

Matthew
Bringing The Beatitudes to life
Matthew 5:3-12
September 28, 2025
Tom Pennington, Pastor-Teacher
Countryside Bible Church, Southlake, Texas

Well, I invite you to take your copy of the Scripture and turn to Matthew, chapter 5, as we continue to look at the Beatitudes. I think you understand that the products that we buy in various stores and Amazon and sites on the internet, many of those products come with warning labels. It's humorous that sometimes those labels were clearly not written by someone for whom English was a first language. My personal favorite is on a Korean kitchen knife, "Keep out of children." Now in fairness, I would do worse translating something from English into Korean, but nevertheless, I think we also understand that most warning labels are there to protect the company that produced them from the liability of someone misusing their product.

That's why a Sears' hair dryer has the label, "Do not use while sleeping." Or there's an iron that says, "Do not iron clothes on body." I am not going to ask for a show of hands for how many of you have tried that. Or a children's cough medicine that maybe you use with your children that says, "Do not drive a car or operate machinery after taking this medication"—if only we could keep our five-year-olds from doing that! A child Superman costume, "Wearing this garment does not enable you to fly." And frankly, I still don't know why I can't cut the "tag off of my mattress." You know, it's humorous, mostly humorous, when people misuse human products.

But it's not nearly so funny when Christians misuse the Scripture that God has given to us. And sadly, that happens every day. I don't want that to happen with the Beatitudes that we've been studying together. And so, as we prepare for communion this morning, I want to step back from studying the individual Beatitudes to consider how we should use them correctly, or "How to Bring the Beatitudes to Life," or to make it very personal, "How to Bring the Beatitudes to Your

Life.” The first seven of the Beatitudes describe who we are, how we respond to God, to sin, to others. The eighth Beatitude describes how unbelievers respond to us. And next Sunday, Lord willing, we'll study that final Beatitude.

But in our brief time together this morning, I want us to consider the valid, the legitimate uses, for each of us, of the Beatitudes. What should you do with what we've learned from these Beatitudes? Many of you have mentioned you've enjoyed the study, as I have, so what do you do with this? So let's talk about that, “What are the valid uses of the Beatitudes in your life?”

First of all, they serve as “A Tutor to Jesus Christ,” a tutor to Jesus Christ. Paul says in Galatians, chapter 3, verse 24, of the moral Law of God, he says, “The Law has become our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.” That word ‘tutor’ doesn't really describe a teacher or instructor, rather it describes the slave whose job it was to take the hand of a young boy and lead him to and from school where he was taught. That slave was also responsible to, sort of, generally oversee and supervise the conduct of that young boy.

That's what the Law does. The Law holds our hand, shows us our sin, and shows us God's standard that we can never meet and, in so doing, leads us to school, the school of Christ. It leads us to Him. And the Beatitudes actually serve the same purpose in one sense. I mean, if you think that your good deeds can earn you God's favor, let me just encourage you to go back and study through the Beatitudes with me again. Go back and look at what God expects in these Beatitudes—they are the divine standard against which we can measure ourselves. Some believe that the Beatitudes, and even the rest of this sermon, establish an ethical standard for everybody; everybody can and should follow these standards. And if we do our best to follow the standard laid out here, then our sincere efforts at that are going to show God that we're essentially good

people, and He'll accept our best efforts as good enough. Friends, that is what most people on this planet, it's what most Americans believe. Ask most people why God should let them into His heaven and their answer will be something like this: "Well, you know, I do the best I can. I try to live a good life. I'm essentially a good person."

