1. **Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (*Verse 3*)**
2. **Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. (*Verse 4*)**

There is only a subtle difference between the “poor in spirit” and the “meek”. In Aramaic (the language Jesus was speaking), the two words are from the same root. In both cases, Jesus is describing those who have willingly accepted the painful condition associated with truly adhering to Jesus’ teaching to put others first, give of yourself, being humble, sacrificing your own desires for a greater good, loving your enemies, and having a spirit of contentment with that condition.

To an outsider, this way of life looks more like one who is *poor*, rather than *rich*. Jesus says those who are “poor” or “meek” in this life by man’s standards will be “rich” in His Kingdom.

By the way, these blessings for the poor and meek do not mean that one who is financially rich in this life will be excluded from His Kingdom, but He does warn that the rich in this life will find it much more difficult to “enter the Kingdom of Heaven”. It is also true that those with little in this life do not automatically qualify if they don’t display the humility and love for others commanded by Christ.

1. **Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted. (*Verse 5*)**

The "mourning" in the 3rd Beatitude is opposed to laughter and similar frivolous worldly joy. This mourning is not to be confused with the miseries of a life of poverty, abjection, and subjection. But rather from the miseries associated with living a holy life - sacrificing of one’s own desires for others.

Those who mourn feel a genuine, internal suffering the way Christ did for the less fortunate. Think of the many references in the Gospels where Christ had compassion on the lowly and extended healing, comfort, and love. Those who mourn will be comforted by God and “have their tears wiped away”.

1. **Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. (*Verse 6*)**

“Hunger and thirst" after justice means a strong and continuous desire of progress towards personal holiness and perfect fairness towards others.

Justice is a moral quality or habit (aka a “virtue”) which perfects the will and inclines it to render to each and to all what belongs to them. Charity (love) and justice both describe how we are to interact with each other. Charity leads us to help our neighbor in his need out of our own belongings, while justice teaches us to give to another what belongs to him.

So if we are seen by God as one who strongly desires (think of how you feel when you are hungry or thirsty) justice for others, then Jesus says He will give you “your fill”. Just imagine what it might mean to be filled to satisfaction by Jesus.

1. **Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. (*Verse 7*)**

This one’s pretty simple to understand. Being merciful to others means both having true compassion for them and acting with loving mercy to them. Jesus promises to give mercy to those who live their lives with mercy. I’m pretty sure there is nothing we will want more than mercy on “that day” we are bowing before him.

1. **Blessed are the pure of heart: for they shall see God. (*Verse 8*)**

Those who are “pure of heart” have become holy in charity (love), chastity (sexual purity), and truth. The pure of heart are like little, innocent children in their openness to God. They have nothing to hide. In contrast, as Adam and Eve did following the first sin, we want to hide our impure behavior.

It also means we treat others the way Christ would, with great dignity, not reducing them to objects of personal pleasure, which would be the case if we made them objects of lust or greed.

1. **Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (*Verse 9*)**

Picture a crowd of people where tensions are high. And an altercation suddenly breaks out. Immediately, there are two types of people who react to the fight: some who jump in and start throwing punches escalating it, and some who immediately try break it up, by pulling the combatants apart. It is the later who are the peacemakers. In this instance, there is no time to think – their heart is oriented toward peace.

Even in non-violent confrontations, the peacemaker will attempt to bring the parties together through kindness and reason, and work to help them resolve their dispute. This is the heart of a peacemaker.

A peacemaker also lives a life of peace with others through charity and sacrifice toward everyone with whom they interact. It is a disposition and a way of life for the peacemaker. And Jesus says those who make a habit of this attitude will be called the children of God.

1. **Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Verse 10) Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account.**

Jesus tells us what we will receive if people do bad things to us because of our loyalty to Him. For us, today in America, being true to our faith could mean broken relationships, mocking by friends, being ostracized, and possibly even losing a job. This is certainly suffering on one level, and Jesus says we will be blessed when we experience this pain due to our faith.

Consider the extreme suffering that many Christians have experienced rather than deny their faith. All Christians in the early centuries who stayed true to their faith suffered since being a Christian was illegal in the Roman Empire until the early 300’s. Some of the Roman emperors cracked down on Christians and forced them to either worship them or be arrested, tortured, and even killed in many cases. Sadly, this goes on today in many countries.

But Jesus promises those who suffer on His behalf show the unmistakable sign that they are allowing God to rule in their hearts – putting Him first - rather than being guided by the ruler of this world who always wants us to elevate ourselves over God.