



Bible Study, January 18, 2023

Series: The Discipleship Training of Jesus Christ

Lesson 2: The Beatitudes – Part 2

Pastor Reginald Rogers, Facilitator

Last Week

A short review of last week, we kicked off this bible study series by looking closely at the first four statements of blessedness taught by Jesus Christ to His first disciples. I mentioned that the first disciples were Peter, Andrew, James, and John. A team of fishermen who left their occupations behind and followed Jesus. We took a close look at being poor in spirit, being mournful, being meek, hungering and thirsting for righteousness. Tonight, we will complete lesson 1 about being merciful. Each teaching moment by the Lord took His disciples higher in their spiritual growth. It is doing the same thing for us too. Spiritual growth is the heart of maturing as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Also, we are going to look at the remaining statements of blessedness taught by the Lord.

⁷Blessed 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, by showing mercy a person does himself or herself good. On the other hand, by not being merciful a person troubles his or her flesh.

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 feel 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?*

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: Psalm 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 demands both forgiveness and compassion for those who need it. How can I easily forget the "Wake Up Call" from the Lord to forgive others unconditionally and unlimitedly that Pastor Walt preached recently?³



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The Application of the Verse

Showing mercy to other people requires that you know the 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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⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

When Jesus taught this statement of blessedness to His disciples, He was emphasizing a truth that was known among the Jewish people. GOD is good to Israel and to those with a pure heart (CF: Psalm 73:1). The truth is that before anyone can enter the presence of GOD his or her thoughts, reasons and actions must be pure.

The Old Testament Comparison

Old Testament Scriptures address this thought about having a pure heart and seeing GOD. Let us read Psalm 24:3-4 which is as follows: *Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.* This is a well-known bible passage that clearly states the human soul's condition for approaching the Holy and Living GOD. To come into the presence of GOD with impure thoughts and impure motives cannot happen. Jesus describes this kind of moral impurity as being defiled (CF: Matthew 15:19-20). The impure heart is a deceitful and devious mind that cherishes sin and meditates upon wicked intentions (CF: Jeremiah 17:9). There is no exception to seeing GOD with an impure heart.

The Meaning of the Verse

Change from a defile heart to a pure heart comes by following Jesus Christ. He told Nicodemus that he must be born again in order to see the kingdom of GOD (CF: John 3:3). The born-again conversion experience is the first step towards obtaining a pure heart. This cannot be accomplished in a person's own will and strength though some may try. It is the confession of the mouth that "Jesus is Lord" and the believing of the heart that GOD raised Him from the dead in which a person is saved (CF: Romans 10:9). The confession cleanses and the belief purify the thoughts while healing the soul (CF: James 5:16). As you grow spiritually, your heart becomes pure before GOD.



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The Application of the Verse

Let me restate that if you want a pure heart, you must be born-again. This is the only way to see GOD. Learning to walk in the light by praying and spending time with GOD, reading the Scriptures daily and increasing in the knowledge of GOD, and sharing your faith and telling others about GOD. Faithfully doing these things will change the way you think and cause your heart to grow purer.

- **List the things that you are doing daily so that your heart will become pure and you will see GOD.**

⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Paul the apostle when writing to the church at Rome made a significant statement about being children of GOD. Please note the following: *For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.* (Romans 8:14) If you are led by the Holy Spirit of GOD, then you are a son or daughter of the LIVING GOD. (*My Emphasis*) Now, Jesus is teaching His disciples about how this is done. Let us capture this teaching in our minds.

The Old Testament Comparison

There are no Scripture references in the Old Testament about peacemakers and children of GOD that directly cross reference the Lord's teaching.

The Meaning of the Verse

Who is the Wonder Counselor, Mighty GOD, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace? According to Isaiah the prophet, these are the names of the coming Christ and was fulfilled by the birth of Jesus. The plan of redemption by Almighty GOD is one of peace between Him and fallen mankind. How will true peace take place? True peace that the world need, demands a change in mind. Jesus said to His disciples in *John 14:27* these words: *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.* This kind of peace is GOD'S reconciling work between Him and mankind by the Holy Spirit. Once true peace is established with GOD, the next step is making peace with others. This is the spirit of the peacemakers that will be called children of GOD.



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The Application of the Verse

As disciples of Jesus Christ, the declaring of peace is through the gospel of peace that is spread to the nations. The ministry of reconciliation by the church is a must too. This is the work of declaring that a person can have a restored relationship with GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ (CF: 2 Corinthians 5:17-19).

- **Describe a time in which you needed restored peace between yourself and another person. What was the outcome?**

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

Mistreatment is a form of persecution that happens against a person that is doing right or living peacefully. It can include any of the previous teaching moments mentioned by Jesus to His disciples. Jesus warned them to get ready and expect this to happen. We do not invite trouble intentionally in our lives, but trouble has a way of finding us when we walk in righteousness.

