

Beatitudes

by Miles DeBenedictis

Miles DeBenedictis explores the Beatitudes, emphasizing the paradoxical blessings of spiritual poverty and the path to true happiness in God's kingdom.

Duration: 1:19:54

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-8, Matthew 7:24-27

Topics: "Beatitudes"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by praying for understanding and guidance as they delve into Matthew chapter 5. They focus on the Beatitudes, starting with 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' The speaker emphasizes that seeking fulfillment in worldly things will not bring true life, as everything in this world is under the curse of death. Instead, they explain that true life and righteousness can only come from God, and that God is refining and sanctifying believers through trials and the washing of His word. The sermon concludes by highlighting the importance of recognizing our spiritual poverty and hungering and thirsting for righteousness, as this is the path to inheriting the kingdom of heaven.

Transcript

Good afternoon. Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5. Fathers, we get into this portion of Scripture today. I ask the Lord that you would open our hearts, Lord, speak to us clearly.

Lord, that you would help us to make application from the words of your Son. Lord, that we would learn of you. And truly hear your heart and your desire for us as we walk with you as we go through this passage.

For we do ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, Matthew chapter 5. It says, In seeing the multitudes, verse 1, He went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.

And he opened his mouth, and he taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. And blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name's sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. This portion that we're looking at here this morning, the first twelve, or this afternoon, the first twelve verses of Matthew chapter five, especially verses three through verse twelve, have often been called the Beatitudes up on the board. It's written there for you so you can get the proper spelling of it.

Basically, what we're looking at here is the blessings that are pronounced to an individual that comes under these categories. The word blessed there can be translated, oh how happy. And it's interesting as you take a look at them because these statements of happiness don't seem to fit the normal ideas of happiness that we as people would think of.

He starts there by saying blessed are the poor in spirit. And that's not exactly something that we normally think of as a happy experience, to be poor in spirit, to be downcast, or whatever we want to think of when we think of poor in spirit. But, of course, it's not something that we tend to label as, oh I'm really happy now that I'm poor in spirit and I'm down and out and don't have anywhere to go.

It seems rather a depressing place. But this is what Jesus characterizes, what God characterizes, as a blessed place to be. And as we look at this, I want you to think of this as a progression, that it starts at this point and there's something that the Lord is doing that he's building into the life of an individual.

And it begins at this stage. It begins at a place of being poor in spirit. We looked at last week, we considered what really started this message.

We talked about the multitudes that were following with Jesus at this point in time. A group of people who were sick. A group of people who were demon possessed.

Those who were looked upon as the sinners of society. There were prostitutes that were following him. There were tax collectors that were following him.

There were all sorts of different rebel groups of people that were following him. We know this because some of his disciples are characterized as zealots, which really would be kind of a rabble rouser during the day. And not only were they following him, but also the Pharisees and the scribes were there.

They were there for the purpose of trying to trip him up, as you see throughout the Gospels, that there were many times that these guys were coming with questions and they were baited questions, trying to get Jesus to fall, trying to get Jesus to fall into their trap, really, to show that he was wrong, that there was something wrong with his ministry, with what he was saying. So there's this group of people who are following with him, who are against him. And then there's a group of people who are following him just because he had neat things to say.

And there was a group that were following him just because they wanted to be healed, whatever the case may be. Everybody that was following him were a bunch of people that wanted something from him. That was really their whole purpose in Jesus at this point in time, where they were really the epitome of consumers.

And they had something that they wanted from Jesus, something that they wanted to gain from him. There were some that were already beginning to think that he was special, that there was maybe even a Messiah in their midst. But again, the view of the Messiah that the Jews during this day had was that the Messiah was going to come and he was going to release them from Roman oppression and that he was going to exalt Israel to their, quote, rightful place as a nation, as God's people, and that they once again would be the people in the world.

And so there was that group that was looking at Jesus and thinking, maybe he's the one who's now going to bring Jerusalem, bring Israel back to the central focus, back to where it should be, and reestablish it as the nation, God's chosen people. They were a proudful people and still are today. And so there were those that were just looking to Jesus as maybe he will do that.

And his teachings were revolutionary, especially for those who were lower class, so to speak, those who didn't seem to fit into the mold of the Pharisees, the scribes and the Sadducees, those who would listen to the teachings of the Pharisees and the scribes. And they'd say, I can't walk like that, which really was the average individual in Israel during this time. When you or I would hear the teachings of the Pharisees, we'd say, that's impossible, we can't live according to that.

Their standard, their life was so much higher than the standard of the common individual in Israel that it was just impossible. There was no way that we could carry that burden and live in the way that the Pharisees were speaking. And so when these people, the common people of Israel, began to hear the message of Jesus, this guy from the region of Galilee who's going around and there's these rumors now that he's doing miracles and that he's casting demons out of people with authority and he's got this teaching that sounds completely different to the scribes and the Pharisees.

And it was sounding like a message that was a little bit easier. And then he comes to these people and he says, blessed are the poor in spirit. Now, again, as we considered last week, he's not specifically speaking to the multitudes, although it was the multitudes that stirred this message.

As Jesus saw this group of people that were following him, it says there in the first verses, and seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain and when he was set, when he sat down, his disciples came unto him and he begins to teach them. He opens his mouth and he teaches them, the disciples, those who would reach out and touch and do a work in the midst of the multitudes. He now begins to teach.

So we considered last week that this message is not only for those disciples that were there with him at that time, but the disciples of Christ throughout the ages. This is the message that the Lord really speaks to us that we have been given to go and reach the multitudes. But it begins very simply with a pronouncement of blessing, which in reality, when you read a lot of the Psalms, they begin in such a way as well, a pronouncement of blessing.

But there's many different things that come out of the Psalms and out of those blessings. And here it's kind of the antitype of what you normally would hear. Blessed are the poor, the poor in spirit.

And he says, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I had you guys write a paper on the first words of the gospel. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

To consider that Jesus was declaring to them that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven is right here now for your taking. It's not something that's just possibly going to come in the future. Oftentimes

when the children of Israel would think of the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, they again were looking forward to when the Messiah would come and he would reestablish Israel as the supreme power of the world.

They were looking forward to that. They were looking expectantly to the Messiah and set that and set that back up. Now Jesus comes and says the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

It's right here. And so rightfully so there were people who were thinking that while the Messiah is in our midst. But again, they had a wrong concept of the kingdom of heaven.

