

- 1) Just to say this a bit early, we will not be meeting the 27th because of the Look Who's Coming to Dinner fellowship.
- 2) Ok, we have arrived at the Sermon on the Mount.
- 3) Before we begin, let us take a quick look at the setting. So, starting with verses 1 and 2 we read...

Matthew 5:1-12 (NASB 2020)

Sermon on the Mount

¹Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. ²And He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

- a) To this point in the gospel, Christ's words have been limited.
- b) Although this message is compact in the gospel renderings, some scholars estimate that this set of teachings may have been over as much as 3 days.
- c) Jesus is surrounded by His disciples – they are by what we read in verse 1 and 2 the primary recipients of the teaching.
- d) The crowds were listening and learning, but they were not the primary target of the address.
- 4) Matthew uses this word “crowds” through out his gospel.
 - a) When we think of Jesus' mission, the crowds are an important part of what we might want to call its success or failure.
 - b) The crowds are most always friendly, but they are normally anonymous, shifting and unstructured.
 - c) They follow Him, marvel at his teachings and miracles but are not considered committed to Him.
 - i) Basically, they are not his disciples.
 - d) This is a contrast to the disciples who are the core group who are, constant, committed, and are taught differently or beyond the crowds.
 - i) For example, the parables are explained to the disciples but never to the crowds.
 - e) Considering this, the crowds, even though they may be open to and enamored by His teachings, are only minimally affected by it.
 - i) There are no reported life-changing commitments occurring that we are told of – no 2000 or 3000 coming forward to become his disciples at the end of the teaching.
 - f) When we look at the crowds, we know of two occasions where there were approximately 5000 and 4000 men plus women and children.
 - g) At Pentecost, we only know of 120 faithful followers (disciples) who were in the upper room.
 - i) If we gave the benefit of a doubt to that number and said there were three times as many who were not there, we would still be looking at less than 400 disciples out of the known 10000 plus that were in just these two crowds that are numbered.

- h) Crowds were the instrument that kept the Pharisees so focused on Jesus.
 - i) They were afraid that His popularity would cause them to fall out of favor with Rome and they would lose their autonomy or worse.
- i) Important to the fulfilment of the salvation by His dying on the cross for the sins of the world.
- j) Only turned on Jesus at the end to seal His fate.
- k) They are where the seeds which are sown that come to sprouting on the day of Pentecost.
 - i) The crowds were necessary in order to have a starting place.

So, having said all that, what does this say to you about Jesus' mission?

- 5) So, moving on into the sermon itself.
- 6) Jesus begins speaking with what we have come to call the beatitudes.
- 7) The word beatitude truly means supreme blessedness.
 - a) I shared with you last time a Ron “ism”:
 - i) Take the word in your mind and break it in two – be and attitude.
 - ii) Now this is a little fakey but keep that breakdown in mind as we read these.
- 8) Continuing with verse 3...
- ³ “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 gentle, for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
- ⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive 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 have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ¹¹ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- 9) We must, before we take another step, decide on a definition of the word “Blessed.”
 - a) By the way, you probably know this but, since it is used here as an adjective, it is pronounced “bleh sid” not “blest” which would be a verb.
- 10) The first problem we run into is the word itself.

- a) The word "**blessed**" was first used in English in the **late 12th century**.
- b) The original sense was closely tied to religious rituals, particularly those involving the marking or consecration with blood.²⁵⁸
- c) Over time, especially as Old English was influenced by Christian Latin, the meaning of "blessed" expanded to include "supremely happy" and "consecrated, holy."²⁸

- 1. https://www.oed.com/dictionary/blessed_adj
- 2. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/blessed>
- 3. <https://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=bless>
- 4. <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/blessed>
- 5. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/bless>
- 6. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/47232289.pdf>
- 7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blessing>
- 8. <https://aleteia.org/2023/12/19/a-brief-yet-revealing-history-of-blessings/>

11) If we just look it up in Webster's, we get in trouble right away.

- a) When applied to religion Webster says: held in reverence or venerated as in "the blessed saints."
 - i) Or, honored in worship: Holy, consecrated as in the blessed Trinity
 - ii) Or beatific: a blessed visitation.
- b) The 2nd definition is enjoying happiness.
 - i) A side note there said; "For Christianity specifically it means enjoying the bliss of heaven."

