

LESSON 2: THE BEATITUDES (PART 2)

Matthew 5:1-12

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Today we continue our study of the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher that ever lived...Jesus' "sermon on the Mount" (Matt. 5-7; cf. Lk. 6:20-38; 11 & 12).
2. **3** I trust we are completely clear in our minds that:
 - A. There is no way in the world we can exhaust this subject! (2 Tim. 2:15)
 - B. What Jesus has to say here is the exact opposite of the "Me! Me! Me! Make me feel good" type sermons so popular today!
 - C. The whole sermon revolves around the questions naturally raised in response to Jesus' statement in Matthew 4:17: "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"
 - D. This sermon is all about what's going to happen to us when we change as we **must** change to become suitable for citizenship in God's kingdom (Jn. 18:36; Lk. 17:20-21). The change Jesus describes is *internal*, but it is:
 - ☛ ****Radical!!**
 - ☛ **Total!!**
 - ☛ **Absolute!!**
 - ☛ **Enduring!! (all described with present tense verbs!)**
 - E. **4** The sermon on the Mount reflects the central theme of the Bible: God wants a "*special people*" for Himself! (Ex. 6:7; 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9-10). Hence, the sermon on the Mount describes the characteristics of God's "*special people*" (all spiritual in nature!):
 - ☛ **His special people are going to go directly against the grain of popular culture.**
 - ☛ **His special people will not ebb and flow with the tide of the majority opinion.**
 - ☛ **His special people are not going to float downstream with the rest of society, but they will swim upstream against the current of what everyone else is thinking, saying, and doing.**
 - F. **5** What Jesus has to say in this sermon is at the very core of **EVERY** teaching contained in New Testament.
 - G. And, importantly, the type of person Jesus is describing here is not some sort of "Super-Christian". He is describing what **EVERY** Christian **MUST** be. Neither is He describing a *smorgasbord* of characteristics/attitudes from which each of us are free to pick and choose only those that suit us. We must pick **ALL** or **NONE**.

II. DISCUSSION:

1. **6** Introductory comments to the Beatitudes: In the Beatitudes Jesus describes:
 - A. The foundational qualities of mind that **must** characterize every citizen of His kingdom. They describe the **only** frame of mind in which a man or woman can be *converted*. Conversion is a complete and total impossibility if one doesn't possess these attitudes of mind!
 - B. **7** The attitudes Jesus describes in the Beatitudes are also predictive in nature; for they describe the only type of person that will be truly satisfied in the Messianic kingdom. These attitudes will either **attract** those whose hearts are seeking God's will or **repel** those who will not submit to God's will (Lk. 8:4-15; Acts 17:27; 2 Thess. 2:10-11).

C. **8** The Beatitudes describe attitudes and character that make one blessed versus happy. Do you remember the difference?

- (1) Happiness arises from what “happens to you.” Thus, *happiness* arises from external circumstances. If you remove the external circumstances that produced *happiness*; *happiness* vanishes. All men experience happiness and unhappiness.
- (2) Blessedness, on the other hand, is quite different. *Blessedness* has nothing to do with external circumstances; *blessedness* arises from internal conditions (internal condition producing an internal state).
 - (a) *Blessedness* is a spiritual quality of inner joy, peace, contentment, well-being that is entirely **independent** of our outside circumstances (what is happening to us)(cf. Job 1:20-22; 2:9-10; Phil. 4:11; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:1)
 - (b) **9** Jesus says *blessedness* is a quality of life achievable by those **willing to choose** eight specific characteristics of mind that are in direct opposition to the conventional wisdom of the world.

2. **10** The Beatitudes: Matthew 5:1-12: Last time we examined only the first of the Beatitudes:

A. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:3)

