

March 2006
SALT ON THE STREET

THE BEATITUDES, SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5:

How many of you want to be followers of Christ?

Jesus tells us here what He is looking for. The love of God starts from the inside and works it's way to the outside, where eventually everyone can see and know who we represent.

This is a sermon that challenges the proud and the independent.

Jesus warns His followers/disciples of the temptations and the dangers of following Him. He lets them know that following Him is not about fame, fortune or a prestigious, well known name. The basis of this game is **FAITHFULNESS, HUMILITY AND OBEDIENCE**. Being a disciple is learning to follow. In following well, you will one day lead. Just as you now follow Christ, you will lead others to follow Christ.

Leading others to Christ is why we are here.

5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Some of you may have wondered, Why am I Never satisfied? What am I looking for, and can't find?

When you can turn to the Lord and ask that question, He will answer you. You've experience many things the world has to offer, women, men, drugs, money, religions, cults, and still you are not satisfied. You are lacking a lasting peace and joy within yourself – this is the poor in spirit. Realization and admitting what you **DON'T** have.

God wishes to give you the kingdom. A kingdom that will not disappear with the winds of change that come into our lives.

5:4 Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted.

When we are able to realize just how poor we are without Christ in our lives – then we are able to mourn.

We mourn for time that cannot be returned, for sins committed, for responsibilities left undone, people we have left ignored and unloved. We mourn for our lack of compassion, and our inability to trust. We mourn for shunning the Lord who now offers comfort.

God's way of living contradicts the way of the world we live in. The world and Wall Street says, "Happiness at any cost. You are what you drive or wear or eat." Appearances are first and foremost of importance to where you want to go.

To mourn is to be broken. Are you willing to really look at your past, and earnestly mourn and repent. **Psalm 51** is a perfect example of one who mourns. David was wrong on so many fronts. He wasn't where he was supposed to be; he misused his power and took another man's wife; he plotted to kill the husband, then ordered it done in a conspiracy to hide his part in it. When he was found out, and confronted – he didn't deny it, he admitted his quilt, mourned his sin, and repented.

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David cries: "HAVE MERCY on me oh God. Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. David brings to God his brokenness, his sin, God gives to Him amazing love and forgiveness. God longs to hear from us, longs to show His amazing love for us – to us. We mourn, He comforts.

5: 5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

In our brokenness we realize just how vulnerable and weak we are to the temptations of the world. In our brokenness we find a quiet strength to reach out to the Lord. That quiet strength is meekness.

From our realization of neediness (poor in spirit), our repentance (mourning), we are able to reach out in love, humility (not by aggression), in meekness. In meekness (quiet strength) we are able to lean on and learn from our powerful Lord. By giving up what we think is our right, for the rights of others, we will one day receive everything God has promised.

The world says, power at any cost; the Bible says in **Psalm 37**: Trust in the Lord, and do good, and you shall dwell in the land and be fed; delight in the Lord He will give you the desires of your heart; commit your ways to the Lord, and He will bring it to pass. Inheritance for meekness.

5:6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

Realization of need brings forth hunger. Spiritual hunger cannot be filled with worldly knowledge, goods or physical food. Our spiritual filling can only come from seeking the Word and Will of God. **Matthew 6:33** say to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Hungering after the Word and ways of God can only result in blessing; in the complete filling of all our emptiness.

5:7 Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.

How willing are to give mercy to those who have wronged us, either intentionally or unintentional? But that is what God has done with us. He has given us mercy for our sins. We did not deserve for Christ to die for our sins. We didn't deserve to be forgiven, but because of our Father's great love, He shows mercy to all of us. Daily I sin, daily I need mercy.

We can act sanctimonious, go to church, read our Bibles religiously, but what is behind our motives? The Bible says in **Hosea 6:6** "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. In **Micah 6: 7-8**, "Should we offer Him thousands of rams and ten thousands of olive oil? Would that please the Lord? Should we sacrifice our firstborn children to pay for the sins of our souls? Would that make Him glad? No, O people, the Lord has already told you what is good, and this is what He requires: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with the Lord.

