pure in heart?

Only by the power of the Holy Spirit! In baptism and by hearing the Word, sinful, self-serving hearts are changed. Those whose hearts have been changed to believe and trust in Christ continually call out to the Spirit to “create in me a clean heart O, God and renew a right spirit within me.” They are guided by the Word to live that purity of heart.

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

The person stuck in his sin and without faith in Jesus does not have a pure heart. Though we will meet and even admire honest, truthful, sincere people who are not Christians, we will recognize that their motivation for being so does not come from a heart of faith. Their hearts are not “pure” in the sense that God speaks of here.

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian’s pure heart? Anytime our thoughts (and then words...actions) are not in line with God’s. We forget that we are God’s people or that God’s people are not dishonest, two-faced, liars, deceivers, putting on a false sincerity.

6. What is the result of being pure in heart? “They will see God.” This has nothing to do with “seeing God” in some way here; this is ultimately seeing our Lord face to face in heaven. The purity of heart in a Christian reveals the faith in Christ that is there. That faith is assurance of salvation with our Lord.

7. How did Jesus exhibit a perfect pure heart?

Jesus was open and honest with others (e.g. preaching the law and gospel to all, including his disciples, the religious leaders, Roman officials, etc.). He was sincere with those he helped and healed (e.g. woman at the well, centurion with great faith).

8. What does that mean for us?

We have salvation through Jesus, who was perfectly pure in heart and forgives us when we are not. We have Jesus as an example of how we are to be pure in heart.

**Luther:** “What is meant by a “pure heart” is this: one that is watching and pondering what God says and replacing its own ideas with the Word of God. This alone is pure before God, yes, purity itself, which purifies everything that it includes and touches.”

“But so long as he sticks to these two—namely, the Word of faith toward God, which purifies the heart, and the Word of understanding, which teaches him what he is to do toward his neighbor in his station—everything is pure for him, even if with his hands and the rest of his body he handles nothing but dirt.”

“Therefore be on guard against all your own ideas if you want to be pure before God. See to it that your heart is founded and fastened on the Word of God. Then you will be purer than all the Carthusians and saints in the world.”

“Now you have the meaning of “pure heart”: it is one that functions completely on the basis of the pure Word of God. What is their reward, what does he promise to them? It is this: “They shall see God.” A wonderful title and an excellent treasure! But what does it mean to “see God”?...if you have a true faith that Christ is your Savior, then you see immediately that you have a gracious God. For faith leads you up and opens up the heart and will of God for you. There you see sheer, superabundant grace and love. That is exactly what it means “to see God,” not with physical eyes, with which no one can see Him in this life, but with faith...”

## **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.**

### **1. What does it mean that a Christian is a peacemaker?**

Not just sitting back and not causing trouble! They actively look for opportunities to bring peace to stressful situations and where there is animosity.

### **2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who were/were not peacemakers?**

Asa	Deborah	Disciples sharing Gospel
2 Chronicles 14:1-6	Judges 4:1-5	Matthew 10:11-14

### **3. Why are believers peacemakers?**

They know the peace that surpasses all understanding which results from Jesus' work of redemption. Their restored relationship with God through Christ sets the tone for their work of peacemaking. They are also directed by God to live at peace—Hebrews 12:14-15 "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Verse 15 reminds us that they do not value peace above justice or above holding to the integrity of God's Word, etc. They use the gospel and the law. They try to settle worldly disputes and prevent strife. Though peace is always the goal, it will not always be possible because of sinful people.

### **4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?**

The unbeliever does not have the example of peace with God to use as their motivation and blueprint for bringing peace. They may be able to effect an outward peace in worldly settings, but do not have the gospel at their disposal to motivate others or to work changes in peoples' hearts.

### **5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian's desire to be peacemakers?**

Feelings of revenge, thoughts that people make their own messes so they can clean them up, don't want to get involved—none of my business—all get in the way.

### **6. What is the result of being a peacemaker?**

They will be called sons of God. Only God can call them this and he does so as they make peace out of love for him and with hearts of faith. This is not a designation that waits until they are with the Lord in heaven—they are viewed as God's "sons" as they prove their faith in their actions.

### **7. How was Jesus a perfect peacemaker?**

His mission as God incarnate was to bring peace between God and people. This is the most important way that Jesus was a peacemaker. The fact that Jesus said that he did not come to bring peace to the earth, but a sword (Matthew 10:34) and division (Luke 12:51) is only a reminder that many will be offended by him and reject him. He is still the Prince of Peace that restored the broken and hostile relationship between sinful people and their God. Jesus also stepped in to bring peace to the sinful woman at the well and brought peace to Peter's guilty conscience after his denial of Jesus.