- (1) **** Foundational attitude of mind!** Jesus describes one who is acutely aware of his/her spiritual poverty and that on their own they are completely helpless, completely powerless to do anything about it...a spiritual beggar! (Rom. 3:10-23; 6:23; Matt. 20:29-34: blind men who said, “Have mercy of us, O Lord, Son of David!”)
- (2) Like these miserable beggars (Matt. 20:29-34) we must come to see our total, absolute and complete need for what only God can provide. We must come to a deep realization of the fact that we are *spiritually bankrupt*. (Lk. 18:9-14: Pharisee v. tax collector)
- (3) **11** As we noted from our examples of Daniel (Dan. 9:3-19); the Pentecostians (Acts 2, esp. v. 37) and the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:26-39, esp. v. 36); the *poor in spirit* not only realize their *spiritual bankruptcy*; they also are *totally submissive* to God’s will! Unquestionably so!
- (4) *Poor in spirit* is something we **ARE**...and it continues throughout our life! We never come to the point where we can forget our spiritual poverty and our need to be total submissive to God’s word. (cf. 1 Sam. 3:10; 1 Tim. 1:13-15: Paul “chief of sinners”)
- (5) **12** There is no place in God’s kingdom for the self-sufficient or self-righteous who have not come to grips with their total spiritual poverty. Nor will those find blessedness in the kingdom who place their own “think-so’s” on an equal or elevated level above God’s “thus saith the LORD” (Matt. 7:21-23; Rev. 3:17-19).
- (6) The “blessing” for “the poor in spirit” is “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
 - (a) If one is not “poor in spirit” (And remains that way!) he can’t be in God’s kingdom.
 - (b) Without realization of one’s total spiritual poverty kingdom citizenship is impossible.

B. **13** “Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5:4)

- (1) ****** How do we understand this mysterious statement? What is Jesus talking about? Taken at face value it seems a ridiculous statement. How can sadness make a person blessed? We need to recall what Jesus’ sermon is all about:
 - (a) It revolves around the questions that would naturally be raised in response to His statement in Matthew 4:17.

- (b) Jesus is describing the foundational qualities of mind everyone **must chose** to become and remain a citizen of His kingdom (Jn. 18:36; Lk. 17:20-21).
- (c) Here He is describing what God means by *repent*. He is describing the only frame of mind in which a man or woman can be **converted**. Without consciously **choosing** these attitudes of mind **conversion** is impossible!
- (2) **14** There are eight different words in the Greek for *mourning*, Jesus uses the strongest (*pentheo*). (“lament, mourn, especially for the dead” Vine “bewail”; Mk. 16:10)
- (3) So what are we to *mourn* over; what are we to *bewail*?
 - (a) ** Death of loved ones?
 - (b) Personal disasters (e.g., financial ruin, loved one struck with cancer or MS, etc.?).
 - (c) Even the sorriest/meanest on earth, *mourn* over those things (e.g., Osama bin Laden).
- (4) **15** What we are to *mourn* over is what the kingdom of God is all about...**right and wrong**! *Sin and righteousness*!
- (5) Only those who are truly *poor in spirit* will really care about right and wrong (2 Kgs. 21:16; Ezek. 9:2-6: **vv. 3-4**: “And He called to the man clothed with linen, who had the writer's inkhorn at his side; 4 and the LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.’”).
 - (a) Only the *poor in spirit* exhibit “godly sorrow” over sin.
 - (b) Only the *poor in spirit* truly *mourn* over sin and righteousness (2 Cor. 7:9-10: this type of sorrow is an increasingly rare commodity indeed! e.g., abortion!).
- (6) **16** Do you find comfort in sin? Heb. 11:25
 - (a) Or, do you *mourn* over sin...does sin make you feel comfortable or uncomfortable? (cf. Lk. 7:37-50: woman washed Jesus’ feet w/tears and anointed them w/oil; Lk. 15:18-19: prodigal son; Lk. 18:13: publican who would not look up, beat his breast and said, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”; Acts 2:37)
 - (b) God provides true *comfort* if you are *poor in spirit* to the point you genuinely *mourn* over sin!

Psa. 38:3-11:

“There is no soundness in my flesh
 Because of Your anger,
 Nor any health in my bones
 Because of my sin.
 4 For my iniquities have gone over my head;
 Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
 5 My wounds are foul and festering
 Because of my foolishness.
 6 I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly;
 I go mourning all the day long.
 7 For my loins are full of inflammation,
 And there is no soundness in my flesh.
 8 I am feeble and severely broken;
 I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.
 9 Lord, all my desire is before You;

And my sighing is not hidden from You.
 10 My heart pants, my strength fails me;
 As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.
 11 My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague,
 And my relatives stand afar off."

Psa. 38:21-22:

"Do not forsake me, O LORD;
 O my God, be not far from me!
 22 Make haste to help me,
 O Lord, my salvation!"

2 Cor. 7:10-11; Matt. 11:28-30: Jesus provides "comfort" (i.e., "rest") to those willing to "Take up my yoke...and learn of Me"; "you will find rest for your souls."

C. 17 "Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. 5:5)

- (1) "inherit the earth" is not literal but an 'idiom'; found often in the scriptures:

Psa. 37:9: "For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the LORD, They shall inherit the earth."

Psa. 37:11: "But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace."

Psa. 37:34: "Wait on the LORD, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it."

