



Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled, Matthew 5:6.

### **A Life of Fullness**

**Lesson Subject:** Christian character produces a life of spiritual blessing.

**L92. Date:** September 1983. **Text:** Matthew 5:1-12.

**Topic:** Jesus: Teachings of.

What is the greatest sermon ever preached? It is the sermon by our Lord Jesus delivered in Galilee and recorded in Matthew 5—7.

The Sermon on the Mount is the longest discourse of our Lord recorded in Holy Scripture. It is a summary of all He taught and practiced. Following the calling of the twelve apostles, it is a summary of the principles of the kingdom of heaven.

The hearers of the sermon changed as the Lord spoke. It began when *“his disciples came unto him”* (Matthew 5:1). By the time it concluded, a great number of other people had joined as listeners (Matthew 7:28, 29).

The change in hearers brought a change in the scope of the message of our Lord. At first, He spoke directly to His disciples. But, as the crowd grew, He enlarged the meaning of His words to include the unbelievers. (Examine the difference between Matthew 5:1-16 and 7:21-27, for instance.) The sermon is addressed to His immediate disciples and to the world at large.

This week's study deals with “the Beatitudes” of Matthew 5:1-12. The term beatitude is from a Latin word which means “happy, blessed.” This section is so called because the word *“blessed”* occurs nine times in twelve verses. The term Jesus used for *“blessed”* means “happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous.” It refers to a life of joy and satisfaction in God's grace and salvation in spite of external conditions. The Beatitudes reflect true Christian character.

## I. THE BLESSING OF HUMILITY

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven”* (verse 3). Who receives the promised blessing? *“The poor in spirit.”* A person is poor in spirit when he is humble-minded. He is fully aware of his spiritual need and his dependence on God to provide for it. There is no element of self-sufficiency in him. He has learned to say with Paul, *“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God”* (II Corinthians 3:5). This is a meek and humble person before the Lord God.

What blessing comes to the poor in spirit? *“Their's (already) is the kingdom of heaven.”* It is not just that they shall go to heaven when they die. The kingdom of heaven has come to them while they live! As its citizens (Philippians 3:20), they rejoice now in its blessings.

How does that apply today? Be done with feelings of self-importance or sufficiency before God. Cultivate full dependence upon Him. Abide in Christ and you will know the joys of the kingdom today.

## II. THE BLESSING OF CONTRITION

*“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted”* (verse 4). Who are *“they that mourn”*? The reference is not just to human sorrows which relate to living in this world. Here are people who are grieved over sin (whether in themselves or in others). They are like Lot who *“dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds”* (II Peter 2:8). He was *“vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked”* (II Peter 2:7). Thank God for saints who sorrow over the sins in their society.

What blessing is promised those who mourn? They shall be given courage and comfort. They will see some saved from sin. They will see judgment fall upon sin and vindicate the justice of God. They will be taught that one day God will overcome all sin and establish universal righteousness. That will comfort their hearts.

What does this mean to you? It means you should sorrow over the failures in your life. Be grieved over the sins of society which blaspheme the name or hinder the work of God. Flee from those sins; cultivate in your heart a yearning for righteousness; and you will be *“blessed”*!

## III. THE BLESSING OF GENTLENESS

*“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth”* (verse 5). Who are the “*meek*”? They are not the weak! Meekness is an attitude toward God by which we accept His dealing with us as good without disputing or resisting. It is the opposite of self-assertiveness and self-interest. The meek person is not occupied with self at all. God is his center of interest.

The blessings promised the meek are *“they shall inherit the earth.”* When? Now! *“All things are your’s whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your’s; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s”* (I Corinthians 3:21-23). That passage declares that all things *“are yours,”* not that they *“shall be yours,”*

Therefore, accept Romans 8:28 as true: *“All things work together for good to them that love God.”* Practice I Thessalonians 5:18, *“in every thing give thanks.”* Remember the loving purpose of God in you according to Romans 8:29, *“conformed to the image of his Son.”* Live as one of God’s *“meek”* ones and inherit all He promises — today!

#### **IV. THE BLESSING OF YEARNING**

*“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”* (verse 6). What does it mean to *“hunger and thirst after righteousness”*? It means to have a yearning in the heart for righteousness. That is not a yearning for the imputed righteousness of salvation, but for the practical righteousness of daily sanctification. Charles B. Williams catches the idea in saying the Lord refers to *“being and doing right.”* It is a continuing desire to see right prevail in one’s life and in society. He does not desire sin, but righteousness.

