

"THE BEATITUDES: PART 2"

Matthew 5:7-12

The world scoffs at these standards Jesus laid down for all who would be His followers. The culture magnifies arrogance, aggressiveness, and ambition. Keep this in mind—Jesus spoke as a King. He spoke with clarity, authority, and purpose. Those who listened that day were forced to examine their hearts. True joy and happiness hung in the balance. Living under the blessing of God can change your life dramatically! Isn't that how you want to live?

Matthew 5:7... "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

"Blessed are the merciful"— The Greek word means benevolent compassion that involves both thought and action. In essence, Jesus is communicating a standard of giving and not taking, of being compassionate and not condemning. Just look at the example our Lord set.

- He reached out to heal the sick.
- He restored the cripples that everybody else had abandoned.
- He fed the poor.
- He actually touched lepers.
- He forgave those who crucified Him.

So, how is mercy manifested in our lives? First, it manifests itself in our attitude. Mercy compels us to get involved and to take risks in reaching out to others. Because of this attitude the believer will not hold a grudge or capitalize on another person's weaknesses.

Second, it manifests itself in our actions (**Matt. 25:31-40**). A few years ago, 3 Kentucky football players were going deer hunting and they were drunk. Jason Watts, who was driving, had a wreck and Arthur Steinmetz was killed. Before his funeral started, Steinmetz's parents asked the parents of Jason Watts to sit with them. Hal Mumme, the head coach called the gesture **"one of the greatest acts of forgiveness and one of the most touching things I have ever seen."**

Salvation is the result of God's *mercy*...

Titus 3:5–7... He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life.

Ephesians 2:4–5... But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).

Forgiveness flows out of mercy, and mercy flows out of love.¹

"For they shall receive mercy"—Donald Grey Barnhouse observed...

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, all the work of God for man's salvation passed out of the realm of prophecy and became historical fact. God has now had mercy upon us. All the mercy that God will ever have on man He has already had, when Christ died. That is the totality of mercy. There could not be anymore...The fountain is now opened, and it is flowing, and it continues to flow freely.

God's mercy serves as an example of how we are to be merciful to others. That is one of the key secrets to enjoying God's favor and blessing in our lives. Does your attitude and your actions reveal that you are a merciful believer? Tony Evans comment is helpful...

To fail to show someone mercy simply because they may have caused or contributed to the pain they are experiencing is a dangerous stance to take. When you do, you can be assured that when it comes time for you to need mercy from the consequences of your own wrong choices, God will remember how you treated others (James 2:13). (Kingdom Values, p. 146)

¹ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Matthew](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 191.

It is God who gives the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit, comfort to those who mourn, the earth to the meek, satisfaction to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and mercy to those who are themselves merciful.²

Matthew 5:8... "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Pure in heart"—The word "pure" was used to refer to metals that had been refined until all the impurities were removed. It refers to a radical inner purity. It is "purity of heart" that Jesus points out here. Purity means that you are no longer disconnected from God by something you have allowed to defile your relationship with Him.

Psalm 24:3–4... Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? **4** He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.

2 Corinthians 7:1... Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The word "heart" refers to the mind, will, and emotions.

Proverbs 4:23... Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life.

2 Corinthians 4:16... Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

In God's providence, the older you get age-wise, the younger and more vibrant you can get on the inside (Psalm 92)!

Look at the promise God makes to the *pure in heart*...

² John F. MacArthur Jr., [Matthew](#), vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 189.

"For they shall see God"—The literal translation is *"They shall be continuously seeing God for themselves."* Think about it. Purity of heart sharpens your spiritual vision so...

- **You can see God in creation.**
- **You can see God in the Word.**
- **You can see God in worship.**
- **You can see God in your circumstances.**
- **You can see God in your relationships.**
- **You can see God in your decisions.**
- **You can see God in all of life.**

Don't you want to live with God's favor on your life?

Matthew 5:9... **"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."**

Make no mistake about the character of God. He is a God of peace...

Judges 6:24... Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Isaiah 9:6... For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Romans 15:33... Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

The Bible opens with peace in the Garden of Eden and closes with peace in heaven, but in between there is anything but peace. This makes the words of Jesus even more radical. He has laid down His expectation for His followers. We are to be peacemakers!

"Peacemaker"—This is a compound word. The first part—"peace"—refers to all that makes for a complete and whole life. The second part of the word—"maker"—is an action-filled word that literally bursts with energy. It means to actively pursue peace to the fullest. Jesus is the perfect example. He came to this earth to bring real peace to the human heart.

Colossians 1:19–20... For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, **20** and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Romans 5:1... Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

What is our responsibility as peacemakers? Listen to Paul's words...

Romans 14:17–19... for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18** For he who in this *way* serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. **19** So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Keep this in mind. The true peacemaker is not always tolerant nor is he or she an appeaser who longs for peace at any price. A peacemaker speaks the truth in love. He/she does not putty over cracks.

"For they shall be called sons of God"—Throughout eternity the peacemaker shall be called a son of God. Notice it is God who assigns this title. Nothing compares to the privilege of being called "*a son of God.*"

Matthew 5:10–12... **"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."**

"Those who have been persecuted"— This refers to a constant willingness to endure the persecution, insults, abuse, vicious speech, and false accusations of a godless world. The Word of God makes it clear that believers would draw this kind of adverse reaction from the world.

John 15:18–21... "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before *it hated you*. **19** "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. **20** "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. **21** "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me."

Philippians 1:29... For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

2 Timothy 3:12... Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Notice the reason for persecution in verse 10...

"For the sake of righteousness"— Here are believers who are committed to Jesus and to the kingdom standards He sets forth for their lives. Naturally this draws a negative reaction from a culture permeated by evil. Just look at the persecution of believers in Sudan, Nigeria, North Korea, China, Iran, etc.

Better yet observe the slurs, the intolerance directed at biblical values, and the attempt in our nation to exchange freedom of religion for freedom from religion.

Jesus said we are "*double blessed*" when this persecution occurs (vs. 10-11). Do you remember what that word means? It means to have the favor of God by experiencing a kind of happiness and joy that transcends circumstances.

So, how should we respond when we are persecuted? Look at verse 12...

"Rejoice and be glad for your reward in heaven is great"—As a follower of Jesus Christ, you need to constantly keep in mind that you are a citizen of heaven. Because of that, your life is shaped by kingdom values. Listen to Paul's comparison of our suffering with the blessing of heaven...

Romans 8:18... For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

2 Corinthians 4:16–18... Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. **17** For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

I ask you again, do you want to live under an open heaven where God's hand of blessing flows in and through your life? Jesus singled out those who would experience this blessing. Eight characteristics stand out in their lives.

For some of you, this careful examination of Jesus' words has plunged you into an **identity crisis**. You look at your heart and your actions and they do not match up with the description of Jesus. Ask yourself this question—are you truly born again? If there is any doubt in your heart, receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord tonight!

There are others who have been plunged into an **integrity crisis**. You know in your heart that you are saved. You are a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, you have been cut to pieces by the words of our Lord because you are lukewarm, complacent, and stuck in a mode of no spiritual lethargy. Listen to the Holy Spirit who uses the Word of God to make you uneasy and steer you to genuine repentance. Confess your sin to the Lord and ask Him to make each of these characteristics an increasing reality in your heart and life.

Don't forget. God is looking for someone to bless. Will it be you?