Their concept of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven was a concept that put them as the number one nation in the world. It was a very prideful concept of the kingdom of God. And now Jesus comes and he says, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

And they are the ones who receive this kingdom that you're looking forward to. A person who's poor in spirit. For anyone to come to the kingdom that God offers, the kingdom of heaven that Jesus was declaring, they need to come to this place of being poor in spirit, of being poverty stricken on a spiritual level.

We need to come to the realization before we turn to God that we truly have absolutely nothing in and of ourselves that's any good. That there is a death that is within us that is in every man. The death of the spirit that took place on the day when Adam and Eve partook of the garden of the fruit in the Garden of Eden.

At that point in time, God told them that in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die. And there was a spiritual death that took place that is run through all men, as Paul talks about in the book of Romans. And so every man, woman that has ever been born or ever will be born has this death, this spiritual death within their lives.

It's a result of sin. But we oftentimes think that it's something else that is missing. We look around the world and try and find something to fill that area of death, to revive whatever that death is.

And so there's many people throughout the world who are looking to whatever it may be. Pleasure. Maybe in pleasure I will find the life that I'm seeking.

Because there is something dead. We all realize that there's a deadness within each of us. And so man seeks to revive this death.

And so some go after pleasure. And they think that because we're glandular beings and life is found somehow in fulfilling our enjoyment and making those glands feel good. And so they go after pleasure to try and make that feel good.

Some people think that, well, it's found in power. That if I gain enough power and I am able to hold this power over people and have people under me, then that's going to make me happy and that's going to revive this death that is in me. Some people look for it in popularity.

That if enough people like me and look up to me, then they're going to make me feel alive. And so people are in the world looking for something to revive the death that is within them. Because there is a poverty of spirit in each of us.

There is a poorness in every single one of us. And so we will look for something to make us rich in this area of poverty. You'll never seek after something until you realize you don't have it.

Until you realize your own poorness of spirit or your own poorness of something, you're not going to seek after something to try and fill it. But we see in man, in humanity as a whole, that humanity is seeking for something. And so they know that there is something dead.

They know that there is something missing. We all have this common understanding that there is a poverty within us because we're all seeking after something. It's just that every single one of us have something else that we're seeking to find it in, to try and find that fulfillment.

And there's millions of different things that people come up with. I'm often amazed at some of the things that are out there today that people are trying to fill this death, this poverty with. Personally, I don't understand the enjoyment of jumping out of planes to try and gain some sort of feeling of life.

I don't completely understand that. At one point in time, I thought it would be kind of interesting to go skydiving. Now I just look at it and think that's stupid.

It's insane. But there's many different things that people look at. We had our class today to try and find some sort of life in, to try and find some sort of fulfillment, to fill the poverty that's in every single one of us.

A lot of people in our day and age, they look to different substances, alcohol or drugs, whatever it may be, to try and bring that life in some way back. But what happens in every single one of us when we seek for something to make us alive, we find that life is not found there. And that's why you have so many people oftentimes who are so despairing in this world because they are seeking to try and find life in things that are dead, things that are under the curse of death.

Remember, when man sinned, a curse was brought upon the entire world, not just upon man. It was brought upon this entire world. And we know that the earth groans and is looking forward to the coming of the Lord because this whole creation is under a curse.

It's all under death. And so when man seeks to try and make himself alive with dead things, it doesn't work. And so you have an even greater death within man because there's this despairing to try and find life, this despondency because everything you try in this world will leave you dead.

And yet man continues to try and find new things. We know from Ecclesiastes that that's the mission really that Solomon went out on to try and find a way out of these areas of, you know, in our modern day, we call it a God-shaped hole in your heart, whatever it may be. We call it a void.

It's a death. It's a spiritual poverty. And Solomon went out and the book of Ecclesiastes is a great, really a great thesis on a man trying to find fulfillment in life in all sorts of different things.

And he tells you at the end of the story, he gives you the whole conclusion of the matter. And he tells us what? There's nothing new under the sun. He tells us in those scriptures, man has been trying for centuries since the creation of the world, since the time that Adam fell, man's been trying to find a way to fill that spiritual debt.

And Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes, there's nothing new under the sun. Although we have new avenues, they're all the same old things today that people have been going after for centuries to try and bring life to

the death that is in each one of us. Jesus here narrows it down for each and every one of us what it is that's missing.

He says, blessed are the poor in spirit. And I'll tell you it's a blessed thing when someone realizes what it is that we're really seeking after. How wonderful it is to know that you found what everybody else in the world is looking for.

That's not an arrogant statement, although some people will tell you it is. Some people say, oh, you're real arrogant thinking that you found the proper, the right way and the good way. Only you have the right religion now and only you have the right direction to God.

It's not an arrogant statement. It's the truth, and sometimes the truth comes across as arrogance. But see, you and I as believers, if you've come to find fulfillment in Christ only and find life in the spirit of God only, then you have found the one thing that everybody in the world is looking for, although they may not realize that that's what they're looking for.

Jesus narrows it down for us that when we came to Christ, we didn't know what we were looking for. But he comes and he puts his finger on the very nerve that's dead. And he says, this is what is dead.

Your spirit is dead. The very part of you that is really, really you. It's been said for a long time within Calvary Chapel and really all evangelical circles that man is a triune being and it's the same way that God is a triune being.

God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Man is body, soul, and spirit. And when we say that even, we have it backwards in the sense that it's supposed to be spirit, soul, and body.

But see, our spirits died at the day, really, we were born spiritually dead, but we see that Moses, I'm sorry, Moses, Adam, was spiritually alive. He was in perfect communion with God until he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the day that he ate of it, he surely died.

His spirit died. You're not a triune being, but the true part of who you truly, really are is the part that can be in connection with the God and the Creator who made you, and that's your spirit. But we're spiritually dead.

It's a pretty sad day when we come to the realization that the individual we love more than anything else in the world is dead, it's us. We love ourselves more than we love anything else or anyone else in this world. And when we've truly come to that point where we truly are dead, that part of us that's able to have communion with the one who created us is dead.

And that's a result of our sin. What begins to happen at that point in time? You begin to mourn over it. Blessed are they that mourn.

He says, blessed are the poor in spirit. Those people who have come to the realization that the true thing that they're seeking after is to have their spiritual life rejuvenated. It's a happy place to be to come to that point.

And you must come to that point before you can find and have the kingdom of heaven. He says, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The person who is able to come to that place where they realize that they're spiritually dead and only God can make them alive is the person that finds

true blessing, true happiness, which is more than just happiness that the world gives, it's the joy of God.

