

So Far So Good

Acts 20:27 *I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.*

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus is said to stand at the height of His popularity. His ministry touched the masses, but He also saw the need to teach His “disciples” closely. The word “disciple” must not be restricted to the Twelve because Matthew doesn’t even mention them until chapter 10:1–4. Disciples here doesn’t even mean “full-fledged believers,” because elsewhere, Matthew uses the term to describe John the Baptist’s followers (11:2). These really are people who wanted to attach themselves to Jesus, so He takes some time to instruct them.

At this point in His ministry, Jesus could not escape the mounting crowds; and by the end of His sermon (7:28–29), He was surrounded by even larger crowds. This suggests that His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount actually covered several days, not just an hour or two. He “sat down” to teach because sitting was the accepted posture of synagogue or school teachers.

As we have noted previously, the Beatitudes are not eight or nine different classes of people (the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, and so on), they are one class of people. We have been talking about them every week because Jesus is making an announcement about how the world really works. In the beginning, it says, “... *theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” The Sermon on the Mount then talks about being comforted, about seeing God, inheriting the earth. Jesus is talking about being adopted into the family of God and being children of God. As children of God we also live in mercy and our souls find satisfaction.

Jesus is not talking about different blessings, He is talking about BLESSING; these are all the different aspects of what it means to enter the kingdom of God. All these blessings are essentially the same thing; they are aspects of the great riches that belong to anyone who has entered the kingdom. It is like the beatitudes are piece of music moving through all the different sections of which the overall theme is: **THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**

- 1. Poor in spirit** simply means to say, “My problems are beyond me. I cannot save myself.”
- 2. Those who mourn.** Mourning goes beyond the first beatitude and says, “My problem is sin.”

The fundamental assumption behind all self-help is the same, “*I own me, even though I didn’t create me.*”



- 3. The meek.** Means we turn to God humbly, and say, “I take my hands off my life.”
- 4. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.**

What can you do to be sure you get to come into the presence of God and feel His love? The answer is a perfect record. The hungering and thirsting is realizing you don’t have ANY righteousness of your own and you say, “*I need a perfect record from somewhere else, and it’s found in Jesus.*”

All of these lead to a changed life. Which goes into:

- 5. Blessed are the merciful** - We become people of mercy.
- 6. Blessed are the pure in heart** - Our hearts walk more in the things of God.
- 7. Blessed are the peacemakers** - We seek bringing together and not division.
- 8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.**

The last beatitudes tell us:

- All of your relationships will be transformed, because you become a merciful person.
- Internally, you will be transformed not just in your relationships, but in your psychology you’ll be transformed, because you’ll become pure of heart.
- Your direction in life will be transformed, because you’ll now have a mission in life.
- Persecution is going to do nothing but make you a better person.

When your focus is on the person of Christ everything changes, everything is different, and nothing can separate us from that.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE
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