

The Beatitudes

A Study of Matthew 5:16

This study was written Marilyn Miller, a Staff Minister. The theological content was reviewed by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary President-emeritus David Valleskey.

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Lesson 1

Introduction & *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit* Matthew 5:1-3

Opening Prayer

Read Matthew 5:1-12

1. Describe your first impressions of the Sermon.
2. How would you summarize the message of the Sermon?
3. From 5:1-2, who is Jesus' audience?
4. Scan chapter 4. Do you think Jesus' sermon came at the beginning, middle or end of his earthly ministry? Why?
5. Notice there are eight beatitudes. The first four describe the believer's relationship with God. The second four describe how that relationship impacts the believer's relationship with other people.

The word "blessed" is an Aramaic word for "happy"...but being happy is subjective. How can we then understand the use of this word so that it is more universal? John 15:11 may help us understand.

Webster defines "beatitude" as a state of utmost bliss. Let's discover why this word is used for this portion of Scripture.

Matthew 5:3 – "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*"

6. Keeping in mind that we are talking about spiritual characteristics, describe what you think Jesus meant by those "poor in spirit?" Look at Psalm 34:6, Is 41:17-18, Is 57:15, or Luke 4:18-19 to help.

7. Contrast this attitude with that of an unbeliever, either in our world today or as the Pharisees at the time of Jesus. Give some examples.

8. How can one possibly attain a “poor in spirit” attitude?

9. How might one receive the blessing of the “kingdom of heaven” in your daily life?

How does a disciple receive the blessing of the “kingdom of heaven” in the future?

10. Share something that this study has helped you understand better. Share something that this will move you to do differently?

Closing Thought:

Hymn: *From Depths of Woe I Cry to You*

CW 305

From depths of woe I cry to you: Lord, hear me I implore you.
Bend down your gracious ear to me; my prayer let come before you.
If you kept record of my sin and held against me what I've been,
How could I stand before you?

Your love and grace alone avail to blot out my transgression.
The best and holiest deeds must fail to break sin's dread oppression.
Before you none can boasting stand, but all must fear your strict demand
And live alone by mercy.

Therefore my hope is in the Lord and not in my own merit;
It rests upon his faithful Word to them of contrite spirit.
That he is merciful and just – this is my comfort and my trust.
His help I wait with patience.

My soul is waiting for the Lord as one who longs for morning;
No watcher waits with greater hope, than I for his returning.
I hope as Israel in the Lord; he sends redemption through his Word.
We praise him for his mercy.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Precious Savior, Holy Spirit, you are truly worthy of our praise. Your love and mercy are more than we can fathom and yet they fill each minute of every day. We thank you for graciously giving us a Savior that we may be reconciled with you, and for working faith in our hearts that we may be fully blessed by your bountiful gifts. We thank you for giving us a desire to please you with our lives and for revealing yourself through your Holy Word. Make our sins visible to us, work repentance in our hearts and we humbly ask you to forgive us (especially for....). Be near when temptations come that we may not fall into sin. Renew our hearts that we may live our lives to your glory. We come in the name of Jesus, confident that you hear and answer our prayers. Amen.

Lesson 2

Blessed are those who Mourn, Blessed are the Meek **Matthew 5:4-5**

Opening Prayer

Read Matthew 5:3-5

11. Review: what key thoughts do you remember about being “poor in spirit” (5:3)

Matthew 5:4 – “*Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.*”

Remember that “blessed” means “happy”. This is not describing our emotions but how God thinks of us as his dear children. We are blessed because of God’s grace and mercy, giving us the assurance of eternal life in heaven.

12. Keeping in mind that we are talking about spiritual characteristics, describe what you think Jesus meant by “those who mourn.” See Acts 14:22b, Ezra 10:1, Psalm 119:136, Ezekiel 9:4, Luke 13:34, Romans 8: 18-20,24-25, Philippians 3:18-29.
13. How is this deep spiritual mourning comforted? Philippians 4:6-7, 2 Corinthians 7:10, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Romans 15:13, Romans 5:1-2, Luke 22:19-20, Galatians 6:1
14. Discuss how this spiritual mourning and comforting may change the way you think of your own sins and those of your family, friends and society? What will this move you to do?

Matthew 5:5 – “*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*”

15. What do you think Jesus meant when he talks of those who are meek? How does God help us understand what it means to be meek? See Matthew 11:28-29, 2 Corinthians 10:1, Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:5, Ephesians 4:2

16. How can one possibly attain a meek attitude? Romans 6:6-7, I Peter 5:5-7, Philipians 2:3.

17. What does it mean to “inherit the earth?” See Isaiah 57:13, 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, Psalm 37:16-17

18. Share something that this study has helped you understand better. Share something that this will move you to do differently?

