

## **The Character Christ Bought for His Subjects: The Beatitudes**

### **Matthew 5:1-4**

Intro: Pakistani beggars... the truly needy went away happy!

#### **An Introduction to the Beatitudes**

- A. "Beatitudes" = Only this person is truly happy and truly approved
- B. The quest of happiness... universal concern

Blaise Pascal: "All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war and of others avoiding it is the same desire in both, attended by different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every man, even of those who hang themselves."

- 1. Whole world concerned to find happiness
  - 2. Sadly... vast majority are seeking it in a way destined to make them miserable
  - 3. Temporary evasion of true source of problem (sin) leads not to happiness but misery
  - 4. Sermon on Mount show short route to true happiness
- C. Beatitudes a survey of true Christian character

#### **General Lesson of Beatitudes**

- 1. **ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE LIKE THIS** (not just "saints")
  - 2. **ALL CHRISTIANS ARE MEANT TO MANIFEST ALL OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS, ALL THE TIME** (not just "poor in spirit", or "meek")
    - Not really going to happen, but it's **MEANT TO BE SO!!**
    - Because of our weakness, we fall short
    - These Beatitudes perfectly fit together "poor in spirit: leads to mourning"
  - 3. **NONE OF THESE DESCRIPTIONS REFERS TO A NATURAL TENDENCY IN ANY PERSON!** Only the spirit can produce them
- D. Fundamental Difference between Christian & Non-Christian
- 1. Clear-cut difference laid out here in the Beatitudes
  - 2. Xian/non-Xian absolutely different in what they admire
    - a. Xian admires one who is "poor in spirit"
    - b. Non-Xian admires **SELF-CONFIDENT MAN!**
  - 3. Xian/non-Xian different in what they yearn for

- a. Xian hungers/thirsts after “righteousness”
- b. Non-Xian yearns for worldly success
- 4. Xian/non-Xian different in what they do
  - a. Xian lives for next world...lives accordingly
  - b. Non-Xian live for this world... live accordingly

**BOTTOM LINE:** Xian/Non-Xian belong to two entirely different Kingdoms

- 1. Vs. 3 “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
- 2. Vs.10 “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

**Christians belong to the kingdom of heaven**

***Colossians 1:13 “He rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”***

**EXAMINE YOURSELF (p.41)**

II. The Beatitudes

**A. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."**

- 1. what poverty of spirit is NOT
  - a. not financial poverty (contra liberation theologians)
  - b. not poverty of spiritual awareness
  - c. not "poor spiritedness" i.e. lack of vitality or hope
  - d. not poverty of the Holy Spirit
- 2. what it is
  - a. poor = lowly, humble
    - i) two Greek words for poverty
    - ii) one, used of widow who put in two small coins... poor but not a beggar
    - iii) this word means to "shrink, cower, or cringe" as beggars did... means to be totally destitute so you have to undergo shame of begging
    - iv) totally without means of sustaining yourself
  - b. total opposite of spiritual pride

***Luke 18:9-14 The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector***

- c. David said the same

***Psalm 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God you will not despise."***

- d. Isaiah openly tells us God loves brokenness & humility

***Isaiah 57:15 "For this is what the high and lofty One says--He who lives forever, and whose name is holy; 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"***

***Isaiah 66:2 "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word."***

e. acknowledgment of spiritual bankruptcy

***Isaiah 6:5 "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty."***

### **INVENTORY TAKEN BEFORE GOD... CHAPTER 11 BANKRUPTCY**

#### ***Can't answer once in a thousand times***

f. not a feeling of worthlessness, insignificance... but of spiritual bankruptcy before the holiness and laws of God

4. where it does not come from

a. making God's law attainable (Talmud interpretations)... Jesus goes on to destroy this later in this Sermon... ironically some Christians try to make these laws attainable naturally too

b. self-hatred

c. showy false humility

d. false imitation... "fake it 'till you make it" can fool other people, can NEVER fool God!!!

5. where it DOES come from

Holy Spirit... DEEP CONVICTION while wrestling with demands of God and own sinfulness

face to face with God, law, self

6. PERFECT ORDER TO SERMON ON THE MOUNT

a. humility MUST come first

b. we cannot be filled by God until we are empty of ourselves

c. only poverty in spirit leads to faith in Christ, and only faith in Christ leads to fulfillment of all the demands of these laws

7. attaining poverty in spirit

a. NOT POSSIBLE THROUGH YOUR OWN EFFORTS

b. BUT put yourself in the place where God's word can do its work

c. beggars go where they will be seen

- d. monasticism, self-abasement, extreme asceticism, mutilation, etc. actually feeds pride
- e. 1st: get eyes off self and look to God... 2nd: starve flesh: stop looking for anything that feeds your pride: praise, compliments and popularity; 3rd: ask God for true brokenness, realizing you don't have it yet

Lloyd-Jones: "How does one become 'poor in spirit'? The answer is that you don't look at yourself or begin by trying to do things to yourself. That was the whole error of monasticism. Those poor men in their desire to do this said, 'I must go out of society, I must scarify my flesh and suffer hardship, I must mutilate my body.' No, no, the more you do that the more conscious will you be of yourself, and the less 'poor in spirit'. The way to become poor in spirit is to look at God. Read this Book about Him, read His law, look at what He expects from us, contemplate standing before Him. It is also to look at the Lord Jesus Christ and to view Him as we see Him in the Gospels."