And it's that person who's able to enter into the kingdom of heaven because, see, the kingdom of heaven is not a physical thing that you and I see here around us. And we can only enter into the kingdom of heaven spiritually in communion with God. And so our spirit needs to be made right.

It needs to be made alive. You may remember in John chapter 20, after Jesus was raised from the dead, he comes and appears before his disciples and he breathes on them and says, receive you the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit, I believe at that point in time, brings life back to the spirit of man.

That in my belief, as I read the scriptures, I see that that to me is when the disciples truly were what we would call reborn, born again. Regeneration took place at that point in time. Now, I've had some people that disagreed with me on that and they say, well, the disciples had to have been saved before that point.

But how could the disciples have been saved before Jesus had died and rose from the dead? After Jesus had risen from the dead, now he breathes upon his disciples and said, receive you the Holy Spirit. It's interesting to me the breath of God in the scriptures. I encourage you to take some time to study it.

God the Father breathes life into man in Genesis. In the early chapters of Genesis, Jesus breathes the spirit upon man, bringing spiritual life to them. And the Holy Spirit breathes power and the refreshing wind came.

And you look at that in the original language. It's the word pneuma in the Greek, which is also characteristic with the Holy Spirit. And so God the Father breathes the initial life into man.

Jesus, the Son, breathes the spirit upon man, bringing life to his dead spirit. And the Holy Spirit brings power, breathing power into the life of the believer. Power to live and follow after the Lord.

The ability to be able to follow the Lord. And so a person, every single person, are poor in spirit, where they realize their own death and poverty of spirit, it's at that point in time that God can begin to do a work in the life of an individual. It is a true confession in a sense because it's coming to an agreement with God, and that's what confession is, agreeing with the Lord.

It's coming to an agreement with God that you are spiritually dead. It's turning away from all the other things you've been trying to make yourself alive with, and coming to him and saying, I am spiritually dead. It's not that, you know, anything else is missing in my life.

It's that my spirit is dead, and I need to be rejuvenated by you, Lord. And so an individual needs to come to a place of being poor in spirit, realizing their own poverty of spirit. This is why I think sometimes our modern evangelical terms are dangerous, in the sense that a lot of times when we hear evangelism, we hear people saying, you have a what? God-shaped hole in your heart, and only God can fill that hole in your heart.

And so basically what you're doing is you're telling a person that, you know, you've been seeking to try and find fulfillment in all these other things, in substances or in pleasure or in whatever it may be. Now all you need to do is take this, you know, peg that we call the Lord, whatever it may be, and stick it into that God-shaped hole in your heart, and now you're gonna be okay. Now I understand the general theology behind that, but basically you're not explaining to a person that you are dead spiritually because of sin, and the only way for you to be made alive is to come to the one who gives life, Jesus the Christ.

And so a person comes to a realization of being poor in spirit, oftentimes through the use of the Word of God in his law. His law has an amazing way of showing us our deadness in spirit, and I believe that that's one of the primary things that God created his law for, was to show us our absolute deadness from who he is, to show us the separation between us and him. That's what death truly is, it's a separation, and so we see that there's a separation between man and God.

His law clearly shows us that separation. How so? Well, the law tells us you shall not bear false witness. How many of you guys have lied? Okay, so we're liars.

The scriptures tell us you shall not commit adultery. How many of you committed adultery? Well, you may say, well, I have not committed adultery. Well, we're going to look at as we continue on in our study, Jesus says, you have heard that it has been said of them of old time, you shall not commit adultery.

But I say unto you that whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed adultery in their heart. How many of you have lusted after anybody? You've committed adultery. Okay, so we're adulterers, we're liars.

We've borne false witness, we've committed adultery. You say, how many of you have murdered? Well, I haven't murdered anybody. Okay, Jesus says, you have heard of them of old time that you shall not murder.

But I say unto you that whoever hates his brother without cause has committed murder. Okay, there we go. We're lying, adulterers, and murderers.

You ever stolen anything? Ever anything? Even something small? Okay, yeah. Okay, so you're a thief, too. Add that to the list of things.

So, just right there, we see we're just using a little bit of God's law to see that we are lying, adulterers, murderers, and thieves. Scriptures also tell us in the law that we shall worship the Lord only. We're not to have any other gods before him.

Okay, so every single one of us have had something that we've put before God before, obviously, and worship that. So, as we go down the law, we see that we have all transgressed the law. There's one that really gets me.

It says that obey your father and mother. Did anybody perfectly obey their father and mother growing up? Good job, Paul. I appreciate that.

Yeah, you lied. There we go. You've just put yourself under the liar category in the law of God.

You see, the law has a way of showing us our what? Our separation between a holy God and man. It shows us our spiritual death. That's what it does.

It shows us that we're poor in spirit. God being perfect, his law is perfect. He is perfect.

He follows his law 100%. His law shows you and I very clearly that we are not perfect. It shows us that there's a separation between us and him.

It shows us that we are poor and dead spiritually. So, we need to come to a place where we realize that we are poor in spirit. And that, although it seems like a depressing thing, is a happy point for the believer.

Why? Because it's that point where we take a step into realizing that we have now seen what the true problem is. And that there's a God who's now reaching down to us and seeking to have a relationship with us. So, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This person who comes to this point of realizing their poorness and deadness in spirit, now has the ability to lay hold of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus said, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's right there for your taking. But you cannot grab hold of the kingdom of heaven until you realize that you're spiritually dead.

Until you realize the poverty of spirit that's in your life. Because you can only enter the kingdom of heaven spiritually, and if your spirit is dead, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven. Spirit needs to be made alive, born again.

That which Jesus spoke with Nicodemus about in John chapter 3. You must be born again. And it is a happy day when we come to the realization of that fact. And that is a day when we, by faith, can lay hold of the kingdom of heaven.

How? Well, you did a paper on it. Matthew chapter 4 verse 17 says, repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. You have now realized your own death of spirit.

You've realized that you are poor in spirit and that you've been trying to fill it with all these other things that are dead and under the curse. And so those things can't make you alive. And so now you're going to turn from trying to fill that void and change that death and make it alive with all these other things.

And you're going to turn to the only one who can make you alive. And that is repentance. To take the step away from all these other dead things that you've been trying to make yourself alive with and now step towards the Lord is repentance.

There's the turn. At 180 degree turn. Now, if a person realizes that, okay, these things are not satisfying me, so I'm not going to go after those anymore.

And they don't turn to the Lord. They have not repented. They've just come to a realization that these things aren't satisfying me.

