

Beatitudes

Part 4.

Blessed are the Merciful
Blessed are the Pure in Heart

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Text: Matt 5:1-12 (ESV)

Matt 5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Traits of Happy Kingdom Citizens

1. Poor in Spirit
2. Mourn
3. Meek
 - *Jesus skips the expected accolades of Jewish thinking and went straight to the heart of man. Inner attitudes.*
4. Hunger and Thirst for [God's] righteousness
 - *Beatitudes 1-3 lead up to #4 where the spiritually hungry are fed.*
 - *Beatitudes 5-7 flow out of #4. Being filled, new traits begin to emerge. Traits that begin to reach out to others and make kingdom impact.*
5. Merciful
6. Pure in heart
7. Peacemakers
8. Enduring persecution

"A Christian IS something before he DOES something"

Messiah's Mission: Judgment

- John's message was repentance and the messiah will bring judgment

Matt 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 9 And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. *(don't count on your pedigree)*

10 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

- The axe was starting to fall. Judgment begins with destroying the false pretenses held so dearly by the Jews.

What Sort of Kingdom?

- Various Jewish perspectives on the Messiah:
 - Pharisees: tradition, legalism, patriarchal obedience
 - Sadducees: focus on present, modernism, liberalism, progressivism
 - Essenes: separatist, purity by isolation
 - Zealots: political revolutionaries, military strength
- Common thread: they all focused on an earthly kingdom, which also required a focus on overthrowing Rome (albeit in different ways).
- Pilate asks Jesus if he was the king of the Jews. John 18:33

John 18:36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is not of this realm."

- Jesus discussed politics and civil matters almost never (and there was plenty to discuss!). He often took on the religious class to correct perversions of God's law.
- God's kingdom would be populated by the poor, mournful, humble, hungry, merciful, pure, peacemakers and persecuted.

Righteous on the Outside

- Beatitudes focused around the kingdom. How to enter and how to live.
- Jesus (and John the Baptist) dismantled the misconceptions regarding righteousness, the kingdom, and true greatness.
- In Jesus' day, Judaism has been mostly reduced to a superficial, external, ritualistic religion
- Jewish leaders trusting in their own achievements and credentials to get them into the kingdom.

Matt 23:27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.'

- The true issue? Your hearts are defiled.
- Matt 5:21-7 Jesus addresses actions, but first addresses the heart.

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Merciful

Matt 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

- What is Mercy?
- G1655 eleemon: compassionate, benevolently merciful involving thought and action. From G1656
- G1656 eleos: mercy, compassion
- A common definition is forgiveness. For example:
 - Parable of unforgiving servant. **Matt 18:33** And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’
 - **James 2:13** For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.
- The mercy and forgiveness shown to us at Calvary should be more than enough reason to be forgiving to any that offend us.
- But mercy is a much broader term. It encompasses genuine compassion that reaches out to help others.
- Jesus most likely means the broader application than just forgiveness.^g

Parable of Neighborly Samaritan

Luke 10:29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

- Jesus is not teaching an external, superficial show of piety. This is how to love.
- This is genuine mercy. Initiated by inner compassion (not self-serving motives) followed by an action of kindness. Mercy reaches out to others.
- Compassion, mercy, kindness all components of loving our neighbor

God's Manifold Mercies

Psalms 119:64 The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy; Teach me Your statutes.

Gen 32:10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies...

2 Sam 24:14 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Neh 9:19 Yet in Your manifold mercies You did not forsake them in the wilderness.

Psalms 69:13 But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.

Lam 3:22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.

H2617 hesed: kindness, lovingkindness, mercy, goodness, faithfulness, love

The Upward Spiral

- You've heard of the downward spiral. A bad event makes the situation worse, which leads to another bad event, which makes the situation worse...
- Sin is proven to lead people on downward spirals.
- God is the inventor of the upward spiral. God shows mercy through salvation and gift of the Holy Spirit. That leads us to show mercy to others, which leads God to show more mercy so that we show more mercy to others...

Matt 5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."

2 Sam 22:25 Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness in His eyes. 26 "With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;...