The Old Testament Comparison

In the book of 1 Samuel beginning in Chapters 19 through 31 much is written about Saul's intentions, motives, and pursuits to kill David without any specific cause. It is a prime case of persecution by Saul against David that lasted a few years. David was a young man in his early twenties when the persecution of Saul began. Why was David being attacked by Saul? Saul was jealous of David's righteous anointing and achievements.

The Meaning of the Verse

This statement of blessedness by the Lord is for His disciples who suffer persecutions for the sake of righteous living. This includes suffering mainly for Him. Jesus explains this in Verse 11 that we will look at shortly. The disciples identify with the Lord. How? By faith, His name, the gospel message, the proclaiming of an eternal kingdom, living in peace, and such as these. But the devil takes a stand in opposition to all the work of the disciples even today. Frustration and humiliation happen in this present life, but the promise of the kingdom of heaven is the eternal destination. Just like the poor in spirit, those who are persecuted are living now and will live forever in the kingdom of heaven.



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The Application of the Verse

The key to this teaching is a disciple must forward march witnessing the gospel, making disciples in all the nations, baptizing them, teaching them to obey all that Jesus Christ taught about the kingdom of heaven (CF: *Matthew 28:19-20*). The disciples should know and understand that opposition and persecution will take place. But they are to press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling in Jesus Christ even if it cost them their lives in this world (CF: *Philippians 3:14*). It is a heavenward call!

- **Has trouble or persecution ever crossed your path because you are a professing Christian taking a stand for righteousness? If so, how did you endure it?**

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

"It is all about Jesus." Remember that when somebody trouble you to the point that you want to retaliate. Tell yourself, "It is all about Jesus." When another person insults and embarrasses you and you feel like chewing them out. Tell yourself, "It is all about Jesus." In this next statement of blessedness that Jesus taught His disciples, it was to let them know that persecution, trouble, and such as these in their lives would be because of Him.

The Old Testament Comparison

When you read Isaiah 53 does it move you in your spirit? Can you envision the pain and suffering afflicted upon the One who is described there. Do you see in this prophecy the fulfillment by the Lord who paid the price of suffering and shame for us? If Jesus suffered in pain and abuse for our sake, then can we receive the promised blessing that He taught His disciples about insult, persecution, false accusation, and such as these because it is all about Him?

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The Meaning of the Verse

Jesus wanted His disciples who walked with Him to know that persecution, hardship, suffering, and more was going to happen if they remain faithful to Him. Yes, even today there is no exemption from these things in our world. There is a strong opposition to Jesus Christ and true Christianity stirring at this very moment. So, what do we do? What should be our attitude about suffering for Jesus' sake? Paul the apostle gave a detailed description about being a "suffering servant" for Jesus Christ in the following:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (2 Corinthians 6:3-10)

Did you notice that Paul was not ashamed to share with the church difficulties and setbacks that happened to him and his companions on their missionary journeys? This kind of struggle and trouble is expected when crusading for Jesus Christ. I believe that Paul and his companions, as well as, many of the early church disciples knew and understood the blessing of this statement.

The Application of the Verse

If each of these statements of blessedness taught by the Lord were steps on a ladder and being poor in spirit was the first step, then being persecuted because of Jesus Christ is the highest step on the ladder. These steps begin with true conversion into the faith. The fruit of a person's obedience to these statements start in this life and are fully obtained in eternity with the Lord. Think about it this way: Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that is full of trouble bears a price like the Lord paid.

- **Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-10 again and prepare a list of the insults, false accusations, and troubles you have experienced as born-again believer of Jesus Christ?**

¹²Rejoice 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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The Lord's Exhortation

Jesus concluded this teaching by exhorting or encouraging His disciples to rejoice and be glad about being persecuted. After the Day of Pentecost and the church was growing in Jerusalem, the disciples now Apostles began to experience persecution from the same religious leaders (the Pharisees and Sadducees) who made themselves enemies to Jesus Christ. The Apostles were sternly told by these religious leaders not to teach in Jesus' Name, but the Apostles obeyed GOD. They were brought before the Sanhedrin court, but GOD gave them favor.

After listening to Gamaliel's speech within the court, the following happened to the Apostles: *His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.* (Acts 5:40-41) The Apostles were let go by the High Court. They did so, but not without physically punishing the Apostles and warning them again not to speak in Jesus' Name.

Did the Apostles get angry because they were unjustly beaten? No, they left the court rejoicing and considered their punishment worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name of Jesus. They kept this teaching about persecution from the Lord in their heart and considered their reward in heaven to be greater than their earthly persecution.

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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