

Beatitudes

Objectives

To gain a basic understanding of the beatitudes

References

Holy Scripture

Scriptural Verse

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock...” (Matthew 7:24)

Lesson Outlines

God’s way vs. the world’s way:

The World’s Way	God’s Way
We are full, and in no need of anything	Poor in spirit, we are lacking
Defending our behavior and actions	Mourning over our sins
Aggressive, responding to anger with anger	Meek and humble
Hunger to fulfill the desires of the flesh	Hunger and thirst for righteousness
Quick to judge and dole out punishment	Merciful and forgiving
“Sophisticated,” complicated, full of sin	Pure in heart and innocent
Angry, fueling hatred, gossipers, fearful, anxious	Peacemakers
Persecuting those that get in our way	Persecuted for the truth

Poor in the Spirit

The first beatitude calls us to understand our spiritual illness and to turn to God for help. We must be able to declare: “I am poor.”

Our father Adam fell because he was seduced by the temptation of the devil. They wanted to be like God; to have his knowledge, power, authority, and freedom. Today we want the same thing, and worse yet...we might think we have unlimited amounts of each.

Being poor in spirit, means to acknowledge my emptiness rather than my fullness. To admit that I am in need of something, that I am not complete, that I am lacking. I am poor. Not only do I acknowledge it to myself, but I do not try to hide it. I do not put on a fake front of strength and holiness. I am poor. I am a sinner, I make many mistakes. I am often wrong about many things, both important and trivial. I do not have all the answers. I do not respond in the right way to many situations on a daily basis.

God promises the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit. What greater gift is there?

Mourning

Mourning is comprised of 3 steps:

1. Examination: I examine my life, my thoughts, my behavior, my motives, my words, and identifying everything however small or great that is not in accordance with God's will. I am honest with myself and not trying to sugar coat what I find.
2. Sorrow: Once I see myself and my sins for what they really are, I should be moved with godly sorrow and mourn over my sins.
3. Repentance: Now as a result of my self-examination and sorrow I will seek to overcome my weaknesses through struggle and prayers with tears. I will hate my sins, and yet maintain a firm hope in God who is able to deliver me from them:

God promises comfort to those who mourn. If we mourn over our sins, then receiving comfort means that not only does God offer us hope and mercy when we do sin, but he also helps us overcome the root of the problem, the sin itself! That is the only way we will be truly comforted...to see the passions lose all power over us.

Meekness

Meekness is strength disguised as weakness. The Lord Jesus Christ had infinite strength...and yet those watching Him being crucified concluded that He was weak.

There are two main reasons why turning the other cheek is a difficult commandment:

1. Pride
2. Fear

So to truly be meek, we need to:

1. Be humble and think of ourselves as sinners. Do I deserve any better than this?
2. Not feel that we have anything to prove.
3. Not care what conclusions people will come to when they see our reactions. Instead our goal should be to please God and Him alone.
4. Not be afraid of our attacker, just as the Lord Jesus Christ was not. God is in control of the situation.

In other words: Meekness is humble and patient strength. Those that practice it shall, "inherit the earth."

Righteousness

God offers us a truly remarkable and real path to contentment. Simply: eliminate sin. God knows that the only true source of contentment and joy is a life full of Him. He also knows that sin is a barrier that keeps us from experiencing His fullness. Eliminate the barrier, and we will have what we search for in a measure we could not have predicted.

This is why God asks us to seek righteousness...because it is the only way we will ever be “filled.”

Mercy

The unmerciful person believes that they are better than others. They do not feel that they are in need of mercy themselves, which it makes it easy for them to withhold mercy from others. When we show mercy to others, God will be merciful to us. When we forgive others, God will forgive us.

Purity

- ❖ The natural man is corrupted. We are born as sinners out of our mother’s womb:
- ❖ We are in need to be baptized into the Lord Jesus Christ and be sanctified. We need new bodies, new hearts, and new spirits.
- ❖ Once transformed, we need to learn the word of God and follow it through the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit that is now in us.

Being Christian is not just about being a “good person.” It is about being transformed into the likeness of our Creator. One who is holier than any one of us can conceive. He offers us an infinite amount of Himself. There is no artificial ceiling beyond which we are unable to pass. He wants us to be with Him and to see Him. He promises just that to the pure in heart.

Peacemakers

God asks us to make peace between people. To not thrive on quarrels and dissensions, but to unite people and help them see past their differences. We should live peaceably and respectfully with those around us, in our homes, in our churches, at work, and in society. To be peacemakers, we ourselves have to have peace internally. Only then can we share that peace and bring about peace in the outside world.

Persecuted for Righteousness

As Christians, we must understand that there is hardship associated with being Christian because we are contrary to the world. God tells us that we will be persecuted for our beliefs and practices. This could mean being directly attacked for who we are, or it could mean having to deal with the conflicts and separation of living in a world that does not share our views.

Conclusion

The Lord’s words in the beatitudes set up a framework for Christian living. Living in the world and overcoming our human nature is not easy and requires struggle with grace but in the end God promises victory and eternal life to those who persist.

Activities/Discussion Points

1. List things that we do, think or feel that are contrary to what is taught in the beatitudes.