- (2) 'idiom': "a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (e.g., *rain cats and dogs*, *see the light*)." (Google). Approximately 25,000 idiomatic expressions in the English language.

- (3) ** Examples:

"apple of one's eye"	"hear it on the grapevine"
"at the end of my rope"	"bark is worse than his bite"
"steal someone's thunder"	"let sleeping dogs lie"

- (4) ** "Who will get the most out of life? Will it be those who are self-sufficient, self-assertive, or aggressive?" (John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 8)

- (5) **18** NO! Jesus says just the opposite of conventional wisdom! Those who are meek and gentle will inherit the richest blessings of life (not talking about "inheriting" material things, but spiritual things! cf. Eph. 1:3).

**"The meek will enjoy whatever comes to them on the earth. They will enjoy life with greater stability, calmness and peace. The greedy, selfish, or those feverishly struggling to gain wealth and glory will not enjoy life the most, but the gentle, self-controlled person who has fashioned himself after the image of Jesus. Perhaps the greatest blessing is knowing that the meek are approved and considered fortunate by God." (John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 9)

- (6) **19** Meekness is perhaps the most misunderstood attitude/characteristic Jesus mentions in the Beatitudes. It is also, perhaps, the characteristic held in highest contempt by the world ("Stand up for your rights! Otherwise the world will run right over you!").
- (7) But, meekness is not weakness! The Greek word for meekness (*prautes*) was used originally to describe the taming of wild animals so that they might be made useful for service (e.g., horses like *Clydesdale* and *Percheron*).

- (8) It is closely related to the Greek word for *humility* and it is often used in combination with *lowly* (Matt. 11:29: Jesus describes Himself as “*meek and lowly in heart*”).

20 “The meaning of *prautes* is not readily expressed in English, for the terms meekness, mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness and pusillanimity (i.e., cowardice, cvt) to a greater or less extent, whereas *prautes* does nothing of the kind. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find a rendering less open to objection than ‘meekness’; ‘gentleness’ has been suggested, but as *prautes* describes a condition of mind and heart, and as ‘gentleness’ is appropriate rather to actions, this word is no better than that used in both English Versions. It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ‘meek’ because he had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.” (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

- (9) Examples of meekness: Abraham (Gen. 13:8-9); Joseph (Gen. 45:4-5); Moses (Num. 12:3); Jesus (Matt. 11:29; 26:51-54: “*twelve legions of angels*”; according to Vine a legion = 4,200-6,000; 12 legions = 50,400-72,000 angels→2 Kgs. 19:35; Matt. 23; Mk. 14:65: spit, hit, mocked Jesus; 15:17-20, 29-32; Lk. 23:34: “*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*”; Phil. 2:5-11; the “king” of meekness! 1 Pet. 2:23: “*who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.*”).

21 “The meek are strong people who decline to domineer; they are ‘those who do not throw their weight about, but rely on God to give them their due.’” (K. L. Chumbley, *The Gospel of Matthew*, p. 85)

- (10) **22** We must show our meekness/humility in at least two ways: “Meekness is the opposite of self-will toward God, and of ill-will toward men.” (A. W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 23)

- (a) Toward God: **Psa. 25:9**: “*The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.*”; Jas. 1:21; Eph. 5:24; Matt. 28:18-20; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11 vs. Matt. 7:21-23

***“It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; ...it is only the humble heart which also is meek, and which, as such, does not fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him.” (Vine)

- (b) *** Toward others: (Isa. 11:6-9; Titus 3:1-2; **Jude 8-19**: “*reject authority, speak evil of dignitaries...grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts, and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage...sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*”; Jas. 3:2-18; **1 Thess. 2:5-8**; Eph. 4:1-2; Phil. 2:1-5).

***“meekness...causes the believer to bear patiently those insults and injuries which he receives at the hands of his fellows, and makes him ready to accept instruction or admonition from the least of the saints, moving him to think more highly of others than of himself. Meekness enables the Christian to endure provocations without being inflamed by them: he remains cool when others get heated.” (A. W. Pink, *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 23)

***“The meek make good friends, spouses, children and neighbors. Meekness encourages wise and spiritually responsible decision-making. The meek person will control his carnal desires and worldly appetites when making decisions about

attendance, time to study and teach others, as well as his financial contribution.” (John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 9)

When you think about it: Shouldn't both of these aspects of meekness be a natural outgrowth of poorness of spirit and mourning over right and wrong? Who do I think I am?!

