



# The BEATITUDES

## 8-part Bible Study

Sundays 10:30am Aug-Sept 2024

### Part 1. Blessed are the **POOR IN SPIRIT**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

#### Just the Opposite

**List** what you have observed about the confusion over what constitutes a blessed life.

<b>True Blessings</b> often overlooked or despised	<b>False Blessings</b> often desired or coveted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BLESSING = something you receive or enjoy as a gift of God that wasn't entirely under your control to obtain or not.</li> <li>• CHILDREN Large family (USA average less than 2 children)</li> <li>• MARRIAGE Less than half of people (1<sup>st</sup> time in USA history) are married. Some stats say there are 86 divorces in USA every hour.</li> <li>• WORSHIP Only 30% of USA adults regularly attend religious services Sadly not all those statistics are necessarily for Christian services.</li> <li>• REST How many when given the opportunity take a day of rest for physical rest and worship?</li> <li>• BIBLE Does it get used like it ought?</li> <li>• FAITH, a gift of God, which can be lost if we despise it.</li> <li>• The SACRAMENTS, gifts of God for his Church.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So-called "reproductive rights" and murder of children.</li> <li>• The euphemistic "Self-care" of divorce, broken relationships, and self-centered living.</li> <li>• Wanting to be or wanting to have a merely physically attractive partner who is spiritual defunct or void of faithfulness and godliness.</li> <li>• Sexually immoral goals, sexual partners outside godly marriage.</li> <li>• Greed for fame, money, power</li> <li>• Drug highs or dulling of senses.</li> <li>• Pornography, sexual affairs or one-night affairs.</li> <li>• Superstition &amp; witchcraft.</li> <li>• Any form of idolatry.</li> </ul>

#### Blessed Are...

**Differentiate** between "happy" and "blessed."

- Happy = temporary, easy enough to grasp at. Happy is only an -in-the-moment thing you can take for yourself by purchase, force, or compelling someone to give you some form of pleasure. It could include getting high on drugs, sexual encounters, or even godly things like a birthday cake, day at the beach, or cup of coffee.
- Blessed = lasting, a gift that is hard or impossible to obtain on our own. Blessed is being given or obtaining something which we can't entirely take credit for, but recognize it is a gift of God to the recipient. And unlike mere happiness its benefits are lasting despite how we feel in the moment. You may not always be happy that your newborn is waking you up late at night. But you can still acknowledge and feel blessed to have them. You might not always be in a state of pleasure as a child of God, but you can take comfort in who you are and be filled with joy no matter what happens to you in life.

**Read and look** at the context of Matthew 5:1-12 to **identify** Jesus' target audience.

**Explain** why the target audience is so important to keep in mind. Compare this intended audience with another similar one (Lk 6:17-23).

- Don't misunderstand. He is speaking to believers, his disciples. If you don't understand this you might interpret this as a way to become a disciple or way for anyone to be blessed apart from faith in Jesus.

**Share** some ways these verses (Mt 5:1-12) can be misapplied.

- This is not given as an instruction manual on how to be a disciple. It is to comfort lowly disciples who follow Christ in faith.
- It isn't a universal promise apart from faith in Christ.

**BEATITUDES**

The title for these sayings, "Beatitudes," comes from the Latin noun "Blessings" based on the Latin word used to translate the Greek word μακάριοι "blessed."



# Part 1. Blessed are the **POOR IN SPIRIT**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

## Poor in Spirit

**Look** at the following and **define** “poor in spirit.”

- **Ps 51:17** My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.
- **Isaiah 57:15** For this is what the high and exalted One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite
- **Is 61:1** The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners
- **Is 66:2** “These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word
- **Luke 18:9-14** (story of the Pharisee & tax collector)
- Greek word signifies a person so poor they must beg
- = those who are “broken hearted, contrite, tremble at God’s Word, look to God for mercy.”

### False Teaching

A teaching developed in church that you could become holier if you took a vow of poverty. Give several reasons why we can say this teaching is false.

**Explain:** “All people are poor before God. Many, however, refuse to acknowledge it.”

- The poor in spirit are those who are suffering, struggling with guilt, emotionally drained. Who isn’t this under the curse of sin? We can put on a good outward show of being guilt-free and without sin’s curse, but we lie. We must say with the Paul, “What a wretched man I am!” -Ro 7

**Identify** some ways we might be tempted to sinfully refuse to be poor in spirit before God.

- Act like we don’t need to repent, act like God owes us something, act like our own sins don’t really hurt us and others or offend God.