There are other religions in the world that do this. In fact, many of the Eastern philosophies and religions, as you begin to study them, that's what you find within them. And you find that some of them basically tell you the true enlightenment is found as you really remove yourself from all these other things that the world has to offer and all the other things that the people are going after in the world.

And now you've completely removed yourself from those and you know, they no longer have a hold on you and you no longer attached to them. And so now you're enlightened. No, you're still lost because you have not turned to the one who gives life.

You're still still dead. You're just not trying to fill your life with other dead things anymore, but you haven't found life because life is only found in Christ because Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. And no one comes to the father in the kingdom of heaven, except through me, he said.

So the kingdom of heaven is not grasped by just simply letting go of all the things of this world. The kingdom of heaven is only grasped by turning to the only one who's opened the door and open the way.

And that can only happen as we come to the realization that we are poor in spirit, poverty stricken and blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

Oftentimes when you realize your deadness and your poorness in spirit, that the very one that you love the most is dead because your own sin, you begin to mourn. And we go through that time of mourning and despairing over that, which has happened to us spiritually. And he says, blessed are they that mourn again, this is so opposite of the world.

The world does not see it as a happy thing or a happy time to mourn over things or to grieve about something. In fact, man tries as hard as he can to stay away from such things. That's why when people die, a lot of times you see that there's a lot more alcohol consumption.

Because people are trying to separate themselves from mourning and grieving. In fact, if you do even a small study or take some classes on grief counseling and how to counsel people are going through grieving times, one of the things that you want to do is you encourage them not to turn to substances like that, because they don't properly grieve. And in the long run, it has continual effects on their life.

But man constantly, when he comes to an opportunity for mourning and grieving, doesn't want to do that. Why? Because it's painful and it hurts and it honestly doesn't. So they turn to different substances and try and do away with the pain.

And oftentimes the biggest way that man tries to do that is through alcohol consumption, because it deadens you. It just makes you more dead. But we find in the scriptures that there is a comforter.

In fact, if you turn in your Bibles to John chapter 14, we get a chance to look at this comforter. John chapter 14. Jesus is speaking here and we'll just look at a few verses here as well as we get here.

But John chapter 14 verse one, it says, let not your heart be troubled. Don't be downcast, don't be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me and my father's house or many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go to prepare a place for you, I'll come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, you may be also. And whether I go, you know, in a way, you know. And Thomas said unto him, Lord, we do not know where you're going and how can we know the way? And Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and life and no man comes to the father, but by me.

Now he goes on and as he continues to speak with his disciples. About them believing in him and seeing the father, if they've seen me, he says, you've seen the father. And so Jesus, it's interesting, John chapter 14 clearly shows us the the Trinity, because Jesus tells us that he is the way, the truth and the life.

And then he goes on to say that if you've seen him, then you've seen the father. And then as we move on through the passage and we get down to verse 26, he says, but the comforter. Which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance.

Whatsoever I have said unto you, peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world gives unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. And so Jesus tells us about this comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, the comforter who comes to comfort they which mourn.

Paul talks about this and I believe his second letter to the Corinthians when he talks about comforting those who are going through difficult times. And really it goes back to the Holy Spirit, who is our comforter. And so blessed is the person who's poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Oh, how happy is that person who comes to the realization of their death spiritually, and then they begin to mourn over it. Blessed is that person who mourns over it. Because there's some people who they come to that point where they realize that they're dead spiritually and then they go, oh, man, that's a bummer.

What can I do to try and make myself alive? And then they're back to square one of trying to go out in the world to try and revive themselves. But the person who comes to that place of realizing their deadness spiritually and then begins to mourn over it can receive comfort. The true comfort of God, which comes only by the Holy Spirit.

And the Holy Spirit has a magnificent work that he does once he begins to come into the life of this person who's poor in spirit and mourning over it. He comes and he begins to transform that person. Blessed is that person who mourns over their deadness in spirit because they shall be comforted.

The comforter comes, the Holy Spirit comes and blessed are the meek. I believe that when a person who is poor in spirit comes to this place of mourning over their own spiritual death and poverty, that the Holy Spirit comes and begins to comfort them. But not only does he begin to comfort them, but he transforms them and he transforms them in the area of meekness.

Blessed are the meek. Meekness is that area of brokenness, of utter brokenness before the Lord, where he is able to take all that you've been trying to build on your own and he's able to grind it down to nothing. That area where many teachers have broken this word up before, and it's almost cliché now, but where you put a dash in between the M.E. and the E.K. and then you look at yourself and see me.

There's something there's nothing good in me. And the Holy Spirit, the comforter has a way of coming into the life of this person who's poor in spirit and who's mourning over it, and he begins to transform them so they have a new focus where they see that there is nothing good in me, where they can say with Paul, as Paul said in Romans chapter seven, seven, I find that is in me in my flesh dwells what? No, what? No good thing. In me that is in my flesh dwells no good thing.

Oh, how happy is the person who comes to that place? Why? Because it's at that place of brokenness that God can begin then to build upon the foundation that he has brought you down to. When Paul says, I find in my flesh dwells no good thing, he goes on to say, Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? And then he says, I thank God. You see a person who comes to the place of poorness and spirit and then mourns over their own death and depravity of spirit and then is made meek by the Holy Spirit of God is in that place where they say, who will deliver me from this body of death? They are that person who is in that place who it says, blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled.

This person comes to that place saying, Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? They are now hungering and thirsting after righteousness and blessed is that person. Oh, how happy is that person who goes through this progression? Who comes to this place of saying, Lord, I need you. I don't need all the other things in this world, all the other dead things that are under the curse that haven't been able to fulfill that haven't been able to bring life.

I need you and your righteousness. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death? I thank God that it says right here, blessed are they which do hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled. Blessed is that person who comes to that place where they're hungering and thirsting after righteousness because the Lord will fill them.

He's promised to do so. They shall be filled. Do you see the progression in this passage? There's an awesome progression, I believe, in the Beatitudes.

Sometimes just people read them and they go, it's a happy thing to be poor in spirit. So now I got to try and make myself poor in spirit. And so they go out and they try and make themselves poor in spirit.

So because then I'll find happiness in God and then maybe I'll get the kingdom of heaven. Oh, it's really a good thing to hunger and thirst after righteousness. I don't really know how to do that.

So I'm going to try and make myself hungry in righteousness. So I'll just keep reading a lot of the word and the word of God is good, but you can't make yourself these things. It happens as we try and follow the Lord that we go through this, but we've got to see our poorness in spirit.

