

An Upside Down Kingdom

The Beatitudes introduce the “Sermon on the Mount” – Matthew 5-7

They are the underlying principles on which Christ builds His description of the Kingdom of Heaven that follows in these chapters, and are to be the defining characteristics of His disciples, the citizens of this Kingdom

They are exemplified perfectly in the life of Christ (Table – “Jesus’ Example”)

They are the opposite of the standards of this world (Table – “Modern Society’s Position”) and even of many religious people (Table – “Pharisee’s Position”)

They are the blueprint for:

- Individual living as a Disciple of Christ
- The radical community of disciples (the Church)
- The transformation of society
- The coming Kingdom of God on earth

The application of each Beatitude is personal (our relationship with God and others) and also social (our interaction with our society).

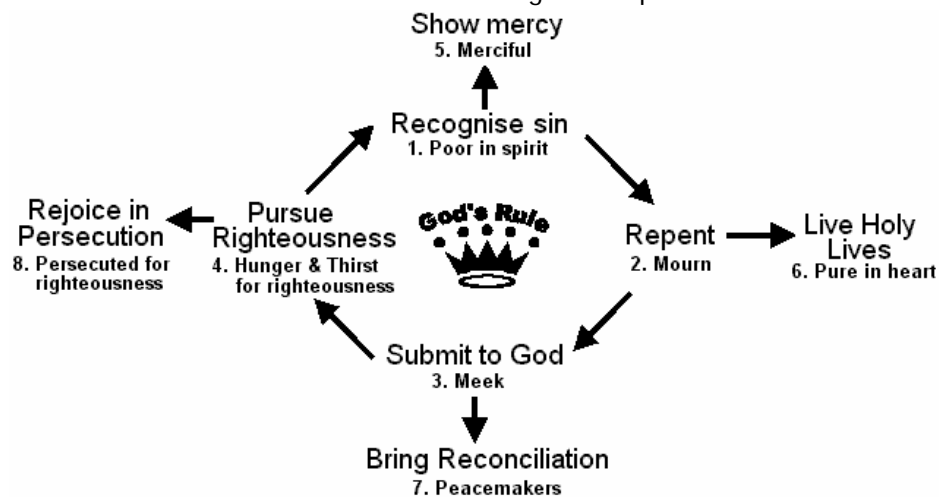
They call us to:

See ourselves through God’s eyes

- Be transformed through God’s power

See our world through God’s eyes

- Become “transformers” through God’s power



For Now And A Time To Be

The Beatitudes are inextricably linked with the Kingdom they describe. Their fulfilment will not be complete until the Kingdom of God is revealed in its fullness at the end of the age – at that time these principles will be the norm. For now, however, just as our lives should be lived as the citizens of God’s Kingdom, and as His Kingdom is revealed in our lives, these principles should define our attitudes and lifestyle.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

Defining The Terms

Beatitude – Simply means “great blessing”

Blessed

- The word “blessed” means more than just “happy” (the word used in some English translations). The origins of the word “happy” come from the Middle English word “hap” meaning “luck”!
- The Greek word translated as “blessed” is *Makarios* and really means “fully satisfied” or without any needs. In our language we would probably describe this as fulfilment or contentment.

“Makarios is the one who is in the world yet independent of the world; his satisfaction comes from God and not from favourable circumstances.”

(Zodhiates – The Complete Word Study New Testament, AMG)

The Path to Blessing

The first 4 beatitudes explain how you can come to know blessedness by being a true citizen of the Kingdom. This process first happens at conversion, but becomes continual in the life of a disciple. The following 4 steps are central to what it means to be completely under the rule of God.

1. **Recognise your spiritual poverty (your sin) (v3)**
2. **Mourn for your sin and repent (v4)**
3. **Submit in meekness to God’s plan for you (v5)**
4. **Pursue His righteousness passionately (v6)**

The remaining beatitudes paint a picture of the results in the life of the person who is truly under God’s rule.

