

THE BEATITUDES

INTRODUCTION

“Blessed” means supremely happy. We are talking about surface happiness vs. inner happiness. The state of mind indicated by the beatitudes is independent of **outward** circumstances. It is obvious that this blessed happiness exists quite apart from your possessions, your pleasures, your personal **successes**, and your accomplishments. So I hope that we understand the word “blessed” in a new, much more Heavenly way.

Happiness Quiz

This lecture is accompanied by a “happiness” quiz. We expect you to take that exam at home, and to be honest about it. In order to pass the exam, you have to give the same exam to your spouse. Now, the key word here is “blessed.” Blessed is **supremely** happy. I am going to give you a lot of new definitions about these words that I use here in this lecture. I believe that through these new definitions, you will develop a new and more **beautiful** understanding of this passage of Scripture.

We are going to begin by reading from Matthew 5:3-12,

“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, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in Heaven, for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

I. HUMILITY

Being poor in spirit versus arrogant / proud

The Bible uses the phrase “poor in spirit,” but a better way to express that today is “humility.” We are not talking about being dumb. Mentally handicapped. A low-level Christian. That is not at all what we are talking about. We are talking about humility vs. **arrogance** and pride.

Characteristics of a humble person:

- A. **A person that has humility realizes that he needs help.** “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit.” (Zechariah 4:6)
- B. **A humble person is willing to lean more on God and on God’s people. An arrogant person says, “Oh, just leave it alone, I will do that.” That is arrogance. We are talking here about being poor in spirit, being humble, having humility.**

II. SENSITIVITY

To Mourn: Those who grieve over the *right* things.

Sensitivity. The Bible calls it “mourning.” What does the Bible mean by this word “mourn?” Does it mean that all believers need to go around crying? “Oh, we had so much food!” I do not think so. So, it does not mean “mourn” the way we normally think of weeping. Instead, it means those who grieve over the **right** things. They grieve for these three reasons:

A. A sensitive person grieves over his own sins and the *hurts* it *causes* others.

Just a while back, I had some meetings, and I said some things about a person, an individual. I thought I had said nothing bad, but all of a sudden the whole country was gossiping, and this person felt terrible. “What did you do behind my back?” Oh! It just made me feel so sad because of the mistake I had made and how it had hurt the other person.

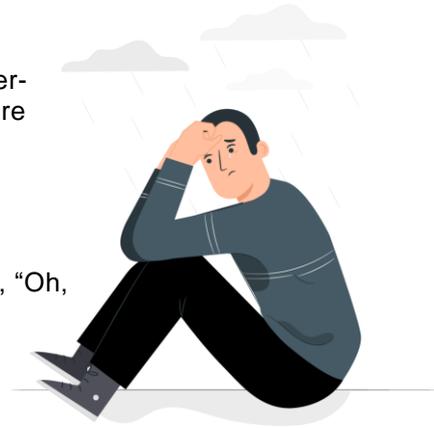
B. Mourning over the sins of *others*: greed, violence, and daily abuse.

Sometimes when I watch the news on television, I just get sick. I cannot understand the believers who want to watch the news on television every night before they go to bed.

C. Mourning over the realization that they are “*poor* in spirit.”

People often realize that they are proud. Often they find themselves thinking, “Oh, I can do that!” And often they do not pray until the very last moment.

If you think about these three elements, you see why we are calling this mourning; people who are grieving *inwardly* over the right things.



III. SELF CONTROL — MEEKNESS

The Bible describes self-control as, “meekness.” Let me explain what self-control is. Maybe some of you are acquainted with young horses. Many times a young horse has a real bright spark in its eye. And the owner cannot ride that horse; he must always be very careful. He cannot trust that horse. It may suddenly kick. It may rear up. But then somebody begins to work with the horse. In English we call that, “breaking-in the horse.” The first day, the horse is still out of control and still wants to knock the rider off. Then several days later, suddenly his character is changed. And an expert can look in his eye and say, “That horse is broken-in.” That horse now will be obedient to its master.

