

Sermon on the Mount - Part 2

by David Servant

In this sermon, David Servant explores the Beatitudes, emphasizing the importance of recognizing spiritual poverty and mourning for sin as essential steps towards receiving God's blessings and comfort.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Spiritual Poverty", "Sanctification"

Description

This sermon focuses on the Sermon on the Mount, discussing the Beatitudes and the importance of recognizing spiritual poverty, mourning for sin, and experiencing the comfort of God's grace. It emphasizes the need for convicting preaching, genuine repentance, and the transformation that comes with being born again. The sermon highlights the characteristics of the blessed, including gentleness as a fruit of the Spirit, and the ongoing process of sanctification in a believer's life.

Transcript

Hey, welcome once again to our program, appreciate your joining us. Here I am sitting on Mount Arbel, which overlooks the Sea of Galilee, which I can see out this way. You can't see, but take a look at this pan of this beautiful view I have this morning of the Sea of Galilee.

As I mentioned in our last broadcast, they shouldn't call it a sea. In fact, the Israelis today don't call it a sea. It's called the Lake of Kinneret.

Even back in Christ's day, it was called the Lake of Gennesaret, and there were various other names. I think the Sea of Tiberias, also the Sea of Galilee, but it's not a big body of water. Just seven miles across, 14 miles long at its widest and longest points.

Well, Jesus gave a very famous sermon somewhere in this vicinity on one of these mountains around the Sea of Galilee. Nobody knows which one it was. It could have been this very one that I'm sitting on right now.

There's a traditional spot right on the northwestern shore, up from the shore a little bit, not far from where we are at right now. But again, nobody knows. The Bible doesn't say.

It just says he went up on a mountain and his disciples gathered to him there and he began to teach them. It's nice to be sitting here today thinking that maybe as we work our way through these verses of the

Sermon on the Mount, that they were originally spoken somewhere right where I'm sitting right now, and hungry people like you were listening to learn to follow Jesus. That's what it's all about, following Jesus.

In our last broadcast, we considered the beginning of the Beatitudes. These are found in Matthew chapter 5, verses 3 through 12. Jesus says, blessed are you, blessed are you, blessed are you.

These are not to be read like some people read a horoscope, looking for their zodiac symbol and then trying to find the one thing that applies to them, as if, well let's see, which person am I? Well I'm kind of, well let's see, I think I'm pure in heart. That kind of describes me better than any of the rest of those. People sometimes say I have a pure heart.

So that must be me. So oh, the blessing I get is I'll see God. No, that's the wrong way to look at these Beatitudes, as I said last time.

These Beatitudes describe the characteristics of one kind of person, the blessed person. And so, if you're among the blessed, you should share in these characteristics, all of them, more or less. And some of these we can grow into and make progress and so forth.

But Jesus is telling us who is blessed, and by implication, he's telling us who is not blessed. And it's very clear that the blessed people are those who are going to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. And he says that twice, he says that in these Beatitudes.

Once he says they shall be called sons of God. Once he says they'll see God. And so all these are future blessings, and this is a way that you can determine if you're among the blessed, and if you're among the blessed, then you're on the way to Heaven.

If you're not among the blessed, you're not on the way to Heaven. And as I mentioned last time, that is a recurring theme throughout this entire sermon. Jesus is focusing on what's most important, and what is most important to you ought to be what is most important to Jesus, and that is, are you going to be a citizen of the Eternal Kingdom? Well, here's a way that you can find out right now.

You don't have to wait until you get there. Sometimes people think that, many times people think that. Well, you can't know if you're going to get to Heaven until you die, then we all find out.

I've even talked to ministers, I've talked to bishops of certain denominations who have told me that. You can't know, they say, until you die, when you're judged by God. I'm telling you that according to Jesus, you can know right now.

You can look and see, do I identify with the characteristics of these blessed people? And if I do, well then I can have assurance right now. I'm among the blessed, and so therefore, I'm going to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. I'm going to see God.

I'm going to be called a son of God. I'm going to receive mercy, all the blessings that Jesus promised. And so in our last time together, we considered what it means to be poor in spirit, and I can't review everything, but basically what we concluded is this, that the blessing begins in your life when you recognize your own spiritual poverty, that you're bankrupt before God, that you've got nothing to offer him of your own righteousness.

