

The Beatitudes

Introduction:

1. The beatitudes, or special blessings of the Lord, are found in Matthew 5:1-12 and Luke 6:20-26.
2. **Beatitude.** Supreme blessedness or happiness. A declaration or ascription of special blessedness.
3. These are some of the earliest public words of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Matthew chapters 1-4).
4. These nine blessings compose our Lord's introduction to His well-known Sermon on the Mount.
5. As Moses laid blessings and curses upon Israel, so the Lord here promises blessings upon the faithful.
6. As Cornelius was eager for all things commanded him by God, so should we desire the character here.
7. These nine descriptive statements point out the character of the righteous, the true citizens of Zion.
8. This is the wholesome doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ, which true lovers of Jesus Christ will crave.
9. While each one could be considered separately and at great length, let us review them quickly together.
10. We shall pursue our purpose by three steps for each one, (a) identifying the character of God's blessing, (b) confirming the promised reward, and (c) identifying the contrary character under the curse of God.
11. The blessings may and should be viewed two ways – the spiritual character stated exists only by the previous blessing of God ("are"), and the promised reward is also by the blessing of God ("for").
12. These are more blessings than exhortations, but the exhortation is hidden in the blessing. Look for it!
13. We find comparable descriptions of Zion's citizens and the children of God in Psalm 15 and Psalm 24.
14. No amount of talk, Bible knowledge, or outward compliance can make up for these marks of saints!
15. These marks do not lie, as all men will lie; and they hard to fake, as they require a righteous new man.

I. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

A. What is the character?

1. Natural man cries, "Blessed are the rich, for theirs are the world's kingdoms."
2. They teach that riches are the condition and evidence of blessing (I Tim 6:3-5).
3. Natural man rages on in his promotion of self-love, but not the righteous poor.
4. Most earthly teachers promote success, honour, and riches as true blessedness.
5. There is no virtue in poverty, as Catholic vows of poverty presume. The same Bible and same Lord teach that faithful diligence will make one rich (Prov 10:4).
6. This is not just feeling sorry for yourself, your circumstances or opportunities.
7. The poverty of spirit here is a destitute spiritual perspective of one's self, as you can read about from the heart of David (Psalm 38) and Paul (Romans 7:18-24).
8. All men are worthless, but being "poor in spirit" is consciousness of the fact.
9. The blessings of God are upon such poor persons (Pr 16:19; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2).
10. The character here is that of the publican, condemning himself (Luke 18:13).

B. What is the reward?

1. The kingdom of God on earth, spiritually and in His churches, will be found; for it is of such blessed persons that our Lord's kingdom is comprised.
2. The everlasting kingdom of our Saviour will be realized in the end, for this is the character of those who will inhabit heaven.
3. Jesus Christ is King, and those who have poverty of spirit are His true citizens.

C. What is the cursed character?

1. Luke has, "Woe unto you that are rich! For ye have received your consolation."
2. The Pharisee, in contrast to the publican, totally missed this trait (Luke 18:9-12).
3. The church at Laodicea is a classic example of Christian pride (Rev 3:17-20).
4. Most religion is to uplift and make proud, rather than abase and make humble.

II. BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN

A. What is the character?

1. Sinful man says, "Blessed are the happy and carefree, for theirs is the kingdom."

2. The world caters to a pleasure-mad society seeking superficial joy (II Tim 3:4).
 3. Are not blessedness and mourning opposites? Or only to the carnally minded?
 4. The mourning here is spiritual mourning for sin that leads to zeal for holiness.
 5. Closely related to poverty of spirit, mourning is our attitude toward that poverty.
 6. We are told to afflict ourselves, mourn, and weep in forsaking sin (James 4:8-9).
 7. The Corinthian saints eventually did mourn with godly sorrow (II Cor 7:10-11).
 8. David knew the sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17).
- B. What is the reward?
1. The comfort of the gospel is only appreciated by mourners (Is 40:1-2; 52:7-10).
 2. Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of our Souls, came to comfort mourners (Is 61:1-3).
 3. Jesus comforted a great sinner who came mourning at His feet (Luke 7:37-50).
 4. We now receive comfort directly from God by the Holy Ghost (John 14:16-18).
 5. Lazarus mourned many things in life, but he was comforted (Luke 16:22-25).
 6. There shall be a great reversal of fortune one of these days (II Thess 1:7-10).
- C. What is the cursed character?
1. The timing of weeping and laughter is important. Weep first (Luke 6:21,25).
 2. The church of Corinth should have mourned, but were puffed up (I Cor 5:1-2).
 3. Great happiness and pleasure in this life (apart from God) will bring sorrow.

III. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

- A. What is the character?
1. **Meek.** Free from haughtiness and self-will; piously humble and submissive; patient and unresentful under injury and reproach.
 2. Natural man exalts toughness, hardness, self-protection, harshness, and revenge.
 3. Judgment and boldness oppose love and meekness (I Cor 4:21; II Cor 10:1-2).
 4. Meekness includes lowliness, longsuffering, and forbearance (Col 3:12-15).
 5. Are you able to easily receive and ignore the offences and slights of others?
 6. Are you gentle, tenderhearted, and peaceable toward others? Or harsh and strict?
 7. Wicked men believe by force, anger, strictness, aggressiveness, quick revenge, and power, they can conquer. But they shall not inherit the earth.
- B. What is the reward?
1. Another reward of righteous saints is to inherit the earth, which is the Lord's.
 2. But the meek shall inherit, and the powerful shall be revealed losers in that day.
- C. What is the cursed character?
1. Those who deal harshly with others will receive the treatment they give.
 2. The Lord is able to abase the proud now and in the great day of judgment.

IV. BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

- A. What is the character?
1. Natural man hungers and thirsts after sensual pleasure and happiness of this life.
 2. They desire and crave success, honour, promotion, esteem, and public glory.
 3. Do you crave the righteousness of Christ to cover your sins and to rule your life?
 4. We are to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first in life (Matt 6:33).
 5. Paul even exhorted Timothy to pursue righteousness (I Tim 6:11; II Tim 2:22).
 6. Righteousness is our proof of adoption as the sons of God (I John 2:29; 3:10).
 7. Paul craved to be found in the righteousness of Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:8-11).
 8. It is only a born again man who has any desire toward righteousness (Eph 4:24).

- B. What is the reward?
1. He will fill those hungry souls who crave righteousness with righteous strength.
 2. He sends the gospel, which reveals the righteousness of God to faith (Ro 1:17).
 3. A crown of righteousness waits those loving His coming (II Tim 4:8; Gal 5:5).
 4. And there will be a new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.
- C. What is the cursed character?
1. Those who think they are full will be hungering in anguish later (Luke 6:21,25), and this is primarily the self-righteous but also includes such as the rich man.
 2. Those who think they are righteous, will be found sorely lacking in that day, for the Lord Jesus Christ will not hear their claims to fame (Matthew 7:21-23).

V. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

- A. What is the character?
1. **Mercy.** Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness. Disposition to forgive or show compassion.
 2. Mercy loves to overlook and forget the offences of others (Prov 17:9; 19:11).
 3. When you show mercy, do you do it begrudgingly or cheerfully (Romans 12:8)?
 4. Consider the good Samaritan, who got involved at his expense for an enemy.
 5. Mercy is a weightier matter of the law, which we cannot overlook (Matt 23:23).
 6. Mercy is related to kindness, longsuffering, forbearance, and forgiveness.
 7. How kind and gentle are you toward those under your authority or influence?
- B. What is the reward?
1. To receive God's mercy, you must give it (James 2:13; Luke 6:36-37; Matt 7:2).
 2. God will show Himself merciful to the merciful (Psalm 18:25-26). Glory!
 3. A day is coming in which we will greatly desire the mercy of God (II Tim 1:18).
- C. What is the cursed character?
1. God will show Himself froward to the froward (Psalm 18:25-26). Horror!
 2. Israel received the same unmerciful treatment they gave our Lord Jesus.