You know, the passages and we're going to look at it as we go through that says, seek and you shall find, ask and it will be given to you, knock and it will be opened unto you. You guys know that passage, right? You know, you'll never seek after something until you realize it's missing. You're never going to seek after these things that we're talking about here about the Lord until you realize that it's gone, that there's a poorness there.

And so it's important for us to come to this place of poorness in spirit. You know what the world does when people come to a place of poorness in spirit? They prescribe Paxil and Zoloft and Prozac to try and deaden the pain because you know what it is painful to realize that you're poor in spirit. But do you realize that it's also a very happy thing because it's at that point that you can begin to realize that only God can make it right.

How great it would be if those who go to a psychiatrist or whatever it may be, because they're broken and they're poor in spirit. If the psychiatrist prescribed that they go home and read the book of Matthew instead of go home and here, take these pills. You might find a lot of people that weren't so depressed because the person who's poor in spirit and mourns over it shall be comforted by the Holy Spirit who will transform their view to where they realize that there is nothing good in me.

Of course, again, the world says, no, that's not right thinking because they say, well, you've got a problem self-esteem. I like to call self-esteem, selfish steam. It's just a bunch of selfish steam.

It's interesting also when you do research about suicide, a lot of times the reasons for suicide have more to do with a overly high self-esteem than an overly low self-esteem. Think way too much of themselves and oftentimes it leads down a very bad path. But we see in the scriptures that the person who's meek, who has a proper godly view of self, hungers and thirsts after that which is righteous, after that which is of God.

And so blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. And this is where the Beatitudes take a turn. Right there at blessed are they which hunger and thirst for righteousness is like a turn beginning in the road.

Because as you begin to hunger and thirst after righteousness, the Lord begins to do a new work in your life. And he now by his spirit, which is doing his work in your life, begins to transform you even further from the area of meekness and now into the area of mercy. It says blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. What are some of the definitions that you can think of for mercy? What's that? Not getting what you do deserve. That's a good one.

Any other ones that you guys have heard before? Go ahead and just speak it out if you have one. None. It can mean compassion, not getting what you do deserve.

That's receiving mercy, but what is it to be merciful? Not giving to people what they do deserve. Oftentimes when it means when it has to do in the area of punishment. Knowing what we know of mercy and right now, obviously, it seems to be not a whole lot, but knowing what we do know about mercy.

Would you say that the natural tendency of man is to be merciful from what we see in the world today and in history throughout? Do you think that that's the natural thing that man would do is to be merciful? No, this is a godly characteristic. This is a work that God does in a person who hungers and thirsts after righteousness. This is God's answer in one way to the hunger and thirst for righteousness.

It only comes from God, and I say that because of what God says about himself, pardon me, in the book of Exodus chapter 34. There you may remember the story. We see Moses there before the Lord, and he says to the Lord after God shows his great grace to Israel, Israel has just sinned in the transgression of the golden calf.

And God wants to he's going to judge them. And Moses says, hey, block me out of your book. He stands in the gap.

He is an intercessor at that point in time. And the Lord says, you know, I'll block whoever out of my book who's sinned against me, basically. And he says, I'm going to pour out my grace upon them.

And as Moses sees the grace of God, he calls out to the Lord in Exodus chapter 34, and he says, Lord, show me your glory. The Lord tells him, I can't show you my glory, because if I show you my glory, you're not going to be able to live. But God says that I'm going to pass by you and put you in the cleft of the rock.

And as I do, I'm going to show you the afterglow presence. It says the hind parts in the in the King James Version. God's not going to show him his butt.

He's going to show him his glory, the afterglow presence of God as it passes by. And as he does, he does something even more than just showing him a glimpse of his glory. He declares his name to Moses.

And what is the very first thing that God uses to define himself? He says in Exodus chapter 34, verse six, the Lord passed before him and he proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God. And what is the very first thing that God uses to define himself? Anybody, what do you think it is? The Lord, the Lord God merciful. When a person comes to God, poor in spirit, mourning over their own condition, the Holy Spirit comes and begins to work meekness into the life of that person.

Now they're broken. They say, oh, wretched man, who am that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death? They're hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And God comes to that soul and he plants a

portion of his own being in them.

They're hungering and thirsting after righteousness. When you're hungering and thirsting after righteousness, you're hungering and thirsting after God because he is righteousness. And he comes and he gives you a piece of who he is.

The Lord, the Lord God merciful. And so we read in Matthew chapter five, blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. This is, again, where the Sermon on the Mount, where the Beatitudes take a turn.

It's taking a turn from man in his own dead condition, being brought low before a holy God. And now it's taking a turn to where that man has been down at total bedrock. And now God begins to build.

And what does he use as his very first building block? It's a portion of his own being and its mercy. And he pours out into that believer who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, mercy, blessed are the merciful. And he goes further and he doesn't even greater work.

And it says, blessed are the pure in heart. Jeremiah in Jeremiah chapter 17, verse nine says that the heart of man is what? Deceitful and wicked. Above all things, who can know it? Who can know the heart of man? What's that? The scriptures tell us that God tests the heart of man.

So the heart of man is deceitful and wicked. You and I don't even know our own hearts. Now, that was a hard thing for me to understand and really grasp.

I had some people who sat down with me a few years ago and they accused me of some things. And this lady looked me in the face and she said, I know your heart. And I said, you don't know my heart.

I don't even know my own heart. We don't know the wickedness. We don't understand the depths of the depravity of our own hearts.

But God does, he sees it very clearly. You know, there are times when he allows us to see a bit of the portion of the wickedness of our own hearts, and you know what it does to us? Takes us back to Matthew chapter five, verse three. Poor in spirit, mourning over it.

The Lord comes by his spirit and he comforts us. And what do we normally say? Oh, Lord, we're now he's being he's making us meek and we say, Lord, oh, I'm so wicked. Look at how wicked I am.

And the Lord says, I knew it all along. I just wanted to show you. God knows it's there.

And there are times where he allows us to see it, to bring us back to Matthew chapter five, verse three, poor in spirit, mourning over it so he can come and comfort us so that he can transform us and make us meek so that we, in that area of our life that before was held back from him and we didn't even realize it so that we, in that area of our life can begin to hunger and thirst after him and he can bring a portion of his presence into that area of our life in the form of his mercy and that he can bring a new heart into that matter. And he is the one who's able to take the dead stony heart as he promised to Jeremiah in the prophecy that Jeremiah gave later in the chapters of Jeremiah, I believe it was in either chapter 30 or 31, where God tells him that I'm going to give you a new heart. I'm going to remove the heart of stone.