As the scripture says, our righteousness is like filthy rags. You can present all of your goodness throughout all of your life to God, and apart from his regeneration by the Holy Spirit, being born again, and apart from his righteousness being created inside of you, all of that stuff you've done amounts to nothing. And I would submit to you that even the good things that people do prior to their being born again have a selfish motive.

Usually there's some other reason that they're doing the good they do. It's often to be seen by other people so that they can be praised by their friends and by their associates and so forth. Jesus addresses that in this sermon, and we'll look at that eventually.

And so, the blessing starts in your life when you humble yourself, and you're able to say, you know, I've got nothing to offer to God, if I'm going to be among the blessed, if I'm going to go to heaven, if I'm going to be acceptable in God's eyes, it's going to take mercy from God because I can't do it on my own. That's when the blessing begins in your life. Blessed are you who are poor in spirit, because yours is the kingdom of heaven.

No doubt there were people there that day who, you know, were in that state. They had suddenly begun to recognize, I'm spiritually poor. When they witnessed the life of Jesus, his spotless, sinless, holy life, and when they heard his sermons and saw him raise the bar of holiness so, so, so far above what was being exemplified by the scribes and the Pharisees and what was being taught in the synagogues, no doubt that awakened their consciences to their spiritual bankruptcy.

And that's what it takes today. Unfortunately, we've got so many people who think they're among the blessed. They're sure they're going to heaven just because they prayed a little prayer, you know, one time at a crusade or something, and, you know, the preacher shook their hand and told them now you're born again, now you have eternal life.

They've never shed a tear for their sin. They've never recognized their own spiritual poverty. They've never come to the place where they realized that their righteousness is like filthy rags.

But when you recognize that, you're among the blessed. Well, what it takes is somebody to set an example before us or take someone to preach to us the commandments of God that raise the bar to where God originally set them, what he intended when he said, do not commit adultery. You know, the Pharisees and scribes, you know, generally they kept that commandment.

They didn't commit adultery physically, but yet, you know, their minds were filled with lust and they were divorcing and remarrying repeatedly because they saw someone who was more attractive to them. And so Jesus raises the bar to his audience and says, hey, you've got to go way beyond that if you're going to be acceptable to God. And so when preaching convicts us of our sin, you know, sometimes people get angry at that.

In fact, that's often a turnoff in modern culture. And people say, you're just trying to put a guilt trip on me. I want to tell you, we need some preachers, in fact we need lots of preachers who are going to put a guilt trip on people who are not among the blessed.

You know, honestly, I'd rather find out now that I'm not among the blessed than find out later. Right? And don't you feel the same way? Wouldn't you prefer to discover now that you're not among the blessed so that you could repent, you know, recognizing your spiritual poverty? And then, you know, receiving the

mercy and grace of God and being filled with his Holy Spirit so that you could begin to live a life that's pleasing him. I'd rather find out now, you know, than find out when I die, when it's too late.

And so all I'm saying is this, we need convicting preaching. And we don't need any sermons any longer that tell us how wonderful we are and how God loves us all so much and surely, you know, his mercy will get us into heaven and there's nothing we could possibly do that would make God, you know, disfavor us in any way. And as we read through the Sermon on the Mount, we're going to see over and over again that was not the teaching of Jesus.

He brought people to conviction for their sin. He was a guilt-inducing preacher, not just by his words, but by his life. We need that today.

That's the first step of spiritual blessedness. You know, this is the first one that Jesus listed. You know, this is where he started and so I think that's significant.

The very first step, if you want to be blessed by God, is you have to recognize, I'm dead in my sins, you know, I've been living for myself, I'm not holy, I'm not righteous. If I was to stand before God today, you know, he's not going to say, wow, I'm impressed by you, come on in and I'll give you a special spot in heaven. No, you need to recognize if you're going to get into heaven, there's no other way other than by God's mercy and by his grace.

And he has to transform you. He has to do something to change you. You know, because if you've ever tried to change yourself and turn over a new leaf or make a new year's resolution, you probably found that not an easy thing to do.

In fact, you know, if you're caught in the chains of sin, you cannot get out without God's help. In order to get God's help, you have to humble yourself. You have to be like that tax collector whom Jesus spoke of in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who in the temple was unwilling to lift his face to God, was beating his breast and saying, be merciful to me, God, the sinner.

