

# The Beatitudes

---

*The Way of Blessedness*

---

Matthew Allen



*The Beatitudes:  
The Way of Blessedness*

*By Matthew Allen*

© 2022 Spiritbuilding Publishers.  
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form  
without the written permission of the publisher.

Published by  
Spiritbuilding Publishers  
9700 Ferry Road, Waynesville, Ohio 45068

THE BEATITUDES  
The Way of Blessedness  
by Matthew Allen

ISBN: 978-1955285-50-6

All Scripture references are taken from Holman Bible Publishers'  
*Christian Standard Bible* unless otherwise noted.

**Spiritbuilding**  
P U B L I S H E R S

[spiritbuilding.com](http://spiritbuilding.com)

# *Table of Contents*

Lesson 1	What Are the Beatitudes? . . . . .	1
Lesson 2	Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit . . . . .	6
Lesson 3	Blessed Are Those Who Mourn . . . . .	11
Lesson 4	Blessed Are the Humble . . . . .	15
Lesson 5	Blessed Are Those Who Hunger After Righteousness . . . . .	22
Lesson 6	Blessed Are the Merciful . . . . .	28
Lesson 7	Blessed Are the Pure in Heart . . . . .	33
Lesson 8	Blessed Are the Peacemakers . . . . .	38
Lesson 9	Blessed Are the Persecuted . . . . .	43
Lesson 10	The Beatitudes of the Psalms . . . . .	49
Lesson 11	More Beatitudes by Jesus . . . . .	55
Lesson 12	The Beatitudes of Revelation . . . . .	59
Lesson 13	The Beatitudes for Today . . . . .	64



## Lesson 1

# What Are the Beatitudes?

## Introduction and Overview

It has been called the greatest sermon ever preached. Yet, it takes only about ten minutes to read. What is contained in Matthew 5–7 is really a compacted version of the theology of Jesus Christ. Just about every verse can be taken apart and examined . . . and yet the depths of their meaning and application can never be fully exhausted. The Beatitudes are, as Donald Hagner called them, *the foundation of righteous living*.<sup>1</sup>

The word *beatitude* is Latin in origin and refers to *an existing state* of happiness, bliss, or blessedness. The state of blessedness is what the Greek word, *makoroi*, is referring to at the beginning of verses 3–10 (also used in v. 11) in Matthew 5. In English, when we use *bless* as adjective, we typically pronounce it with two syllables (bless–id). Each of the beatitudes refer to the state or condition of joy resulting from our share in the salvation of the kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup> They are not asking or wishing for something, they are affirming qualities that already exist. Kenneth Bailey has written:

As a group, the Beatitudes do *not* mean “Blessed are the people who do X because they will receive Y.” The point is not exhortation for a certain type of behavior. Instead they should be read with the sense, “Look at the authentic spirituality and joy of these people who have or will be given X.” Put in concrete terms we could say, “Bless-ed is the happy daughter of Mr. Jones because she will inherit the Jones’s farm.” The woman in question is *already* the happy daughter of Mr. Jones. She is not working to earn the farm. Everyone knows that a key element in her happy and secure life is that she and the community around her know that the farm will one day be hers. The first statement affirms a happy state that already exists. The second statement affirms a future that allows her even now to live a happy life.<sup>3</sup>

---

1 Hagner, Donald A. *Matthew 1–13*. Vol. 33A. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1993, p. 86.

2 Hauck, Friedrich, and Georg Bertram. “Μακάριος, Μακαρίζω, Μακαρισμός.” Edited by Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–, Vol. 4, p. 367.

3 Bailey, Kenneth E. *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008, p. 68.

The beatitudes are describing the reality of the believer. They are the present experience, an objective reality.