## Kingdom of Heaven

**Read** Mt 8:5-12 to find the outcome for a man who was rich (Lk 7:5), but still “poor in spirit.”

- This Roman centurion was obviously fairly well off. He had a servant and according to Luke’s account even funded a synagogue. But you see by his words he doesn’t consider himself too highly, in fact he is very humble before Jesus. Jesus speaks of him as an example of one of the many Gentiles who will sit at the table to feast in God’s everlasting kingdom.

**Describe** what is meant by “the kingdom of heaven” based on this account.

- It is being present with God’s people from across the world for his great feast of celebration. It ultimately includes eternal life. It is the opposite of being “thrown outside where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

On his deathbed in 1546 Martin Luther had a piece of paper in his pocket with a note he had written, “WE ARE ALL BEGGARS. THIS IS TRUE.” **Explain how** that note ties in with his emphasis on salvation through grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone, and Christ alone?

- As beggars it must be grace, God’s gift that saves us. We have nothing to offer. As beggars it must be through faith in God’s promise, not based on our works. As beggars we cannot rely on human wisdom or tradition, they will fail us; we must trust the Word of God. As beggars we take our eyes off ourselves for any credit and give thanks to Christ the giver of life, his riches = our salvation!

### What About the Poor?

In Luke 6:20,24 Jesus contrasts those who are presently materially rich with those who are materially poor. Explain why disciples of Jesus also need this type of encouragement. (See 1 Cor 1:26-29).

## Christ For Us

**Elaborate** on how the Christ lived perfectly on our behalf as a man who lived poor in spirit.

- Jesus was at times so overwhelmed with sorrow that he prayed for strength according to his human nature. If poor in spirit includes one who is broken hearted, stands in awe of the Word of God, and looks to God for all good things, then Jesus did this perfectly for as he lived in our place. He always relied on the Father. He revered the Word of God. And on our behalf, as great high priest, he looked to the Father.

## Blessed Are You

We fall short of being what God requires. Yet we have the promise that in Christ we are blessed. **Explain** how this promise of blessing:

- 1) Gives us courage to confess our sins. **We are blessed when we come in humility to God.**
- 2) Redefines the way a sinner is blessed. **It can’t be by works, but we come as beggars.**
- 3) Points Christians away from self to look towards Christ. **We bring nothing to the table. Christ brings it all!**
- 4) Gives us a part of the picture of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. **Blessed and without self-pride! & Note the present tense, “Thiers IS the kingdom of God.” It is already ours. Our discipleship is defined by God’s Word, not outward appearances.**



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## Part 2. Blessed are **THOSE WHO MOURN**, for they will be comforted.

### In the House of Mourning

**Share** the last time you experienced a funeral. Describe how it made you feel and what emotions and thoughts were in the forefront of your mind.

- Answers will vary. Note especially the difference of where hope is found and what sort of faith the person confessed. If it was all about the eulogy and how great the person was it might make you feel despair for yourself or disdain for the lies you find in it.
- Christian funerals comfort those who remain with the hope of the gospel.

**Read** Ecclesiastes 7:2-4. Explain why Solomon considers it so beneficial to attend funerals.

- We need to contemplate our days and our end on this earth, it causes us to be wise with the time we have. True wisdom is found when we listen to the Lord and his law and gospel.
- If we only seek after pleasure and never reflect on our mortality, we will never be prepared for death.
- Follow up thought: Agree or Disagree: we need to bring small children to funerals.

### Many Types of Mourning; One Source

**Identify** several different reasons followers of Christ might weep and mourn.

- Gen 23:1-2 (Abraham weeps over Sarah who died) death of a loved one.
- Psalm 38, Mt 26:75, James 4:8-10 (Ps 38:6 David is grieved and mourns over his sin; Mt 26:75 Peter wept bitterly over his guilt of denying Jesus; Ja 4:8 James calls on us to grieve and mourn over sin.)
- 2 Cor 2:1-4 (Paul wept many tears in deep concern for those he loved straying into the danger of sin.)
- Acts 20:36-38 (A tearful goodbye, departure, with missionary Paul and his flock at Ephesus.)
- Phil 3:18 (Paul's grief over the many who are headed to hell and live as enemies of the gospel.)

**Review** what Scripture says is the ultimate cause of all our grief.

- Gen 3 and the fall into sin. This world is under a curse because of sin.