### **8. What does that mean for us?**

Jesus paid for all our sins of not being peacemakers and he sets the example for us to follow in bringing peace to others.

Luther: "St. Augustine boasts that when his mother Monica saw two people at odds, she would always speak the best to both sides. Whatever good she heard about the one, she brought to the other; but whatever evil she heard, that she kept to herself or mitigated as much as possible. In this way she often brought on a reconciliation. It is especially among womenfolk that the shameful vice of slander is prevalent, so that great misfortune is often caused by an evil tongue. This is the work of those bitter and poisonous brides of the devil, who when they hear a word about another, viciously make it sharper, more pointed, and more bitter against the others, so that sometimes misery and murder are the result."

"Be a reconciler and a mediator between your neighbors. Carry the best to both sides; but keep quiet about the bad, which the devil has inspired, or explain it the best way you can. If you come to Margaret, do what is said of Monica, Augustine's mother, and say: "My dear Margaret, why are you so bitter? Surely she does not intend it so badly. All I notice about her is that she would like to be your dear sister." In the same way, if you meet Catherine, do the same thing. Then, as a true child of God, you will have made peace on both sides as far as possible."

**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (“you” = disciples)**

1. What does it mean that a Christian is persecuted?

They endure hardship BECAUSE OF their faith. This is not persecution because of doing something wrong (that we deserve!). It’s not even persecution in the face of doing “right” or moral things. This persecution is because of living our Christian faith.

DO WE try to bring persecution on ourselves deliberately? NO!

DO WE try to live in such a way that avoids it at all costs? NO!

N.B.—LIT: “have allowed themselves to be persecuted”=willingly submitted when it came

2. Can you think of biblical examples of people who were or were not persecuted?

Paul	“Rocky place” Seed	the Prophets	Stephen
2 Cor. 11:16-33	Matthew 13:21	Acts 7:51-53	Acts 7:54-8:1

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Jonah	Heroes of Faith	Jerusalem Christians
Jonah 1:1-3	Hebrews 11:32-40	Acts 8:2-3

3. Why are believers willing to be persecuted?

Because of their love for Christ; if it happens because they are living for him, they are willing to endure it. Note Jesus’ words in Luke 21:12-19 and see Paul’s example in 2 Corinthians 12:10

4. How is this different for believers as opposed to unbelievers?

Unbelievers (and us by nature) do not like injustice—unless it favors us! A person might be willing to endure hardship based on their values/morals/principles, but it doesn’t come from a heart of love for Jesus.

5. Can you think of examples of how the sinful nature encroaches on the Christian’s willingness to endure persecution?

We don’t want to suffer—for anything! We think of ourselves instead of Christ and his sacrifice for us. It’s EASIER to ignore Christ’s Word and live for our wants—which tend to make our life easier, not more difficult.

6. What is the result for those who are persecuted?

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Their faith, which shows in their actions, will be rewarded with eternal life. This is a reward of GRACE and is not earned by a person’s willingness to endure persecution. Paul explains this in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12.

*In verse 12, the reward is “pay” in Greek—not heaven itself, but the great glory they receive there.*

7. How did Jesus perfectly endure persecution?

John 5:1-16—After healing, yet he kept doing his Father’s will and preaching the Word.

Ultimately, he was willing to go to a humiliating, cruel and painful death for us AND endure “persecution” by his Father to pay for our sins.

8. What does that mean for us?

Jesus is our Savior from all our sins of weakness and wavering in the face of persecution. AND Jesus is our example of how we may endure persecution in this world

Luther: See to it, therefore, that you have a genuine divine cause for whose sake you suffer persecution, and that you are really convinced of it so that your conscience can take a stand and stick by it, even though the whole world should stand up against you. The primary thing is that you grasp the Word of God firmly and surely so that there can be no doubt or hesitation there. Suppose that the Emperor, the bishops, or the princes were to forbid marriage, freedom in the choice of food, the use of both

kinds in the Sacrament, and the like, and were to persecute you for these things. Then you would have to see to it that your heart is convinced and persuaded that the Word of God has made these things free and unprohibited, that it even commands us to take them seriously and to stake our lives upon them. Then you can have the confidence to say: "This cause does not belong to me but to Christ, my Lord. For I have not concocted it out of my own head. I have not assumed or begun it on my own or at the advice or suggestion of any man. But it has been brought and announced to me from heaven through the mouth of Christ, who never deludes or deceives me but is Himself sheer Truth and Righteousness. At this Man's Word I will take the risk of suffering of doing and forsaking whatever I should. All by itself, His Word will accomplish more to comfort and strengthen my heart than the raging threatening of all the devils and of the world can accomplish to frighten me."