What we learn from this sermon and from the Beatitudes, and you've heard me say this often if you've been a part of our church, is "God never grades on a curve." He doesn't have a curve. His standard is absolute perfection. His standard of righteousness is impossibly high. And we see that in this sermon. I mean, just let me show you a couple of examples. Verse 5, we're to be "gentle." That is, we're to always submit to God's Word and will, and we're to always treat others with gentleness, even those who sin against us. Verse 6, we're to long for personal "righteousness" like a starving man craves food and a man dying of thirst longs for water. Verse 7, we're to extend "mercy" to all those around us like God does to us. Verse 8, we're to be "pure in heart," morally clean in our entire inner person. Verse 9, we're to "pursue peace" with God and with others. You see, for God to accept us based on our efforts, we must be and do all of those things perfectly—perfection is the standard. Look down at chapter 5, verse 48, "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." The standard is absolute perfection, and that means you and I can never meet it.

So the Beatitudes, just like God's Law, act as a tutor; they hold our hand and lead us to Christ and to the gospel of salvation by grace alone. They show us our sin. They show us our failure to meet God's standard. And in light of that, we learn that for sinners like us to get into God's kingdom, we must repent. You say, "Where is repentance in the Beatitudes?" Look at the very first one. We must come as "beggars," and the second one, we must "mourn" over our sin, and

“hunger and thirst for righteousness” instead, as we see in verse 6. So we must “repent;” that's here in the Beatitudes.

We must also “exercise faith in God.” You say, “Where's faith in the Beatitudes?” Again, look at the first one. We come to God as the “poor in spirit;” we come begging God for grace. There's no better picture of faith than that. I mean, a person begs from someone (Why?) because they have an expectation that that person may show them mercy. We come as beggars to God because we believe that, in Christ, God will be gracious to us, and He will forgive our sins.

But of course, that raises the huge question, “How can He do that? How can a perfectly just God pass over our sins and forgive us?” And the answer is, “He can't pass over them; He has to punish them.” Jesus doesn't answer this question here in the Beatitudes, but He does later in Matthew. In Matthew, chapter 20, verse 28, He says that He came “to give His life (to die), as a ransom for many.” That's His Word, as a ransom payment, not to Satan, but to God. You see, your sins and my sins deserved eternal punishment. And the only way God could let us out of that, and still be just, is for someone else to pay the debt. And on the cross, Jesus, the infinite One, suffered our sins and paid for them all. So the first use of the Beatitudes then is as a tutor to lead us to Jesus Christ because there's no way we can meet the standard and earn our way into God's favor.

A second use of the Beatitudes is as “A Test of Genuine Salvation,” a test of genuine salvation. The first Beatitude, you'll notice, and the last Beatitude make the same statement. Verse 3, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Verse 10, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” By bookending these Beatitudes with those statements, Jesus meant that all of these qualities belong to those who are in His kingdom, who are His, who've been saved. According to Luke 6, in this

very same sermon, Jesus also listed the opposite qualities that describe those in Satan's kingdom. Now Luke records only four of the eight Beatitudes in Matthew, but for those four, He also records four corresponding woes or pronouncements of judgment.

So understand this, when Jesus preached this sermon, He described those who belong to His kingdom, that's the Beatitudes, and those who don't, that's the woes. His point was that there are only two kingdoms in the world, His kingdom and Satan's kingdom. And every person, let me make it personal, “You belong to one of those two kingdoms as you sit there today.” You're either in Jesus' kingdom or you're in Satan's kingdom—that's what the Lord taught. And the Beatitudes help us know which kingdom we're actually in. If they describe you, Jesus says you're in His kingdom. If the opposite describes you, then Jesus says you're in Satan's kingdom.

