

The Beatitudes

 *July 27*

**INTRODUCTION:**  The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus’ teaching about what right living looks like in His Kingdom. Central to this is the blessed character of a disciple, or the norms of the Kingdom, described in the Beatitudes . These are declarations of blessing (sometimes described as happiness, but not the subjective happiness of the world, but a heavenly joy). There is no higher blessing than to be approved by God!

**CHALLENGE:** In one sitting, read the whole sermon often over the coming months.

**FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP** (Conscience, Ro 2:15…)

* What is our conscience?
* How does it: a) Convict, b) Comfort and c) Counsel
* How can we sear or train our conscience?

**READ:** Mt 5:2–6

**QUESTIONS:**

1. **What character traits does the world admire?**
2. **What character traits do Christians tend to admire; are the Beatitudes among them?**
3. *Each blessing corresponds to the condition (or character).* **Encompassing all the beatitudes, what is the blessing of the first and last Beatitude? Like spiritual fruit, how are the Beatitudes characteristic of a citizen of the Kingdom?**
4. *More than character descriptions of a disciple, all but one also describe Jesus who we are called to imitate (c.*f. Mt 10:24–25). **As you consider each Beatitude, consider how Jesus reflected these characteristics.**
5. *It is generally noted that there is a progression among the Beatitudes. The first three display need. The centre is what we gain and the last four are actions we do*. Discuss or consider other ways of structuring them.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

1. **Though physical poverty can teach us much, why cannot this Beatitude be describing this? (Prov 16:19; Isa 57:15, 66:2). *How is this a requisite to salvation (Mt 4:17)?***
2. *Being poor in spirit is to recognize that you are spiritually bankrupt.* How is this recognition of weakness counter-cultural?
3. *Consider the beginning (Mt 5:3), middle (Mt 6:13) and end of the Sermon (Mt 7:24).* **Do these tip us off to a right Kingdom spirit?**
4. *From the outset of the Sermon, we learn that we do not have the resources to attain to the perfection required! (Mt 5:48)*

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

1. Why does the world like to ‘grit and smile’?
2. Beyond mourning someone’s death, what many forms does mourning take (e.g. over sin)?
3. **As realists why should a Christian mourn both personally and societally?**
4. **How does Christ comfort us?**

*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

1. *Meekness isn’t weakness. It means a “tamed horse” or God’s strength under God’s control; sometimes translated as gentle. Another way of thinking about meekness is not the absence of assertiveness, but of self-assertiveness (or assertiveness for self).*
2. **Self-advancement, power, gain…these are all worldly values. Like Abraham deferring to Lot, how are the meek content today knowing what they will inherit tomorrow?**

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.*

1. **What “spiritual” sorts of things do Christians often pursue?**
2. Do you see righteousness as important as food or drink?
3. *While we need Christ’s imputed righteousness (the reighteousness we receive at conversion) this is speaking [primarily] of the imparted righteousness we gain by the Holy Spirt and seeking to do God’s will.*
4. Why does righteousness bring contentment?

**Next Week:** The Beatitudes, pt. II (Mt 5:7–11)