What does it mean that such a one shall be *“filled”*? He will receive that which he desires. He will be completely satisfied. The psalmist said of God, *“He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness”* (Psalm 107:9).

How can we know the blessing of being *“filled”*? We must put out of our lives anything that lessens the spiritual appetite (companions, entertainment, reading materials, television programs, secular music, etc.). Settle the sin problem. Unreservedly yield to God. Give God access to your whole being. Be serious about it. You will be filled with all the fullness of God when you truly hunger and thirst after God.

#### **V. THE BLESSING OF MERCY**

*“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy”* (verse 7). Who are the *“merciful”*? They are the compassionate who manifest pity by acts which help to relieve the distresses of mankind. (Grace is related to sin, while mercy is related to need.) A merciful person is never satisfied that things are well with him. He wants things to be well with others also.

What reward is promised the merciful? *“They shall obtain mercy”* from God and man. That does not mean by being merciful men can merit the mercy of God and receive salvation. Jesus said, *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”* (Luke 6:38). How can you show mercy? Be slow to criticize another for his failures. Be ready to share your resources to meet the needs of others. Invest yourself, not just your money, in service. He who is *“the Father of mercies”* (II Corinthians 1:3) requires the spirit of mercy in His children (Colossians 3:12).

## **VI. THE BLESSING OF PURITY**

*“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”* (verse 8). What does it mean to be *“pure in heart”*? It means one's heart is clean. He is utterly sincere. His mind, emotion, and will are unstained by sin. God has cleansed, for *“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (I John 1:7). The cleansing is perfected at salvation and applied in daily life by practical sanctification.

What reward comes to the pure in heart? They shall *“see God.”* When, in eternity? Yes, but before then. They will see God in the regular events of daily life. No longer will good things be attributed to luck, but to God. Those whose hearts are pure will see God's hand in protection, provision, guidance, and in a hundred other ways. Being God conscious, they will see every hush aflame with His glory. How can we keep our hearts pure so as to see God? We must dedicate each day to Him at its beginning. We must relate all events to Him during the day. We must keep guard over thoughts, words, deeds, and motives to keep them holy. We must practice immediate repentance when sin occurs. We must renew our commitment to Him over and again when the devil tempts. *“Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life”* (Proverbs 4:23).

## **VII. THE BLESSING OF PEACEMAKING**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of*

God”(verse 9).

Who are the “*peacemakers*”? They are those who seek to make and maintain peace between God and man and between man and man. They are the exact opposite of the troublemakers, being neither the cause nor carrier of trouble. They promote peace by the Christian gospel and practical counsel.

What blessing is promised them? They shall be called according to what they are, “*the children of God.*” Others will recognize them and acknowledge them as children of God. Children of God make peace; children of the devil make trouble.

How can we be peacemakers? Let us control our own spirit that we neither give nor take offense. Let us not begin or repeat stories which sow discord (Proverbs 6:17-19). Let us seek to reconcile problems wherever trouble arises. This is an important ministry for “*the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace*” (James 3:18).

## **VIII. THE BLESSING OF ABUSE**

“*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake. . . . Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you. . . . Great is your reward in heaven*” (verses 10-12).

Who is promised the blessing? It is those who are denounced, who endure cruelty, who are the brunt of the jokes of wicked men, who bear up when slanderous lies are told on them “*for righteousness' sake.*” They endure mental or physical abuse by those who do not believe in Jesus. What is the reward of the abused? The kingdom of heaven belongs to them. Overflowing gladness and exultation of heart fills them in view of the reward waiting in heaven. “*If we suffer, we shall also reign with him*” (II Timothy 2:12).

How can you live by this standard? Do not defend yourself when under attack by evil, but trust God to protect you and vindicate you. Follow Jesus' example of suffering and bearing the sins of others for the sake of their healing (I Peter 2:19-24). Keep your mind on God.

If the standard set in the Beatitudes seems beyond your ability, rejoice! That casts you in full dependence on God. He will give you victory (Romans 7:24, 25; Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 2:13). Seek this standard and be one of God's blessed ones.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. What is the setting of the Sermon on the Mount?
2. What does “*blessed*” mean as used in the Beatitudes?
3. Who are the poor in spirit?
4. What is said about those that mourn?
5. How can you meet the qualification of verse 5?
6. What does it mean to hunger and thirst after righteousness?
7. What do you know about the grace of mercy?
8. How can you be pure in heart and see God?
9. Why are peacemakers called the children of God?
10. What practical steps will you take to make your life conform to the standard of the Beatitudes?