

# Sermon on the Mount

## Lesson 2 – Beatitudes/Salt & Light

### Matthew 5:1-16/Luke 6:20-26

Many have called the Sermon on the Mount an ordination message for the newly chosen twelve apostles. Though it was preached on a specific mountain at a specific time, this is a wonderful example of what Jesus taught every day! Let's sit at the feet of Jesus and learn too!

#### I. Four ways to understand the Beatitudes – All are correct! (Life Application Bible – p. 1562)

A. They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers. Shortly after choosing the twelve, Jesus will begin teaching what is expected in conduct and attitude within His Kingdom. These are expected of all who have given themselves as a true follower of Christ. These attitudes are not generated by the will or the discipline of the believer but grow as the fruit of the Holy Spirit as one submits to Him.

B. They contrast Kingdom values versus worldly values. Contrasts are found throughout the whole Sermon on the Mount, but in the Beatitudes, we find the extreme differences between what is important in the kingdom versus the world. As true followers of Christ, we must examine ourselves and make sure we have not taken on the world's values and been polluted by them.

C. They contrast the superficial "faith" of the Pharisees with the true faith Christ desires. Religion will always seek to come to God by doing. The only outcome of this type of piety is pride! True believers come to God opposite of pride, instead in humility and faith, understanding the inability anyone has to secure a right relationship with God without His intervention!

D. They show how the Old Testament expectations will be completely fulfilled in the new Kingdom. Jesus will teach nothing new in the Beatitudes; everyone had its roots in the Old Testament. The Jewish teachers had long lost the heart and meaning God had intended. Jesus will teach the connection between the Old Testament, His true believers, and the coming Kingdom on earth! Matthew 5:17-20

II. "Blessed" Defined – Divinely bestowed well-being – Happiness Other definitions I found were: divine joy; perfect happiness; supreme inward joy; fortunate, blissful Old Testament "Blessed" – Psalm 1:1; Prov. 3:13 Other New Testament – Matt. 11:6; Acts 20:35

A. Happiness and holiness are inseparable in His Kingdom. Psalm 1:1-3, 19:8; John 15:11 These three New Testament references use the same word and associate it with holiness. God-given inner joy comes from living God's way in faith-driven, humble obedience!

B. Different from the culture of the day – When the listeners on the mount heard Jesus use the word, "blessed," their minds went to the belief that happiness came from living as one pleased. The pagans that lived all around the Jews built their lavish, sensual temples and taunted the Jews with the fact that their gods enjoyed all the pleasures of life and desired them to do the same. At the time of Christ, the Jews had pretty much fallen to the same false belief. Money, possessions, and power had become the god of many Jews. It was the god of those who had accumulated wealth and those who desired it! Jesus taught that day true happiness comes from a right relationship with God!

### III. Nine Blessed Characteristics – Christ’s Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount Righteous character and its blessings!

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit (“be ye poor:” Luke 6:20): for theirs (“yours” Luke 6:20) is the kingdom of heaven (God.” Luke 6:20).” Matthew 5:3**

A. Poor in spirit/poor – Defined: humble, broken, cower, cringe as a beggar. It has always been God’s desire for man to come to Him in this way. The Old Testament is full of verses and examples teaching and demonstrating this principle. (Isaiah 57:15; 66:1-2; Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Prov. 16:19; 29:23) The opposite attitude of man is a proud, self-sufficient, haughty spirit. One who comes to God with a humble, broken spirit, realizing he can do nothing of himself is accepted by God, and receives the blessing of eternal life with Him! Jam.4:6-10

**“Blessed are they that mourn (“ye that weep now:” Luke 6:21): for they shall be comforted (“laugh” Luke 6:21).” Matthew 5:4**

B. Mourn/Weep – Defined: attitude of sorrow over personal sin and the sin of others. This heartfelt sadness is part of the moving toward confession of sin to God. (2 Cor. 7:10) Again, the Old Testament holds many verses with this same thought. (Ps. 51:7-15; Is. 40:1-2) The natural man, those who don’t believe in God, seeks happiness and fulfillment through pleasures and personal achievements at any cost. But these do not give true peace and comfort. But with sins forgiven, true believers, Christians, those saved from the penalty of sin, can live their lives comforted, joyful, and at peace with God now and in heaven to come. These are characteristics of a follower of Jesus! Jam. 4:9-10 “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep:…Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

**“Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5**

C. Meek – Defined: humble gentleness, submission of will to another Example: a soldier who serves and obeys with unquestioning submission. The Old Testament speaks of meekness often. Moses was described as meek as he submitted to God in leading the people of Israel. The book of Psalms has many verses about meekness. (Ps. 22:26; 25:9; 37:11; 76:9; 147:6; 149:4) The world lives desiring and asserting their own will and strength over others, but this is not the way of those who are followers of God. The outcome for meek, faithful believers is the inheriting of God’s blessings and care now, and later all the joys of heaven.