Now listen. A meek person is one who has his *temper* under control. What about you? “Sometimes yes, sometimes no.” Most of the time? Especially when you don’t need it? How can you evaluate whether or not you are a meek person? Whether you have self-control? I will give you four points for evaluating yourself:

A. Can you control your temper when you have been wronged?

Will you stamp your foot? Will you swing your arm? Do you run home and say, “Honey, guess what happened to me today!” Of course you can control your anger when everything goes good! But can you control your anger when you have been **wronged**?

B. Do you forgive others and let them *know* that you have forgiven them?

Let them know in several ways and with certainty?

C. Do you refuse to meditate upon negative remarks to you or about you?

This is exactly Abraham Bible! He can wake up just around 12:30 at night. And some evil thought comes in. And pretty soon it is one o'clock. It is two o'clock. And it is three o'clock, and he is still thinking, "Why did they do this to me?" This is still one of the things I struggle with in my life.

Meekness means not meditating upon negative remarks made to us. Do you refuse? I am working on it. Many times I try to stop and start praising God and deliberately read a book or start doing something else.

D. Do you overcome evil with good?

These things are accomplished by the **meek**. These things are accomplished by the person who is in control, in possession of himself. With **meekness** we can train ourselves to look for motives behind the other person's attack on us. If you discover the problem that has generated the attack, you may be able to respond with patience and compassion instead of a bitter reaction.

Self-control — meekness: is to be in possession of yourself.

IV. RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Bible tells us, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6)

Hungering and thirsting means a *craving* for something. Example: If I am lecturing and have not stopped yet for lunch, and it is already two o'clock, and then it is 2:30, and I am still lecturing. Three o'clock, and I am still lecturing. What are you doing? You are thinking, "Stop the lecture. My mind cannot concentrate." Because you are craving for something to eat, that craving *overrides* any other interest that you would have. A craving is strong enough to cause a person to act in such a way as to try to obtain what he is desiring. That is what Jesus is talking about. It means having such a craving after righteousness that you *must* get it, no matter what.

What is righteousness?

Righteousness has to do with right **relationships**--both with God, and with one another.

What does that mean?

A. We can have the correct facts, but act like the devil with them.

B. We may be filled with truth, but not have much *grace*.

"I do not care what you think. I know that is what the Bible says. I know I am right." If you are like that, you have the truth, but you do not have grace.

C. A person who is concerned about right relationships does not continue in sin because sin damages right relationships. So, when we mention righteousness, we are talking about right relationships.

D. Are you craving for righteousness? Do you have that strong inner feeling for a good relationship with God, with your spouse and others around you?

E. Do you reach out to the neglected and bring them *dignity*?

There are all kinds of people who are almost below human dignity begging in the Metro stations and out on the streets. Are you reaching out to them?



V. MERCY

Mercy is an inner ache that always seeks an outer action to help a person who is in spiritual, emotional, social, or physical need. For me, mercy is much more difficult than righteousness. Sometimes I have a hard heart toward people. I am trying to practice mercy.

Why are we not merciful?

- A. A person will not be merciful if he is not *craving* for right relationships.
- B. He will not crave for right relationships unless he keeps himself under control. (So, we are working our way back up the Beatitudes.)
- C. He will not keep himself under control unless he is *sensitive* to the hurts of others.
- D. He will not be sensitive to the hurts of others unless he is humble, aware of his own spiritual *dependence* on God's grace.

It was a revelation to me to see how these Beatitudes were interdependent upon each other. All of these attitudes are related to one another.

VI. PURITY

A person who is pure in heart sincerely tries to have the heart and mind of God.

- A. The one who is pure in heart is *transparent*. You can look through him.
- B. What you see is what you get.
- C. He has no *hidden* purposes. He has no evil motives.
- D. The person who is pure in heart can see God in this world because his vision is not *blurred* by insensitivity.
- E. He is not always reading “hidden meanings” in what he sees and hears.



