

Continued from Page One
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"I could pretend to sleep about what I was doing, but I couldn't get out."

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BLESSED

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY WILL BE FILLED. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD. BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS,

LIFE GROUP RESOURCES



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BLESSED

For so many of us we simply want to be happy. But where do we find happiness? So many of the age-old pursuits have come up empty. The pursuit of money, sex, power have left many with brief moments of elation but not a deep sense of contentment and happiness. Some of us have moved house, moved jobs, changed relationships, travelled the world, dabbled in different spiritual pursuits, and yet still haven't found the key to happiness.

Jesus invites us to embrace a whole new way of seeing the world and living. In Matthew chapter 5, at the start of his most famous Sermon, he lists a group of beatitudes (derived from the Latin word beatus - blessing/happiness). And the way to happiness is completely at odds with the message of this world.

The danger with these lists of 'blessings' is that they aren't new behaviours that we should strive for. Jesus is speaking to a group of people about how they can and should see the world differently now that the Kingdom of God is near. Instead of spending their life striving to become rich, powerful, comfortable, strong, 'victorious', Jesus wants people to see that blessing, happiness and bliss is found in a completely different place. These statements are a declaration of a new kingdom reality. Jesus is turning things on their head – his kingdom reverses and turns upside down some of the things that have become the way of this world. The invitation of the beatitudes is more than just a list of new behaviours to pursue, but rather a new kingdom and king which invites us to discover happiness, contentment and flourishing in whole new ways and in very different places.

The way of Jesus is counter-intuitive to the way of the world. The invitation in a broken world where those who mourn aren't comforted, those who are merciful don't receive mercy and so on, is to live in the way of God's new reality where the Kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

Throughout this series we will be invited to find joy in the midst of our current circumstances, and to see the world through a whole new lens – the Kingdom of God. Where the things we have been told provide happiness are replaced with a new set of realities where happiness can truly be found under the rule of King Jesus.



Life group series

Matthew 5:1-12

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Blessed are the Pure in Heart

Blessed are the Merciful

Blessed are those who Mourn

Blessed are the Meek

Extra Resources

<https://bridgetown.church/teachings/gospel-of-matthew/who-is-actually-blessed>

<https://bibleproject.com/blog/the-sermon-on-the-mount-and-jesus-as-the-new-david/>

<https://bibleproject.com/podcast/matthew-p5-kingdom-blessing/>

Hide this in your heart – a book by Michael Frost and Graham Joseph Hill



“Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Matthew 5:3

The bottom line for this study is: **You’re blessed when you have complete dependence on God.**

The Poor in Spirit

- Describe what being poor in spirit means in your own words.
- Describe what the kingdom of heaven means in your own words.
- If someone was to be blessed by being poor in spirit, what qualities/virtues would they have?
- How is being poor in spirit radically different to how the world tells us to live?
- How does being poor in spirit help us find fulfilment in this life, and in the life to come?
- Where/how do you see this Beatitude in the life of Jesus?

This Beatitude elsewhere in Scripture

Read Luke 18:9-14

- How do you see this beatitude at work in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector?
- What is significant about the Pharisee (the supposedly holy one) being the one who is rejected?
- What is significant about the Tax Collector (someone who betrayed God’s people) being the one who is justified before God?
- What does this parable then tell us about how we are to live dependent on God rather than on wealth, recognition, status etc?

Reflect

- Where have you seen or experienced this this Beatitude in your own life?
- If you’re honest, how much are you satisfied by what the world has to offer? And how much are you desperate for God?
- What needs to change in your life for you to recognise your own desperate need of Jesus?
- Discuss practical ways you can reject how the world wants us to be rich, and instead find blessing in dependence on God.

Pray

- Pray for a deepening dependence on God and to let go of the worldly trappings that fool us into thinking we are satisfied without God.
- So...what are you going to do about it? And who are you going to tell?



“Blessed are the Peacemakers for they will be called children of God”

Matthew 5:9

The bottom line for this study is: **You’re blessed when you deny your right to be offended, and actively pursue peace with others.**

The Peacemakers

- If someone was to be a peacemaker, what qualities/virtues would they have?
- How is being a peacemaker radically different to what we see going on in the world today?
- How does being a peacemaker help us find fulfilment in this life, and in the life to come?
- Where/how do you see this Beatitude in the life of Jesus?

This Beatitude elsewhere in Scripture

Read Matthew 18:15-20

- Jesus gives instructions on how to deal with sin, offence, and strife among believers. Describe the process in your own words.
- How easy/difficult is it to follow Jesus’ instructions here? What stops us from following this way of living?
- What posture does a person need to take to be a peacemaker? What negative qualities must one deny in themselves to become a peacemaker?
- How is ‘shalom’ (God’s eternal, abiding peace) different than how the world sees peace (merely the absence of strife)? How can we strive for shalom in our relationships rather than merely an absence of strife?

Reflect

- Why is it so easy to take offence and so hard to actively go about restoring peace?
- What can you do to help disarm yourself from being offended and instead pursue peace with others?
- What correlation is there around cancel-culture/taking offence and the need for genuine peacemakers in the world today?

Pray

- Pray for those who you are harbouring offence against, or with whom you lack peace. Pray for God to move you to action to pursue God’s peace with them and to restore broken relationships.
- So...what are you going to do about it? And who are you going to tell?



