

THE BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO TRUST AND OBEY

*Examining The Beatitudes
(The Sermon on the Mount)*

Matthew 5:3-12

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Introduction

To be blessed is for one to be happy or fulfilled and this was the whole essence of Jesus' sermon on the mount – that is reminding them and those that will become of the blessing that is attached to obedience to the Almighty Father. Happiness is a precious possession of God's children. The Psalmist exclaimed, "*happy is the people whose God is the Lord*" – **Psalm 144:15**.

Happiness is a feeling of well being and the deepest happiness comes from the knowledge that we are acknowledged and blessed by God – **Proverb 20:22**. Such happiness reflects a close relationship with our heavenly Father and the knowledge that we are doing His will – **Psalm 112:1, 119:1,2**.

Interestingly, Jesus in His sermon on the mount enumerated more reasons for which we can be blessed or happy. An examination of these nine points that can usher godly peace, blessings or beatitudes will help us to realise how blessed we can be if we faithfully serve the Almighty God.

Jesus delivered one of the famous discourses of all time popularly referred to as the beatitudes. It is also called the sermon on the mount because it was delivered on a mountain overlooking the sea of Galilee. The gospel according to **Matthew 5:1-3** relates – "*And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying,*

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

In this line of the sermon Jesus pointed out that those who are conscious of their spiritual need will be heirs of the kingdom of Heaven. A person is blessed and happy if he is aware of being in need spiritually. Humble believers are fully aware of their sinful state beg God for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice – **1 John 1:9**. There is joy and a sense of fulfilment when you know that God has taken away the load of sin from your life. **Psalm 32:1-2** "*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit*".

Awareness of our spiritual need move us to study the word of God daily thus absorbing the spiritual food that grows our faith and bring blessing and happiness to our lives. This will also move us to attend Christian fellowship regularly – **Hebrews 10:25**. Love for neighbours make us aware of their own spiritual needs which will prompt us to zealous in the preaching and teaching the good news to them – **Mark 13:10, Romans 1:14-16,17**. Sharing bible truths with others bring fulfilment and joy as those who are counted blessed.

2. Blessed Are Those who mourn for they shall be comforted – **Matthew 5:4**.

In this line Jesus is not talking about those whose who mourn physically as a result of pain of loosing a loved one through death or valuable possession, rather he is referring to those who mourn spiritually with the knowledge that they have fallen through sin from the pathway of salvation. The book of James emphasized that our sinful state should cause us to mourn – **James 4:8-10**. ⁸ *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* ⁹ *Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.* ¹⁰ *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

Those who are truly saddened over their sinful state are comforted when they learn that their sins can be forgiven if they exercise faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice and show true repentance in obedience to God's will – **2 Corinthians 7:9-10** ⁹ *Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.* ¹⁰ *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.* Restoring our precious relationship with God gives us the consistent hope of eternal life with God in heaven that brings a deep feeling of inner joy, blessedness – **Romans 4:7-8**. ⁷ *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;* ⁸ *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."*

3. Blessed Are the meek for they shall inherit the earth – **Matthew 5:5**

In this line of the Master's sermon, meekness or being mild temper should not be misconstrued to be weakness of character but a virtue. One bible scholar wrote, *"the supreme characteristics of the man who is meek is that he is under perfect control. It is not a spineless gentleman, a passive quietism"*. It is strength under control. Jesus stated about himself, *"I am meek and lonely in heart"* – **Matthew 11:29**. Yet Jesus was courageous in defending righteous principles – **Matthew 21:12-13, Matthew 23:13-33**. Indeed, meekness and self control were listed together by apostle Paul when he outlined the fruitage of the spirit in **Galatians 5:22,23**. It is a Christian character that make for peace with outsiders and those within the fold. Paul admonished in **Colossians 3:12-13** ¹² *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness,*

longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” Meekness is however not limited to our relationship with one another but by willingly submitting ourselves to the authority of God, we demonstrate that we are meek. Jesus is our prime example. He was obedient to the end – **John 5:19,20**.

Indeed those who are meek in heart will inherit (enjoy the abundance of) the earth and have peace.

4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled – **Matthew 5:6**.

For those who trust in God, He set the standard of righteousness, hence those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, are indeed searching for divine guidance> such ones are keenly aware of their imperfections and long for an acceptable standing with God. How blessed and happy are such ones when they learn from God’s word that if they repent and seek for forgiveness, they will be in a position to attain that righteous standing before God – **Acts 2:38, 10:43, Romans 5:19**.

Having attained such righteous standing such ones are counted blessed because they become the begotten children of God thus joint heirs of the kingdom.

5. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy – **Matthew 5:7**.

In a legal sense, mercy is understood to refer to clemency on the part of a trial jurist who restrains from inflicting on a wrongdoer the maximum punishment under the law – hence the legal jargon, “*temper justice with mercy*”. However, it is used in the scripture to mean expression of kind consideration or pity that brings relief to those who are disadvantaged. Those who are merciful in this regard are compassionate. Jesus illustrated how a Samaritan provides a fine example of an individual who acted merciful, we need to engage in positive deeds of kindness toward those in need – **Galatians 6:10** “*Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith*”.

By our own act of mercy, we are guaranteed recipients of God’s mercy.

6. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God – **Matthew 5:8**.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the “*sons of God*” – **Matthew 5:9**. A pure heart is one that is not only morally clean but also spiritually undaunted and unified in his devotion to God - **1 Chronicle 28:9, Psalm 86:11** - and the peacemakers live in peace not only with their fellow brethren but with their neighbours – **Romans 12:17-21**. They seek peace and they pursue it – **1 Peter 3:11**.

To be peacemakers who are pure in heart, the promise is that they will be called the sons of God and will see God. Yes, when at the end of our earthly journey. The crown of life is awarded to such ones as joint heirs of the heavenly kingdom they will see God and worship Him forever – **Romans 8:14-17**.

From the forgoing, we have seen that those who are conscious of their needs, who mourn, the meek, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, merciful, the pure in heart and the peacemakers are blessed and find true happiness in trusting and obeying God. Yet such ones have always encountered oppositions, even persecution. Does this mar their joy? Jesus answered this question in the next two lines – **Matthew 5:10,12**. *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you*".

When Jesus first sent his apostles to preach the good news he warned them that they would encounter opposition – **Matthew 10:5-18**. But He also assured them and those who will become believers that such opposition would not necessarily endanger their deep felt happiness, because with perseverance they will overcome. Suffering in itself is not meritorious. The apostle Peter however wrote in **1 Peter 2:20, 4:15,16**, that suffering for the sake of Christ is counted as a blessing and therefore brings happiness. True righteousness is measured by our conformity to God's will and commands.

Suffering for righteousness sake, therefore means suffering because one resists the pressure to violate God's will or standard. The apostles were indeed persecuted by the Jewish leaders for refusing to stop preaching in the name of Christ – **Acts 4:18-20, 5:27-29, 40**. But they stood their ground with increased zeal and happiness.

They went their way from before the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they had been counted worthy to suffer for His name – **Acts 5:41-42**.

Conclusion

The topic has been Blessed are those who trust and obey God – examining the beatitudes. This powerful sermon delivered by the Master is in sync with the Christian character and therefore a penetrative survey of our discipleship and devotion. There is therefore abundant blessings attached to our trust and obedience to the will of the Almighty. However, the greatest of the blessings and happiness is when Christ finds us worthy of the heavenly glory.

Hence Paul after enduring all the persecution, said in **2 Timothy 4:7-8**, *"7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will*

give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

May God help us to fulfil the beatitudes so as to inherit the blessings and joy that follows in Christ name – Amen.