So, just take this test with me. Which kingdom-characteristics best describes you? Look at verse 3, a Christian sees himself as an absolute spiritual “beggar.” If you're painfully aware of your spiritual bankruptcy, if you know you have nothing to offer God, and you have come to Him as a beggar, begging for His grace, then you're in Jesus' kingdom. On the other hand, if you think you have some personal merit or some personal goodness, you don't belong to Jesus. Verse 4, a true Christian weeps and “mourns” over his sin. An unbeliever doesn't mourn over his sin, but frankly takes it lightly, denying it, excusing it, justifying it, at times, even laughing about it. Verse 5, a true Christian is “gentle,” meaning he submits to God, and he is gentle and gracious with people. A person in Satan's kingdom is proud, harsh, self-assertive. Verse 6, a Christian longs for real holiness and “righteousness” in heart and life. An unbeliever doesn't care about righteousness at all or sees himself as already having achieved it by his own efforts. Verse 7, a Christian actively expresses “mercy” toward others, while the non-Christian is brutal and unforgiving, both in how he thinks and acts toward others. Verse 8, a person who belongs to

Jesus' spiritual kingdom is “pure in heart,” morally clean in their entire inner person. He was cleansed at salvation, continues daily to repent and seek forgiveness, and to pursue real heart change. On the other hand, an unbeliever's heart is always dirty. Verse 9, a true Christian tries to end the conflict in all of his relationships. Unbelievers, on the other hand, create conflict or, at least, tolerate it in their relationships. Verse 10, a true Christian is often ridiculed to his face, or at least, behind his back and even “persecuted” because of his faith in life. An unbeliever lives and acts just like other unbelievers, so they all accept his behavior and may even like him.

So there's the test. This is Jesus' test. Which kingdom do you belong to? Jesus says those who manifest these qualities are in his spiritual kingdom and are blessed, and those who don't, who still belong to Satan's kingdom, and, on them, Jesus pronounces impending judgment. So the Beatitudes then are a test of genuine salvation. They're a mirror—look at them and look at yourself in the mirror.

Thirdly, the Beatitudes serve as “A Textbook for Kingdom Living,” a textbook for kingdom living. Jesus addressed the Beatitudes, in this entire sermon, to His disciples. He addressed it to The Twelve that He had just chosen earlier that morning, and to all of those who were His true followers—those who had already entered His spiritual kingdom by grace alone. And He intended these Beatitudes to teach us, who are now His, how we should live in His spiritual kingdom right now. You see, the Sermon on the Mount is not, as classic dispensationalists taught, solely for the future millennial kingdom of Jesus; this sermon is not just for the thousand years when Jesus reigns on this planet. Think about it, we don't need it then because then we'll be perfect. And many of the themes in this sermon simply won't apply. We won't need to be told to guard our speech or to control our anger. We won't be told not to lust or commit adultery. We won't be tempted to break our vows or lie. No, this sermon is for right now! It's for all whom

God has forgiven and reconciled to Himself through the death of His Son, those who've repented of their sins, who've put their complete confidence in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Every Christian already displays these eight qualities to some extent. But in our Lord's words here, there is also an implied command for us to continue to pursue them. It's like what Paul says (Right?), "Excel still more."

So, here's how we should live today in Jesus' kingdom. If you're a Christian, here's how you should live. Verse 3, you should pursue being "poor in spirit." We are spiritually bankrupt, we know we're spiritually bankrupt, that's how we got in. But we must consistently be aware of that poverty, begging God, daily, to continue to show us His grace. In other words, don't ever get to a place where you think you deserve what you get from Jesus. Verse 4, we should be those who increasingly "mourn" our own personal sin and the presence and power of sin throughout this fallen world. And we should "mourn," that's the word here, we should mourn like those who've lost a loved one in death. Verse 5, we should be increasingly "gentle," constantly submitting ourselves to the will and word of God, and then treating the people around us with a humble, gracious, and gentle spirit. Verse 6, we should "hunger (more) and thirst (more) for righteousness." We're to be marked by a growing desire, not only to have the righteous standing before God by grace alone, but also to have a righteous character and righteous conduct like that of our Lord. Verse 7, we're to be increasingly "merciful." We're to respond to the sins of others by extending forgiveness and pursuing reconciliation. And we're to respond to the misery and need of the people around us who are suffering with compassion, heartfelt compassion, and practical help whenever we can. Verse 8, we're to be the "pure in heart." We're to respond to our sin as believers with ongoing confession and repentance and the practice of putting those things off. We're to be putting off sin and pursuing holiness. Verse 9, we're to be increasingly

