

THE WORDS AND WORKS OF KING JESUS

PART 4: LIVING IN THE KING'S KINGDOM

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Matthew records five discourses (lengthy teaching/preaching sessions) which took place after Jesus defeated Satan by resisting his temptations in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights.

In the first discourse, which is often called the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes how his Kingdom is like nothing else on earth and certainly not like anything the crowds were looking for.

Chapter 5 contains what are called the Beatitudes¹ where Jesus explains to his followers how those in his Kingdom are blessed. The phrase "blessed are" in each beatitude implies a current state of happiness or well-being. This expression held a powerful meaning of divine joy and perfect happiness to the people of Christ's day. In other words, Jesus was saying "divinely happy and fortunate are those who possess these inward qualities." While speaking of a current "blessedness," each pronouncement also promised a future reward.

Blessing: happy, under divine favor

¹ In the Vulgate, each of these blessings begins with the word *beati*, or *beatus*, which translates to "happy", "rich", or "blessed." The corresponding word in the original Greek is μακάριοι (*makarioi*), with the same meaning.

I. REFLECTING ON THE BEATITUDES: MATTHEW 5:1-10

Parallel passage: Luke 6

"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said..." (Matt. 5:1-2 NIV)

A. Blessed are the poor in spirit (5:3)

1. To be "spiritually bankrupt" apart from God
2. The word translated "poor" is the same word translated "beggar" in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-22
3. To cower or cringe
4. To have no merit or righteousness of their own
5. To be utterly dependent on God
6. The blessing: theirs is the kingdom of heaven

B. Blessed are those who mourn (5:4)

1. To be desperately sorry for one's sins and unworthiness before God
2. Mourning in Scripture is often associated with confession of sin (Psa. 51; Dan. 9:3-5)
3. To mourn is to recognize the complete lack of righteousness apart from God
4. The blessing: they will be comforted

C. Blessed are the meek (5:5)

1. To be meek is to have a tender, humble, teachable spirit, gentle, not easily provoked
2. Meekness recognizes God's authority and submits itself to every manifestation of it
3. Meekness is characterized by unquestioning submission
4. The blessing: they will inherit the earth (i.e., they will be accepted into his kingdom)

D. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:6)

1. To have a starving spirit that craves God's righteousness
2. To have an appetite for the things of God (Exod. 33:13, 18; Psa. 42:1-2; 63:1-2; Phil. 3:10)
3. The blessing: they will be filled

E. Blessed are the merciful (5:7)

1. To have a forgiving spirit and a compassionate heart
2. To have a loving care and concern for the needs of others
3. The blessing: they will be shown mercy

F. Blessed are the pure in heart (5:8)

1. To be cleansed and forgiven
2. To have pure motives
3. To live a clean life, unsoiled and untainted by the world
4. To have a single purpose, that of God's glory
5. The blessing: they will see God

G. Blessed are the peacemakers (5:9)

1. To bring peace between people
2. To bring peace between people and God

3. To resolve disputes
4. To reconcile differences between people
5. The blessing: they will see God

H. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness (5:10)

1. To rejoice in being identified with Christ, no matter what happens
2. To suffer for Christ
3. To be mocked, ridiculed, criticized, ostracized
4. To be treated with hostility
5. To be martyred
6. The blessing: theirs is the kingdom of heaven

II. SUMMARY

In these Beatitudes we see that Christ gave characteristics of a true righteousness which was required for entrance into the Messiah's kingdom. He promised blessings (favor) for those who show the characteristics of this righteousness.

In this passage Jesus was contrasting the righteousness that he demanded to that of the self-righteous Pharisees. The principle in this passage was that entrance into the kingdom was not on the basis of Pharisaic righteousness, for it produced none of these characteristics that Christ required. It was the righteousness being offered by Christ that would make one acceptable in the kingdom.

Resources

Much of the material in this study was based on John Legg's "The King and His Kingdom," and J. Dwight Pentecost's "The Words and Works of Jesus Christ."