

The Beatitudes

Being the followers Jesus longs for



Session 8

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

Matthew 5:10

A Few Notes for Understanding the Beatitudes

Audience:

The primary audience is the disciples. There are crowds listening, but Jesus directs his teaching to his committed followers.

Purpose:

Jesus is purposefully teaching his disciples the essentials they must know about being his followers and the blessings that result.

Message: The disciple Jesus longs for...

1. is **“poor in spirit.”** They **RECOGNIZE** their desperate need for God and totally trust Him.
The Blessing: You belong to God and know that He is in control.
2. **“mourns.”** They **GRIEVE** over sin and the damage it has caused in their lives and world.
The Blessing: Mourning leads to confession and repentance which brings God’s new life.
3. is **“meek”** meaning they are **HUMBLE**, but **CONFIDENT** in their relationships with God and others and **SUBMIT** to God and God’s ways.
The Blessing: In the end, the meek, will inherit the kingdom of God for eternity.
4. **“hungers and thirsts for righteousness”** They **COMMIT** themselves to doing what is right in their own life and towards others.
The Blessing: You’ll be filled with God’s presence bringing His righteousness, love and life!
5. is **“merciful”**. They **FORGIVE** others because they realize that God has shown them incredible mercy and they are grateful.
The Blessing: Your mercy shows that you’ve already experienced God’s incredible mercy.
6. is **“pure in heart”**. They have an **UNDIVIDED** commitment to God and **INTEGRITY** in their relationships with others.
The Blessing: You can confidently approach God and enjoy His presence and attention.
7. is a **“peacemaker”**. They follow Jesus’ example by **MAKING PEACE** whenever possible.
The Blessing: God calls you His child and unconditionally accepts and loves you.

BIBLE STUDY

Read Matthew 5:10-12.

1. Why do you think this final beatitude gets extra commentary by Jesus compared to the others? What does Jesus want His disciples to understand?

2. What reasons does Jesus give for being persecuted? Why would people consider this a reason to persecute someone?
3. Why would Jesus call persecution a blessing?

Read Acts 5:27-42.

4. Why are the disciples willing to accept persecution and rejoice over their flogging?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.

5. In verses 3-5 Peter talks about an inheritance that is being kept in heaven and a salvation to be revealed in the end times. What is this inheritance and salvation that Peter is talking about? How does this compare to the blessing promised to the persecuted in the beatitude we are studying?
6. In 1 Peter 1:5, what are we being shielded from? What do we need to have in order to receive this shield?
7. In 1 Peter 1:6-7 Peter acknowledges the reality of persecution, but he tells us that persecution ends up benefiting us. What is this benefit and why is it a blessing and cause for rejoicing?
8. According to Peter, what gives us an inexpressible joy even when facing persecution?

APPLY

1. What will persecution reveal about our true beliefs?
2. Is there a stand you know you need to make right now, or will need to make soon, in order to stay faithful to Jesus? If so, what is it?
3. What can you do to prepare yourself to stand strong whenever persecution of any kind comes along?

PRAY

Pray that you will have the courage and strength to take whatever stands are necessary and face any persecution for the sake of following Christ and honoring God.