On your own, read Psalm 37 several times this next week to receive the comfort he offers his disciples.

Closing Thought:

Comfort, Comfort All My People CW 11

“Comfort, comfort all my people; speak of peace” so says our God.
“Comfort those who sit in darkness, groaning from their sorrows’ load.
Speak to all Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;
Tell them that their sins I cover, that their warfare now is over.”

All their sins our God will pardon, blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserve his anger he no more will see or heed.
They have suffered many a day; now their griefs have passed away.
God will change their aching sadness into ever springing gladness.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Precious Savior, Holy Spirit, you are truly worthy of our praise. Your love and mercy are more than we can fathom and yet they fill each minute of every day. We thank you for graciously giving us a Savior that we may be reconciled with you, and for working faith in our hearts that we may be fully blessed by your bountiful gifts. We thank you for giving us a desire to please you with our lives and for revealing yourself through your Holy Word. Make our sins visible to us, work repentance in our hearts and we humbly ask you to forgive us (especially for....). Be near when temptations come that we may not fall into sin. Renew our hearts that we may live our lives to your glory. We come in the name of Jesus, confident that you hear and answer our prayers. Amen.

Lesson 3

Blessed are those who Hunger and Thirst; Blessed are the Merciful
Matthew 5:6-7

Opening Prayer

Read Matthew 5:3-7

19. Review: what key thoughts do you remember from the two earlier studies?

Matthew 5:6 – “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*”

Remember that “blessed” means “happy”. This is not describing our emotions but how God thinks of us as his dear children. We are blessed because of God’s grace and mercy.

20. Describe what you think Jesus meant when he talked of “those who hunger and thirst for righteous”. See Psalm 42:1, Psalm 84:1-2, Psalm 143:6, Matthew 6:33
21. How can one develop a hunger and thirst for righteousness?
22. How can this hunger and thirst be filled? Genesis 15:6, Romans 1:17, 3:21-24, or Revelation 7:15-17 give us some ideas.
23. Discuss the spiritual progression we see in these first four beatitudes – poor in spirit, mourning, meekness and finally hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

Discuss how these first four beatitudes may change the way you think of your own life and the priorities you set. What will this move you to do?

The first four beatitudes discuss our relationship with God. The last four beatitudes discuss how this relationship affects how we see and treat others in this world.

Matthew 5:7 – “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

24. What does Jesus mean when he tells us to be merciful? To whom should we show mercy? Matthew 18:21ff, Romans 12:1, Galatians 5:6b, Colossians 3:17, James 2:14a, all of Psalm 51, esp 1,10.

25. Just look at all the charitable activities of this world. Aren't most people in this world merciful? Read Ephesians 2:10, Hebrews 11:6, Matthew 23:23, Romans 9:15-16, Isaiah 64:6 to help understand what God sees as merciful.

26. How do the merciful “receive mercy?” See 2 Corinthians 9:6, Galatians 6:7-10

27. Share something that this study has helped you understand better. Share something that this will move you to do differently?

Closing Thought:

Lord Help Us Ever to Retain

CW 514

Lord help us ever to retain the catechism's doctrine plain
As Luther taught the Word of truth in simple style to tender youth.

Help us your holy law to learn, to mourn our sin and from it turn
In faith to you and to your Son and Holy Spirit Three in One.

Hear us, dear Father, when we pray for needed help from day to day
That as your children we may live, whom you in baptism did receive.

Lord, when we fall or go astray, absolve and lift us up we pray;
And through the sacrament increase our faith till we depart in peace.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Precious Savior, Holy Spirit, you are truly worthy of our praise. Your love and mercy are more than we can fathom and yet they fill each minute of every day. We thank you for graciously giving us a Savior that we may be reconciled with you, and for working faith in our hearts that we may be fully blessed by your bountiful gifts. We thank you for giving us a desire to please you with our lives and for revealing yourself through your Holy Word. Make our sins visible to us, work repentance in our hearts and we humbly ask you to forgive us (especially for...). Be near when temptations come that we may not fall into sin. Renew our hearts that we may live our lives to your glory. We come in the name of Jesus, confident that you hear and answer our prayers. Amen.

