

**A True Blessing**  
(Matthew 5:3-12)

**Introduction:**

- I. Days like Christmas and yesterday are times when we especially thank God for the many blessings he has given us.
  - a. We use the term “blessing” in many ways.
    - i. We talk about talents and abilities.
    - ii. We talk about physical and material blessings.
    - iii. We talk about loved ones.
  - b. What do all of these things have in common?
    - i. They give us satisfaction and happiness.
    - ii. There is a problem, though, if we rest our happiness only on these things.
      1. With age, we are less able to do the things we did when we were younger, and our talents become more difficult to use.
      2. Material things can be lost in a fire or weather disaster, or stolen from us.
      3. Loved ones pass away, and we have no choice but to let them go.
    - iii. Our happiness needs to be rooted in something that does not deteriorate with age, something that cannot be destroyed or stolen, and something that will never die. That is the secret to lifelong happiness.
      1. Read Matthew 5:3-12.
        - a. The poor in spirit are blessed because the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
        - b. The mourners are blessed because they will be comforted.
        - c. The meek are blessed because they will inherit the earth.
        - d. Those who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness are blessed because they will be filled to satisfaction.
        - e. The merciful are blessed because they will receive mercy.
        - f. The pure in heart are blessed because they will see God.
        - g. The peacemakers are blessed because they will be called God’s children.
        - h. Those who are persecuted are blessed because the kingdom of heaven is theirs. They rejoice because they are persecuted like the prophets, priests, apostles, Christians, and Christ himself, and their reward is great.
      2. All eight of these have something in common as well. The reasons for happiness cannot be taken away by men. This happiness is given by God to anyone and everyone who wants to become a Christian.
        - a. Notice that I said everyone who *wants* to be a Christian. Some people would turn away from their sins and follow Christ because of their parents or their spouse. This happiness only comes to you if you yourself want to be a Christian. This is how to receive the true blessing.

## Discussion:

### I. Poor in Spirit.

- a. This is not referring to a depressed person. It is not referring to someone who does not have the Holy Spirit.
- b. This refers to a person who knows they do not have spiritual riches laid up in heaven and feels impoverished by that thought. They feel bad about not being stronger spiritually. They want to get better, and they will work to get better. As a result, theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
  - i. Isaiah 66:1-2
    1. This is the one to whom the Lord will look: the one who is humble and contrite in spirit.
      - a. Have you ever wondered what it means to be contrite? The man in the story of the good Samaritan who was beaten, robbed, and left for dead is an example of a contrite person.
      - b. Paul said, "I discipline my body." (I Corinthians 9:27)
        - i. The word "discipline" does not mean that he gave himself "time out" when he did something wrong.
        - ii. This word literally means "to blacken the eye." In other words, Paul (at least metaphorically) beat himself black and blue in order to discipline his body. He was contrite in spirit.
    2. You may think, "How could someone feel this way and be happy?"
      - a. That is where God comes in. If we are never satisfied with our spiritual lives, but try harder every day, and weary ourselves with discipline, *ours* will be the kingdom of heaven.
        - i. The way "kingdom of heaven" is used here and in verse 10 can be interpreted two ways: heaven, and the church. The NT in several places refers to the church as the kingdom of heaven.
          1. If you interpret this as "heaven," then all of this hard work will be rewarded by heaven at the end.
          2. If, however, you interpret this as "the church," then for you to even become a member of the church, you must be poor in spirit and willing to suffer persecution for being a Christian.
          3. I believe they both apply. How? From Pentecost until Judgment, the only ones to go to heaven will be those who are part of the church. That is, the kingdom of heaven here will become the kingdom of heaven there.

4. Therefore, for you to be a Christian, for you to be able to have a chance at heaven, you must never be satisfied with your spiritual life, and you must work to make it better.

## II. Those Who Mourn.

- a. This is a spiritual mourning, not a physical one. Granted, God will comfort us at the loss of loved ones, but this is talking about remorse for spiritual things.
- b. Those who mourn at the spiritual death of Christians, those who mourn because the church is not perfect, those who do not know the good news of God and so they mourn, these are the ones that will be comforted.
  - i. Isaiah 61:1-3 places the responsibility on the prophet to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor...to comfort those who mourn.
  - ii. Today, it is our responsibility to do the same thing. We must teach the gospel so that those who have not heard it may be able to rejoice with us in heaven at the end of the age.