To be **blessed** is not a superficial feeling of well-being based on circumstance, but a deep supernatural experience of contentedness based on the fact that one's life is right with God. Blessedness is based on objective reality, realized in the miracle of transformation to a new and divine nature.<sup>4</sup>

They should be understood as declarations. They represent true, inner righteousness of those who are poor in spirit, humble, and merciful. In so doing, Jesus is making a statement about what God thinks about those who believe in Him. To live in a state of blessedness is to have an awareness of the approval of God.<sup>5</sup>

The state of happiness or contentment Jesus describes is attained in a completely opposite way from the way the world pursues it. Wealth, success, fame, popularity, and ambition are all said to describe happiness. Yet, these external things will never satisfy the deepest needs of the heart. The world says "get," "achieve," or "do" things to be happy. Jesus' way to find happiness is a completely different pursuit. Solomon teaches us that the pursuit of things is void of purpose and empty.

"Absolute futility," says the Teacher. "Absolute futility. Everything is futile."  
What does a person gain for all his efforts that he labors at under the sun?"  
(Ecclesiastes 1.2–3).

One of the messages that runs throughout the sermon on the Mount is that lasting and true happiness will never be found in earthly things.

"Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also, (Matthew 6.19–21).

The state of blessedness that Jesus points to in the beatitudes is found only outside of this world. The emanate from the person whose thought patterns

---

4 MacArthur, John F., Jr. *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985, Vol. 1, p. 142.

5 Hughes, R. Kent. *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, p. 17.

have been completely transformed, being based on a regenerated life operating from a spiritual perspective.

### *The Placing of the Sermon on the Mount in the Overall Context of Matthew*

Matthew 4.23 could serve as a summary of the earthly ministry of Jesus.

Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Note how Matthew characterizes Jesus' ministry:

1. Jesus **taught** about the way of the kingdom.
2. Jesus **preached** about the good news of the kingdom.
3. Jesus demonstrated the power of the kingdom by **healing** the sick.

Now, let's look at Matthew 9.35:

Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.

Did you catch it? Here again we see Jesus' ministry summarized as teaching, preaching, and healing.

Now, what do we find in between Matthew 4.23 and 9.35?

In chapters 5–7 we find a summary of the theology of the kingdom and chapters 8–9 provide us with the historical account of his healing ministry. Not only must we take in His teaching, but we must also live the type of life He requires, trusting in His power to get us through.

### *A Look at the Eight Beatitudes*

When we observe the wording, there are eight beatitudes. What is written in Matthew 5.11 should be viewed as an expansion on what is said in v. 10. The *insulting* and false testimony are specific examples of the persecution Jesus mentions in v.10.

The 8 beatitudes of Matthew 5.3–10 can be seen as a unit when we observe vs. 3 and 10. Both end with: *for the kingdom of heaven is theirs*. In the present,



sons and daughters can live in a state of blessedness knowing that they are in the kingdom and the inheritance it brings is theirs.

The other 6 beatitudes are different:

- 5.4: *for they will be comforted.*
- 5.5: *for they will inherit the earth.*
- 5.6: *for they will be filled.*
- 5.7: *for they will be shown mercy.*
- 5.8: *for they will see God.*
- 5.9: *for they will be called sons of God.*

Since they are in the kingdom, what blessings do believers enjoy?

While God's sons and daughters are in the kingdom now, the blessings we currently enjoy are but a foretaste of the full blessings we will enjoy in heaven. The kingdom brings comfort, hope in a realized inheritance, declared righteousness, mercy, spiritual access to God, and adoption by God. Obviously after this life concludes, we will realize these blessings in their totality.

Another way to look at the beatitudes is to divide them into two sections.

- The first four focus on our relationship to God.
- The second four focus on the impact our relationship with God has on the way we treat other humans.

The Spirit works in our heart to develop dependence on God, which leads to genuine sorrow for sin and a trust in His mercy and grace, which leads to a spirit of meekness, which results in the desire to lead a holy life. When we surrender our heart to God, the natural result will be seen in all our relationships. We will choose to be merciful when others sin against us. We will seek purity above all else. The desire for peace will reign, and the desire to inflict pain on those who persecute us will fade away.

## *Conclusion*

If we are to understand the beatitudes as declarations, then we need to view them first as an announcement of how blessed and fortunate those in the kingdom really are. Even through the difficulties of life, they have access to every spiritual blessing that will equip them for every scenario or situation.