### Empty Solutions for Pain

Look again at the various reasons for mourning. **Share** some ways that we are tempted to dismiss or ignore each type of grief.

- We live in denial of death -a mental block.
- We try to cover up or dismiss our sin and guilt and make excuses for it.
- We could stop caring for others because it hurts.
- We might avoid saying goodbye because it hurts.
- He might begin to hate those who hate God instead of sharing God's merciful love and concern for them.

**Share** some sinful ways people might try to alleviate grief with a false remedy.

### NOT THE MARK OF WEAKNESS

"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not a mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition and of unspeakable love." ~Washington Irving, 'Father of American Literature' (1783-1859)

- Some will try to medicate away grief or get drunk. Some will act out in anger. Some will blame God.



## Part 2. Blessed are **THOSE WHO MOURN**, for they will be comforted.

### They Will Be Comforted

Use 1 Thes 4:13-18 to **summarize** God’s solution for our mourning.

- Jesus died and rose again (for our sins). Those who have faith in him will raise to life at the resurrection. All believers will be with the Lord forever.

**Explain** why grief must be a part of the life of every disciple of Christ and **isolate** exactly what makes it different from the grief found in the rest of the world.

- Just look at all the tears and grief that come up in the book of Psalms, the life of prophets like Jeremiah, and in Lamentations.
- We still face loss and the pain of living in a world cursed because of sin. We still face our own guilt when we sin.
- Jesus says, “those who mourn” because he knows all his disciples will. It is a future promise, “they will be comforted.”
- “Do not grieve like the rest of mankind who have no hope.” We have a certain hope of forgiveness and resurrection!

**List** some different ways you can respond when you see fellow Christians grieving.

- Be there when they need someone. Encourage them with the gospel. Follow up and check in regularly. Give them time and more gospel.

**Read** John 16:20-22 & Rev 21:4 to **pinpoint** when Jesus intends to fulfill this promised blessing.

- Look at especially verse John 16:22 “Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice.”
- Rev 21:4 even if tears could appear in paradise, God himself will be there to console and comfort us!

### Evaluation Exercise

**Evaluate** and **rate** the way your church views crying in public. Is it a healthy acceptance or an unhealthy stigma?

1 Bad / Stigma	2 →	3 →	4 →	5 Accepted	6 →	7 →	8 →	9 →	10 Good
Nothing could be more embarrassing!	Crying is weakness or mind or faith.	Real men don’t cry.	I’m not crying. Something’s in my eye.		Don’t cry too long.		People cry sometimes. You need to!	So sorry. Here’s a tissue.	Let the tears come! Hear the gospel!

- Answers will vary. Tears will come. Just consider the Psalms! On the one hand, a lack of excessive, unending tears can be a testimony to the comfort of the gospel. But on the other hand, it is good and healthy to allow tears. Just make sure your church or family points those who mourn to the gospel, our real source of comfort even though tears will come.

**Make the same evaluation** and rating for your own family culture. **Account for** any differences.

- Every family is different. Discuss ways you can change what might need to change so that the gospel can shine.

### Christ For Us

**Elaborate** on how Jesus lived perfectly on our behalf as a man who mourned over sins’ curse.

- (See Luke 19:41, John 11:35, Heb 5:7)
- Lk 19:41 Jesus wept over Jerusalem which had in sin so often remained lost.
- John 11:35 Jesus wept and experienced the death of a friend.
- Heb 5:7 Jesus perfectly lived in our place “with fervent cries and tears.”

#### PROPHECY FULFILLED!

The living Christ Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3. Read it and compare it with the promises in the Beatitudes.

### Blessed Are You

**How** do we find this promised blessing already beginning to find fulfillment in our lives?

- We find comfort now through the gospel. God is near. God has a good plan. God promises he will remove our tears and the curse of sin. “The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” -Psalm 34:18.



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## Part 3. Blessed are **THE MEEK**, for they will inherit the earth.

### Meek and Lowly

**Recall and list** some of the people recorded in Scripture who would be considered meek and lowly. What circumstances put them in such a lowly state?