I'm going to give you a heart of flesh. Is it Ezekiel? I believe he says something close to Jeremiah as well about a new heart, but that is an Ezekiel as well. God says, I'm going to give you a new heart.

No longer will you have to say, no, the Lord, you won't have to teach your neighbor, no, the Lord, because you shall know the Lord from the least of you to the greatest. But that's only when God gives you a new heart. And that's that's only for the person who's come to God, poor in spirit, mourning over it, then made meek by his spirit after they've been comforted by him, hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

He begins to rebuild that person with his mercy and he gives them a new and pure heart. And that person who has a pure heart can then see God. But first we need to be given the pure heart that only God can give.

Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God. Verse nine says, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. Now, it's one thing to know that you're a child of God.

Scriptures tell us in Romans chapter eight that his spirit will bear witness with your spirit, that you're a child of God. It is a wonderful thing to have the witness of the spirit upon our lives, that we are children of God. If you read any of the old evangelists, some of their words, if you look at some of the things of George Whitfield, of the Finney's, or you look at some of the things that even Spurgeon talked about, you see that there's often talked about the witness of the spirit.

They didn't. And in fact, when you read some of their writings, they saw no reason for us as evangelists. Every single one of us are called to evangelize this world, whether we think we're evangelists or not.

They saw no reason for us to try and convince people that they're saved to comfort those people who think, well, I'm just not saved. They said that the Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit, that you're a child of God. And so they were often talking about the witness of the spirit in evangelism.

So it's one thing to have the witness of the spirit and to know that you're a child of God, but it's a total other thing to be called a child of God. What do I mean? It's an amazing thing when people look at your life and they say, that person is different. That guy is a true believer.

That person is really a child of God. See, it's one thing for you to know it. It's quite another when other people recognize it.

And that's a work that only God can do. It's amazing when people start to look at your life and they say, man, something's different about you. And it's not because you got a haircut or you're using a new kind of shampoo or something, but it's because they see that there's a true change in you.

And it's something that can only be attributed to God, the father doing a work in you and in me. It's not something that we can do on our own. It's something that he truly works into us.

And it's truly something that he gets the glory for. We're going to talk about this more next week when we talk about the gifts that we've been given and how their purpose is to glorify our God in heaven. But the work that God does in you and in me, that other people see and they begin to call and say, man, that person is a real child of God.

It's a work that only God can do. But notice one of the things that's connected to it. It says, blessed are the peacemakers, the peacemakers.

Jesus told us that in the world, you're not going to find peace. The world goes around saying peace, peace, but there is no peace, right? There have been dozens of peace accords between Israel and the

Palestinians since the foundation of Israel back in 1948. Is there peace in Israel today? No, there's some historical things going on right now because just in the last couple of weeks, we see that Ariel Sharon and the new president of the Palestinian Authority, they've been getting together and having peace talks again, which is very big deal.

It hasn't happened since 1992 when Bill Clinton first got into office and he started working with then Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat. But they always sign these little things of peace and there never is peace because you're not going to find peace in this world because peace only comes from who? The Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ is the only one that brings peace. And when Jesus Christ brings peace into my life, into your and into yours, he makes us peacemakers.

Not that we're ones who manufacture it, but that now we are ambassadors of Christ as Paul talks about, and we're able to bring the message of peace to other people. That is an indication of a true child of God is one who brings the message of peace that only God can give to other people. That's what man truly needs is to have peace with God.

Man is constantly looking for peace on earth. There will be no peace on earth or goodwill towards men until the Prince of Peace is on earth. But he's made you and I peacemakers in the sense that we are able to bring the message of peace between man and God to other people.

And that's what a true child of God does. He brings the message of peace. He is a peacemaker.

But it's interesting what often happens to the peacemaker. In this world that is ridden with war, and I'm not just talking about physical wars, I'm talking about the spiritual war that takes place in the life of every individual on the face of this earth. Realize when you and I as peacemakers go to people who don't know the Lord, there's a spiritual battle going on at that point in time for that person's soul.

And so often what happens to the peacemaker is what we see down in verse 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. What often happens to that peacemaker is persecution.

Instead of finding someone with open arms saying, yes, that's what I need. They find someone with a clenched fist. And so persecution often comes to that individual who comes in the name of Christ with a message of peace.

And Jesus says, blessed are they which are persecuted. Again, this is so opposite from the world. The world wants nothing to do with persecution.

Why do you think we're working so hard to try and make peace on her? Because no one wants to be persecuted. No one wants to be beat down. But Jesus says, blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall revile you. Oh.

How many of you feel, oh, how happy when people revile you, when they talk down towards you, when they look down upon you because of your stance as a believer, you think, oh, man, I really am happy about that. You know what? As much as we try sometimes to be spiritual about things and go, all right, I'm going to be happy about that's not a happy thing. To be reviled.

To be persecuted. And yet in Christ it is. Why? Blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

It's not because you're a fool, but because of his sake, because of Jesus. People don't like Jesus. Franklin Graham wrote a book just a couple of years ago called The Name.

I'd encourage you guys to check it out and read it. It's an interesting book. And he talks about what the name of Jesus brings to the table, really, and how much of a bother it is to people.

They don't like to hear the name of Jesus. In fact, they like to curse the name of Jesus as much as they can. That's why in so many different places it's used as a curse word.

Never do you hear people say, ah, Confucius, when they're angry. Because they don't really have a problem with Confucius. They don't care to use his name as a curse word.

They don't use Buddha's name as a curse word. You don't hear people say, ah, Joseph Smith. But they want to use Jesus's name as a curse word because they can't stand that name.

They want to curse it as much as they possibly can. And so Jesus says, blessed are you when you're persecuted for my sake. Rejoice.

It's a hard thing to rejoice in the midst of those things. I don't know anybody that really has those times and jumps up and down. Unless they they may be a little out there.

But let's be honest, unless we're trying to just look good for other Christians around us and say, oh, yeah, I'm being persecuted. No, when we're persecuted, when we're reviled, we're not happy about that. It does not make us feel good at all.

I remember when I was like seven years old, there was some sort of little feud in my neighborhood. We just moved into a new neighborhood and my next door neighbor, he's a lot older than me then, but he wasn't very nice. And I remember my mom had gone to this some sort of retreat or something and she had this shirt that said abiding on it.

And she had brought some shirts home and I had one of these shirts that said abiding. And I remember this kid next door picking on me because this shirt I was wearing, I didn't really know at the time when I was seven years old what abiding meant. I just knew she got it at some Christian conference she went to.

