



**Bible Study, January 10, 2023**

**Series: The Discipleship Training of Jesus Christ**

**Lesson 1: The Beatitudes – Part 1**

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**Pastor Reginald Rogers, Facilitator**

## **INTRODUCTION**

If you are like me, then are you saved because of your belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of GOD? If you are like me, then are you filled with the Holy Spirit of GOD? If you are like me, then do you spend time in prayer, enjoy fellowship with the saints, study the Word of GOD and share your personal testimony with others? If you are doing these things, then you are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

What is a disciple? Generally, a disciple is a learner or committed follower of a teacher.<sup>1</sup> In the Scriptures, a disciple is one who follows and is in constant association with a teacher. Such were the disciples who followed Jesus Christ. However, the Lord was not the only one who had followers. John the Baptist had disciples and the Pharisees called themselves Moses' disciples or followers (*CF: Matthew 9:14, John 9:28*).

When you look at the very first disciples of Jesus Christ you learn that Simon called "Peter," Andrew his brother, James and John who were brothers and fishing companions of Peter and Andrew were the first disciples that Jesus called unto Him (*CF: Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20*). Let us look at Luke's gospel writing about these same disciples being influenced by Jesus to follow Him in Luke 5: 1-11—

<sup>1</sup> One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup> He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup> When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." <sup>11</sup> So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Initial observations of this passage show (1) a large crowd of people surrounding Jesus as He taught the Word of GOD (2) two empty boats and the fishermen washing their nets (3) Jesus got into one of the boats which belonged to Simon (4) When Jesus finish speaking He told Simon to pull out into the deep waters and let down his nets (5) Simon advised that they fished all night and caught nothing (6) Simon obeying and letting down his nets (7) The catching of a large number of fish that began to break the nets (8) The shout for their partners to come help them (9) Both boats filled to the point of beginning to sink (10) This miracle cause Simon Peter to fall on his knees and repent because of the amazing catch (11) All of them in both boats were



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absolutely amazed by what happened (12) Jesus comforts and encourage them (13) They went ashore and left everything to follow Jesus.

Based on this experience, these four men were the first disciples of the Lord. It has been this way throughout the church age. What happens to us today? First, we give up (by repenting of our sins). Secondly, we grow up (following the Lord's teachings). Lastly, we go out (fulfilling the great commission). This is the same way that Peter, Andrew, James, and John did when they followed Jesus.

Our first two lessons in this series are the beatitudes. What does beatitude mean? To begin, the word "beatitude" is not found in the Scriptures. This is a Latin word "*beatitudo*" that means *a declaration of special blessedness*.<sup>1</sup> This is a blessedness due to GOD's grace. When Jesus went up the mountainside and saw the crowd of people coming, these four men came to Him. Jesus began His teachings with the beatitudes and like those first disciples, we will begin with these too. "Blessed" is a word used in the New Testament to mean "happy" in relationship to one's life or it could mean "fortunate" in terms of a particular situation or opportunity (CF: 1 Corinthians 7:40, Acts 26:2). However, "blessed" in these statements spoken by the Lord takes us deeper in our spiritual understanding of blessedness. Here Jesus uses the word "blessed" to describe a person's privilege to experience GOD'S grace in a very special way. He wants His disciples to know that they have a direct relationship with GOD (CF: Job 5:17, Psalm 1:1-2)

### **The Scripture Reading | Matthew 5:1-12 NIV**

<sup>1</sup>Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, <sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them. He said:

<sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup>Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

<sup>7</sup>Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup>Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

<sup>10</sup>Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup>"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.



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### **Examining the Text**

*<sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Kingdom of heaven or Kingdom of GOD? When Matthew wrote this gospel about Jesus teaching His disciples the beatitudes or declaration statements, he knew they were primarily Jewish people. Why is this important to this lesson? It is important because of the words that Matthew used to describe the holy kingdom of GOD. He wrote that Lord began this first declaration announcing to His hearers that the blessing for the poor in spirit is the "kingdom of heaven" and not the kingdom of GOD. I believe that Matthew being Jewish knew that the Law of Moses prohibited the misusing of the name of GOD (CF: Exodus 20:7).

### **The Old Testament Comparison**

Jesus declared in Luke 4:18(a) these words: *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor..."* This is a direct quote from Isaiah 61:1(a). It proclaims that the Messiah would be anointed to preach good news to the poor. When Isaiah said this, he spoke to the people of Israel who were exiled and had lost everything economically. But this quote goes beyond the economic condition of the people of Israel. It addressed the poverty of their spirit too. There is an affliction, hopelessness, oppression, powerlessness, and desperateness that impacts the soul when physical circumstances and conditions change drastically. This is the poorness in spirit that Jesus is emphasizing with His disciples. When the heaviness and the weight of the world has taken its toll, the kingdom of heaven is the answer.