“Blessed are the Pure in Heart for they will see God”

Matthew 5:8

The bottom line for this study is: **You’re blessed when you choose lasting holiness over immediate happiness.**

The Pure in Heart

- Describe what being pure in heart means in your own words.
- If someone was to be blessed by being pure in heart, what qualities/virtues would they have?
- How is being pure in heart radically different to how the world tells us to live?
- How does being pure in heart help us find fulfilment in this life, and in the life to come?
- Where/how do you see this Beatitude in the life of Jesus?

This Beatitude elsewhere in Scripture

Read John 3:1-21

- What is your understanding of Jesus saying you must be born again? What does being born again mean to you?
- Have you personally had a moment of being born again? What was that experience like? How has it changed your life?
- What might being born again have to do with having a pure heart?
- What is so important about seeing the kingdom of God? Why might we need clear vision and clean hearts to see this properly?

Reflect

- Where have you seen or experienced this this Beatitude in your own life? Has there been a time when purity and a clearer understanding of God have gone hand in hand?
- Why do you think people who are pure of heart will be blessed with the ability to see God?
- What are the things in your life that cloud your vision and stop you from living a pure life?
- What can you do to prevent the things of this world making your heart unclean and impure?

Pray

- Pray Psalm 51:10-12 over each other. Pray for restoration and a cleansing of sin that we may see ourselves and God more clearly.
- So...what are you going to do about it? And who are you going to tell?



“Blessed are the Merciful for they will be shown mercy”

Matthew 5:7

The bottom line for this study is: **You’re blessed when you show undeserved kindness.**

The Merciful

- Describe what being merciful means in your own words.
- If someone was to be blessed by being merciful, what qualities/virtues would they have?
- How is being merciful radically different to how the world tells us to live?
- How does being merciful help, us find fulfilment in this life, and in the life to come?
- Where/how do you see this Beatitude in the life of Jesus?

This Beatitude elsewhere in Scripture

Read Matthew 18:21-35

- The unmerciful servant was caught out not passing on the same mercy that had been offered to him. What was the punishment for this? Would he ever be able to pay off such a debt to get out of jail?
- What does Peter’s question and Jesus’ answer at the start of the parable tell us the nature of forgiveness?
- What can you see in this parable about the astonishing mercy of God?

Reflect

- How have you experienced needing mercy from someone else? What was that experience like for you?
- Has there been a time in your life when you’ve shown undeserved kindness or forgiveness to someone else? What did that do for them, and what did it do in you?
- What needs to change in your life for you to live a more merciful and kind life?
- Discuss practical ways you can show mercy and the undeserved kindness of God to others around you.

Pray

- Pray that we would forgive others just as the Lord has forgiven us. Pray that God would inspire you with ways to show an extra dose of kindness to someone this week.
- So...what are you going to do about it? And who are you going to tell?



“Blessed are those who Mourn for they will be comforted”

Matthew 5:4

The bottom line for this study is: **You’re blessed when you honestly bring your grief before God.**

Those who Mourn

- When people mourn, what are the qualities/virtues of God they need that will bring them comfort?
- How is this beatitude at odds with what the world tries to tell us about grief?
- Where/how do you see this Beatitude in the life of Jesus?

This Beatitude elsewhere in Scripture

Read John 11:1-44

- How do you see this beatitude at work in Jesus and with those he interacts with in this narrative?
- What role does empathy play in comforting those who mourn? Where do you see this play out in these Bible verses?
- Jesus wept. He also later suffered on a cross and died. He knows the grief we carry. How does knowing that we have a saviour who empathises with us bring comfort both in this life and in eternity to come?
- What hope does Jesus’ words in verse 25-26 give to those who mourn?

Reflect

- Has there been a time in your life when your grief was utterly overwhelming? What was it that helped bring you through that grief?
- Have you had the opportunity to show the comfort and love of God to someone else who was mourning? How did that experience help them and what did God do in you at the same time?
- How honest are you with your grief before God? How vulnerable are you with the hurting and broken parts of your heart?
- What does this beatitude teach us if we were to be honest and open with our grief before the Lord and others?

Pray

- Pray you would open the hurting and vulnerable parts of your life bare before the Lord. Take some time to reflect on the comfort and healing that He wants to bring into your life. *Psalm 34:18 “The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”*
- So...what are you going to do about it? And who are you going to tell?



“Blessed are the Meek for they will inherit the earth”

Matthew 5:5

The bottom line for this study is: **You’re blessed when you choose to put others before yourself.**

The Meek

- Describe what being meek means in your own words.
- If someone was to be blessed by being meek, what qualities/virtues would they have?
- How is being meek radically different to how the world tells us to live?
- How does being meek help us find fulfilment in this life, and in the life to come?
- Where/How do you see this Beatitude in the life of Jesus?

This Beatitude elsewhere in Scripture

Read John 13:1-17

- Why is Peter initially so shocked that Jesus would wash his and the disciples’ feet?
- Consider Matthew 20:20-28 alongside these verses in John. What do they teach us about the nature and character of Jesus?
- What does Jesus teach us about the relationship of power and humility?
- Read Philippians 2:1-11. How does adopting the nature of a servant change the way in we live? How can we mirror the life of Christ in this way?

Reflect

- Who is someone in your life who lives with meekness? What do you see in them that shows them to be meek?
- We have the power to tear others down, or to build them up. Are there times when you’ve not had that power under control? What were the consequences of not having that power restrained?
- Discuss some practical examples of how we can live with humility to serve others before ourselves.

Pray

- Pray that each of you would continue to grow in humility and serve others before yourself. Pray that God would reveal ways in which you can serve a world in need this week.
- So...what are you going to do about it? And who are you going to tell?

