

# The Beatitudes

Jesus begins His most powerful sermon with a series of nine paradoxical and upside down statements that we commonly call "The Beatitudes." Matthew begins each sentence, each verse, of the sermon with a simple word, "Blessed." This quarter, we take a look in detail at these concepts, ideals and principles that we have fondly known as "The Beatitudes."



## The Setting:

1. Luke places the sermon on the mount in Jesus' second year of ministry, at the peak of His popularity
2. Matthew tells us that Jesus went up on a mountain (footnote: a hill) and sat down.
  - this setting made a natural amphitheater and would have been good for acoustics
  - here with clean air, clear perspectives, a large crowd gathered

## The Sermon:

1. The Beatitudes are not the totality of the message Jesus gave. They form the introduction and the image of what citizens in the kingdom were like
  - In the book, *Invitation to a spiritual revolution*, the author states: "It is safe to say that the Sermon on the Mount is the best known, least understood and least practiced of all the teachings of Jesus."
2. The sermon is a careful, inside descriptive look at the character and the heart of citizens in the Kingdom of God.
  - The call is for mental alertness and self assessment. The call is for attitude and behavioral changes. It is a call to "become"
  - The sermon works from the inside out and it is personal and directed to the heart of each listener
3. The sermon begins with these odd beatitudes and ends with the crashing of the foolish man's house during a storm

## The Concept of Beatitudes:

1. Jesus was not the first to use beatitudes or the expression, "Blessed."
  - Within the Law of Moses there were "blessings" and "curses" connected to obedience to the Law (Deut 11:26-28; 28:1,2)
  - Throughout the Psalms, the "blessed" life is described (1:1; 2:12; 21:6; 32:1)
  - In Revelation, there is a series of "blessings" (1:3, 14:13; 19:9; 22:7)
2. Modern writers like to use the expression, 'Be happy' as a way to define the word "Beatitude"
  - Happiness is based upon what "happens" and that is often out of our control

Our English word "bless" comes from an Old English word 'blod' which meant "blood." To bless originally referred to that which had been consecrated by blood

- The word was similar to 'bliss' which became 'happy'. The Latin word brings the idea of being 'fortunate.' The word "blessed" carries a much deeper meaning than happy

- Blessed is a state of mind that one chooses

## Jesus Blessed the Lives of Others;

- Jairus by raising his daughter (Mk 5:42)
- Giving sight to a man born blind (Jn 9:7)
- In parables He illustrated the "blessings from Heaven"
  - laborer who worked one hour and was paid a full days wage (Mt 20:9)
  - celebration the prodigal received when he returned home (Lk 15:23)

3. Jesus lived the blessed life even though here on earth He was scorned, ridiculed and rejected

#### The Structure of Beatitudes:

1. Jesus begins with the very words that most would never include in a list of "blessings"
  - Poverty, mourning, meek, hungry, thirsty
2. The world has always been chasing happiness
  - The "Pursuit of happiness" is built into our Independence
  - Wealth, power, fame are the instruments that drives success and happiness in the world. These words are not addressed by Jesus

#### The world would say:

Blessed is the man who is always right  
Blessed is the man who is satisfied with self  
Blessed is the man who is strong  
Blessed is the man who rules  
Blessed is the man who is popular  
Blessed is the man who enjoys his life

#### Observations about the Beatitudes:

1. The Beatitudes involve \_\_\_\_\_ qualities
  - Jesus' kingdom was "not of this world" (Jn 18:36)
2. These qualities are \_\_\_\_\_
  - They are not natural nor popular
  - We often view "blessings" as things given to us by God. Here, these are decisions we make towards God
    - some people are "blessed" with good looks, a voice that sings beautifully, and ear that hears pitch, a talent that is "God-given"
    - but remarkably, here any and all can live the "blessed" life by the choices that they make
3. These qualities are \_\_\_\_\_ together
  - They are in a progressive order
  - They are intended to be a unit. One has all of these or one has none of these
4. These qualities are independent of the \_\_\_\_\_ around us
5. Jesus expects each of us to \_\_\_\_\_ a blessed life
  - This leads us to being content, thankful and closely following the Lord
  - Jesus wants us to have these qualities NOW
  - These things are not easy to manifest
  - While these qualities are scorned and mocked by the world, to Heaven, this is the way to a "blessed" life