### **The Meaning of the Verse**

I am sure that if we could observe the crowds that followed Jesus Christ in that day, we would see with our own eyes the physical poverty, the hopelessness, the oppression, and such as these. Those people had very little resources and depended on others just to survive. No doubt it should be in our minds that this statement spoken by Jesus to the disciples was good news to their ears. He was not proclaiming "material riches" as the answer to their condition. But He was declaring that through their humility the promise of the kingdom of heaven was greater than anything on this earth. That is challenging to the thinking of disciples who were accustomed to self-sufficiency. All these things, such as, arrogance, self-righteousness along with self-sufficiency and any other "self" that promotes sin in a person's life is realized and confessed by the poor in spirit.

### **The Application of the Verse**

It is necessary according to this verse that a person must be poor in spirit in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' earthly ministry began with the call to repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near (CF: Matthew 4:17). So, the call to repentance is the main step followed by a humble acknowledgement that the person brings nothing of their own power, possessions, or merit to gain entrance into the heavenly kingdom. True confession and a sincere need for the Lord Jesus Christ is the assurance for entering this precious kingdom.



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➤ **List some of the things in this life that would cause you to become poor in spirit?**

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*<sup>4</sup> Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*

The first beatitude given to the disciples was for them to be poor in spirit with a promise that the heavenly kingdom is theirs now. This next beatitude is different. Here the promise is comfort that will take place in the future. Note the verb “will be” which is the future tense.

### ***The Old Testament Comparison***

When Jesus stood and read the book of Isaiah in the hearing of those present in the synagogue, He also mentioned the following words in Isaiah 61: 1(b)-2: *...He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn...* What is mourning? Mourning indicates the pain and the grief and the anxieties of the soul over some loss, often the death of a loved one. But it could be over the loss of valued life, such as the Israelites who went into exile and mourned. Or it could be over the loss of possessions, or status, or health. People mourn over any disaster or tribulation. And in times of mourning, they look for hope. And most often in this world there is little hope.<sup>2</sup>

### ***The Meaning of the Verse***

The disciples are central to this teaching from the Lord. Jesus wanted them to know that they were the people who mourn that need comforting. Let us look a moment at ourselves. There is not a person in this bible study who has not experienced a sad or tragic loss at some time or another in life. When loss occurs, what immediately follows? Pain, grief, sorrow, mourning and such as these because of that loss. As time passes, these emotions diminish. Looking at this verse again, the disciples were taught that mourning leads to comfort in the kingdom of heaven. Why? Because of the world's influences on life—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life. All these according to John the apostle comes from the world (CF: 1 John 2:15-17). The cause of spiritual mourning is sin and those who mourn because of sin will be comforted.



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***The Application of the Verse***

This teaching by the Lord is about mourning that leads to heavenly comfort. It is not about mourning as we naturally understand the term. As previously stated, the disciples of the Lord are the people that will be comforted. Why? Because of the ever-increasing amount of sin in the world. If we as disciples turn the television on at 5:00 or 6:00 PM every day and listen to the roll call of sinful events taking place around us, then we should be mourning.

- **Tell of a time whether recently or some time ago in which something caused you to spiritually mourn and cry out in prayer to the Lord? What were your feelings?**

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*<sup>5</sup>Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*

When I was a young disciple myself, a pastor said to me, "Meekness is not Weakness." The Lord teaching here reinforces that point. Jesus is not talking about people being weak and cowering. But we will see what He meant when He taught this statement of blessedness to His disciples.

***The Old Testament Comparison***

Psalms 37:11 tells us, *But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.* This is a very clear Scripture verse about who will inherit the land. Israel was given the promise that the land of Canaan would be given to them. The Lord's eternal promise is that His disciples will live with Him in the new heaven and new earth (CF: *Revelation 21:1-3*).

***The Meaning of the Verse***

In the Scriptures, meekness is usually spoken of as a spirit of gentleness, as well as self-control (CF: *Galatians 5:22-23*). A meek person is the opposite of an arrogant and prideful person. A meek person does not exploit nor oppress another person. A meek person does not avenge a wrong by another person. A meek person is not violent and does not seek power for personal gain. But a meek person will experience the second coming of Jesus Christ. As a result of this, the meek person will inherit the promised new creation.

***The Application of the Verse***

How would I know if I am a meek person? The bible is like looking into a mirror. It shows you what you look like. Let us look back for a moment at Galatians 5. In this chapter, Paul the apostle spends time explaining about living in the Spirit and not in the flesh. If you are driven by your flesh, then you will be doing the things that your flesh desires.



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But if you are driven by the Holy Spirit, then you will be doing things of the Spirit. Paul gave a list of the things that the flesh desires, as well as, a list of the things the Spirit desires. Meekness and self-control are the things of the Spirit. See both listed in Galatians 5:16-24. This test by the Scriptures will reveal if you are living in the flesh or living in the Spirit.