- (11) One last point: meekness is not weakness! Meekness does not mean we **EVER** compromise truth with error! (Moses: Num. 12:3: “Now the man Moses was very weak, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.” vs. Ex. 32; Jesus: **Matt. 11:29**: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” vs. Jn. 2:13-17; Matt. 21:12-13; 26:53: 12 legions of angels)

BTW: Are you beginning to feel the heat? Are you beginning to feel the expectation Jesus has for His disciples is becoming progressively more difficult? (“special people”! Ex. 6:7; 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:9-10)

D. **23** “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6)

- (1) Where has Jesus brought us thus far? Hopefully, we have allowed Him to bring us...

- ☛ ******To a complete realization of our total and absolute spiritual poverty...spiritually we are mere *beggars*!
- ☛ ******To a deep sense of regret and sorrow (i.e., godly sorrow) over our sin, over right and wrong. God cannot help us unless we *mourn* over sin!
- ☛ ******To a clear realization that our “spiritual position” (or lack thereof!) should “tame” us; make us willingly submit to God first, sacrifice our “rights” for the good of others.

- (2) **24** Now Jesus turns the heat up even more and addresses the level of our motivation:

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”
(Matt. 5:6)

“The story is told of a young man who went to a wise old man seeking the secret of success. The wise old man took him down to the river and held the young man’s head under the water. After struggling and finally breaking free from the old man’s grip, the young man lay exhausted on the shore gasping for breath. After the young man had recovered a bit, the old man replied, ‘When you want success as much as you wanted air, you will succeed.’”
(John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 9)

- (3) ****** Jesus calls on everyone who would be His disciple to have the same “inner drive” by using *hunger* and *thirst* as His metaphors here.
- (a) *Hunger* and *thirst* are our most basic of physical needs.
 - (b) They are needs that we will seek to fulfill first above everything else (e.g., psychologist Abraham Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs”; “physiological” come first!).
- (4) We must pursue what His kingdom is all about, righteousness, with the same intensity as we pursue food and water. We must have an intense craving, not just an occasional concern! God’s kingdom cannot be at the periphery of our life, it must be at its center! cf. Psalms 42:1-2
- (5) **25** *Righteousness* (*dikaioisune*) is used in the Bible in 3 primary ways (adapted from: John Smith, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 10). Righteousness is:

- ☛ ****Integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness of thinking, feeling, and acting (Titus 2:12: “teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”).**
 - ☛ ****What is appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man (Jn. 16:8),**
 - ☛ ****Gracious gift of divine justification that is bestowed upon those who have totally surrendered themselves to God through faith in Christ (acquitted of sin; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:1-3; Rom. 3:21-22: “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference...”).**
- (6) Hunger and thirst as used by Jesus here do not describe someone who is only mildly, or even just very hungry and thirsty.
- (a) He is speaking of someone whose hunger and thirst have reached a point of deprivation that is life threatening! (1 Pet. 2:2; Jn. 6:35: bread & water of life)
 - (b) Are you spiritually ravenous enough to be filled? Do you desire a snack or a meal?
 - (c) Only if we indeed “hunger and thirst for righteousness” will we receive His blessing of being “filled”!
- (7) **** Progression:** note that these essential spiritual character traits build on one another!

III. CONCLUSION: 26

1. How about you? Are you...present tense!
 - ☛ ****Poor in spirit?** (spiritual beggar?)
 - ☛ ****Mourning?** (Lament and bewail over sin, really concerned about right and wrong?)
 - ☛ ****Meek?** (Under God’s control, submissive? Forego your “rights” for others?)
 - ☛ ****Hungering and thirsting after righteousness?** (Ravenous to be right with God?)
2. **** Do you find what Jesus is asking of you compelling or repelling?**
 - A. Are you willing to choose these things to become fit for His kingdom and all its blessings?
 - B. Or, does the thought of choosing such things appear foolish and ridiculous to you?
3. The choice is yours! You can do as God asks or you can reject His offer. If you accept, He promises to bless you; if you reject, He will not bless you and all you can look forward to is the fleeting happiness this world can offer (Jn. 6:68-69; Acts 4:12).
4. Invitation (Matt. 11:28-30)

IV. REFERENCES:

- Chumbley, K. L. 1999. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Publisher not given (Nashville, TN).
- Earnhart, P. date unknown. *The Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5:1-17).
www.auburn.edu/student_info/search_truth/archive/
- Pink, A. W. 1997. *An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount*. Baker Book House (Grand Rapids, MI).
- Smith, J. 1995. *Truth in Life Adult Workbook: The Sermon on the Mount*. Guardian of Truth (Bowling Green, KY).