

# The Blessed Life

Bubba Garner

The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12) serve as the introduction to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. They get their name from the Latin *beatitudo* which means "blessed," a word that appears nine times in these ten verses. Though some translations use the word "happy" here, Jesus has much more than mere cheerfulness in mind. Happiness comes from happenings; blessedness comes from being. The blessed life, then, is the result of your attitude toward God.

**"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."** The starting place for the person who wants to enter his kingdom is the recognition of his own worthless condition. Before the Lord can use us, we must first see ourselves as bankrupt without Him. It is only then that we become rich toward God.

**"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."** This is a personal mourning over personal sin. It is an acknowledgment of what our selfish choices have done to our relationship with God. When this godly sorrow works repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), we are comforted by the thought of Him wiping away every tear, where "there shall no longer be any mourning" (Rev. 21:4).

**"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."** Meekness does not mean weakness. In the ancient world, it was used to describe an animal that had been tamed and brought under control. A meek man is actually strong because he harnesses his strengths and keeps them contained. We are blessed not when we are without restraint but when we are under His control.

**"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."** After Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness, "He then became hungry" (Matt. 4:2). That same word is used here for the appetite that we must have for spiritual food. This is a call for a complete change of priorities. If you live for things like riches and pleasure, you will lose yourself in the pursuit of them. If you live for righteousness, you will find true rest for your soul.

**"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."** Most of the world sees mercy as a sign of softness, letting someone off easy when you should have destroyed them. But mercy is what we all need. It is what God extended to us when we deserved justice and judgment. It is what He compels us to show toward our fellow man when they deserve less. We have been forgiven much; we have much to forgive.

**"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."** The condition of the heart has long been the concern of heaven. When David asked, "who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place," the answer came clearly, "he

who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Psa. 24:3-4). Man can see what you do. God can see why you do it. When you do the right thing for the right reason, you are on the right path to seeing Him.

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”** It is one thing to love peace. That almost comes naturally, even instinctively. It is another thing to keep peace. That is simply maintaining what is already present. But it is altogether different to make peace or bring it about where it does not exist. That is exactly what Jesus, who “is our peace” (Eph. 2:14), accomplished when He brought man back to the Father by breaking down the barrier of sin that separated them. We are never more like God than when we make peace in our relationships with His sons and daughters.

**“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”** The kingdom citizen must set his sights on the prize before him. If our focus is only on the present world, we will allow the threat of tribulation and persecution to influence our behavior. But when our concentration is on the eternal joy that awaits us, the momentary affliction will pale in comparison. “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great” (Matt. 5:12). It is persecution, not appreciation, that awaits those who follow the Savior. Rejoice in it. It’s just another way to know we’re going the right way.

When I was growing up, I always thought this section of Scripture was called the “Be Attitudes.” Perhaps that’s not too far off the mark. When we give the right attention to what God wants us to be, we will have little trouble carrying out what He wants us to do. After all, conduct is a reflection of attitude. And the right attitude leads to the blessed life.