VI. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

- A. What is the character?
1. Pure hearts separate the carnal religion of men from the Lord's spiritual religion.
 2. The acceptable worship of God must be consistent with our hearts (Matt 15:8), for it is a perilous time when men have a form without admitting His authority.
 3. We must keep our hearts with all diligence, for they produce our lives (Pr 4:23).
 4. We want not only clean hands, but a pure heart to go with them (Psalm 24:3).
 5. Therefore, we are duty bound to examine our hearts regularly (Ps 139:23-24).
 6. Where do you make your investments in life? There is your heart (Luke 12:34).
 7. We cannot come to the great God and glorious Saviour with a double mind.
- B. What is the reward?
1. The citizens of heaven who will dwell with God forever have pure hearts.
 2. David looked forward to the day with His likeness he would see God (Ps 17:15).
- C. What is the cursed character?
1. God hates hypocrisy, which is a heart different than your words and actions.
 2. And He does not miss a single idol, thought, or intention hidden in our hearts.
 3. Jesus spent much of His ministry, according to Matthew, ripping the Pharisees.

VII. BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

A. What is the character?

1. Do you cause offence, strife, division, tension? Or do you resolve it and end it?
2. Personal revenge is forbidden for Christians, as taught in many places.
3. We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4:3).
4. If you have an “enemy,” then restore peace with goodness (Rom 12:17-21).
5. Wisdom from above is peaceable and sows peace in righteousness (Jas 3:17-18).
6. Bitterness can cause us to fail of the grace of God (Hebrews 12:11-16).
7. If the Lord Jesus returned today, would He find you in peace (II Peter 3:14)?
8. We are not talking about peace at any price, for that is wicked compromise.

B. What is the reward?

1. The character of our Father is visible in our lives when we are peacemakers.
2. A great evidence of adoption is our treatment of our Father’s other children.
3. The Lord Jesus will present His children to the Father (Heb 2:13; Luke 20:36).

C. What is the cursed character?

1. Those who do not love other saints give evidence of damnation (I John 3:14-15).
2. The isolated, selfish, independent, critical, anti-social mentality of the froward will be judged (Psalm 18:25-26).

VIII. BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS’ SAKE

A. What is the character?

1. Only persecution for righteousness’ sake counts (I Peter 2:20; 3:12-17; 4:12-19).
2. There is no merit in suffering, especially suffering for your own faults and sins.
3. Consider Abel, Joseph, David, Job, Daniel, John, Jesus, and all the apostles.

B. What is the reward?

1. Again, as in the first beatitude, the reward is the character of Zion’s citizens.
2. Since heaven is at war with this world, we are on the right side by persecution.
3. We inherit both our Lord’s spiritual kingdom in this world and heaven to come.

C. What is the cursed character?

1. Saints will never find a comfortable and acceptable role in the world (Jas 4:4).
2. The stony ground bears no fruit due to the persecution of the world (Mat 13:21).
3. If you are a friend of the world and highly esteemed, God is your enemy.

IX. BLESSED ARE YE WHEN MEN HATE YOU FOR MY SAKE

A. What is the character?

1. **Revile.** To speak offensively and contemptuously with rude scorn of another.
2. The name calling, persecution, and false accusations are without any basis.
3. The name calling, persecution, and false accusations are for Christ’s sake.
4. Persecution is sure for those who live godly (II Tim 3:12; Jn 15:20; Phil 1:29).
5. What should the response be? Great joy! Leaping joy! (Acts 5:40-41; 16:25).
6. Paul actually sought comfort in such suffering to be like Christ (Phil 3:10).

B. What is the reward?

1. A great reward in heaven, as Jesus promised those in Smyrna (Revelation 2:10).
2. The reward that excels all and should be sufficient is eternal life (John 12:25).
3. There is glorious assurance to be in the company of the prophets and Jesus.

C. What is the cursed character?

1. Those persecuted and reviled for other reasons are a disgrace to Jesus Christ, therefore let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.
2. Those doing any persecuting of God's saints are in grave danger of great evil.
 - a. Consider the harsh judgment of Korah and forty-two children.
 - b. God counts it a righteous thing to persecute our enemies (II Thess 1:4-7).
3. God's curse is on those who are spoken well of by the world (Luke 6:26).
 - a. For all such must be ungodly compromisers (John 15:19; James 4:4).
 - b. And such popular opinion is an abomination to God (Luke 16:15).

Conclusion:

1. This is the character of the children of God, who shall see God, and inherit the kingdom of heaven.
2. This is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not deceive yourselves. Do you fully have these traits?
3. The difference between blessing and curse here is too great to describe, so tremble before His Word.
4. It is never too late, as the thief on the cross showed the great mercy and forgiveness of the Lord Jesus.
5. But do not presume on His mercy, for He does not offer it perpetually; repentance is only His gift.