Jesus said, truly I say, that man left that day justified. But what about the Pharisee, the big religious dude? You know, the guy that had it all together, he was so thankful that he was not like other men. He did not recognize his spiritual poverty and he was in the deepest darkness of all, no hope for him.

You know, he didn't leave the temple. He was not amongst the blessed, no, but the sinner, the one that no one would have thought was among the blessed, he's the one that left that place justified. Justified means just as if I'd never sinned when God declares you not guilty.

You see that? Okay. And the second beatitude, which we'll cover in the second segment of our program today, follows right in line, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. I think this one is listed secondly, for the same reason, it is a significance that it's number two.

And that is once you recognize your spiritual poverty, then the only correct reaction is you're going to mourn for your sin. You're going to feel like a wretch, you know, like John Newton, who was a slave trader, you know, put people on his boat in Africa and took them to England and sold them and so forth. You know, one day he recognized his spiritual poverty and he began to mourn for his sin.

Ah, that was a great day in his life. Jesus said, that's the characteristic of a blessed person. You mourn, you will be comforted.

John Newton wrote that famous hymn that's been sung ever since then, Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. When you recognize that you're a wretch in the eyes of God, oh man, then you're humbling yourself before God. God gives grace to the humble.

And so if you haven't reached that place of wretchedness, you know, I'm just praying that you will. And if you'll stick with us throughout these programs, what Jesus says in here is so convicting as we work our way through the Sermon on the Mount, I mean, you're going to feel like a wretch. In fact, I'm telling you, even as a Christian who's been serving God for some years, there's conviction coming.

And you're going to, once again, cry out for the grace of God because you're going to realize how much you need his amazing grace in your life. And so seek him, you know, open your heart. God resists the proud.

And so if you're proud, if you think I've got it all together, if you think, you know, I've got all my ducks in a row and surely God would not cast me out of his presence, well then you are to be pitied. But if you're amongst the blessed, you recognize your wretchedness before God. Hey, we'll be back right after this short trip.

Enjoy it and we'll be in the Sermon on the Mount in just another minute. Hey, welcome to ancient Sardis. This was a city where there was a church that John wrote to in the book of Revelation.

Here I am at the largest temple of Artemis that existed in the Roman world. She was worshiped fervently, just a god of someone's imagination with about 40 breasts. But people were devoted to her, specifically in Ephesus where they cried out for two hours, great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

Well, you probably haven't heard much about anyone worshiping Artemis these days because Jesus won his battle against her through the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of the word of God. And he is now being worshiped all over the world while the temple of Artemis is lying here in utter desecration. Okay, welcome back.

We're going to continue our journey through the Beatitudes considering a little bit further that second Beatitude, verse number four, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Anytime there's been a historical revival in North America or anywhere around the world for that matter, it's always characterized by what we've read in these first two Beatitudes. People first of all recognize their spiritual poverty and then because of it, they begin to mourn, that is those who open their hearts.

There's always stiff-necked people, there's always hard-hearted people and God is doing everything he can to reach those hard-hearted stiff-necked people all the time. Take a look around me right here and tell me that God is not trying to speak to everybody in this region. Look at the majesty of these mountains and of this beautiful lake that has been here from way back in the beginning of time and you get an impression that God is trying to say something.

God is always speaking to people in their hearts, to their consciences. Every time that people sin or break a commandment of God or do something that's morally or ethically wrong, the conscience that God put in there condenses them. But there's another way God reaches people and that's through the preaching, convicting preaching of the word of God.

Historical revivals are always characterized by convicting preaching and that's what's wrong today. That's one reason there's no revival because there's no convicting preaching. There's no one raising the bar up.

In fact, preachers who are raising the bar are called gloom and doom preachers. They're often castigated as people who are always just trying to get people to feel guilty. Well, they're trying to do that for a good purpose because they realize that's where the blessing starts.

When you feel guilty and you begin to mourn for your sin, that's when God begins to pour his grace out upon you because otherwise God resists the proud. Alright, that being said, in the days of like John Wesley and the Methodist revivals, they had a special way to take care of people who were falling under conviction for their sin. Oftentimes in the services, if they were in a church building or in a hall somewhere, they would set up a mourner's bench and this was also true, I think, in the revivals of Charles Finney, a mourner's bench where people who are under conviction, they'd invite them to come forward and be in a special place where they could mourn for their sins.

