

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT – MATTHEW 5-7

The Beatitudes: The Distinctive Flourishing of Kingdom Citizens

Matthew 5:3-12

Faith Church of Linden

By Daniel Patz on March 15, 2026

The following notes are a draft of my sermon. These are not my pulpit notes or a manuscript I use to preach with but something I type up before writing out my “pulpit notes”. I hope they are helpful.

Introduction:

Let's revisit a version of the two questions I began with last Sunday:

1. How do we find true and lasting happiness? Can/should a Christian ask or be concerned about that question? Aren't they called to a life of self-denial? Is seeking your own happiness wrong?

Oprah - in a book with Arthur Brooks - Build the Life You Want: The Art and Science of Getting Happier:

"In my 25 years of doing the show, if there was one thing almost everyone and every audience had in common, it was the desire to be happy. As I've said before, after every show I'd chat with the audience, and I always asked what they most wanted in life. "To be happy", they'd say. "Just to be happy. Just happiness."

2. Why are there so many “Christians” in name only with very little difference in character (if any) than the world? They say that Christ is everything, but they live lives that show otherwise. It seems like they are hypocrites and Christ's character and commands have little impact on their lives.

That brings us to the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus. This morning we will begin with the major portion of the Introduction of the sermon – The Beatitudes.

The word Beatitude comes from the Latin – meaning – Happy or happiness.

We will look at the beatitudes as a whole this morning and then in the coming weeks take them one by one – there so much here and it is so foundational to the questions above.

True Christians are called to happiness and holiness.

So, my sermon will be looking at them with three Key Truths about the Beatitudes. I hope they will be “keys” or guides to you meditating on and applying them to your life – that you would think on them, pray for them to be a reality and that the Spirit will make these so real in our church.

6 Key Truths About the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

1. Invitation to True Blessedness

The Beatitudes are invitations to real happiness and true human flourishing.

The word “Blessed” means more than temporary happiness—it points to the deep, lasting joy and fulfillment that God gives.

Do you realize that you really want to be happy and that is why you do so much of what you do? This desire isn’t bad but we desire it for the wrong reasons and we pursue the fulfilling of these desires in the wrong things.

Blaise Pascal (circa 1650s) wrote this:

"All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war and the others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attending with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves."

The type of happiness that God gives to His people begins now in a certain form, and in its fullest in the age to come. Where are you seeking flourishing? How does the world describe the traits of a flourishing life:

- Financial wealth
- Unburdened by material needs
- High self-esteem and self-confidence
- Self-realizing – I just need to be myself
- Pain-free and problem free
- Fair treatment
- Physical health
- Attractiveness

- Accepted by the right people – approved of

Application Questions: What pursuits or possessions in your life are you currently chasing in the hope they will make you truly happy or fulfilled? Where have you tasted even a small measure of God’s deep, kingdom happiness—and what made it different from worldly happiness?

2. Way of the Cross

The Beatitudes describe “the way of the cross” being formed in our hearts.

The call to follow Jesus is the blessed life. Yet it is hard and narrow! Matthew 16:24-28 ESV Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (25) For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (26) For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? (27) For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. (28) Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

(Grammatically, the first part of each Beatitude—“Blessed are...”—is the protasis or “if/condition” clause, setting forth who receives the blessing.)

The qualities Jesus highlights are:

- “the poor in spirit” (to know yourself to be what you truly are – completely bankrupt and destitute in and of yourself – completely in need of God’s grace and mercy – lowly, humble, contrite in heart.)
- “those who mourn” (sorrowful over sin – your own sin and the sins of others; weeping because you can for the pain and the impact of evil; mourning with true repentance and brokenness over the wreckage that is around you)
- “the meek” (so humble and aware of God’s grace that you do not insist on your own rights but show gracious care to others around you even to the point of being taken advantage) – “let him turn the other cheek; if he sues you let him have your cloak as well...”
- “those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” (hungering and thirsting in pain at the pain and injustices around you and for Christ’s sake working and praying and fasting and pursuing it to be made right again)

- “the merciful” (being painfully longsuffering and forgiving and giving sacrificially to those in need and who do not deserve it – even to those who are your enemies)
- “the pure in heart” (a complete surrender of your heart to Christ and the Father’s will – not my will, but yours be done! – A singleness of mind of laying up treasures in heaven and not on earth)
- “the peacemakers” (remaining painfully in relationships to bring true peace between warring parties)
- “those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” (suffering because you are doing good – judged wrongly, unfairly, falsely accused and mistreated)
- “you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account” (vv. 11–12). (in siding with the Lord Jesus – being misunderstood, slandered, ridiculed for Christ)

All of these are hard and difficult—not the normal values of flourishing from this world’s perspective. The Gospel of the Kingdom brings people to a place where they need to reorient themselves and their thinking on what brings happiness. The world says we must be free of annoyance, have all that we wish and to have an easy life. Jesus says – blessed are those who suffer now.