Jesus said to the teachers of the law, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? (Matthew 9:4). So often we entertain evil thoughts, “Why did he say that? What do you think he meant by that?” And we think of some other evil ideas maybe. A pure person is not always reading hidden meanings in what he sees and hears.

- F. Many of the churches' problems result when Christians question and misinterpret one another's actions, words, and intentions.

Somebody may be doing something nice, but another believer thinks, “Oh! I know why he is doing this! Oh, I bet it is because...”, and they come up with false surmisings. It happens many times, and a lot of the churches' problems are precisely in this area. We question and *misrepresent* people's actions, intentions and the things they are saying.

- G. Being pure in heart involves viewing our brothers and sisters in a positive, wholesome way. Think no evil.

“Whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things.” (Philippians 4:8). Many times you and I are at fault right here.

Two questions for you to answer sight now: — Are you pure in heart? — Do you mean what you say?

VII. PEACEMAKERS

There are many *breakers* of peace. The makers of peace seem to be very few. A person who is pure in heart, who is without mixed motives, is a person who can become a peacemaker.

What are the characteristics of a peacemaker?

A. Peacemakers are active in reconciling individuals to both God and one another.

The greatest peace that people need is peace with God. They need to have their sins forgiven, and repent of their rebellion against God, and experience God's love by becoming a member of His family.

In order to be a peacemaker, there must be a problem. There must be a war. You cannot be a peacemaker between my wife and me because we have no argument. So, when people have an argument, when there is fighting, quarrels, that is your time. That is the opportunity for you to be a peacemaker.

B. Peacemakers are the ones who build (or become) *bridges*, not canyons.

What are you doing with your Christian life? Do you make canyons? Do you separate people? Do you cause hurt feelings? Do you leave people behind feeling very uncomfortable? Or do you build bridges? Do people say, "I am so glad Yaroslav was here this evening." Or, "I have appreciated Sasha's prayers so much." How are you known in your church?

C. They stop gossip by refusing to repeat it--even if it is true.

These people may have had an argument, but do you have to tell everybody about it? Is that going to help that family? Is that building a bridge in your church? It is something you can do -- to refuse to repeat gossip, even if it is true.

D. Peacemakers will not cut down others.

They will not emphasize people's negative points--negative character traits--and talk about it with other people. He is such a wonderful fellow, except...

E. Peacemakers will not retaliate.

They will not *revenge* themselves. They do not want to get even with somebody who has mistreated them.

F. They will forgive.

Real true forgiveness, deep down inside.

G. They will make decisions that will benefit people who hurt them.

It is well to note that even the most careful, humble, gracious efforts of peacemaking, can still result in a false accusation of meddling. "Meddling" is messing in somebody else's business. When young Moses was trying to break up two fighting Israelites, they said, "*Who made you ruler and judge over us?*" (Exodus 2:14). They were accusing him of interfering.

Listen to these concluding remarks. Yet, it is peace makers who are praised, not peace lovers. There are many peace lovers who say, "Let us just have peace. We can work with the Jehovah's Witnesses. Let us not make arguments. The Mormons... they are nice people, let us just have peace." There are many peace lovers. But it is the peacemakers who are praised. The ones who take a broken relationship between two people and build a bridge.

Peace does not happen automatically! It is made. Ask yourself: "Am I an aggressive peacemaker?"

VIII. CONTENTMENT

He said, "Blessed are you when you are falsely persecuted or insulted. Now when we think about contentment we think about joy. Think about the following proverb:

"To pursue joy, is to lose it.
The only way to get it,
is to follow steadily the path of duty
without thinking of joy,
and then,
like sleep it comes, most surely,
and unsought."

"To **pursue** joy is to lose it." You are going to be looking for joy. You say, "I want a better family. My family is the pits. I need a better job. This is nothing. I need a better car, because this..." A person who is looking for joy is sure to lose it.

"The only way to get joy is to follow steadily the path of duty, without thinking of joy, and then, like sleep, it comes most surely, unsought." Joy is obtained while in the way.

