

Why the Beatitudes Matter to the Christian

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Matthew 5:1-2

The great question and quest of men is the quest for happiness. How do I obtain “happiness,” “contentment,” and “satisfaction?” Sorrowfully, men seek happiness in the most fleeting and temporary means (drugs, alcohol, sex, power, position, riches, stability, etc.). Men seek all manner of things to plug the “happiness hole” within their being. The emphasis is on “how to do it” rather than “who do I need to be.”

I. Why Consider the Sermon on the Mount?

- A. The prompting of the Spirit.
- B. Move us from a superficial walk with Christ towards a mature faith. We are superficial when...
 - 1. Superficiality has more interest in *addition* than *transformation*.
 - 2. Superficiality has more interest in breadth than depth.
 - 3. Superficiality is more interested in “*how*” than “*holiness*.”
- C. The Cause of Superficial Christian living is largely a failure to take the Bible seriously.
 - 1. The Bible is a textbook for life.
 - 2. The Bible is our sole authority.
 - 3. The Bible is our source of knowledge about God.
 - 4. Approaching the Bible with a Theory is to undermine its power.
 - 5. Reading the Bible is not enough. “How much are we living out the Bible as Salt and Light?”

II. The Beatitudes are for every Christian.

- A. It is a false premise that the Beatitudes are for the “super-Christian.”
- B. Divisions must be resisted, and instead, unity sought (ex. Clergy/Laity),
 - 1. Divisions, by definition, divide.
 - 2. Man-made defined divisions are unscriptural.
 - 3. Unscriptural divisions are destructive.
- C. There are only distinctions in office (Pastor/Apostle/Prophet/Teachers/Evangelist)
- D. The Beatitudes are about Character, not Office.

III. All Christians are meant to manifest these Characteristics.

- A. Poor in Spirit, leads to... (Matthew 5:3)
- B. Mourning, leads to...(Matthew 5:4)
- C. Meekness, leads to...(Matthew 5:5)
- D. Hunger and thirst, lead to...(Matthew 5:6)
- E. Mercy, leads to...(Matthew 5:7)
- F. Purity, leads to...(Matthew 5:8)
- G. Peacemaking, leads to...(Matthew 5:9)
- H. Persecution, leads to... (Matthew 5:10)
 - 1. Blessed
 - 2. Satisfaction
 - 3. Happiness
 - 4. Joy
 - 5. Contentment

IV. The Beatitudes demonstrate the difference between Christians and Non-Christians

- A. Christians should be different in what they admire.
 - 1. Poor in spirit vs. proud & boastful.
- B. Christians should be different in what we seek
 - 1. Hunger and thirst for righteousness
- C. Christians should be different in what we do
 - 1. Purity, Peace, Mercy
 - 2. **1 Peter 2:11–12**, *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*
- D. Christians should be different in what we CAN do (aware of our limitations)
- E. The Sermon on the Mount exhorts us to be what we are meant to be for Christ!

V. None of the Beatitudes describe our natural tendencies

- A. Beatitudes are the work of the Spirit in us.
- B. The beatitudes are defining of our new nature as a believer.
- C. Living the beatitudes is the result of transformation, not the result of our natural temperament.
 - 1. You must be born again to be like this
 - 2. Paul (Philippians 3:4-7)

VI. The Beatitudes show that the Christian and the Non-Christian belong to 2 different Realms.

- A. Notice the first and last beatitude (vs 3 and vs. 10)
- B. The Example of Nicodemus. Nicodemus did what was right as a leading Pharisee, but Jesus confronted his unbelief and sin.

1. Nicodemus warmly and respectfully embraces Jesus (John 3:2)
 - a) His title - Rabbi (teacher)
 - b) His work - as a teacher sent from God
 - c) His miracles - signs of that God is with Him (John 2:11).
2. Nicodemus falls short of seeing Jesus as God incarnate.
 - a) He potentially saw Jesus as a prophet (not the Prophet Moses spoke of)
 - b) He saw Jesus as a miracle worker, sent from God, but not as God.
 - c) Jesus saw Nicodemus in the group of “*all men*,” in **John 2:24** (a false professor and not a possessor of saving faith).
3. Jesus confronts Nicodemus with the truth, **John 3:3** *Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*
 - a) Nicodemus’s Shock at the claim of Jesus
 - (1) **John 3:4**, *Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”*
 - (2) **John 3:9**, *Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?”*
 - b) Why Men are Unsaved Christians
 - (1) A Reliance on Religion (Nicodemus is a picture of a false but professing believer)
 - (a) Nicodemus was a member of the Pharisees who were hyper-legalists concerned with external appearances while overlooking one’s inward condition (**2 Timothy 3:5**, *Having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.*)
 - (b) **John 3:4**, *Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”*
 - (i) Nicodemus, “I can’t start all over again. It’s too late!”
 - (ii) There would be no hope for Nicodemus, in his mind, if he had to start all over again. This is a matter of forsaking all and following Christ!
 - (iii) Jesus reiterates **John 3:5**, *Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*
 - (c) Born of water and the Spirit
 - (i) It is not physical birth (water) or a bath in water.
 - (a) It was merely symbolic of the OT purification by water.
 - (b) **Ezekiel 36:25–27**, *I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*
 - (ii) The only baptism implied here is Spirit baptism
 - (a) **John 1:33**, *I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’*
 - (i) *A lost person must be spiritually purified (cleansed) and spiritually reborn.*