8. How to know when you have it

- a. beware the viper!!
- b. Thomas Watson's seven principles:

If we are poor in spirit, we will...

- 1) be weaned from ourselves (Psalm 131:2)... self is nothing, Christ is everything
- 2) be lost in wonder of Christ, the beauty of his person
- 3) not complain about any situation, no matter how bad it may be... we genuinely feel that we deserve hell for our sins, so anything God gives us is better than we deserve
- 4) see strengths of others and faults of self
- 5) spend much time in prayer... just like a beggar, constantly needy, constantly asking
- 6) take Christ on his terms, not desiring to hold onto our pride, our position, our comforts... He is Lord, that is final

Watson: "A castle that has long been besieged and is ready to be taken will deliver up on any terms to save their lives. He whose heart has been a garrison for the devil, and has held out long in opposition against Christ, when once God has brought him to poverty of spirit and he sees himself damned without Christ, let God propound what articles of surrender he will, he will readily subscribe to them. Lord, what will you have me to do?"

- 7) praise and thank God for His grace constantly

7. the rewards of poverty in spirit

- a. "blessedness" = approval and therefore happiness
- b. entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven

## B. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

1. logically follows the first... as we look at God, at His standards, at His purity... as we look at ourselves, and see how sinful we are, we begin to mourn deeply
2. NOTE: how bizarre and foolish this seems to the world

*"Happy are those who mourn!!"*

Illus. Lawrence Taylor... repeated arrests for drug charges... pleaded guilty to filing false federal tax forms, declared bankruptcy... "I don't apologize for anything... There are some things in all our lives we wish we could change. Unfortunately, we can't do that. The past is the past. I can't worry about it."

3. World almost insane in its desire for happiness... seeks it in immediate gratification of temporal appetites

*TRAGICALLY: most people seeking happiness in ways absolutely destined to make them miserable*

Illus: Amusing Ourselves to Death

*Want to laugh, have fun... "Eat, drink and be merry..."*

*Preaching books: one after another on jokes, humorous stories, anecdotes...*

*WORLD SHUNS MOURNING at all costs*

4. Scripture takes a different route: genuinely addressing root of grief: sin

Illus.: Pain... anesthesia or healing? Football player, defensive lineman... pain killer at halftime

5. What mourning is not:
  - a. being morose, pessimistic or gloomy
  - b. being a wet blanket, squelching all joy
  - c. grief that arises from grovelling self-pity

6. what mourning is:
  - a. PERSONAL GRIEF OVER PERSONAL SIN

Peter went outside and wept bitterly... this began his healing and restatement as a leader

Illus: George Whitefield's conversion

- b. PERSONAL GRIEF OVER SINS OF OTHERS

Illus: Easy to walk with Jesus through Matthew 23 and pronounce woe to the Scribes & Pharisees or other sinners... but do we stand with Him & weep over Jerusalem as well?

- c. MOURNING IS CHRIST-LIKE

"Man of sorrows"

7. Christian a true realist:

- a. death there, must be faced
- b. God is there, will be known as either Savior or Judge
- c. eternity is there, and every single human being is rushing toward it
- d. God's revelation is there and clearly preaches all these eternal realities will soon come to pass: heaven or hell, eternal blessing or eternal condemnation

*World wants to party away these realities... laughing and AMUSING itself, hoping they'll go away...  
Christians face them directly and mourn over the sin that brought them about*

- 8. Rewards of mourning: true comfort
  - a. true joy of salvation... Jesus comes and says "I died for that sin, too"
  - b. absolute assurance from God based on death of Son:

***Revelation 21:4 "God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."***

Illus. George Bowen's downward journey

Read it from book:

IV. Application

TEST YOURSELF... Do these Beatitudes characterize your heart? God cares about who you really are... not the shell or mask you present to the outside world

A. **Search your hearts:** are you a spiritual beggar?

- Do you feel truly that you have nothing to offer God at all on your own... or are you basically OK
- Are you confident in your own righteousness and good deeds?
- When you think of judgment day, on what do you base your confidence that you will go to heaven?
- Do you feel that spiritual begging is only for those who don't know Christ yet?

B. **Do you mourn over sin?** Or do you look to be amused away from thinking about how far you are from God?

- When you sin, do you take time to grieve over it, or do you just ignore it
- When you see the state of this nation, does it move you emotionally at all??
- As you look over the sins Jesus deals with in chapter 5: anger, lust, divorce, falsehood... do these lead you to deep conviction, confession and repentance... or do you feel nothing

C. If you lack something, **ASK GOD**

D. Begging and Mourning: **Keys to revival**

Jonathan Edwards: All truly God-inspired affections are broken-hearted affections