The status of the believer is not of their own doing, it is the gift of God. It is, ... a celebration of the ongoing work of God in one's life.

But not only are they pronouncements, they also represent an invitation for someone outside of the kingdom to come to Jesus so they can become this type of person. If a searching unbeliever recognizes the blessings being enjoyed by God's sons and daughters because they are poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful, pure, and peaceable, then wouldn't it behoove them to reach out to Jesus to become that type of person?

What are the beatitudes to you?<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Some of the thoughts in the conclusion are adapted from *The Beatitudes and the Gospel of the Kingdom*. See Piper, John. *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)*. Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007.

## Lesson 2

# *Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit*

## *The Foundational Mark of the Christian*

### **Matthew 5.3**

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

### *Introduction*

**T**he beatitudes describe the mark of the believer, i.e., blessedness, happiness, and joy. God is excited to fill the hearts of His sons and daughters with genuine happiness and peace ... true blessedness. His kingdom is the only place where this is found. To enter the kingdom, we must be willing to subject ourselves to God's rule and authority and acknowledge Him as Lord. Only when we do this will we discover true happiness. Once we are inside, we begin to discover how we have been brought to a place where God eagerly disperses His blessings ... even as we labor here on earth. Paul said:

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ, Ephesians 1.3.

As Christians, we are already receiving blessings by being in God's family ... and we place our faith in the Word of God who promises that they will continually be delivered to us throughout all eternity. Part of Paul's teaching in the magnificent passage of Ephesians 2 is to convey the message that those who have been made alive with Christ by being raised up with Him will *display the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ Jesus*, Ephesians 2.5–7. So, the moment we were made new, God began to lead us to true happiness, contentment, joy, and peace. One day in the world to come, we will experience these blessings in totality.

Meanwhile, how do we get there?

The beatitudes point the way. It begins by having the right attitude toward God. We are poor in spirit, mourn, exhibit meekness, and hunger and thirst for righteousness. Our right attitude toward God impacts the way we treat others. We respond in mercy, purity, and the desire for peace. The world will not react kindly as it will lash out at us with reviling and persecution. The net

result of our right relationship with God and our fellowman is that we will be the world's preservative (salt) and reflect the true light of the Son of God, Matthew 5.13–16.

This is the opposite of what the world tells us. Media and the prevailing cultural philosophy of the day champion wealth, pride, self-confidence, fame, and power are all keys to happiness. For the kingdom citizen however, it is exactly the opposite. Learning what it means to be *poor in spirit* is the first step.

### *The Beatitude*

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs,” Matthew 5.3

We must not miss the imagery of the word Jesus chose for *poor*. This person is not like the poor widow mentioned in Luke 21.2<sup>7</sup> who had at least some small resources, this is the beggar in a miserable condition. They are completely indigent. One dictionary describes the word as “to rove about in wretchedness.”<sup>8</sup> Jesus is not advocating that Christians be physically poor, he is describing the kingdom citizen's awareness of their complete spiritual poverty before God. Apart from Jesus we bring nothing to the table. Those in the kingdom understand they are there by grace ... they are devoid of all pride ... and stand before God in total dependence.

It is the person who moves with *humility, contriteness, and trembles at God's word*, Isaiah 66.2. It is the person who is *brokenhearted and crushed in spirit*, Psalm 34.18. It is the *broken and contrite heart* of Psalm 51.17. It is the tax collector of Luke 18.13 crying out for mercy because of his own sin. It is like David who confessed his total helplessness before God and plead for mercy, Psalm 51.1–3.

It is ... the true possession of humility.

### *Why This Is Foundational*

In another place in Matthew's gospel, we read:

“Truly I tell you,” He said, “unless you turn and become like little children, you

---

<sup>7</sup> The word for “poor” in Luke 21.2 references what might be described as ordinary poverty, where a person is in need of things relating to livelihood, but not destitute.

<sup>8</sup> Thayer, Joseph Henry. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*. New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889, p. 557.

will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child—this one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Matthew 18.3–4.

If one approaches God with pride, he or she will never enter the kingdom.

