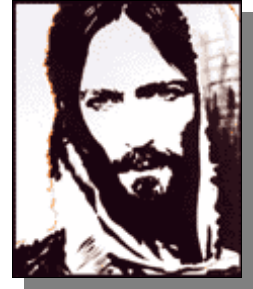


Teacher of Righteousness

The Beatitudes - Matthew 5:3-10



series: The Jesus I Follow

week 3

Most students of pedagogy (the science of instruction) would say that Jesus was one of the outstanding teachers of all time, and that His “Sermon on the Mount” is one of the most effective examples of teaching ever recorded. But others would go further, and say that the dual impact of Jesus’ frequent teachings, backed up by his extraordinary daily lifestyle, lived out in the open for everyone to see, has never been matched.

As Christians we reject the view that Jesus was simply a “great moral teacher”; certainly He was much more, indeed He is the living and reigning Son of God. But that said, He was an awesome teacher!

As soon as Jesus began His public ministry He began to teach. And His longest—and most famous—sermon was delivered on a hillside overlooking the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Sermon has drawn the attention of every generation; some of it is easy and straightforward, much of it is difficult and, frankly, a bit confusing. But it is hard to turn away from. John Stott writes:

“The Sermon on the Mount has a unique fascination. It seems to present the quintessence of the teaching of Jesus. It makes goodness attractive. It shames our shabby performance. It engenders dreams of a better world.”

Like a 1st-century Moses addressing a motley group of followers instead of the children of Israel, Jesus begins His message by describing 8 principles, in contrast to Moses’ 10 commandments. They have become known as the “Beatitudes”, because they all begin with the word “blessed”, which in Latin is “*beatitudo*”.

Blessed are the poor
in spirit,
for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who
mourn, for they will be
comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the
earth.

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

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

8 Blessed are the pure in
heart, for they will see
God.

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

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

- Read the beginning of Psalm 1. This is a psalm that every Israelite would probably have memorized. How does it begin, and how does that relate to the Beatitudes?

- Note: Jesus often uses physical things to describe spiritual realities. For instance, in verse 3 He is not talking about financial poverty, but spiritual, and in verse 6 he is referring to spiritual thirst, not physical (something the woman at the well in John 4 found confusing).

- How would you paraphrase the first beatitude, and why do you think He placed it first?

- Read Luke 13:9-14 and explain why it illustrates the first Beatitude.

In the chart below, write out what you think each Beatitude means. Look up the references for help in the process. Feel free to use Bible dictionaries or other research tools.

Beatitude	Your Paraphrase / Definition	Helpful References
2		James 4:9,10
3		1 Peter 5:5,6
4		Matthew 6:33, 1 Peter 2:2,3
5		Colossians 3:13
6		2 Corinthians 4:18, Hebrews 12:2
7		Romans 12:17-21
8		John 15:18-25

Now read the introduction to the Sermon in verses 1 and 2 of chapter 5, and then read the conclusion in verses 7:24-29. How did those who heard Jesus' sermon respond?

- Look up "amazed" in a Concordance. How many times in the Gospels is this the reaction of people to something that Jesus has done?

When you take the beatitudes and use them to evaluate your own spiritual life, what do they reveal?

- Name one area where a beatitude describes the current reality of your spiritual growth:
- Name one area where a beatitude reveals that you need to make some changes:

Remember the key to the Sermon on the Mount: no one comes into God's Kingdom without grace, and no one grows spiritually without God's Spirit. The beatitudes are not qualities we can produce by trying harder; they are the result of the Spirit's work in a life that is surrendered to God.

Being poor in spirit is to be spiritually bankrupt before God. It is the mental state of the man who has recognized something of the righteousness and holiness of God, who has seen into the sin and corruption of his own heart, and has acknowledged his inability to please God."

- James Boice

The Beatitudes are Christ's own specification of what every Christian ought to be. All, these qualities are to characterize all His followers. Just as the ninefold fruit of the Spirit which Paul lists in Galatians 5 is to ripen every Christian character, so the eight beatitudes which Christ speaks describe His ideal for every citizen of God's kingdom."

- John Stott, Christian Counter-Culture