

# Matthew: The Life & Teaching of Jesus the Messiah

Lakewood Presbyterian Church

**Key Idea:** Far from addressing eight different, distinct groups, the Beatitudes describe eight character qualities of the same group of people, namely disciples.

## Lesson 12

Matt. 5:3

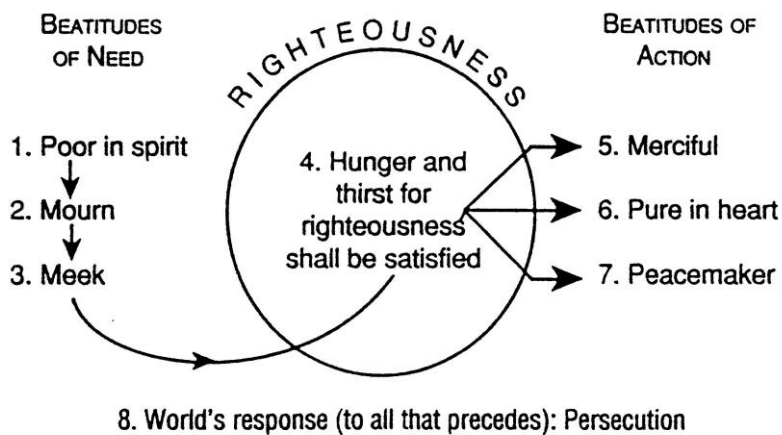
### The Beatitudes: The Poor in Spirit (11-9-25)

## I. The Beatitudes in Context

Last week we talked about the importance of context in unlocking the meaning of a given passages. What follows a particular verse is often just as important as that verse itself. The same is true with the Beatitudes, not only in that each beatitude represents a progression of thought from the one before, but because the Beatitudes as whole are intimately connected with the introduction (5:1-2) and to subsequent passages dealing with one's ministry as Salt and Light (5:13-16) and to Jesus' fulfillment of the Law (5:17-20).

Since the Introduction makes it clear that Jesus addresses his remarks primarily to disciples, it is reasonable to infer that the Beatitudes do not address eight different distinct groups, but rather either character qualities of the same group of people, those who already are following the Master. The Beatitudes' progression of thought tends to confirm this thesis, for the first three beatitudes describe a disciple's confession of spiritual needs, whereas the fourth show the resultant hunger of that need. The latter four beatitudes then set forth a disciple's active response to the promise that his hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied (Beatitudes 5-7), whereas the last beatitude describes the unsaved world's response to him. We might diagram this relationship as follows:

### RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BEATITUDES



So when Jesus comes to speak of Salt and Light, he is connecting the Beatitudes with how a disciple's character should influence the world about him. The ethical standard which enables one to be salt and light in a sin-darkened world is then logically taken up in Matthew 5:17 and following: God's Law right understood.

## II. What Is a “Beatitude” Anyway?

It is worth noting that the Sermon on the Mount began with beatitudes rather than imperatives (commands), so when Jesus does go on to make great demands upon his followers, these demands should be understood with the context of grace. Each beatitude, then, can be seen a c\_\_\_\_\_ (Blessed are the . . . ) and a p\_\_\_\_\_ (for they shall . . . ). For as the disciples have already been called out of the crowd to follow and learn from Jesus, so , so they are blessed, not because of what they do, but because they are called and thereby recipient of the promises. They have already responded to Jesus’ message (Matthew 4:17) which begins with a call to repent.

There are several clues which help us to understand just what a Beatitude is:

- A. Disciples are *makarios* which can be translated as h\_\_\_\_\_, b\_\_\_\_\_ or f\_\_\_\_\_.
1. Happiness and holiness are c\_\_\_\_\_.
  2. *Makarios* is the Lord’s objective j\_\_\_\_\_. As his disciple you are blessed whether or not you subjectively feel His blessing.
  3. Blessing entails both r\_\_\_\_\_ as well as p\_\_\_\_\_.
- B. The time frame of these blessings is both f\_\_\_\_\_ as well as p\_\_\_\_\_. How so?
1. Christ is K\_\_\_\_\_ even n\_\_\_\_\_, but we long for, and will see His reign and rule become manifest (Matthew 6:10).