- **Take a break and read Galatians 5:16-24. Then determine which path you are walking by doing a self-examination. If you feel that you are walking in the flesh, tell why then pray and seek the Holy Spirit's help. If you believe that you are walking by the Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit is evident, tell why then give thanks to the Lord for the Holy Spirit being active and present in your life.**

*<sup>6</sup>Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

The Lord used the most basic human needs in life to describe the next key point to His disciples. These needs are illustrated in other places of the Scriptures. Let us observe.

### ***The Old Testament Comparison***

The picture of hunger and thirst used in this teaching by the Lord reminds us of what the Psalm writer expressed in the following: *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"* (Psalm 42:2-3) When we are hungry and thirsty, we seek to satisfy these needs with food and drink. Spiritually, there is a hunger and thirst in the soul. Seeking the Living GOD is how the soul satisfies its hunger and quenches its thirst (CF: Psalm 63:1). The desire of the soul should be to do the will of GOD constantly and consistently.

### ***The Meaning of the Verse***

This beatitude is describing a deep passion to hunger and thirst for the righteousness of GOD. While those who are righteous may do good things in life, the Lord wants His disciples to see the enthusiastic drive of living a righteous life. He expects them to be righteous while remaining poor in spirit and being meek. One does not override or cancel the other. This is the concept of righteousness: "Doing right in GOD'S sight." However, righteousness should include a desire for the world to live right before GOD. Does it not grieve your soul that unholiness, unrighteousness and injustice is the on-going way in the world that we live in? Jesus wants His disciples to see that personal righteousness cannot be separated from the world in which we live.



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***The Application of the Verse***

Many believers have a desire to live righteously, but how does the desire for it becomes “red-hot” in the soul? Spiritual growth is the key to living right before GOD on a constant basis. In Romans 6:13 Paul taught the church the following: *Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.* Paul taught that this discipline to live in righteousness is sacrificial. Notice his use of the word “offer” which indicates being a living sacrifice (CF: Romans 12:1-2). There must be a commitment to (1) do the will of GOD, (2) be guided by the Holy Spirit in your spiritual walk (3) grow closer to the Lord, and (4) become sensitive to the unrighteousness and injustice in the world.

- **Assess your commitment for doing the four points mentioned above and describe your own hunger and thirst for righteousness?**

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**7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

In my bible reading, I came across Proverbs 11:17 which states the following: *Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves.* In other words, one does good to his or her soul by showing mercy. While the other troubles his or her flesh by not being merciful.

***The Old Testament Comparison***

Psalm 51:1 was an appeal from King David to Almighty GOD for compassion when he sinned before Him. This verse is recorded as follows: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.* Can you sense in your own soul the heavy burden for GOD’S compassion by David? Have you been in a similar place where you long for GOD’S mercy. I believe that we all have been in that same place because of our sins. We do not want to hear this, but all of us have sinned and come short of GOD’S glory (CF: Romans 3:23). The reality of fallen mankind is the result of sin. Often, I find myself pleading for GOD’S mercy as a point of confession. But here is something to think about: *I ask GOD for His mercy, but am I showing other people mercy?*





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##### ***The Meaning of the Verse***

So far in our teaching, what would you say that the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek in heart and those who long for righteousness have in common? I would say that they all look for help from above. They lift their eyes beyond the hill tops for that gracious help that comes from the Lord (CF: *Psalms 121:1-2*). When you understand mercy because of your own dependency upon GOD, your own inadequacy before GOD, your own incompleteness without GOD and your own weakness in the sight of GOD; you begin to realize the importance of showing mercy to other people. Showing mercy to others demand both forgiveness and compassion for those who need it. How can I easily forget the “Clarion Call” from the Lord to forgive others unconditionally and unlimitedly?<sup>3</sup>

##### ***The Application of the Verse***

Showing mercy to other people requires that you know the essence or significance of GOD’S mercy in your own life. Jesus wants His disciples to display this quality of His as often as possible. James in writing the church on this specific subject said this: *Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.* (James 2:12-13) If this was good instruction to the early church, then it is good instruction to the church today.

- Tell about a time in which you had to show mercy to another person that needed your mercy? What was the outcome?

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##### **Endnotes**

1. Darrel L. Bock, *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study – Gospels* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2002), 51.
2. Allen Ross, *An Exposition of Matthew – 7. The Beatitudes*, Accessed December 26, 2022, <https://bible.org/series/exposition-gospel-matthew>.
3. Walter Dukes, Senior Pastor, Bethel Family Christian Church, *Forgive as Jesus Does*, YouTube, Accessed December 26, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubouCCKf5Z4&t=3804s>.
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