## III. Those Who Are Meek

- a. Psalm 37:10-11 – The meek will not be destroyed, but will inherit the earth. They will be preserved and protected. God will not leave us.
- b. James 4:6 and 10 follow along these lines as well. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he will exalt you. That is another way Christians receive happiness and are blessed.
- c. Luke 14:7-11

## IV. Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

- a. When you come to worship, how do you feel about it? Do you come out of habit? Do you come somewhat reluctantly? Or do you hunger and thirst for it? Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:48) and the water that will cause a man to never thirst again (4:14). If you are hungry for the gospel you will be filled by it. Therefore you have reason to rejoice.

## V. The Merciful

- a. We often quote the golden rule: Treat others the way you want to be treated. God uses a rule similar to that. The way you treat others is the way he treats you. Look at examples like those who visited the sick, imprisoned, fed the hungry, etc. in Matthew 25. Also look at Psalm 41:1 – the one who considers the poor will be delivered on the day of trouble. God will treat you how you treat others.
- b. The mercy we show will be shown to us as well. That is part of the Christian's blessings as well.

## VI. The following two, the pure in heart and the peacemakers, are self-explanatory. Happiness comes to those who are pure and live peaceably, because they will be associated with God, and ultimately they will see God.

## VII. We already discussed verses 10-12 some regarding the kingdom of God being available to those who are willing to suffer for it. This brings happiness to them and is a blessing to them.

## **Conclusion:**

- I. These blessings are not things that man can take away. God will not even take them away. The only way to lose them is to give them away of your own accord. How do you give away this happiness?
  - a. Act like you don't need God. Don't study your Bible, and don't pray. You are spiritually rich already.
  - b. Don't mourn over lost souls and imperfections of the church. You're too busy for that.
  - c. Flaunt your Christianity before others that they may see your good works and glorify you.
  - d. You know everything about Christ and the gospel, so fill your other hungers and thirsts. You might as well stop coming to Bible class and worship services.
  - e. Expect others to treat you as you treat them. (They won't always.)
  - f. Allow your heart to become clouded with sins and doubt. Hide from God. Do not dare to pray to him.
  - g. Argue with everyone everywhere. Always try to get what you want from everyone.
  - h. This is a free country. You do not have to stand up for Christ if you do not want to. Besides, my image/career/friendship is more important.
- II. Do you see how easy it can be to give away true happiness? Do you see why so many people have all the money in the world and the spotlight is on them, and yet they are so unhappy? How much money does it cost to receive this happiness? None.
- III. It will cost you your life, though. You will have to sacrifice your pride and be dependent on God and know that you absolutely can not get by without him. You will have to do your part to lift up the hands that are falling in the church, to help those who are spiritually sick, and to strengthen the church. We talked about letting Christ live in you this past Wednesday night, how we will be saved by the life he lives in us. It's *his* life; let him live it. Be hungry for the gospel, that you may be able to fill your spiritual needs, but also take even more food with you, because you may meet someone on the road who is hungry and does not have that food. (i.e. Come to Bible class, even if you think you know everything. We need your input, your help teaching, and you need to gain knowledge enough to teach others.) Do good things without wanting anything in return. Realize that what you want is not always best for everyone. Take care of each other.
- IV. I think this is a good list of new year's resolutions for everyone. We can all get better at following Christ. That is what being poor in spirit is all about.
- V. If you need to turn your life over to God, we are waiting for you and praying for you that you will make that decision. What better time is there than now? There are those here today who have not been baptized into Christ. Whether it is out of a lack of knowledge (we will study with you), or a pride issue (i.e. I do not want to be expected to work with the church), do not let that stop you. Get rid of that pride. If you would like, we will study with you and clear up any questions you may have.
- VI. If you need support from us, come to us. We will help you and strengthen you. We will pray for you. That is why we are here as a group. Do not wait any longer. Make things right today, before it is too late. If you want to do so now, we will stand and sing a song to encourage you. Turn your life over to God. Do not gamble with your eternity. Make it right now, as we stand and sing.