

SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE GOSPEL - A CASE STUDY OF SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5:3-12

Godwin Eyangho

INTRODUCTION

On a mountain in Galilee, Christ taught His disciples and these teachings are known today as the *Beatitudes* or *Sermon on the Mount*.

This was in the process of spiritual formation of the disciples to make them have good knowledge of God and His word, the purpose of Christ on earth and what is ahead of them during and after Christ's earthly ministry.

A part of these teachings form our lesson on *spiritual formation*. Christ opened His mouth and taught them saying:

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - Verse 3

Poor in spirit means humility, we must be humble in all aspects of Christian living. For without humility, we cannot walk successfully with God on earth (**1 Peter 5:5,6; James 4:6**).

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven – it is a quality that Christ said will give rest to our souls (**Matthew 11:28,29**).

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED - Verse 4

Christians must be conscious that period of mourning or sorrow (*unhappy mood or situation*) will definitely come.

Mourning here can be applied in two ways: when we lose our dear ones or in problem and when we sin.

When we are confronted with severe problems or someone dies, we must be comforted with the word of God and must not sorrow or mourn like the world (**John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 1:3,4; 1 Thessalonians 3:13,18**).

When we sin or we are disfellowshipped, we must mourn – have godly sorrow (*true repentance*) that will lead to

forgiveness and salvation
(*2 Corinthians 7:10*).

We are to mourn with those who mourn (*Romans 12:15*).

Absolute comfort for us will be when we die or at the end of the time when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes (*Revelation 21:4*).

**BLESSED ARE THE MEEK,
FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT
THE EARTH - Verse 5**

This passage is taken from *Psalms 37:11*. It does not mean that those who are gentle will inherit the world forever.

Rather, it means that by their gentleness and obedience to God, the meek conforms to the standard of lifestyle that God intended for people in the world and as such they will enjoy the blessing in the land of the living.

Thus Christians must be gentle not harsh. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit and a quality Christ wants us to have so that our living on earth can be pleasing and acceptable to God (*Galatians 5:22, Matthew 11:28,29*).

**BLESSED ARE THOSE
WHO HUNGER AND THIRST
FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR
THEY SHALL BE FILLED
Verse 6**

Christians have the righteousness of Christ (*Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 5:21*).

In our spiritual formation, we must earnestly desire to do what is right (*righteous*) always to please God (*Ephesians 5:8,11; Romans 6:18*).

We must not claim self-righteousness but strive daily to live according to Christ's righteousness as God supplies the full grace to do this, *they shall be filled (1 Corinthians 15:10)*.

**BLESSED ARE THE
MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL
OBTAIN MERCY - Verse 7**

Spiritual formation, demands showing mercy to others. We must be merciful to those who are in need (*James 2:15,16; 1 John 3:17*).

Mercy attracts forgiveness – just as we cannot get forgiveness, if we fail to forgive, so also we won't enjoy God's mercy if we are not merciful to others.

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD - Verse 8

Our hearts must be cleansed of every *modicu* of evil or wickedness. This is true holiness in man in order to relate with God (**1 Peter 1:15,16; Psalm 24:3-4**). Christians' hearts must be pure before God and towards all men because God looks at the heart (**1 Samuel 16:7**).

For they shall see God – for without holiness no man will see God (**Hebrews 12:14**).

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF GOD - Verse 9

The wisdom from above is first pure and peaceable (**James 3:17**). We have peace with God and we must be peaceable with all people (**Romans 12:18**).

We are also to make peace between God and man through the gospel (**2 Corinthians 5:19**).

They (*peacemakers*) are called the children of God and for this reason, in our spiritual formation we must be peacemakers always as the chosen and holy children of God on earth today (**1 Peter 2:9**).

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED Verse 10-12

¹⁰ Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. ¹² Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Christians must be ready to face persecutions, trials or life challenges for the sake of Christ and righteousness. As we live godly, righteously on earth we are bound to meet with persecutions (**2 Timothy 3:12**).

These challenges are to make us formidable in our spiritual formation.

Therefore, we must be happy to suffer as Christians and be sure of victory through Christ (**1 Peter 4:16; Psalm 34:19; 2 Timothy 3:11; John 16:33; 1 John 5:4**).

We have heavenly reward... for great is their reward in heaven – eternal life.

CONCLUSION

In our spiritual formation, these beautiful and inspiring instructions of Christ must be

imbibed and practised to please
God and be blessed here ad
hereafter for God cannot lie
(Titus 1:2).