And then altar workers and other Christians would come and pray with them and lead them into a prayer of repentance for their sin so that they could then be born again. And no doubt that's part of what Christ was promising right here. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.

Now let me describe a real conversion to you, something that it seems like it's hardly ever seen in our day and age. A real conversion begins with people being convicted for their sin, blessed are those who are poor in spirit, secondly, mourning for their sin, and then thirdly, praying a prayer of repentance, making the adjustment in their heart saying, I'm a sinner, I need a savior, I call out for the mercy of God. And when someone does that, the Holy Spirit comes inside of them, that's what the Bible calls the new birth, the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

And when that happens, they're comforted, they're released from that burden of guilt that they feel. Of course, they're under that incredible sense of guilt during the time of their mourning for their sin. There's a heightened sense of awareness of their guiltiness before God.

But when God forgives them, it actually happens. There's a moment in time when God says, that's it, you've humbled yourself, and so now I forgive you. You've confessed, and so I'll keep my end of the bargain, you've repented, I'll erase your sins, I'll cast them into the sea of forgetfulness.

When that happens, God also, part of the deal, is he puts his Holy Spirit in us. And the Holy Spirit is referred to as the comforter in various places in Scripture. The comforter comes in.

And so can you see, Jesus is speaking that day to a group of people, many of whom who are mourning for their sin. And they're probably being made fun of by their friends, just like if you've ever mourned for your sin, people make fun of you too, because they'll say, you shouldn't be feeling guilty like that, something's wrong with you, you're listening to the wrong preachers, and so forth. And so the people in Christ's audience that day, who are mourning for their sin, and Jesus is saying, hey, you're blessed, don't listen to your friends who are telling you that you're losing your mind, or you shouldn't feel guilty, you know, if your psychiatrist tells you that, you know, that's because your mother never approved of you, and so that's why you're feeling guilty.

Well, maybe your guilt is coming from God, because he loves you, and because he's trying to reach you, because he wants you to humble yourself. And so, in the days of those great revivalists, people would come to those mourners' benches, and they'd be under heavy conviction. Sometimes they wouldn't get released right away, simply because they wouldn't humble themselves enough, they wouldn't, you know, they wouldn't repent fully.

And they'd leave that house, or that church building, whatever, they would be under this dark cloud for days and days under conviction, still the Holy Spirit's working on them, but eventually they'd come to the place, either, you know, at the services, or sometime later, where they'd finally let go, and say, okay God, I repent, I'm not gonna live for myself any longer, I believe in Jesus, so I'm gonna start serving and doing his will, turning away from my sin, following him from here on in. And when they do that, God forgives them, and the Holy Spirit comes into them, and they are born again. Blessed are you who mourn, for you will be comforted.

Praise God. See, that's describing being born again, that's how you can tell you're among the blessed. And I submit to you that there's so many people today who are living a lie, who think because a preacher told them, or tells them every single week, well, we're all born again here because we've all accepted Jesus, you know, they're living in a total deception, thinking that they're born again.

The only reason they think they're born again is because someone told them they're born again. It's like a theory to them. Well, you're born again, you have the Holy Spirit in you now.

Oh, I do, okay, I guess I do. But this is a real experience, being born again. You know, your life changes.

From then on, you look at it and you say, man, before that point in time, I was dead. I was living in a cloud or something, what was wrong with me? But now I've come alive. That's because the Holy Spirit came into you, you were actually born again.

You are blessed. But if you're not born again, you're not blessed. If you've never gone through these stages of conviction and mourning for your sin, you are not blessed.

But I'm not saying that to condemn you, I'm saying that just to enlighten you. You can be blessed. And if you'll stay with us through these broadcasts and listen to the teaching of Jesus, you know, it'll convict you, I guarantee you.

It will convict you greatly. And you'll begin to mourn for your sin if you open your heart. Now, if you just have a stiff neck and a hard heart, it's not going to change you one bit.

But if you open your heart, oh, God will do a wonderful work because he gives grace to the humble. All right, let's move along here. Let's try to make some progress in this broadcast.