Summary

- God is a god of mercy and THE source of mercy
 - **Eph 2:4** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
 - Being merciful is not how to be saved. We are saved by grace because God is rich in mercy, even when we were spiritually dead.
- God grants mercy so we can also be merciful.
 - Parable of unforgiving servant Matt 18:21-35
 - **Luke 6:36** Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.
 - Our mercy flows out of God's mercy
- Mercy encompasses both forgiveness and compassion/kindness towards others.
- Merciful living is a key to happiness in God's kingdom.
 - **Prov 11:17** The merciful man does good for his own soul, But he who is cruel troubles his own flesh.
 - **Matt 5:7** "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." ¹²

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Pure in Heart

Matt 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

- God set the ultimate standard: Purity in heart.
- Pure-G2513 katharos: clean, pure, clear, unsoiled, unalloyed
- Heart-G2588 kardia: heart, the seat and center of human life. Often refers to the mind, thoughts, affections, motives.
- Being at the center, the condition of the heart is of utmost importance.

Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Matt 12:34...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

- The issues of thinking, feeling and acting all originate in the heart.
- That's why the bible address the heart over 800 times!

Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

- Without holiness and purity, no one will see God.

Who can stand in his holy place?

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, 2 for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. 3 Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. 5 He will receive blessing from the LORD and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

- Jesus may be summarizing Psalm 24:3-5 the 6th beatitude.
- The purity issue seems to revolve around loving the truth.
 - Vs 4...to what is false and does not swear deceitfully
- God's purity is the standard, not relative morality like the Pharisee.
 - Luke 18:11...God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

Singleness of Heart

- One definition of purity is unalloyed or not mixed with other elements.
 - E.g. Pure gold or pure silver
- A pure heart also means it is wholly devoted, not divided.

Psa 119:10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! (also Psalm 9, 86, 138)

- Maybe this is why David is called a man after God's heart

Jer 32:38 And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 39 I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.

Matt 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...24 No one can serve two masters...

- Singleness of heart is extremely important to God. Don't try to serve 2 masters. James 4:4-5 refers to this as spiritual adultery
- All in or not at all.

The Problem: Sin Originates in the Heart

- **Gen 6:5** Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
 - **Jer 17:9** "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.
 - **Matt 15:18** But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.
 - The heart of man has always been the issue.
- 1 Sam 16:7**...For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
- Purify the heart → purify the person.

Heart Transformation

- How does a wicked heart become pure?
- Only God can transform the heart of man.

Jer 24:7 Then I will give them a heart to know Me, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart.

Ezek 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart...

- Beatitudes 1-4 layout the prerequisites to enter the kingdom and receive a pure heart.

Types of Purity

1. Positional purity granted to us at salvation. We are pure in status due to the sacrifice of Jesus on our behalf.
2. Practical (applied) purity is how we live. As the Holy Spirit directs our steps, we make better choices.

Practical Purity

- Practical purity will be a struggle as long as we are in the flesh. (remember Paul's struggle with the flesh Rom 7)
- What about when we fail?
 1. Confess your sin, don't hide from it. **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
 - Consider David's recovery from lust, adultery and murder

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Practical Purity

2. Prepare ahead for the next battle

- Guard your heart. **Prov 4:23** Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
- Get your armor on! **Eph 6:11** Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

Pure in Heart Shall See God

Matt 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

- This is the ultimate reward: seeing God.
- Of all the “rewards” of the beatitudes, this one seems like the best.

1. *Theirs is the kingdom*

2. *Be comforted*

3. *Inherit the earth*

4. *Be satisfied*

5. *Be shown mercy*

6. *See God*

7. *Called sons of God*

8. *Theirs is the kingdom*

What does it mean to “see” God?

What did Jesus intend? Not entirely sure, but it could be one or more of the following levels.

5 Levels to Seeing God

1. Supernatural manifestations. Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Manoah, Gideon, Elijah, Mary, Joseph, etc.

2. God's attributes which can be perceived by all

Rom 1:19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

3. Enhanced spiritual sight

1 Cor 2:12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me...salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see.

5 Levels to Seeing God con't.

4. Watching and eagerly awaiting Jesus' return should be on the forefront of every Christian's mind.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (purifying hope!)

5. After seeing Christ, we also will see God enthroned.

Rev 22:3 No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. 4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

Summary

- God purifies those who come into the kingdom in beatitudes 1-4
- God calls all Christians to guard their hearts in practical purity
- God's call to a pure heart is a consistent theme through scripture

Psalm 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. 10 With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! 11 I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

- A pure heart means both:
 - Uncorrupted; 1 Pet 1:16 "...be holy for I am holy"
 - Be wholly devoted to God and His kingdom; not duplicative

Matt 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."