No amount of money or sacrificial service will take the place of just doing what is right, merciful and walking in humility with the Lord.

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5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

The song says, and follows my heart, “Oh, I want to see Him, look upon His Face. There to sing forever of His amazing grace....” As we give ourselves over to learn and live the examples the Jesus left with us, He fills our hearts with His love. Holy Spirit works in our lives daily to lead us to purity in thought, words, and deeds. **1 Timothy 1:5**, Now the end of the commandments is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

One of the names for our Lord is the Prince of Peace. God desires peace in the land and peace among mankind.

Purity of heart seeks peace not confusion or trouble. In so much of our living trouble will find us quite frequently. But as followers of Christ we now don't have to solve our problems in ways that will create more. We seek to live peacefully. In fact **Romans 12:18** says that as much as it is possible in you, to live peaceably with all men. We are to try our best, as unto God to seek peace.

Peace is a quality of God our Father that we as His children are to display. In **2 Timothy 1:7**, it says that God is not the author of confusion, but of love, joy and a sound mind. When we have and strive for these qualities in life, we find peace; a peace that no disturbance can take away from us because it is instilled in us by His Spirit. Happiness fades with the happenings of the day, but peace remains even in our times of trouble.

5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Have you noticed that as you try to live at peace, there is always someone around who tries (continually) to get your goat, tries hard to get you to leave the principles you are trusting and living in. This is one form of persecution. Then there are others, who because you now claim Jesus as Lord of your life will be outright ugly; they will say and do things that are spiteful and wicked.

Matthew 4:17; 10:7,8 Jesus came preaching that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand. He came in power with power and He extended this power to live, preach, teach and pray to His followers. He said to go out and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

5:11 Blessed are you when men shall revile (speak abusive about) you, persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Again He talks about how we will be treated wrongly. Where Jesus is concerned there is much division. And because of our allegiance with Him, we can expect not to be well received in some quarters, we will be persecuted and lied on. But He says when that happens because of Him we are Blessed. There is only one way to the Father, and that is through the Son, Jesus. Not everyone will accept this. Some will hate us because we stand firm that Jesus Christ is the only way to God the Father. Remember it is not because of us that we are persecuted, but because of Jesus. Jesus said, ...In the world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. He lives in us, we in Him.

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5:12 Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Yea!! Persecution is what I have to look forward to following Jesus. Why should I chose this? I don't like pain, I don't like confusion, and I have to wait till I get to Heaven to get my reward.

I never understood that the Beatitudes were an inward work in me. I always saw them as something for others. This verse pertained to somebody, that verse was for someone else, maybe I fit into one or two of them. But the Beatitudes is an inside heart surgery, that shows up in our character as we grow in Christ.

Paul says in **3 John 2**, “ Beloved, I wish above all things that you prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.” As we grow in the Beatitudes we prosper – big time, just as the Lord has said in each one. The biggest reward is not here on earth, a chicken in every pot or a Mercedes or two in every garage, but in Heaven where we will spend eternity. In Heaven we will be as our Father intended us to be; perfect in every way. We will see beauty undefiled by evil or disease. Our Father who created both Heaven and Earth and everything on them, has rewards stored up for us that our little finite minds cannot imagine.

Matthew 4:24-25 “And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought to Him all sick people that were taken with diverse diseases and torments, and those who were possessed with devils, and those which had mental illnesses, and those who has palsy, and He healed them. And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and beyond Jordon.”

Jesus took this group of hurting, sick, and needy people and spoke these great words of comfort in what we know as the Beatitudes, and He spoke hard words of truth. Only the Word of Truth given in love will heal the holes in our soul that sin has created. Jesus shed His blood, and took our cold, stony hearts, and makes them soft enough to receive the life giving, eternal love that Father God has provided for the whole world.

John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Let us yield our pride to surrender to Christ, and allow our Father to do the surgery to repair our hearts through the Beatitudes.