Verse number five, the third beatitude, blessed are the gentle for they shall inherit the earth. Well, if you've ever read in Galatians five, the fruit of the spirit, this is the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in the life of the person who has believed in Jesus. There are nine fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, and so forth.

You know, I can't remember all nine of them right now, but one of them is gentleness. And so, you see, that's the work of the Holy Spirit in you when you become gentle. What does gentleness mean? It means the way you relate to other people.

You're not so harsh any longer. You're not so blunt. You're not so abrupt.

You have a concern for people. Gentleness is always spoken of in terms of how you relate to others. If you're a hermit, you have no chance to be gentle because you're not relating to anybody.

And what is it saying? Well, you know, one of the things that changes when the Holy Spirit comes into us is that we are transformed to become more like Christ. And of course, Christ is the great lover of people. God is love.

And so, naturally, you're going to have more love for people, more consideration towards them. You're going to have more sensitivity. You're going to care about them.

You're going to care about people that are hurting. And your life will be characterized more so by gentleness. Now, that is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

And fruit, I'm glad that Paul used that phrase, fruit of the Spirit, because fruit can ripen and mature and grow. And we can become more gentle, more sensitive, more loving towards other people. That's all part of growing in Christ.

But this is also a sign that you're among the blessed, praise God. Because when the Holy Spirit works in you, you're blessed. When you've been convicted of your sin, recognized your spiritual poverty, mourned for your sin, and then been born again and been comforted by the Holy Spirit who now has come to live on the inside of you, now the fruit of the Spirit is going to begin to flow in your life.

And above all things, you're going to see your relationship with other people change dramatically. That doesn't mean everyone's going to be your friend and going to fall in love with you. Oh no.

Remember, one of these last Beatitudes, she says, blessed are you when men persecute you and revile you and so forth. Yeah, you're going to get a whole new set of enemies once you believe in Jesus and begin to follow him. But you're still going to love your enemies.

You're still going to be patient with those who persecute you. And your relationship with the other people who have believed in Christ, that's going to change dramatically. John writes in his first epistle, we know we have passed from death to life because, here it is, we love the brethren.

Isn't that cool? You know, he's saying that's how you can tell you're born again. You've passed from death to life because you love the brethren. So there's going to be a change.

If there's no change and there's been no new birth, there's been no new birth, there's no gentleness, well then you're not among the blessed. But you can change right now. You can repent and get among the blessed.

So what I'm talking about is simply Christianity 101, which is kind of where you would think we'd be, looking at the most famous sermon of Christ, his most basic sermon in many ways, speaking to his disciples. These are all baby Christians. No one whom Jesus was speaking to in the Sermon on the Mount had been a believer in him for longer than probably just a few months.

So they're all baby Christians. They've all been listening to the wrong kind of teaching most of their lives in the synagogues and hearing a perversion of God's word. Jesus is bringing them back to the truth.

You've got to be born again if you want to be among the blessed who are going to heaven. And so as we close this program for today, I want you to seriously consider if you are among those blessed people. And I'm not saying that you're perfect because God, who begins a work in you, promises to perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

There's an ongoing process of becoming more like Christ that is called sanctification. But right from the beginning, there's a radical change when you repent of your sins. It changes you.

And one of the first areas that shows up is you become gentle. And people will notice. They'll say, man, you're different.

What happened? Now you've got a chance to tell them what happened to you. Okay, until next time, keep following Jesus. Keep serving him with all your heart.

God bless you. Hey, there's a whole lot more happening to the ministry of Heaven's Family than just this teaching broadcast. Heaven's Family consists of three divisions.

The first of which is Shepherd Serve. And through the ministry of Shepherd Serve, we are literally equipping thousands of hungry pastors around the world with vital biblical truth every single year. We do that in two ways.

First of all, by pastor's conferences. They're happening almost every single month somewhere in the world. And secondly, through the translation and publication and distribution of a 500-page equipping manual called The Disciple-Making Minister.

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Through the ministry of I Was Hungry, we are meeting the very pressing needs of Christ followers around this world in very poor nations. We're helping widows, orphans, lepers, refugees, victims of disasters. You can read all of our current projects at I Was Hungry dot O-R-G.

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You can read about it at all three of our websites. Thanks so much. God bless you.

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