

## The way of divine joy

The passage of Scripture known as the beatitudes is a list of the way to a blessed life, or a life of divine joy. The word *beatitude* comes from the Latin word *beatitudo* which means blessedness. Of course, the word beatitude isn't in the text of the Bible. It is more of a description of the text.

Matthew 5:1-12 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

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

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### 1) The king and his subjects

- Jesus had been proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.
- The sermon on the mount is a series of teachings confronting worldly and hypocritical thinking and teaching the ways of the kingdom.
  - We will see that the ways of the world and natural religious thought and the ways of the kingdom are in direct contrast to each other.
  - By natural religious thought I mean man made laws and requirements to attain the favour of God.
  - Only that which originates from God pleases Him.
- Jesus, sees the crowds and goes up the mountain where he teaches his disciples
  - Matthew 5:1-2 ...and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:
  - Jesus didn't always want to focus on the crowds, but on his disciples who would later talk the gospel of the kingdom into the world.
  - Jesus went up a mountain to teach. This was possibly for the sake of practicality. No doubt the crowds would also have followed him to listen to him teach, although his focus was on teaching the disciples.
  - However, going up a mountain has more significance than just practicality.
    - God met with Moses on Mount Sinai where he gave him the ten commandments.
    - Jesus was transfigured on a mountain where he met with Moses and Elijah
    - Elijah contended with the priests of Baal on mount Carmel, and God overcame.
- Jesus sat down to teach
  - It was common for Rabbis to stand when reading the scriptures, but to sit when teaching.
  - It's probable that Jesus was following the rabbinical tradition of the time.
- The king was now posed to communicate the values of the kingdom to his subjects

### 2) The way to divine joy

- Jesus lists eight characteristics of kingdom people and the reward for each one.
  - It's these characteristics and their rewards which pave the way to divine joy.
  - Blessed are they who... for they shall have...
  - The Greek word translated blessed means supremely blessed, blessed to the utmost, happy
  - Let's be clear that joy comes from the Lord and cannot be earned. These characteristics are fruit of the Spirit that are manifest in born again believers. We don't choose which one of the eight we want to be or do. As believers we become all of those as we live our lives in Christ.

- The eight characteristics leading to divine joy
  - The poor in spirit
    - It's the poor in spirit who recognise their true sinful and weak condition before God and their absolute dependence on him for life and godliness.
    - The kingdom of heaven belongs to such who are humble and throw themselves absolutely at the mercy of the king. They recognise that their only worth is found in Jesus their king and not in themselves.
  - Those who mourn
    - Although God does comfort those who mourn due to loss, it's those who have godly sorrow that leads to repentance who will truly be comforted.
    - A child of God hates sin and grieves at any sin they commit wanting to remove it from themselves as soon as possible.
    - They grieve because they know that Jesus their Saviour died for every sin and every time they sin they agonise over the pain that they cause him again.
    - Such mourning that brings repentance will bring the comfort of eternal acceptance.
  - The meek
    - Matthew Henry: The meek are those who quietly submit to God; who can bear insult; are silent, or return a soft answer; who, in their patience, keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of anything else.
    - Meekness is the strength to stay steadfast and do the right thing even in difficult times.
    - Meekness is not weakness. Jesus meekly went to the cross, but it took great strength to willingly do so.
    - The meek have joy in this world and will inherit the new earth. Thus, the meek are those who have the strength to resist but humbly say "not my will but yours be done".
    - The meek are saved in this life on this earth and enjoy a foretaste of the kingdom, and will enjoy the kingdom on the new earth in eternity.
  - Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
    - To hunger and thirst for something is to desire it to the extreme.
    - Righteousness is revealed in the gospel and we receive it as a free gift by faith.
    - It is those who desire to please God who would hunger and thirst not only for imputed righteousness, but practical righteousness in their lives.
    - We are satisfied by the righteousness of Christ
  - The merciful
    - Mercy is a godly trait. We received mercy and weren't left to remain under the wrath of God.
    - In the same way mercy was imparted to the people of the kingdom to show the same mercy to others.
    - We aren't saved by showing mercy. We become merciful because we are saved and will receive the complete mercy of the Lord at his coming, when we will be changed to be like him.
  - The pure in heart
    - God is pure and without sin, and we have been purified by the blood of Jesus.
    - It is only by His blood that we have been made fit to enter into the presence of God, be reconciled with him, and one day to see him face to face in all his glory.
  - The peacemakers
    - Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker who made peace between a sinful people and a holy God through his mediation.
    - God calls us to be peacemakers. He calls us to a ministry of reconciliation by pointing sinful people to Jesus who reconciles.
    - We are also to be peacemakers between hostile parties wherever God may put us.
    - In doing so we will be imitators of Jesus reflecting his reconciliatory nature and thus be called sons of God.
  - Those are persecuted for righteousness' sake
    - Along with all the positive traits of the kingdom comes persecution for righteousness' sake.
    - When we follow in Jesus' footsteps in this world, we will be persecuted in the same way that he was.
    - A servant isn't above his master. What happened to him will happen to us.
    - Jesus commands us to rejoice and be glad when that happens for our reward in heaven is great.
    - Persecution for his name sake shows that we are true citizens of the kingdom and ours is the kingdom of heaven.

### 3) Joy is lost in its pursuit

- Luke 6:24-26 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.  
“Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.  
“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.  
“Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.
- On the contrary those who seek joy in this world will lose it.
  - Matthew 16:24-26 Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?