5. **Showing mercy to others (v7)**
6. **Holy living from a pure heart (v8)**
7. **Bringing peace (v9)**
8. **Persecution (v10)**

A Special Explanation (vv 11&12)

The eighth beatitude carries a special extra 2-verse explanation. Perhaps this is because the suggestion that a person who is undergoing persecution can know true joy and fulfilment is so radical and paradoxical. Jesus expands in vv 11&12 to make 2 points:

- v 11** emphasises the inevitability of persecution – all citizens of the Kingdom will know persecution in actions or insults or slander
- v 12** explains how persecution can bring fulfilment – because of our reward in Heaven. We can actually rejoice because of this!

GROUVP	PROMISE	PHARISEE'S POSITION	MODERN SOCIETY'S POSITION	APPLICATION - PERSONAL	APPLICATION - SOCIAL	JESUS' EXAMPLE	FOR FURTHER STUDY	KEY WORDS
The poor in spirit (v 3)	Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven	Blessed are those with many righteous acts for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven	Blessed are the self-confident for they will have power	Do we, in humility, recognise our sin & complete dependence on God?	Do we reach out to the poor and outcast or disadvantaged?	John 5:19 expresses dependence on His Father Luke 5:32 calls sinners	Isaiah 64:6 Psalm 127:1 Zechariah 4:6 I Peter 5:5b-6 Col 3:12	HUMILITY
Those who Mourn (v 4)	They will be comforted	Blessed are those who mourn, for their piety will not go unnoticed	Blessed are those who have fun for they will escape their inner doubts	Do we repent for sin in our own lives?	Are we moved by the sin of our society to action?	Mt 23:37-38 mourning for Jerusalem	James 4:9-10	REPENTANCE
The Meek (v 5)	They will inherit the earth	Blessed are those who can have confidence in their own deeds, for they are above condemnation	Blessed are the assertive for they will reach the top	Do we accept God's view of our lives and submit to His will?	Do we live as servants of others for the sake of Christ?	John 13:5 washes the disciples' feet	Mark 8:34 & 9:35 Romans 12:1-3 Gal 5:13 Col 3:12 II Pet 3:13 Rev 5:10	SUBMISSION / SERVICE
Those who hunger and thirst after Righteousness (v 6)	They will be filled	Blessed are those who work for righteousness, for they may achieve it	Blessed are those who hunger for pleasure – they've never had so much choice	Do we desire the righteousness of God above all in our live? We must examine every part!	Do we desire and work for social justice and right treatment of all people?	John 2:12-17 His zeal for God's temple Luke 4:18 – His mission statement	Psalms 139:23-24 Isaiah 55:1-2 Amos 5: 21-24	PRIORITIES
The merciful (v 7)	They will be shown mercy	Blessed are those who show mercy, for it's another good deed on their record	Blessed are those who have all they need, for they will avoid pity	Are we ready to forgive others without holding grudges?	Do we seek a merciful society that reaches out to those in need?	Luke 23:34 forgives even from the cross	Matt 6:12 Matt 18:21-35 James 2:12-13 Col 3:13	MERCY
The pure in heart (v 8)	They will see God	Blessed are the pure in deed, for they will please God	Blessed are the hard of heart, for they will avoid hurt	Are we being transformed daily into Christ's likeness, and are we seeking only Him?	Are we avoiding the polluting influence of our society and working to make it one of greater purity?	John 8:46 none can accuse Him of sin I John 3:5 John's testimony to His purity	Psalms 24:3-6 Psalm 51:10 II Tim 2:20-22 Heb 12:14	HOLINESS
The peacemakers (v 9)	They will be called the sons of God	Blessed are those who live at peace, for they are safe from harm	Blessed are those who are sheltered, for they can avoid strife	Are we living at peace with God and with others and making every effort to bring His peace to others?	Do we as individuals / a church promote peace in relationships / society / the world?	Col 1:19-20 He made peace through His blood shed on the cross	Rom 5:1-2 Rom 12:17-19 II Cor 5:19-20	RECONCILIATION
Those who are persecuted (vv 10-12)	Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven	Blessed are those who live in the Kingdom of Heaven, for they shall avoid suffering	Blessed are the tolerant, for they never rock the boat	Are we experiencing suffering for Christ's sake? If so, are we trusting Him through it?	Do we stand so firm for Christ and His righteousness that our world notices and reacts?	I Peter 2:21-24 He suffered unjustly, and so bore our sins	Rom 5:3-5 Heb 11:32-40 James 5:7-11 I Pet 2:19-25	PERSECUTION