The door into His kingdom is low, and no one who stands tall will ever go through it. We cannot be filled until we are empty; we cannot be made worthy until we recognize our unworthiness; we cannot live until we admit we are dead. We might as well expect fruit to grow without a tree as to expect the other graces of the Christian life to grow without humility. We cannot begin the Christian life without humility, and we cannot live the Christian life with pride.<sup>9</sup>

Pride is an absolute barrier to the relationship with God. It must be continually dealt with as it lies as the root of our sin. It prohibits our seeing the ever-present reality of the human condition. In and of ourselves we are wretched, worthless, and sinful. In Ezekiel 16, the prophet looks forward to a future time of blessing after the nation endures the *consequences of their depravity and detestable practices*, 16.58. One day God would establish a permanent covenant with them, and note the heart and disposition of the men and women who entered it:

I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the Lord, so that when I make atonement for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth again because of your disgrace. This is the declaration of the Lord God,” Ezekiel 16.62–63.

When a person begins to understand his or her own spiritual poverty, the certainty of eternal doom, and sees the reality of spiritual deadness apart from Christ, he or she will see the true magnificence of the salvation God provides. This understanding will not happen without humility. *Everyone with a proud heart is detestable to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished*, Proverbs 16.5.

Pride was *the* issue behind all others in Laodicea. Those in the church believed they were rich, wealth, and in need of nothing, Revelation 3.17. Pride blinded them to reality. Jesus says they were *wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked*. Until they divested themselves of their pride, they had no chance of being conformed to the image of Christ.

---

<sup>9</sup> MacArthur, John F., Jr. *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985, Vol. 1, p. 148.

## *How to Become Poor in Spirit*

### *Focus on Christ*

The emphasis on our selfish wants and desires must end. Christ now rules over our heart, Colossians 3.15. We see who Christ is through the Word, Colossians 3.16, experience God's care and concern through our active prayer life, 1 Peter 5.6–7; and worship through private and public devotion, we can open our heart to His power. Jesus is the perfect example of humility, Philippians 2.5–8.

### *Declare War on the Flesh*

The natural man craves honor and recognition that come through his/her own works. Pride goes right along with our old self. We must kill it. We have nothing to boast about. Our entire existence is due to Christ, Colossians 3.3–4. We must come to realize everything we have has been given to us. *What do you have that you didn't receive? If, in fact, you did receive it, why do you boast as if you hadn't received it,* 1 Corinthians 4.7.

### *Ask God for Help*

Just like David, we should pray: *God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me,* Psalm 51.10. We should desire *integrity of heart,* Ezekiel 11.19. Jesus promised:

“Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened, Matthew 7.7–9.

## *The Poor in Spirit Inherit the Kingdom*

It is God's good pleasure to give the kingdom to those who come to Him in humility:

Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you the kingdom, Luke 12.32.

God wants us to recognize our poverty so that He can make us rich. He wants us to recognize our lowliness so that He can raise us up.

10     *The Beatitudes: The Way of Blessedness*

For the High and Exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is holy, says this:  
“I live in a high and holy place, and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit, to  
revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the oppressed, Isaiah 57.15.

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you, James 4.10.

### Lesson 3

# *Blessed Are Those Who Mourn*

## *The Heart of Sorrow Is the One Accepted By God*

### **Matthew 5.4**

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

### *Introduction*

Have you ever said to yourself, “I just wish I could leave. I want to go to a place far from here. A place of rest and peace, where I can clear my mind.” Psalm 55 references a time in David’s life when it felt that way for him:

I said, “If only I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and find rest. How far away I would flee; I would stay in the wilderness. Selah I would hurry to my shelter from the raging wind and the storm,” Psalm 55.6–8.

There are certainly times in our life where we might be able to identify with David. Trouble comes upon us, and we want to escape. The deeper our problem ... the more difficult it seems to find comfort. And yet, in Matthew 5.4 Jesus says:

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

How can those who are sad be happy at the same time? How is it that the path to happiness involves sadness and that the way to rejoicing is found in mourning?<sup>10</sup> It is the exact opposite of human, worldly thinking that says to find contentment everything must be going your way. Here, Jesus turns the conventional wisdom upside down. What did He mean here, and what is in this for us?