c) Margin notes John 3:10-15

C.
D.
E.

VII. General Outline of the Sermon on the Mount

- A. Chapter 5 – The Christian Living in the Upside-Down Kingdom
 1. The Character of a born-again Christian (5:3-10)
 2. The Character of the Christian Tested (5:11-12)
 3. The Christian’s Relationship to the World (5:13-16)
 4. The Christian facing the demands of God’s Law (5:17-48)

B. Chapter 6 – Living in the Presence of God

1. Living for God's glory (**Matthew 6:1** *"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."*)
2. Living for God's Kingdom (**Matthew 6:5**, *"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."*)
3. Living for God's Pleasure (**Matthew 6:16**, *"And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."*)
4. Living for God's Purposes (**Matthew 6:19**, *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,*
5. Living for God's Peace (**Matthew 6:25**, *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"*

C. Chapter 7 – The Christian Living in the Fear of God

1. Living in Fear
 - a) **Matthew 7:1**, "Judge not, that you be not judged.
 - b) **Matthew 7:12 (ESV) — 12** "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
 - c) **Matthew 7:13 (ESV) — 13** "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.
 - d) **Matthew 7:19 (ESV) — 19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
 - e) **Matthew 7:23 (ESV) — 23** And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'
 - f) **Matthew 7:27 (ESV) — 27** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."
2. Living in New Life
 - a) **Romans 8:1–4**, There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **2** For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. **3** For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, **4** in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
 - b) **The Big Difference**
 - (1) Christians are not free agents.
 - (2) The "things" (food, clothing, housing) are not our primary concerns
 - (3) The Christian walks in fear of God (2 Corinthians 5:10)
 - (4)

VIII. Who was the Sermon intended? What is its relevance?

A. Different views:

1. It is a social gospel of principles to bring the Kingdom on the Earth.
 - a) Wars will end.
 - b) Troubles will be banished.
2. It is an elaboration of the Mosaic Law
 - a) However, the SOM goes beyond the Mosaic Law (ex. The Beatitudes)
3. A Dispensational view.
 - a) It only is applicable to the Kingdom and has nothing to do with today's Christianity.

B. *"Matthew puts the true teaching concerning the kingdom in the very forefront of his Gospel, for the great purpose of this Sermon is to give an exposition of the kingdom as something which is essentially spiritual. The kingdom is primarily something "within you." It is that which governs and controls the*

heart and mind and outlook.”¹

1. It is not, “live like this and you will be a Christian.” Rather it is, “Live like this because you are a Christian!”

IX. True Happiness Is Found in a Believer’s Union with Christ by way of the New Birth

- A. Nine “Blessed’s” in the opening verses of Matthew 5 and the Sermon on the Mount
 1. Blessed – characterized by happiness; being highly favored
 - a) Our forgiveness **Romans 4:7**, *“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;*
 - b) Our Christ **Matthew 16:16–17**, *Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” 17 And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*
 - c) Our Position **John 13:16–17 (ESV)** — **16** Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. **17** If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
 - d) Our Giving **Acts 20:35 (ESV)** — **35** In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”
 - e) Our Trials **James 1:12 (ESV)** — **12** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
 2. Blessed also means Contentment or Satisfaction or Fulfillment or Bliss.
 - a) It is continual
 - b) It is constant
 - c) It is only used in Scripture in connection with believers, never an unbeliever.
 - d) Blessed is also descriptive of God’s nature (Psa 68:35; 72:18; 119:12; 1 Tim 1:11) of which believers partake: **2 Peter 1:4 (ESV)** — **4** by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
 - e) Blessed is the inward character (the state of) of true believers.

X. Why Should We Study the Sermon on the Mount?

- A. Jesus died that I might be able to live the Sermon on the Mount. **Titus 2:14 (ESV)** — **14** who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
- B. The Sermon on the Mount shows the absolute need for the new birth.
- C. The more we live the Sermon on the Mount, the more we will experience, “blessed.”
- D. It puts the life of Jesus Christ in shoe leather!

¹ Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1976. (11).