

# The Gospel of the Kingdom, Pt 9

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## Intro

I love God's sense of humor. I know you all know that one of the things I swore I wouldn't do after becoming a pastor was Preach. And here I am preaching for the second week in a row. If you didn't believe in miracles before, you are witnessing one right now.

I promise you I will do my best to provide a better message than I did last week.

## Sermon on the Mount

As we learned last week, the Sermon on the Mount was the first, longest and probably the most influential of Jesus' teachings. These teachings spread over 3 chapters in Matthew 5-7.

We learned we are to be perfect, but not in the means of being sinless or having moral perfection. Instead, we need to be complete, whole and mature, or in other words, we need to be all that God wants us to be. We know, in this life on earth, we will never obtain that, but it is what challenges us, even encourages us to greater achievements for the Lord.

## The Beatitudes

Who remembers what *Beatitude* means?

Blessings, that's right. Anything else? We also know other definitions include divine joy or happiness.

Last week we covered the first four Blessings, those that deal with Personal Qualities. Humility, Remorse, Self-Control, and Desires for Righteousness.

This week we will cover the remaining Blessings. I would say in today's world, we really need to focus on these to win back the ground lost to Satan.

## The Beatitudes – Social Qualities

The Beatitudes for social qualities; mercifulness toward others, purity of heart or reverence for personality, peacemaking or solicitude for others, self-sacrificing loyalty to righteousness. These are the sources of social rest.

The blessings of the kingdom are social as well as individual.

***7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.***

If you are blessed with sorrow for your own failings (the second beatitude) and with right relationships (the fourth beatitude), you will not find it difficult to show mercy to others.

It is much easier for us to show mercy when we have experienced similar situations and have had mercy shown to us.

What is mercy? Mercy consists of treating people better than they deserve from us. Forgiveness is a type of mercy. After all, Mercy is what was behind Christ coming to earth – His life, death, and resurrection.

Nothing is closer to imitating God than when we show mercy. Showing mercy is probably the one act that delights God more than anything else. It is very obvious we don't deserve the mercy God shows us, but that is the whole point, giving mercy when it is not deserved.

There was someone in my life that hurt me like no person should ever do to another. It took me a long time to forgive them for all they put me through; and I had to do it more than once. But it says in the Bible if we don't forgive, God can't forgive us (Matthew 6:15). This is showing mercy, they may not deserve it, but we are called to do it anyway. We don't deserve God's mercy, but I am ever so thankful He gives it.

***8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.***

The pure at heart are those made clean through the Spirit and the Word. Jesus' description can have two meanings: Inner moral purity and a heart solely devoted to God.

To have a pure heart means no hidden agendas, to not be a hypocrite, to not hold ill will towards others.

Purity of heart arises not from perfection of our will, but from reception of God's Grace.

Our blessing for a pure heart is our ability to see God. Those that are blinded by sin (2 Corinthians 4:4) cannot see God. Those with a pure heart can see God in Nature, Scripture, and in their Church Family.

My happy place is the beach. When I am there I feel like I am sitting in God's backyard. To see the waves ebb and flow, all of the different sea creatures. The multitudes of seashells in every shape, size, and color. Who else could create such beauty?

***<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.***

Peacemakers receive this honor because they participate in the same mission as Christ, by sharing the Gospel with the lost.

This beatitude takes every Christian into the task of conflict resolution. Conflicts arise whenever people have differences of opinion. In a fallen world, the tendency is to ignore conflict or suppress it by using force, threat, or intimidation. We see this unfolding today in the war between Israel and Hamas. In our own country where people don't **want** to hear the Word of God, so they make up new rules to ignore the truth.

In God's kingdom, it is a blessing to bring people together who are in conflict. Only then is it possible to resolve the conflict and restore the relationships.

The result of conflict resolution is peace, and peacemakers will be called "**children of God.**" They will reflect the divine character in their actions. God is the God of peace (1 Thessalonians 5:16) and we show ourselves to be his children when we seek to make peace in the workplace, in the community, in our homes, and in the whole world.

I know I don't like to deal with conflict, but my years in corporate America taught me how to try and diffuse various situations. Not an easy task, especially when dealing with upper and executive management. But it is necessary for things to work together.

My son Ryan is one of those Peacemakers and it seems to come easily to him. As a little boy he never liked to hear anyone arguing. He always stepped in to calm the situation. He wanted to fix things, so everyone was happy.

***<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

This beatitude can seem negative. The previous ones focused on positive traits.

Jesus is talking about the blessing of being persecuted for doing what is right. The reality is, in a fallen world if we demonstrate genuine righteousness, we will find many will reject us.

When we put in a honest effort to be a Christian and to live the life of a Christian others will persecute and revile us. When this happens, we are to consider this as a blessing. It is evidence that we are the children of God, and that He will defend us.

Paul tells us:

***“Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”***

***2 Tim 3:12.***

This is further illustrated in the following:

***<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***

Jesus reminds us here that while we may suffer persecution in our pursuit of Him and righteousness, the reward, in the end, is the Kingdom of Heaven (Rev. 7:16-17). Those around us may mock us, hurl insults at us, or make false accusations against us, but as v12 clearly states:

***<sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***

We aren't the first to have this happen, and we surely won't be the last.

For example, there are times as Pastors when we preach, someone takes offense. In most cases it's not because of what was said, but more because the Holy Spirit is convicting that person of what is being taught. And yet, we end up being the ones that suffer the accusations.

## Conclusion

The Beatitudes provide a great roadmap to help us live the life we are called to live. It also shows us just how far we are from God. But, with the grace of God and as followers of Christ, it makes it possible for us to live these out to the best of our ability.

Be encouraged that in Christ we are blessed, and He reminds us in these verses that living a blessed life in Christ is quite different from what the world defines as being blessed.