John Stott writes: “The blessing promised, as an unearned free gift, is the gloriously comprehensive blessing of God’s rule, tasted bow and consummated later, including the inheritance of both earth and heaven, comfort, satisfaction and mercy, the vision and the sonship of God”

*The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, p.38.

## III. The Poor in Spirit (5:3)

Undoubtedly there has been a great deal of discussion and debate over Jesus’ remarks concerning the “poor.” Typically, critical scholars have pointed towards Luke’s Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20f.) and its omission of the word “in spirit” as grounds for an unqualified blessing upon the poor and oppressed as such. In their view, Matthew “spiritualizes” or “psychologizes” Jesus’ words so as to blunt their original force. The critics, however, are reading their romanticized or Marxist notions into the text from the standpoint of a comfortable suburban office and so do not reckon carefully with either the context of Matthew and Luke’s two sermons or the Old Testament background standing behind Jesus’ words.

### A. What are the characteristics of the spiritually impoverished?

1. The “poor in spirit” vs. the “poor” (Luke 6:20): Which is the correct reading? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. The OT background (Ps 34:6; Is.41:17-18) makes s\_\_\_\_\_ of what Jesus is getting at.
    - i. Poverty is characterized by t\_\_\_\_\_ d\_\_\_\_\_ on the Lord.
    - ii. Wealth in OT Israel tended to c\_\_\_\_\_
    - iii. To whom does the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment apply? \_\_\_\_\_
2. To be spiritually poor means to know one has n\_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Poverty of spirit is characteristic of God’s most e\_\_\_\_\_ servants.
    - Moses \_\_\_\_\_ (Ex.3:11) David \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Sa. 7:18)

- Isaiah \_\_\_\_\_ (Is.6:5) Peter \_\_\_\_\_ (Lk.5:8)
- Paul \_\_\_\_\_ (Rom. 7:18) \_\_\_\_\_ (I Co. 15:9)

b. Poor s\_\_\_\_\_ -i\_\_\_\_\_ is the key to e\_\_\_\_\_ d\_\_\_\_\_

1. They are characterized by the \_\_\_\_\_ (Ro. 3:19)
2. And put no c\_\_\_\_\_ in their ability o\_\_\_\_\_ (Is. 64:6)

c. The “rich” in spirit are the s\_\_\_\_\_ - d\_\_\_\_\_ (Rev.3:17)

Key Idea: *To be poor in spirit is the very antithesis of the world’s message of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-help, and self-expression.*

## B. What is the blessing Jesus promises? What is the promise of the Kingdom?

1. To be blessed means to be a\_\_\_\_\_ and f\_\_\_\_\_ by God.

a. The kingdom is given f\_\_\_\_\_ to the utterly un\_\_\_\_\_

b. The “kingdom” is both n\_\_\_\_\_ & n\_\_\_\_\_

How so: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Consider how the blessing is both n\_\_\_\_\_ and n\_\_\_\_\_ y\_\_\_\_\_

The Now:

(a) True c\_\_\_\_\_ (Ps 61:1-2; Lk. 12:32)

(b) True s\_\_\_\_\_ (6:25-34)

(c) True f\_\_\_\_\_

The Not Yet:

(a) True w\_\_\_\_\_ (6:19-20)

(b) True n\_\_\_\_\_ (Ja. 4:10; I Pe.5:5-7)

## C. How do I know if I am poor in spirit?

1. Recognize the m\_\_\_\_\_ of a counterfeit poverty of spirit.

a. True poverty of spirit is not natural d\_\_\_\_\_

b. It is not a false m\_\_\_\_\_

2. Recognize then the m\_\_\_\_\_ of a g\_\_\_\_\_ poverty of spirit.

a. You are not h\_\_\_\_\_ (I Co. 4:7; cf. Mk.10:17f)

b. Your eyes rest on C\_\_\_\_\_ a\_\_\_\_\_ (Jn. 3:14)

c. You abhor y\_\_\_\_\_ (not asceticism or self-pity)(Job 42:6)

d. You exalt God’s f\_\_\_\_\_ g\_\_\_\_\_ (I Ti. 1:14-15; Heb. 13:15)

3. How do I become poor in spirit? Understand the g\_\_\_\_\_ of God, the h\_\_\_\_\_ of God, and the g\_\_\_\_\_ of God.