- Joseph learned meekness by his trials under God. Later when second-in-command of Egypt he treated his brothers kindly and gently.
- Moses was “the humblest man who ever lived.” Even though he talked with God and was chosen to deliver and lead Israel.
- Samson right before he died, before that he was awfully proud of his strength.
- David, who learned perseverance and patience through his trials. He was so lowly his brothers didn’t even consider him as a potential for Samuel’s anointing. But at times David could be rash and proud (Confer Nabal and Abigail account)
- The Syrian Phoenicia woman pleading with Jesus (Mark 7:24-30)
- NOT the twelve disciples of Jesus -they struggled with pride and wanting to be the greatest!
- The beggar Lazarus (story or parable?)
- Job who though rich at the start never seemed to consider himself greater than others. Was made to feel lowly for other reasons.
- Mary the mother of Jesus.
- Jesus, of course! Note: being meek doesn’t necessarily mean that you are in a low position. It has to do with the way to act towards others. Jesus is the Messiah, but he came humble and gentle and didn’t look down on fallen sinners but as a lowly man chose to wash their feet and even give his life.

**Share** if you know someone who is meek and lowly but isn’t necessarily a Christian or going to receive what Christ has promised.

- It’s hard to find prominent examples of those who could have been proud but remained outwardly humble! Mahatma Gandhi is a prominent figure in history. He lived in a display of lowliness and used political non-violent resistance to help bring India political independence from Great Britain. He followed the vows of Jainism and Hindu Yoga philosophy, truth, nonviolence, celibacy, non-stealing, non-attachment. He died apart from Christ and held to his false Hindu theology.

**Review:** Why is it so important to keep in mind Jesus’ target audience?

- Jesus isn’t saying meekness saves. He is comforting his disciples with the truth that despite everyone regarding them as lowly, they still stand in God’s eyes as heirs of the earth. They don’t fight for their place; it is given to them as a lowly child of God who trust in Jesus.

### Defining “Meek.”

**Distinguish between** “poor in spirit” and “meek.”

- Poor in spirit could perhaps be summarized as lowly before God; meek seems to refer more as lowly before other people.

**Explain** why these traits are different and yet one must lead to the other.

How could you not be humble towards those around you if you have recognized how lowly you are before God who lifts the lowly? The more we contemplate God’s grace for us as sinners the more we ought to be gracious and gentle to those around us!

**Use** Proverbs 6:16-19 to **elaborate on** how seriously God views the sin of looking down on others.

- He hates and detests haughty eyes. It is on par with those who scheme evil and murder the innocent.

### MEEK

Greek plural adjective πρᾶξις; not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance, gentle, humble, considerate, meek.

(William Arndt: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*)

Occurs in Mt 11:29, 21:5, 1 Pt 3:4



## Agree or Disagree: “It is possible to be both meek and wealthy.” (see Ro 12:16)

- On the one hand it is sometimes hard for us to associate with people we consider in a different position from us. *“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.”* On the other hand, there can still be people in positions under you or poorer than you. But it is how you treat them as associate with them that matters. (Consider some examples you listed at the start or people you know today who are wealthy but humble.)

## Agree or Disagree: “It is possible to both be meek and hold a higher position of authority.” (Mt 20:20-28)

- On the one hand power often goes to our heads. On the other hand, the more we know Christ and his kingdom the more we see what true greatness and leadership looks like.

## How this World Treats the Lowly

Discuss when we are tempted to look down on others as beneath us.

- John 4:9, Jonah 1-4 **Racial or ethnic hatred.** Despising another who belongs to a different group, nation, or culture.
- 1 Ti 6:17-18 **Riches can lead to arrogance.**
- Mt 23:1-12 **Coveting positions of prestige can lead to arrogance.**
- Jude 16 **We flatter those who can benefit us.** We are tempted to climb the social ladder at all costs. We like to mud-sling or slander political and other opponents in jealousy or hatred.

### PAUL’S MEEKNESS

Read 2 Cor 11-12

Who was looking down on the Apostle Paul and why?

11:16ff Read what things Paul could boast about. Explain why he wouldn’t.

## God’s Plan for the Proud

Zeph. 3:6-8 **Describe** what God would do to all people in his fierce anger.

- No nation or person is exempt from God’s judgment over sin and pride.

Zeph. 3:9-13 **Describe** the remnant who will survive his fierce anger.

- God’s remnant, (All believers), will be purified of sin, and will live humbly in his new creation and without fear of those who oppress.

## God’s Plan for the Meek

Pick one and identify what they trusted God would do for the meek.