Lesson 4

Blessed are Pure in Heart; Blessed are the Peacemakers **Matthew 5:8-9**

Opening Prayer

Read Matthew 5:3-9

28. Review: what key thoughts do you remember from the earlier studies?

Matthew 5:8 – “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*”

29. Describe what you think Jesus meant when he talked of “those who are pure in heart”. See Psalm 24:3-4, Psalm 51:6-10, 1 Timothy 1:5, Matthew 23:25-28

30. How can one become pure in heart? Genesis 6:5, Psalm 5:9, Matthew 15:19, Galatians 5:19-24, Philippians 4:8-9

31. How or when will we see God? 1 Corinthians 13:12, 1 John 3:1-3, John 14:2-3, John 17:24, Job 19:25-27

32. Has this discussion given you new insight into your life and motivation, where you will get your strength for carrying on with your daily tasks?

Matthew 5:9 – “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*”

33. What do you think Jesus means by “peacemakers”? Matthew 10:34-37, 1 Peter 3:8-11, Hebrews 12:14, Ephesians 4:3

34. How can one become a peacemaker? Galatians 5:22-25, Matthew 5:44-45, Ephesians 6:10-15, Psalm 133, Matthew 18:15-17
35. What does it mean to be “called the sons of God?” Galatians 4:4-7
36. What key thought do you take away from the study today? How might this move you to do something differently?

Closing Thoughts:

Love in Christ is Strong and Living

CW 490

Love in Christ is strong and living, Binding faithful hearts in one;
Love in Christ is true and giving – May his will in us be done!

Love is patient and forbearing, Clothed in Christ's humility,
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring, reaching out in charity.

Love in Christ abides forever, fainting not when ills attend;
Love, forgiving and forgiven, shall endure until life's end.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Precious Savior, Holy Spirit, you are truly worthy of our praise. Your love and mercy are more than we can fathom and yet they fill each minute of every day. We thank you for graciously giving us a Savior that we may be reconciled with you, and for working faith in our hearts that we may be fully blessed by your bountiful gifts. We thank you for giving us a desire to please you with our lives and for revealing yourself through your Holy Word. Make our sins visible to us, work repentance in our hearts and we humbly ask you to forgive us (especially for....). Be near when temptations come that we may not fall into sin. Renew our hearts that we may live our lives to your glory. We come in the name of Jesus, confident that you hear and answer our prayers. Amen.

Lesson 5

Blessed are Those Persecuted for Righteousness And Conclusion

Matthew 5:10-16

Opening Prayer

Read Matthew 5:3-12

37. Review: what key thoughts do you remember from the earlier studies?

Matthew 5:10-12 – “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for 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.*”

38. Verse 9 announces blessings on the peacemakers and it is followed by a blessing for those who are persecuted which is stated twice! Peace and persecution don't seem to go together. Why do you think this blessing is repeated? Why do you think Jesus ends these beatitudes with this message? Acts 5:41, 2 Timothy 3:12

What does it mean to be “persecuted for righteousness?” John 15:18-19, John 17:33, 1 Peter 4:12-16, Luke 6: 26

39. How can one possibly withstand persecution or even death for the sake of Christ? Colossians 3:16, Acts 14:21-22, Hebrews 10:25, Romans 8:35-39, Romans 8:28, James 4:7

40. What does it mean to be rewarded in heaven? Romans 6:23, Luke 17:10, John 3:16, John 14:2-3

41. Has this discussion given you new insight into your ability to face the persecutions that may come your way? What might you add to your prayers with this realization?

Conclusion:

Matthew 5:13-16 – “You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world”

42. Read Matthew 5:13-16. Why might Jesus have followed the beatitudes with the idea of his disciples being the salt of the earth and the light of the world?
43. Salt is used both to give flavor and also as a preservative. What does it mean for a follower of Christ to be called the salt of the earth?
44. What does it mean for a follower of Christ to be called the light of the world?
45. What key thoughts do you take away from the study? How might this move you to do something differently in your life?

Closing Thought:

Take My Life and Let it be

CW 469

Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee.
Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart – it is thine own; it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love my Lord I pour at your feet its treasures store.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, Precious Savior, Holy Spirit, you are truly worthy of our praise. Your love and mercy are more than we can fathom and yet they fill each minute of every day. We thank you for graciously giving us a Savior that we may be reconciled with you, and for working faith in our hearts that we may be fully blessed by your bountiful gifts. We thank you for giving us a desire to please

you with our lives and for revealing yourself through your Holy Word. Make our sins visible to us, work repentance in our hearts and we humbly ask you to forgive us for all things (especially for....). Be near when temptations come that we may not fall into sin. Renew our hearts that we may live our lives to your glory. We come in the name of Jesus, confident that you hear and answer our prayers. Amen.

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