12) That's a lot to pick from – right?

- a) If we jump back about 12 more centuries from where "blessed" in this context came into being, the word in the Greek is **μακάριος**.
 - i) Looking at BDAG, we find the following definition (I'm quoting):

blessed is the one who ... the happiness of or hail to those who are blessed ...

- ii) Continuing, they say;

This appears to be exactly right for the Aramaic original, but scholars have disputed whether it exhausts the content that μακάριος had in the mouths of Greek-speaking Christians.¹¹

13) Seems like "happiness" is the place to land so far – right?

14) Before we do that let us go one other place – what happens if we change the word happiness in any of these definitions to joy.

15) Now, calling us back to our discussion in our study of Philippians...

Philippians 4:11–12 (NASB 2020)

¹¹ Not that I speak from need, for I have learned to be content in whatever *circumstances* I am. ¹² I know how to get along with little, and I also know how to

¹¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 611.

live in prosperity; in any and every *circumstance* I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.

16) Paul does not use the word for blessed. (bleh sid or blest)

17) Here, Paul using the words “content” and “joy” not to indicate “happiness” but a feeling of inner contentment regardless of the circumstances.

a) In the context of our conversation, I think that it is reasonable that blessed would fit.

18) To be blessed as in the beatitudes is also not a superficial feeling of well-being based on circumstance.

19) Being blessed as I think Paul is really indicating here and as Christ is using the word in the beatitudes is a deep supernatural experience of contentment –

a) not associated with good and wonderful things happening –

b) rather, regardless of what is happening, the joy is there because one's life is right with God.

c) Not right in the sense that we are doing everything “right” and never make mistakes – right in the sense that we have the relationship with God that we need and cherish!

d) Paul had that “rightness” with God that allowed him to be able to express this to us.

20) When one looks at the beatitudes every one of them seems paradoxical.

a) The condition and the corresponding blessedness do not fit together. It makes us want to say – What? – How can this be?

21) It is like Paul talking about joy and contentment when he is setting in prison not really knowing if he would get out alive.

22) By normal human standards poor in spirit, humility, mourning, desire for righteousness, mercy, and persecution are not the stuff of which happiness is made, or joy comes from.

A lot but – Agree / Disagree?

Further Comments Please!!

23) Ok let's look at them individually...

³ **“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (1)**

a) **Poor in spirit** – This expression describes an inward feeling of one who is spiritually poor or bankrupt – unable to give anything to God and thus depending on His mercy.

i) Jesus is speaking of people who understand their helplessness and put their dependence on God.

ii) The final dispensation of the kingdom lies in the future. But these folks have the kingdom now as it is being revealed by Jesus at this moment.

iii) They and we have it by living out the words and teachings of Jesus.

Do we and/or should we feel the poorness in spirit as defined here?

b) We should note here that this beatitude (1) and verse 10 (8) both promise a present tense reward of the kingdom of heaven in the same way.

i) The intervening beatitudes are all future tense.

⁴ **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (2)**

- c) **Mourning** – Of the nine terms used for mourn or lament in scripture, the one used here is the strongest, the most severe.
 - i) It represents the deepest, most heart-felt grief, and was generally reserved for grieving over the death of a loved one.
 - ii) Scholars differ on the exact object of the word mourning as used here.
 - (1) Some say that Jesus was referring to the nation of Israel mourning for its sins.
 - (2) Others interpret this more personally, explaining that it refers to those who mourn for their own sins or even for personal grief or oppression.

As those who are saved by Christ's blood, why should we mourn over our own sins?

What about those listening to Jesus that day – why should they mourn over their sins?

⁵ **“Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth. (3)**

- d) ***Gentle*** – means here to not be overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentle, humble, considerate, meek in the older favorable sense¹²
 - i) The term sometimes was used to describe a soothing medicine or a soft breeze.
 - ii) Only those who seek Jesus and understand his ways will be gentle as He means here.
 - iii) Contrary to human standards of the strong ruling, the gentle in this way will truly rule.
 - iv) When you think about this in the mindset of those who were listening to Him, it must have really seemed strange
 - (1) The Romans were anything but gentle and they themselves were looking for a Messiah who would lead a great revolution against them.

When are we NOT gentle?

¹² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 861.