David’s Plea (Psalm 25)	Mary’s Praise (Lk 1:46-55)	Pauls’ Explanation (1 Co 1:26-31)	Job’s Trust (Job 19)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Lord saves those who trust in him from all danger. He forgives and guides the humble.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>God our Savior overturns the proud and lifts up the lowly as their Savior, just as he promised.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>God does not call us to faith because we hold a high position. Often, he calls the poor, lowly, and despised to shame the world’s wisdom.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Job knew that his flesh would eventually be destroyed, but God would raise him to life in the end.</li></ul>

**Use** Galatians 3:28 **to explain** what happens to ethnic, gender, and socio-economic pride when we come to faith in Christ.

- It no longer makes any difference with it comes to our status before God.

## Christ For Us

**Expound** on all the ways that Christ was meek as he lived perfectly in our place.

(Lk 2, Lk 9:18-22, Lk 9:58, Jn 13:1-5, Mt 21:1-5)

- His birth, life, example, and holy week all show his great lowliness and gentleness to life and die in our place even though he is Lord of all. He redeemed us in lowliness. He calls us to follow his example of humility.

## Inherit the Earth

**How** is this already being fulfilled? (Zech 9:9-13)

- Jesus came. Now he comes in lowly Word and Sacrament to proclaim peace to all.

**How** will it find ultimate fulfillment? (Zech 9:14-17, Mt 25:35)

- When we sparkle like a jewel in the crown of Christ at his glorious return!

### COMPARISON EXERCISE

Compare the Beatitudes with the commands listed in Romans 12:9-21.



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### Part 4. Blessed are **THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST** for righteousness, for they will be filled.

#### Seek First

**Read** Mt 6:31-33 and share some of the modern-day things many might run after besides just what we will eat, drink, or wear. **Contemplate and discuss** what Jesus means by, “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness.”

- People are well fed and clothed in most of our nation. However, they continue to chase after things which can't bring lasting satisfaction and security. They will seek after riches, pursue and obsess over hobbies etc.
- Jesus means that we shouldn't worry about the lesser blessings if we have the greater. God will take care of the lesser. If he gave his own Son won't he also with him graciously give us all things? if you concern yourself with God's gifts found in Christ (forgiveness, peace, reconciliation, and what he works in us by his Spirit, we will have not only all we need but contentment, confidence, and eternal blessings.)

#### RIGHTEOUS

“In accord with divine or moral law: free from guilt or sin.”  
~Merriam Webster

#### Defining Righteousness

“What is right or just in matters of justice or weights and measures.” Slang for “excellent.” In the Scriptures it is an attribute of God and demanded of us.

How we lack it ourselves (Isaiah 59:1-13)

- We lie, we deceive, we are dishonest with others, we cheat, we create injustice, we grope like the blind looking for light and what is good, unable to find it anywhere.

How all the fallen world lacks it (Is 59:14-16a)

- There is no one, no justice. Righteousness is not found.

**Finish reading** Isaiah 59 to **elaborate on** how God plans to provide what we lack.

- God saw that there was no one to intervene, so his own arm worked salvation, he wrapped himself in righteousness. The Christ came with perfect righteousness to do what no other man ever could. He kept the law in zeal. He met the demands of justice like no other man could.

#### Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

**Pick one and defend** your answer.

- Theologians debate this, but why not see it as both? One way to illustrate it is vertical relationship (us to God) and horizontal (us to our neighbors).
- To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to want the perfect holiness we ourselves lack.
  - To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to want the world be brought back to perfect justice.

Read **Psalms 42** to discern one reason why we might hunger and thirst for the Lord and his righteousness.

- This world will taunt us for trusting in God, mocks the way believers in Christ suffer. We live by faith and do not see righteousness, but it is ours in Christ. And he will bring perfect righteousness to this world in the end.

## Broken Cisterns that Cannot Hold Water

Many will search for satisfaction in places which are demeaning and degrading towards human dignity and which cannot satisfy (Jer 2:13). **Read** Jeremiah 2 to see where they were “digging”.

- They turned to Assyria and Egypt (and their deities) as their source of hope against Babylon. False hope apart from the Lord’s deliverance.
- **Share** some of the places that people in this world look for satisfaction when they forsake the “Lord, the spring of living water.”
- Politics and princes, sexual desires, superstition, witchcraft, universalism.
- **List** some of the “broken cisterns” which believers can be tempted to turn to when they fail to trust in the Lord for his righteousness.
- All the same traps of broken cisterns as this world
- **Discuss** what a “famine of hearing the words of the Lord” (Amos 8:11-12) might look like today. **Share** how you might see this happening.
- It is happening in part already in our nation. Just look at what a great change happened as God’s Word became scarce in much of Europe. Churches in our nation are dwindling in doctrine or in support. How long until no one hungers and thirsts for what truly satisfies? God will say, “okay, have it your way. No more gospel.”