**“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness (“ye that hunger now:” Luke 20:21): for they (“ye” Luke 6:21) shall be filled.” Matthew 5:6**

D. Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness/Hunger – Defined: a deep, passionate, driving desire for holiness, an appetite for the things of God. All of mankind understands hunger and thirst. We all can relate to times of extreme hunger or thirst. The desire for holiness and pleasing God with holy living has always been the evidence of faithful followers of God and with right living comes God’s blessings. (Is. 55:1-3; 58:10-11; Ps. 34:10; 42:1-2; 84:11-12; 107:9) Remember, with the feeding of our soul with good things comes the spiritual maturity and growth God seeks for all those that follow Him. An unbeliever hungers and thirst after personal desires and the pleasures of the world, but these give no lasting satisfaction.

**“Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.” Matthew 5:7**

E. Merciful – Defined: pity in action; generously caring for the needs of others; forgiving; compassionate towards suffering. God is merciful to mankind; it is His character. (Deut. 7:9; Ps. 25:10; 62:12; Prov. 28:13; Is.

30:18) The follower of God understands the mercy that was extended to them by the provision of Christ for sin. Mercy toward others is a natural outpouring of the Holy Spirit within a believer. They are merciful because they have obtained mercy! The world's attitude is to crush the weak, the poor, the suffering, and to demonstrate strength, not compassionate mercy! Luke 6:36; Eph. 5:1-2

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

F. Pure in Heart – Defined: the righteousness of Christ dwelling in a man; free from the contamination of sin; without divided interests or loyalties. No honest man can say his heart is pure, only Jesus' blood can wash us clean. It is a work of God! (Eph. 4:24; I John 1:7) The unbeliever lives in the darkness of sin, they can neither understand the things of God now nor will they ever see God in eternity. (I John 3:1-3; I Cor. 13:12) They will always be separated from Him. Even in the Old Testament, it was God who purified the heart of man. (Ps. 51:10-12; 24:3-5)

**“Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.” Matthew 5:9**

G. Peacemakers – Defined: at peace with God through faith in Him, this generates the natural fruit of becoming a messenger of His peace; a peacemaker desires peace with all men and for all men. Remember, God is the God of peace and Jesus is the Prince of peace! They are the givers of peace! (Ps. 29:11; Rom. 5:1, 8-10) A true child of God is recognized because they have the desire to make and bring the truth of God's peace to the world! The unbeliever has no peace. Life is hard, and though they want peace, talk of peace, and fight for peace, God tells us in His word, “There is no peace,...to the wicked.” Is. 57:21

**“Blessed are they which are persecuted (hunted, pursued, desire to destroy, run down like an obnoxious animal)for righteousness' sake sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10**

H. Persecuted for righteousness' sake – Defined: a believer's allegiance to Christ, identifying with a righteous God, and living in conformity to His standards bring about a vicious hostility from the world. This loyalty and love for God is proof of their salvation and their place in heaven! It will happen, the world hates righteous living! Through the ages, this has been true for those who live God's way. (2 Tim. 3:12; James 1:2; 5:10-11; 1 Peter 3:14)

**“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile (insultingly criticize, abusive ) (“ hate ” Luke 6:22) you, and persecute you, (“and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach (disapprove) you, and cast out your name as evil,” Luke 6:22) and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my (“Son of man's” Luke 6:22) sake. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice, and be exceeding glad (“ye in that day, and leap for joy:” Luke 6:23): for (“behold” Luke 6:23) great is your reward in heaven: for so (“in like manner did their fathers” Luke 6:23) persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Matthew 5:11-12**

I. Persecuted for Christ's sake – 1 Peter 4:12-14; This is different from the previous Beatitude, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for **righteousness'sake**.” A causal reading may lump them together, but they are separate. Defined: physical persecution and slanderous attacks based on one's belief and relationship with Jesus Christ. Please notice several important details found in these few verses. 1) Jesus is telling His newly called twelve and all those listening, that true followers of Him **will have** persecution! Jesus said, “Blessed are ye, when” not “if.” 2) We understand the fact that this persecution is based on our relationship with Jesus but see how Jesus is making Himself equal with the Father with this statement. As the prophets were persecuted for

their faithful service to God, so shall you suffer because of your loyalty to me. 3) Lastly, notice how one is to take this persecution, not just bravely, not just quietly, not just without retaliation, but instead, He commands them to “Rejoice,” and piles it on by saying, “and be exceeding glad:” Because of this intense persecution, we are told to celebrate and be glad-hearted over the fact that our wages, or reward, will be eternal, and it will be worth it all! 1 Peter 4:12-14