Application Questions: In what area of your life are you still trying to “save your life” instead of losing it for Christ’s sake? How have you recently denied yourself, taken up your cross, or followed Jesus in a way that felt hard?

3. Promises of Glory

The Beatitudes point us to the glorious promises we have in Christ.

CS Lewis in "The Weight of Glory":

The New testament has a lot to say about self-denial, but not about self denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. If there lurks in most minds the notion that the desire our own good and earnestly to hope for the enjoyment of it is a bad thing, I submit that this notion has crept in from Kant and the Stoics and has no part of the Christian faith. Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the gospels it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and

sex and ambition when infinitely joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

Each blessing includes a future hope or present reality—the apodosis or result/promise:

- “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
- “they shall be comforted”
- “they shall inherit the earth”
- “they shall be satisfied”
- “they shall receive mercy”
- “they shall see God”
- “they shall be called sons of God”
- “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
- “your reward is great in heaven” (vv. 11–12).

These promises give heart and encouragement to those suffering under the pain and difficulty of the protasis (the hard conditions described). This sermon calls us to lay up treasures in heaven that will not fade away or be destroyed. It calls us to seek our reward from our heavenly Father and not from the praise of man.

Matthew 13:44 ESV “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Philippians 3:7-9 ESV But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

Application Questions: Are you more motivated right now by earthly approval/reward or by the promise of your heavenly Father’s reward? How can meditating on one of these promises give you courage to endure the corresponding “hard condition” today?

4. Grace-Formed Traits for Every Believer

These Beatitudes describe every true Christian—not just a special or “super-spiritual” few.

These traits mark all who genuinely belong to Christ’s kingdom, not an elite group of extraordinary believers. Our Lord does not say here that He is going to paint a picture of what certain outstanding characters are going to be and can be in this world. It is His description of every single Christian. Those who have come to Christ are being changed. They have been baptized by the Holy Spirit and they are a new creation that is being changed towards a whole-hearted righteousness and to a new value system and relationship with the Father.

Subpoint A: All Qualities for All Believers

The Beatitudes are qualities every Christian is called to display. In other words it is not that some are to manifest one characteristic and others to manifest another. It is not right to say some are meant to be “poor in spirit,” and some are meant to “mourn,” and some are meant to be “meek,” and some are meant to be “peacemakers,” and so on. No; every Christian is meant to be all of them, and to manifest all of them... In fact each one of the beatitudes demands the other.

All believers should grow in and show these characteristics—being poor in spirit, mourning (over sin and brokenness), meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemaking, and enduring persecution for righteousness’ sake—in their lives. Not perfectly, but increasingly, as part of following Jesus.

Subpoint B: Fruit of Grace Alone

The Beatitudes are traits that do not come from our natural human nature. They are the result of God’s grace working in our hearts, transforming us through the Holy Spirit. Each one of them is wholly a disposition which is produced by grace alone and the operation of the Holy Spirit upon us. I cannot emphasize this too strongly. No man naturally conforms to the descriptions here given in the Beatitudes, and we must be very careful to draw a sharp distinction between the spiritual qualities that are here described and material ones which appear to be like them. Let me put it like this. There are some people who appear to be naturally “poor in spirit”; that is not what is described here by our Lord. There are people who appear to be naturally “meek”; when we deal with that statement I hope to be able to show you that the meekness which Christ talks about is not that which appears to be natural meekness in an ordinary unregenerate person. These are not natural qualities; nobody by birth and by nature is like this.

Application Questions: Do you sometimes view these Beatitudes as “advanced Christianity” for super-spiritual people? How does that excuse affect your pursuit of them? In what ways has the Holy Spirit already begun producing these traits in you—however small? Give thanks for that evidence of new creation. Where have you mistaken natural personality traits (e.g., shyness as meekness, sensitivity as mourning) for the Spirit-produced Beatitudes?

5. Distinct from the World

The Beatitudes are a primary way true Christians stand out from the world.

These attitudes and values make believers essentially different from non-Christians and the surrounding culture, reflecting the upside-down values of God's kingdom.

From Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

This is made so clear in the entire sermon on the mount. The glory of the gospel is that when the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first. That is how revival comes. That must also be true of us as individuals. It should not be our ambition to be as much like everybody else as we can, though we happen to be Christian, but rather to be as different from everybody who is not a Christian as we can possibly be.

- The Christian and non-Christian are different in what they admire.
- The Christian and non-Christian are different in what they seek.
- The Christian and non-Christian are different in what they do.
- The Christian and non-Christian are different in their belief as to what they can do.

The truth is that the Christian and the non-Christian belong to two entirely different realms. You will notice the first Beatitude and the eighth Beatitude promise the same reward, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” What does this mean? Our Lord starts and ends with it because it is His way of saying that the first thing you have to realize about yourself is that you belong to a different kingdom. You are not only different in essence; you are living in two absolutely different worlds.

Application Questions: In what ways are you tempted to blend in with the world's values instead of standing out in these Beatitude ways? Think about your closest relationships or daily interactions: Do people notice you admire, seek, do, and believe

different things because of Christ? How might your distinctiveness (even if it brings misunderstanding or rejection) become a witness that attracts others to the gospel?

6. Christ Fulfills Them Perfectly

The Beatitudes should bring us to Christ who fulfills them perfectly.

No one is more blessed than the Beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased. There is no one who shows us the happy and flourishing humanity like Jesus. Jesus shows us the way to the cross (in all of the beatitudes) and the hope of glory that is to come.

Hebrews 12:2 ESV looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus is the perfect embodiment of every Beatitude—He lived them out flawlessly in His life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection. As the truly “Blessed” One (Matthew 3:17; 17:5), He demonstrates the upside-down kingdom values, endures the full cost of the protasis (the hard conditions), and secures every promise (the apodosis) for His people through His obedience and victory.

Here is how Scripture shows Jesus living out each Beatitude:

- **Poor in spirit** — Jesus emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant and humbling Himself to death (Philippians 2:5-8). He committed His spirit to the Father in total dependence: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). He relied wholly on the Father, having nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20), fulfilling “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
- **Those who mourn** — Jesus wept over Jerusalem’s sin and rejection (Luke 19:41), mourned at Lazarus’s tomb (John 11:35), and agonized in Gethsemane over the cup of wrath (Matthew 26:38-39). He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3), yet promised comfort: “they shall be comforted.”
- **The meek** — Jesus was gentle and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:29), washing His disciples’ feet despite His authority (John 13:1-5), turning the other cheek in trial (Matthew 26:67; 1 Peter 2:23), and inheriting the earth as the meek King (Psalm 37:11; Revelation 19:11-16).

- **Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness** — Jesus' food was to do the Father's will (John 4:34); He hungered for true righteousness, fulfilling it perfectly (Matthew 3:15), and was satisfied in resurrection glory (Hebrews 12:2).
- **The merciful** — On the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), showing mercy to enemies and securing mercy for us (Matthew 5:7; Ephesians 2:4-5).
- **The pure in heart** — Jesus was sinless and single-minded, praying "not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42), laying up treasures in heaven through obedience. He alone sees and reveals God fully (John 1:18; Hebrews 1:3), fulfilling "they shall see God."
- **The peacemakers** — Jesus made peace by the blood of His cross (Colossians 1:20), reconciling enemies to God (Romans 5:10), telling Peter to put away the sword (Matthew 26:52), and being called the Son of God who brings sons to glory.
- **Those persecuted for righteousness' sake / reviled on My account** — Jesus was despised, rejected, falsely accused, reviled, persecuted, and crucified for righteousness (Isaiah 53:3-5; Matthew 27:39-44; 1 Peter 2:21-24). Yet His reward is great—seated at God's right hand (Hebrews 12:2), with "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" and "your reward is great in heaven" fully realized in His exaltation.

Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him, fulfilling every condition and securing every promise. In Him, we find the perfect model, the source of grace to grow in these traits, and the assurance that the blessings are ours through union with Him.

CONCLUSION

The Beatitudes are not the Bar Exam that you must pass to get into the Kingdom of Heaven. However, they do call us to action. Jesus invites us - call us to be His disciples and to follow Him – first to the Cross to be saved and then to take the way of the cross in a relationship with him. With the Holy Spirit's help and power, he starts to renew us and work these realities in our hearts.

Welcome to the good life! Welcome to true blessedness - to you is the Kingdom of heaven – comfort, mercy, seeing God – knowing Christ Jesus our Lord – a Treasure that is greater than all!