### *Blessed Are Those Who Mourn*

In the previous beatitude, Jesus discussed the need for understanding our true spiritual condition without God. We come to Him destitute and broken, bringing nothing to the table. We are in complete spiritual bankruptcy. We come to Him doing the only thing we can, i.e., pleading for mercy and grace. We come to him void of any pride.

---

<sup>10</sup> MacArthur, p. 154.



The understanding of our true status before God, the consciousness of our own sin, naturally leads to genuine sorrow. The heart of sorrow, bowed down in humility is the one accepted by God. David understood this after his great sin with Bathsheba. After being confronted by Nathan he comes before God and confesses:

For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. Against you—you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence; you are blameless when you judge, Psalm 51.3–4.

Truly, David mourned for his sin. When we consider our own sins in light of God's amazing grace and mercy, we too identify with David's hurt and sorrow. The realization of what sin does should break our heart.

The term for *mourn* in 5.4 conveys a deep sorrow or heartfelt grief, usually reserved to describe the grief one experiences over a dying loved one or friend. During New Testament times the word described great sorrow or lamentation, a deep, inner agony. In certain places it could be described as a passionate grief that leads to action. And here specifically, it has to do with those who see the world for what it really is and are not trapped by its temptations.<sup>11</sup>

The type of attitude Jesus speaks of here is especially important as it is popular during our time to laugh off our sin. The world seeks self-gratification and pleasure and neglects the needed introspection to see the weight of sin. As a result, most people do not grieve or mourn over sin or evil. The lack of mourning over one's personal sin leads to a lack of repentance. As we worry about the direction our country is headed, may we pray that collectively the nation begins to wake up to the fact of its wretchedness before God, let that turn into sorrow, and move toward repentance.

Someone has said that there is a great need in the church today to cry instead of to laugh. Many things about Christianity that were intended to bring us to sober mindedness with deep thought and self-examination have been turned into fun or foolishness. Scripture says we are to confess our sins and mourn for them. Only when we do that can we experience genuine happiness . . .

---

<sup>11</sup> *pénthos* [grief, sorrow], *penthéō* [to grieve, sorrow]. See Kittel, Gerhard, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985, p. 825.

which no amount of optimism or positive thinking can produce.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you, James 4.8–10.

As we consider the *mourning* in Matthew 5.4, we should also not forget Isaiah 61 which speaks of mourning people being comforted. Isaiah speaks about the mourning that happens when the righteous suffer, the wicked prosper, and God seems silent about it. In that mourning is an intense desire for God to make it right. And there, as in Matthew, the promise is that the deliverance and comfort from God will come.

### *They Shall Be Comforted*

Those who mourn for their sin, rest in the fact that they know they will ultimately experience God's deliverance, which will come directly from Him. Happiness doesn't come from the mourning itself; it comes from how God responds to it ... which is supplying forgiveness. This leads to genuine happiness that goes farther and deeper than anything on earth could provide.

The comfort promised here is not just far off in eternity. The blessing comes after obedience. As we continually mourn over our sin, we should be continually comforted ... in this life. God has already given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 2 Thessalonians 2.16.

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,  
Matthew 11.28.

He will lift the burden from those who mourn over sin ... and he will bring rest to those who are weary of sin. As we confess our sin, he is faithful to forgive, and for as long as we mourn our sin, he is faithful to comfort.

### *How to Mourn for Sin*

#### *Remove the Things That Keep You From Mourning*

What are the things that make you content with yourself? What are things that make you resist the Spirit and question His word? *A stony heart does not mourn.* Do you need to remove:

- The love of sin?
- Self-conceit?
- Pride?
- Procrastination?

### *Get Into the Word*

The word instructs about the true nature of sin and how destructive it is to us. Think of how the great men of Scripture viewed their sin. As we do, we'll come to see our own reality and the depth of sin we face.

### *Pray About It*

Pray for contriteness of heart. God never refuses those who ask, Matthew 7.7–9.