And I remember one day while I was wearing this shirt, this kid was picking on me and I was standing down in my yard and their yard is kind of up a little bit from ours. And I remember he spit at me and it went in my hair. And I'll never forget it.

David Rose, next door neighbor, and it had everything to do with this shirt that said abiding. It was about abiding in Christ. It bothered me so much.

I had never up until that point wanted to hit someone so much in my life. This guy was a little bit taller than me and about six years older than me at the time. But man, did it bother me.

It's not one of those things that you jump up and down like, oh, right on. I've been reviled and persecuted for the name of Jesus. No, it's something that's a painful thing.

And yet the Lord says rejoice and be exceedingly glad. The only way that we can fulfill this is when the Lord is working in us and working in us to realize the outcome, the end result for great is reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you see without understanding what God is doing. We will never be able to rejoice in such circumstances and persecution when we're being reviled, when people are spitting on us, whatever it may be.

We'll never be able to live in an area of exceeding and great joy in the midst of that unless we realize that God is doing a work and unless we have him working in us to realize that it is ultimately for his glory and greatest reward in heaven. And so we have here in these first 12 verses, the Beatitudes. A life of blessedness.

That is found only truly in Christ. It is found only truly as a person comes to Christ, poor in spirit, that's where it begins. And as we go through the Sermon on the Mount, as we continue our study in this class, we're going to see that I believe at certain points in this message, it kicks us all the way back to.

Chapter five, verse three. You see, I believe that the Lord is doing this work in each one of us who are believers, those who have come to important spirit, he begins this progression, which is the next three chapters called the Sermon on the Mount, where he is transforming and changing you and I. Where he is totally revamping us, where he's taken us all the way down to bedrock by making us see our poorness in spirit and mourning over it and breaking us, making us meek. And then from that point on, he begins to build a new house out of our lives all the way to the very end of this, where he's going to finish the construction of this house.

And he's going to tell us in Matthew, chapter seven, in the very last verses that he who hears these things of mine and does them shall be like a house that's built upon a rock and the storm will come and that house will stand because it's founded on the rock. This message is about God reconstructing the life of a broken individual, a dead spiritual spiritually individual, which is every single person who's ever been born since the time that man was first created. This is how God transforms and changes us so that we are these houses firmly built upon the rock and it begins with being poor in spirit and it really ultimately ends with us standing before the Lord in Matthew, chapter seven and being in his presence.

He warns us there in Matthew, chapter seven, that there will be some in that day who are going to stand before me and say, hey, didn't I do this in your name and didn't I do this in your name? He's going to say, depart from me. I never knew you. Because they didn't understand the truth and the real the reality of the message of this sermon.

It has nothing to do with just doing your righteousness so that men could see you because he's going to confront that in this portion of scripture as well. It has everything to do with coming to him broken because you are spiritually dead and wicked. And then him completely renewing and revitalizing and rebuilding.

And as I say that there's a progression, we're going to come to portions in this passage as you read through and you come to verse 20 and it says, for I say and you accept the right, your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees. You shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven. You see, we get to verse 20 and we think, all right, I'm doing pretty good.

I've made it through this progression. Then it's like, wait a minute, I got to be better than the Pharisees and the scribes. I can't do that.

I'm poor in spirit, takes us back to verse three. And then the Lord begins to build us up again and we get to verse 20. We go, the Lord, he's the one who's doing this work in me.

And then immediately when we get into that, we get into verse 21 and he says, you have heard that it has said you shall not kill, but I say unto you that if you hate your brother, you've killed. Oh, man, I just yelled at that guy the other day. I was just angry with that guy.

Back to Matthew chapter five, verse three. And the Lord begins the work again, and it's constantly God putting us on the fire so that the impurities of our life will come up so that he can expose them and show them to us so that we look at it and go, man, I'm poor in spirit. Then he goes, all right, let's go back to the beginning.

I'll take it away. And then he puts us in the fire again and more impurities come to the surface and we see, oh, man, there's lust in my life. And the Lord says, yeah, back to poor in spirit.

Let me take that away. And he begins to rebuild us, puts us back on the fire. The fire heats up, the trials come, the impurities come to the surface and we see, oh, man, I broke that promise that I made to that guy.

Oh, back to the beginning. The Lord says, all right, let's clean this out. See, because God is refining us, he is sanctifying and cleansing us by the washing of the water of his word, right? That's what he wants to do in each of our lives.

Why? So that you and I will stand before him as a beautiful and pure bride. He's making us ready for heaven. But it starts right there in verse three, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It's a lot different than what the world teaches. It's the opposite of the doctrine of the world. But it is the doctrine of Christ.

It's different than what we normally would think. In Luke chapter six, we have very much the same record, the Beatitudes given. But there's something interesting that we see a little more on top of what we just read.

We've just seen the blessings, but I want you to notice something that takes place in Luke chapter six, starting at verse 24, after he tells them blessed or rejoice and all these different things there in Luke chapter six, starting at verse 20, we get down to verse 24 and he says, but woe, he pronounces woe. Against certain people, but woe unto you that are rich. Now, remember how Matthew chapter five, verse three began, blessed are the what? The poor in spirit.

So that are full for you shall one time you shall hunger, you're going to hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now for you shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

This is the answer or the other side of the story to the Beatitudes of Matthew chapter five. They, they are also given here in Luke chapter six, starting at verse 20. He talks about blessed are the poor for theirs is the kingdom of God in verse 20.

Blessed are you who hunger now in verse 21, you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and revile you.

But then in verse 24, he says, woe unto you. You see the person who refuses to turn to God, but instead sees themselves as rich because they have everything that they ever wanted here on earth. But they refuse to turn because they don't understand the poorness of their own spirit, that they're dead spiritually.

Woe unto you that are rich because you've already received your consolation. You're not going to receive the consolation of God in eternity. We see this when Jesus speaks of the rich man and Lazarus, don't we? That the rich man, he had what he had while he was here on earth and then he dies and he finds himself in torment in Hades.

And he looks across that gulf and he sees that there is Lazarus being comforted, consoled by Abraham. And he cries out and Abraham basically tells him that you had your goods while you were on earth. You were rich.

You had your consolation there, but you never saw the poorness of your own spirit. You never realized that you were dead spiritually and so you never turned to the Lord. You were rich then and now you have no consolation.

Woe unto you that are full. You had everything that you desired there in life. And so you saw no need to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

And so now you're hungry in eternity. Woe unto you that laugh now. Hey, you had a really good time.