“peacemakers,” pursuing peace between sinners and God by praying for their salvation and sharing the Gospel with them, pursuing peace between ourselves and others where there's conflict, and pursuing peace between others who are locked in conflict. Verse 12, we're to be increasingly those who “rejoice and are glad” when we are insulted and persecuted because of Jesus and righteousness. You see, once we've entered Jesus' spiritual kingdom, and we do that by grace alone by faith alone in Christ alone, once we've entered His kingdom, the Beatitudes and this entire sermon serve as a textbook for kingdom living, right here, right now.

There's one final use of the Beatitudes that's important to note, and that is as “A Testimony to Our Future.” The Beatitudes acknowledge that, by God's grace, we can begin to live like kingdom citizens right now. However, because of our sin, our fallenness, our flesh that remains, we can never manifest these qualities in their fullness until we're glorified, until we're in Christ's presence. Although we live in Jesus' spiritual kingdom today, we're still not all that the Lord died to make us. I mean, think about it, in this life, we're consistently spiritual beggars who consistently find ourselves mourning over our sin. We hunger and thirst for righteousness, which we increasingly have, but we never have all that we hunger and thirst for. And our purity, while we pursue it wholeheartedly, is often stained with sin. So to encourage us, Jesus adds to each of these Beatitudes an amazing promise. And he intends these eight promises to give us great hope!

So Christian, have hope. This is what Jesus wanted you to find comfort and hope in. First of all, notice verse 3 and verse 10, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus says to you, “If these qualities describe you, be encouraged, you're in my kingdom today, and you'll be in my literal future kingdom as well. You can have assurance. You're really mine, for yours is ‘the kingdom of heaven.’ You're going to be there; you're there now, and you'll be there in the future.”

Verse 4, “they shall be comforted.” If you mourn and are broken over your sin before God, in the future, He's going to perfectly comfort you. How? He's going to remove every possibility of sin forever, and you'll never mourn over your sin again.

Verse 5, “they shall inherit the earth.” You already belong to Jesus' spiritual kingdom, and in the future, someday, you'll inherit your place on the new earth forever. Verse 6, “they shall be satisfied.” One day, your desire for righteousness is going to be fully satisfied. You're going to be like Jesus Christ. Verse 7, “they shall receive mercy.” When we stand before God at the judgment, listen, we will never experience the terror of God's justice. Instead, He will treat us with mercy. Why? Because Jesus got the justice my sin deserved. Verse 8, “they shall see God.” With our own eyes, we will see the glorified body of Jesus Christ, and whatever other physical manifestation God chooses to display Himself. And that vision of God, listen, it'll be the most satisfying thing you have ever experienced. It will enthrall you and captivate you forever. Nothing that thrills you here will come close to what you will experience forever in the presence of God. Verse 9 says, “they shall be called sons of God.” When we stand before God, He will put His great arm around us, and He will declare to the angels and to all humanity that He has adopted me, and He's adopted you! He'll call you “His son.” He'll call you “His daughter,” because you really are and you will be forever!

Christian, there's a list for giving thanks to God. You belong to Jesus' kingdom now and forever. He's going to wipe away every tear you've ever cried over sin and remove the possibility of sin from you forever. He's promised you an inheritance in the new heavens and the new earth. One day, you will enjoy comprehensive righteousness, and in the judgment, you'll know only God's mercy, and you will see God. And God will call you His son or His daughter, and He will love

you forever like He loves His own Son. All of those amazing promises are ours, solely because Jesus died in our place.

And in the Lord's Table, we give thanks to God for the death of Jesus and for all of those blessings that He purchased on our behalf. As the men come to serve us, take a moment and prepare your heart. Confess your sin. Thank God for these amazing promises!