

## Lesson 238

# The Sermon on the Mount:

## The Character of the Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven

### Story Elements



- **Text:** Matthew 5:3-16 (also Luke 6:20-49)
- **Setting:** circa AD 28, atop a mountain somewhere near the sea of Galilee.
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, and many disciples
- **Plot:** Jesus preaches the Sermon on the Mount, in which he teaches about life in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- **Key word(s):** “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” – A word that means happy, blessed, or fortunate; we get our term *beatitudes* from the Latin *beatus*, which means blessed or happy.
- **Climax:** **Matthew 5:10** *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* This verse is the climax because it brings everything to a head: those who live for the Kingdom of Heaven will not only suffer *in* this world but will suffer **at the hands** of this world.

## The Inward Character of the Christian

1. The first section of the Sermon on the Mount is famously known as the Beatitudes – the state of blessedness.
  - (a) In the beatitudes, Jesus is not encouraging the poor and downtrodden by telling them that “everything works out in the end” – rather he is describing the character of the Christian. We know this because near the end of this section Jesus says, *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for \_\_\_\_\_ sake.*
  - (b) To properly understand the beatitudes, we should view them as spiritual conditions that have tangible influence.
2. (v 3) He begins with *the poor in spirit*. These are they who see themselves as destitute of any \_\_\_\_\_ thing. The Lord rebuked the church of the Laodiceans because their attitude was “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” But the reality was, they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (Rev. 3:17)
  - ➔ Those who acknowledge their spiritual need are made to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Spurgeon notes, “Those who are of no account in their own eyes are the blood royal of the universe.”<sup>1</sup>
3. (v 4) *They that mourn* – These are the ones that \_\_\_\_\_ over their own sins, the sins of others, and the effects of sin on the world. **Ezekiel 9:4** *And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.*
  - (a) Their blessedness is the eternal and lasting comfort they receive when all sin and its effects are gone – progressively in our individual sanctification and ultimately in the next life. (cf. Rev. 21:4)
4. (v 5) *The meek* - Matthew Henry explains it this way: the meek “are *gentle towards all men* (Tit. 3:2); who can bear provocation without being \_\_\_\_\_ by it; ...*They are the meek, who are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified.*”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *An Exposition of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2015) 21.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1629.

→ They are blessed in that *they shall inherit the earth* – amazing contrast to the world which desires to conquer through carnal might!

5. (v 6) *They which do hunger and thirst after righteousness* – “He means those who desire above all things to be entirely conformed to the mind of God. They long not so much to be rich, or wealthy, or learned, as to be \_\_\_\_\_.”<sup>3</sup>

→ They will be blessed in waiting for when they awake in the likeness of their Savior. **Psalm 17:15** *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.*

6. (v 7) *The merciful* – These are they that forgive because they are \_\_\_\_\_; “They pity all who are suffering either from sin or sorrow, and are tenderly desirous to make their sufferings less.”<sup>4</sup>

(a) They are blessed in the Day for which they are *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*. (Jude 21) “What we are to others, God will be to us.”<sup>5</sup>

7. (v 8) *The pure in heart* – Here the Savior draws a distinction between legalistic righteousness and true righteousness: the pure in heart are not content with mere outward conformity but have inward \_\_\_\_\_.

→ They are blessed in knowing the Day is coming when *they shall see God*. **Heb. 12:14** *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

8. (v 9) *The peacemakers* – These are they that “are not only passively peaceful, like the meek, who keep the peace; but actively peaceful by endeavoring to end wars and contentions, and so *make peace*.”<sup>6</sup>

→ They are blessed in knowing they are like their Heavenly Father, who is the God of peace.

9. (v 10) *They which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake* – this final beatitude is a fitting conclusion because it describes how this world treats those who seek to live according to the previous 7 beatitudes. **2 Tim. 3:12** *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*

→ This final beatitude ends with the same blessing as the first: *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. Our Lord adds a further explanation in vv 11, 12, assuring the reviled believer that they should consider themselves in \_\_\_\_\_ *for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

---

## The Outward Influence of Christian Character

10. Those whose lives embody the beatitudes have an effect on the world around them. They become...

(a) (v 13) *the salt of the earth* – the Christian’s life should be that which adds a \_\_\_\_\_ effect on their society and an enhancing enjoyment of life in a sin-cursed world.

(b) (v 14-16) *the light of the world* – likewise the Christian’s life should be light in a sin-darkened world.

APPLICATION → “...we are meant to learn from these two figures, that there must be something marked, distinct, and peculiar about our character, if we are true Christians...Have we grace? Then it must be \_\_\_\_\_. Have we the Spirit? Then there must be *fruit*. Have we any saving religion? Then there must be a difference of habits, tastes, and turn of mind, between us and those who think only of the world.”<sup>7</sup>

**Answer Key:** Key word(s): “blessed” • 1. a) my • 2. good • 3. grieve • 4. inflamed • 5. holy • 6. forgiven • 7. transformation • 9. → good company • 10. a) preserving; → seen

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel; Volume One, Matthew, Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 33.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Spurgeon, 22.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ryle, 36.