

4. Developing a New Character

Jesus intends to shape a new character within us, a character that is in harmony with God. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pronounced a series of blessings known as “The Beatitudes” that expresses in simple terms the characteristics God is looking for. As we align ourselves with these traits, the blessings of God will begin to flow.

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-16

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“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 receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.



Observations

Our Relationship with God:

1. Poor in Spirit: We are poor in spirit when we recognize that regardless of our station in life, we truly possess nothing ourselves. We all begin our spiritual journey here.

2. Those Who Mourn: We mourn because of our spiritual poverty and because of the love of God, who welcomes us into His Kingdom.

3. The Meek: When we recognize our true spiritual condition and humble ourselves before God, God shows us His favor.

4. Hunger for Righteousness: In our humility, we now begin to hunger for the new life God offers, a life of righteousness, reflective of the character of God.

Our Relationship with Others:

5. The Merciful: Having received mercy, we desire to offer it to others, which confirms the mercy we have received.

6. Pure in Heart: Having rid ourselves of all malice toward others, we are able to perceive God more clearly.

7. Peacemakers: Having received peace for ourselves, we then desire others to experience peace.

8. Persecuted: The world resists the kingdom of God, and so it will resist our efforts as well, but this is a sign that we are on the right track.

Verses for Memory:

Of all passages in the Bible, The Beatitudes are most worthy of setting to memory.



Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*

Application *for abundant living:*



Let Your Light Shine

The world needs to see the difference Jesus can make demonstrated in the lives his followers. Before we can bear witness with our words, we must first bear witness with our lives.

Do not be afraid to make righteous choices in the manner of your living; people will indeed notice. Yet prepare yourself to give a simple explanation by pointing to the love and grace God has for all of us.

Further Study *for a deeper understanding:*

The “**Sermon on the Mount**” in **Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7**, is perhaps one of the most important passages of all Scripture. It is the manifesto of Jesus Christ. Jesus undoubtedly offered a similar message everywhere he went, but here we have one of his messages in its entirety! Set aside some time to carefully read the entire sermon.

Questions *for reflection or group discussion:*

Do the people at your workplace or school know that you are a follower of Jesus Christ?

If so, is there a price you are paying because of it?

Have you ever been approached by someone who knew that you were a Christian and wanted your advice? What was the outcome?