Who cares if a crazy prince or a foolish emperor fumes in his rage and threatens me with sword, fire, or the gallows! Just as long as my Christ is talking dearly to my heart, comforting me with the promises that I am blessed, that I am right with God in heaven and that all the heavenly host and creation call me blessed. Just let my heart and mind be ready to suffer for the sake of His Word and work. Then why should I let myself be scared by these miserable people, who rage and foam in their hostility to God but suddenly disappear like a puff of smoke or a bubble, as the prophet Isaiah says (Is. 51:12,13): "I am He that comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass, and have forgotten the Lord, who made you, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth?" That is to say: "He who comforts you and takes pleasure in you is almighty and eternal. When it is all over with them, He will still be sitting up there, and so will you. Why, then, let the threatening and fuming of a miserable, stinking bag of worms concern you more than the divine comfort and approval? Be grateful to God and happy in your heart that you are worthy of suffering this, as the apostles went forth (Acts 5:41) leaping for joy over the fact that they were disgraced and beaten down.

## Conclusion to the Beatitudes of Matthew 5

Think of the Beatitudes not a list of blessings, but a circle of blessings that begins with the kingdom of heaven and ends with the same. They are filled with paradoxes. They encompass the Christian's life: the first four beatitudes speak of the Christian's relationship with God and the last four deal with the Christian's relationship with others. All speak of blessings that are already possessed by the Christian. Believers do not do these things in order to be saved; they do them because they have been saved by Jesus. In these Beatitudes, Jesus shares with us what happens as we live our faith in these particular ways. The follower of Christ experiences the happiness, the blessedness described here by the Savior. Jesus describes a heavenly happiness, a happiness of the highest kind that comes from having a relationship with our God in Christ

We began our study asking "What can we gain from a study of the Beatitudes?" By the grace of Jesus and the Spirit's power, we now enjoy those things:

- 1) A deeper appreciation for the blessings we enjoy as a child of God
- 2) Personal growth in holy living (sanctification)—out of love and thanks to God
- 3) Experiencing blessings from God in even greater measure

## Other “Blessed Are...” statements of Jesus

*Look at each of the beatitudes here in context to find the meaning of Jesus’ words when he spoke them and the application for us today.*

### **Matthew 11:6 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”**

John the Baptist’s disciples asked Jesus if he was really the Christ (v.2).

Jesus was encouraging John to not doubt or be discouraged about salvation through Him. The same encouragement is useful for Jesus’ followers today—focus on Christ.

### **Matthew 13:16 But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear.**

The disciples ask Jesus why he spoke in parables (v.10).

God has blessed some with faith to understand and others do not have that faith. Parables made sense to the faithful, but hid kingdom truths from unbelievers. The same is true today as God’s Word and Jesus’ parables are proclaimed and taught.

### **Matthew 16:17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.**

Jesus asks his disciples who people said he was and who they said he was (v.13,15).

Peter answered “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (v.16) Jesus confirms that it is only through God that Peter (or any of us) recognizes the Savior for who he is.

### **Luke 10:23-24 Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”**

Jesus sent out the 72 disciples (and they returned), Jesus prays, thanking his Father for revealing spiritual things to them and notes that he (Jesus) reveals himself to people. He then speaks these words to his disciples. He is speaking of seeing the Messiah, the Christ, in the flesh—the coming of salvation. We too are blessed to see how Jesus fulfilled the promises and prophecies of God and brought us salvation.

### **Luke 11:28 He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”**

Jesus cast out a demon from a man and was teaching the people. A woman cried out to him with a beatitude of her own, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” This is Jesus’ response. He wants nothing to distract from hearing God’s Word and living by it in faith. This is Jesus’ desire for us also as we remain in this world, awaiting the day of our salvation.

### **John 13:17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.**

Jesus was about to be betrayed and crucified. He was celebrating the Passover in the Upper Room and washed his disciples’ feet. When done, he explained that happiness and joy would come to them as they served one another in love. God’s people today find great joy in serving each other with their gifts and time.

### **John 20:29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

Jesus has just appeared to his disciples for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time—this time with Thomas there. Thomas sees and feels the marks of the crucifixion and exclaims “My Lord and my God!” This is Jesus’ answer. Blessing and joy came to Thomas that day, but even greater happiness, Jesus says, comes to those who have a childlike trust in Jesus without needing to see proof. Believers today experience that blessedness as they trust in Christ after hearing the gospel.