Crucial is the reason for opposition. 1 Peter. 2:19-21; 3:14, 16-17; 4:14-16.

CONCLUSION

The Beatitudes give eight descriptions of the nature of every believer. Every believer ought to have these characteristics in his life, in his character. You ought to have it in your character. They are not eight **different** individuals. But rather one individual exhibiting **all** eight characteristics.

Example: I remember when I was a young man, I listened to a sermon on the Beatitudes. The pastor said, "Well of course, nobody is perfect so nobody will have all of these. But as a church together we have them. One is meek. Another one is poor. Another one is a peacemaker."

Oh, my brother and sister! This is not right. We are asked to have all of these characteristics, because these are the characteristics of the life of Jesus Christ. Remember, you are called "Christ." The Bible in the book of Acts calls the believers "Christians," "little Christs." You are not a big, risen, glorified Christ in Heaven, but you are the "perfect" image of Him here on earth. Marriages are failing so fast in the world that soon people will beat a path to any church which is characterized by successful marriages.

Now the self-examination

Now we are going to have a self-examination. Ask your spouse to recheck your self-evaluation of these important attitudes, tonight. Perhaps as a New Year's resolution, decide to prioritize on practicing one of these attitudes per month. Rotate until you are satisfied with your new attitude and lifestyle.

Let us take a look at this...

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

We are happy to present the video, audio and paper materials that have been prepared by **New Life for Churches**. You have the privilege *upon completion of your practical assignment* to use this lecture with others.

Practical assignment

Completed

➤ Use the following tool to evaluate yourself.

SELF EVALUATION TOOL ON THE BEATITUDES

THE "BE" ATTITUDES OF _____

Put your name in the blank.

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Humility/poor in Spirit										
Self-control / meek										
Mercy										
Righteousness										
Sensitivity / mourn										
Peacemaker										
Purity										
Contentment										

The value system for each attitude is 1-10

1. Mark each attitude under the appropriate number indicating the place this has in your lifestyle
2. Provide an identical unused list for your wife
3. Let your spouse mark her perception of **your** attitudes
4. Recheck & discuss with spouse your self-evaluation of these attitudes
5. Together make a new final list
6. Use this list for your spiritual growth
7. Practice one of the traits per week — starting with the lowest
8. Rotate until satisfied with new life style

- Use the following tool to strengthen these character traits in your life. Bring four completed copies of the following chart to the next conference. (One for each week.)



HOW TO USE THESE CHARACTER TRAITS IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. In the morning when you rise make it your habit to begin the day by going on your knees and asking God to give you opportunities to practice (attitude)
2. During the day constantly look for opportunities to practice this needed trait.
3. Ask God to guide you and to open your eyes to new opportunities.
4. In the evening just prior to laying down to sleep mark on a calendar (or on a chart as shown here) your success for that day and thank God for it.
5. Do this 5 days a week (not on Sunday as this is a "Holy Day Unto the Lord")
6. The following week select another character trait.

This simple chart should be self-explanatory.

Attitude	Monday	Tuesday	Wednes-day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total Success
Humility/poor in Spirit							
Self-control/meek							
Mercy							
Righteousness							
Sensitivity/ mourn							
Peacemaker							
Purity							
Contentment							
Total success							

Scoring is as follows:

- - - = the opportunity was there, but you really failed, maybe didn't even try.
- — = you tried but were not successful.
- +/- = not bad, but not good either, maybe one time yes, but another time no. A little bit of success, but not really a reality
- + + = Yes, you were successful. God blessed
- +++ = Yes, today you conquered. Praise God, you are growing, learning, developing this trait.

If you have many +/- signs you are in trouble. This is the worst; see Rev.3:16

These 8 attitudes set forth the way of genuine happiness.

This happiness is peaceful contentment, regardless of the circumstances of life.

What are you becoming? God has a goal for each of us

“Amen and amen.” Thank you for your attention.

May God richly bless you when you practice these traits.