In every point of the Beatitudes, we see extreme contrasts with the Jewish Religious system, specifically the Religious Leaders. As we observe religion today, I think we can confidently say we continue to see these contrasts! These Blessings were for those who showed the characteristics of righteous, true believers and followers of God. The Jewish Elite showed none of these qualities. They never recognized their sinful condition, never repented or submitted to God, never demonstrated mercy, or purity of heart, they stirred up trouble, they didn’t seek to make peace, and in every way were the persecutors not the persecuted! This was a powerful, revealing truth of God, and everyone that heard Jesus that day recognized the contrasts!

**“But woe (Lit. how terrible, bad, horrible, shame on you, miserable, sorrows await ) unto you that are rich ! for ye have received your consolation. <sup>25</sup> Woe unto you that are full ! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. <sup>26</sup> Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.” Luke 6:24-26**

**IV. Four “Woe’s” Recorded in Luke – Worldly idea of happiness is condemned by Christ as empty.**

Through the ages, since the fall of man in the garden, the Devil has convinced men that having lots of money, living without any worry, enjoying entertainment of all kinds, being surrounded by worldly pleasure, and knowing all those you associate with think you’re great, will make one happy and fulfilled! But Jesus pointed out that these things will never bring lasting happiness on earth or in eternity to come! This has always been a truth of God and Christ will repeat it often as He preached. (Ps. 16:11; 17:14-15)

**“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted ? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. <sup>14</sup> Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. <sup>15</sup> Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16**

**V. Two Results of Living the Beatitudes – Christ’s Believers Application** I want to end with the same “Believers Application” as Jesus that day on the mount! He was speaking to those who were true believers and followers of Him.

A. Our life as salt At the time of Christ, salt was used as a preservative and a flavor enhancer. They would have to process their salt from the Mediterranean or the Dead Sea. If this was not carefully done it would leave salt that was not pure. The salt extracted from the Dead Sea was especially difficult to purify, for Dead Sea salt is mixed with many other minerals, and if they are not removed, will break down the effectiveness of preservation and the salt does not taste good! The impure salt could be used to clear a pathway, for it would keep vegetation down, but that was about all it was good for! We are to act as pure salt in the world we live in, believers are not called to live separately from the world, but these Beatitudes within us should greatly affect our culture! If Christians make little effort to impact the world they live in, their potential usefulness is not being met and is of little value to God’s purpose for us! So how is your saltiness? Are you living as God intended – nice and salty!? Later in His ministry, Jesus will say at the end of another sermon, “Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith

shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” Luke 14:34-35

B. Our life as light I really am uncomfortable in darkness. I sleep with nightlights. My sweet husband and children know this and have all put up with it over the years. I don't like cave tours when they feel compelled to turn out the lights, I don't like waterpark tube rides that insist on throwing you back and forth in total darkness, I don't like the dark! Actually, most people don't! When given a choice between having lights on or sitting in the dark, most folks will choose light! Except, when it comes to sin! Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3, "...light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Jesus is the Light, and the source of light! We are to reflect Him like the moon on a dark night reflects the sun! We must remain a pure, intense, clear light, and a light set in a very advantageous position – not hidden! As Paul said in Phil. 2:15 we are to be, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;"

In 1905, Duluth MN, was enjoying a boom in the shipping of iron ore from its harbor on Lake Superior. But because of the unpredictability of violent storms and the dangerous rocky shoreline, calamity for ships, cargo, and sailors was always looming! November 28, 1905, a single storm damaged 29 ships, the uninsured property of the US Steel fleet! The Northshore of Lake Superior was becoming known as the world's most dangerous piece of water! Something had to be done! In 1907 Congress appropriated \$75,000 for a lighthouse and fog signal at Split Rock, a 110-foot cliff that protrudes out from the shoreline. Split Rock Lighthouse was commissioned and lit on July 31, 1910. 113 years later, Split Rock Lighthouse is one of the most photographed and visited historical sites in Minnesota. Are you a lighthouse for God? Have you positioned yourself well, like on a city on a hill or a candlestick giving light in this dark world or have you hidden your light by quietness or the stains of sin? Does your light "so shine before men, that they may see your good works?" Does your light cause men to "glorify your Father?" Do you cause others to desire God? The world may love the darkness of sin, but God desires to draw them out of that darkness to His glorious light! Finish by reading Eph. 5:8-16