You partied it up. You lived it up. You had the pleasure that you wanted while you were alive.

But now here you are and you mourn and you weep because in hell there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And so we see the opposite of the spectrum there. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.

You had a lot of things that good to say about you, but neither were you a peacemaker who oftentimes receives the persecution of men. Everybody spoke well of you then, for so did the fathers of the false prophets. And so in Luke chapter six, we're given the other side of the story.

We can come to Christ, poor in spirit, realizing the depravity and the death that we have spiritually and have the Lord rework our lives completely as we're seeing here in Matthew chapter five, or we can reject that and say, no, I think I'm doing just fine. And live our lives richly now, laugh now, eat it up now, but judgment will come and that person may stand before the Lord one day and say, Lord, Lord, did I not prophesy in your name? Did I not cast out demons in your name? Did I not do all sorts of wonderful works in your name? And he'll say, depart from me. I never knew you.

You who practice lawlessness or work iniquity. It's an important message here, the Sermon on the Mount. The message that every single one of us need to know well, I believe.

This is a message that's able to transform the blessed message. Oh, how happy is the person who grasps it. There's some other areas in scripture, a lot of other areas that we see this blessed are they or blessed is the, there's several of them mentioned here on the board.

Psalm one, of course, is one of them that says blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, right? Nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord. And in his law, does he meditate day and night? He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf shall not wither and whatsoever he does shall prosper.

Psalm 32, verses one and two, David said, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and whose spirit in whose spirit there is no guile. In Psalm 34, verse eight, we read, oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.

Blessed is the man that trusts in him. Psalm 65, verse four, blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causes him to approach unto you. Psalm 128, verse one says, blessed is everyone that fears the Lord, that walks in his ways.

In John 20, Jesus said unto him, unto Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed. In James chapter one, verse 12, James says, blessed is the man who endures temptation for when he has tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to him, them that love him.

And in Revelation chapter 14, verse 13, I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, says the spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them. Those are just a few verses.

You can find a lot of them in the scripture that we see other beatitudes, other blessings pronounced upon the people of God. God desires that every single one of us would live in the blessed life. John chapter 10, verse 10 says, that the thief has come to steal, to kill and destroy, but I have come that you may have life and that to its fullest or that more abundantly.

There is a thief in this world who steals and kills and destroys. And the way that he does it often begins by giving men riches here on earth, by letting them have a good time here on earth and laugh it up and live it up. And yet they die in hell eternally, separated from God because they never addressed the fact that they were separated from God from the start when they were born because they were spiritually poor.

God desires that they would turn, that they repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. It's right here now. It's not something far off as the enemy would have men think.

See, the enemy wants you to think about, oh yeah, yeah, I'll think about that when I get older. I'll think about that on my death bed. We don't often, not many people have that chance.

The blessed individual is the person who realizes that they're poor in spirit now and realizes that the kingdom of heaven is right here, right now. This is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent. Eternal life begins the moment, the immediate moment that a person turns to God, to the knowledge of him.

The blessed life, the life of abundance begins immediately that a person realizes their poorness in spirit and begins to mourn over it. And the Lord meets them and comforts them, transforms them. God, your word is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword and I pray that your living word would cut deep in our hearts.

Lord, that even now you'd reveal to us any areas of our lives that we're holding back from you and that you would cause us to be poor in spirit and mourn over that in that area of our life. Father, that we, by your spirit, can be transformed, made meek, hunger and thirst for your righteousness and that Lord, you can make us merciful, give us a new heart and give us a message of peace. Even if that means we'd be persecuted for your namesake, we look forward to the reward that you have for us to be with you throughout all eternity.

We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Questions? Any questions as we look at this? Again, one of the things I want to point out is that in this class I'm not so much looking that we grab a whole bunch of information.

We could do a strict just word for word exegesis of the scripture and that'd be great, but you can go out and get a ton of books on the Sermon on the Mount about that. What I want to do is look at this from an applicable standpoint. So I hope that you all understand that as we go through this.

But if there are any questions about the text, hopefully I can answer those if you have any. Any? None? Alright. Are there any good books you can read? Yeah, there are, but I don't remember all the titles of them.

I can get you some. There are some good books out there. I'm hoping, very much hoping, that one day Don McClure writes a book on it because I think that his studies on the Sermon on the Mount are probably some of the best that I've seen.

But I'll get you some names. Let me see if there's anything I wanted to hit on here. Yeah? In verse 3, it says that poor in spirit, that's kind of the place of conversion.

I think that, because as I mentioned, it's a good question, is poor in spirit in verse 3 the point of conversion? I think that it is the starting point of conversion. Actually, let me state that a little bit differently. I think it's the starting point of salvation.

But I look at salvation as a three-fold work of God, and that salvation is justification, sanctification, and glorification. And so I think that if a person comes and realizes their poorness of spirit, sometimes they can try and turn to other things to try and change that poorness of spirit. And there's a lot of other religions out there trying to address the area of poorness of spirit.

So unless they mourn over it and receive the comfort of the Spirit of God and begin to hunger and thirst after His righteousness, I think that they can derail the process, so to speak, of salvation. But it is the first step. How many of you have read the book *The Calvary Road* by, is it Hesham, Roy Hesham? I believe it's Roy Hesham.

I encourage you to look at that book. It's a quick read. It won't take you but maybe a few hours to read through it because it's a small book.

And he talks about that salvation for anybody to be saved needs to come to the foot of the cross and come to this area of poorness of spirit, really. *The Calvary Road*. It might be *The Calvary Road* by Roy Hesham.

In a lot of ways, yes, it's a reiteration of the fact that the poor in spirit grabbed hold of the kingdom of heaven. And then again in verse 10, you just see the persecution coming upon those for theirs is a kingdom of heaven. Something to consider there about verse 10 is that we are not in our kingdom here.

We are pilgrims. That's really when you look at Hebrews chapter 11 and you consider the things that set the saints apart in Hebrews chapter 11 was that they sought for a city whose builder and maker was God. They realized that their salvation was not here on earth, but it was with the Lord in heaven.

And when you're in a place like that, then you're going to receive the persecution of this world because this is not your kingdom. And we're going to be with the Lord. We're citizens of heaven.

And so we look forward to a city whose builder and maker is God, a city which has foundations, it says, whose builder and maker is God. So it is a reiteration of verse 3 and it's really a proclamation about those who really realize that this is not their home, receiving the persecution of others in this world.

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