## Fulfilled and Filled in Christ

**Pick** one of these verses to **describe** how we are filled.

Is 12:2, Is 44:3, Jer 17:13, Jn 4:13–14, Ro 3:20-24

- Metaphors: draw from the waters of salvation = God’s Word
- Metaphor: pour water, pour out holy Spirit = points to baptism
- John 4 Jesus is the source of living water, life giving gospel truth.
- Rom 3: our righteousness is from God, through faith in the redeeming sacrifice of Christ.

**Summarize** the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lv 23:39-43), and then read Jn 7:37-38.

The Feast of Tabernacles, סוכות *Sukkot*, [or Feast of Booths, Feast of Ingathering] occurs on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the Hebrew month Tishni, the seventh month on the Hebrew calendar; or late-Sept, early October. It was a celebration of the final gathering of the fall harvest and commemorated how the Lord provided food and water for them while they lived in temporary dwellings 40 years in the wilderness. Jesus pointed to how he provided God’s greatest miraculous provision. “On the last and greatest day of the festival (Sukkot), Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” <sup>39</sup>By this he meant the Spirit.

## The Feast of Faith

**Read** God’s Invitation Card, Isaiah 55:1-7

55:1 **Why** we are invited to “eat & drink”

- (handout is shaped like card). It is without cost.

55:2 **Why** we should hunger and thirst for it.

- It truly satisfies, the richest of foods.

55:3 **How** we “eat and drink”

- “Listen, give hear, my words.”

55:3b-4 **Who** carries the invitations to people? 55:5-7

- Given to David (the people of Israel) = all who have God’s Word become his messengers.

**Who** is invited

- All the nations, sinners, the wicked.

55:7b **What** our God offers

- Freely pardons.

### REJECT / BELIEVE

**Scan** through John 6:25-68.

**List** what Jesus offers. **Describe** the reactions people gave

**Explain** why we see the different responses. **List** ways you see the same things today.

### The Means of Grace

Categorize the different ways God promises to pour out water to quench our spiritual thirst and spiritually feed us. (Mt 3:1-12, Mt 26:26-26, Mt 28:18-20)

### APPLICATION

Read Psalm 63. Use what we studied today to **apply** each verse to our lives.





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### Part 5. Blessed are **THE MERCIFUL**, for they will be shown mercy.

#### Mercy & Judgment

**Briefly debate** the pros and cons of a government enacting the death penalty. Explain why both sides of the argument might claim God would approve of their position.

- God gives governing authority the right to enact justice “with the sword” (Rom 13). But God is merciful and wants all to repent, therefore a Christian can also argue for leniency to allow the sinner time to repent, not go away without consequences or harm more people, but given the opportunity to hear the gospel and be forgiven.

**Fix** this statement by changing either of the underlined words:

“It is the government’s job to be merciful.”

- It’s the governments job to be fair, just (provide justice).
- It’s a Christians job to be merciful (teach and share God’s mercy).

#### Defining Mercy

Grace is giving someone what is \_\_\_\_\_ undeserved \_\_\_\_\_ .

Mercy is sparing someone from what is \_\_\_ deserved \_\_\_\_\_ .

Scan through Romans 9 to reveal some sobering truths for anyone who has received God’s mercy. (note especially 9:14-16).

- We dare not assume he gave us mercy because of something in us or that we were better than others. He does not have to give mercy to anyone! It is his right to choose when to display. And therefore, it is ALWAYS an unearned gift of God to receive his mercy.
- We dare not question if God can give mercy to others!

Distinguish between mercy towards evildoers and tolerance of evil. (Jude 20-23)

- Jude reminds us to be merciful to straying believers and corrupt sinners, but not get too comfortable with sin, but fear falling into it.

#### Vengeance is the Way

**Summarize** the story of Joseph (Genesis 37-50) to expound on why his brothers were living in dread when their father died.

- (Review account. Note the innocence of Joseph and the merciless treatment of his brothers. It haunted years later that he had begged them for mercy, but they wouldn’t listen.)

#### THE LORD’S PRAYER

Find and share any parallels between the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer.

#### LIVING IN FEAR & HATE

Look at Genesis 34:1-29 to see how some of Joseph’s brothers responded when they had opportunity to get revenge. How much mercy do you think they expected to receive from Joseph after what they had done to him?

## How Far Does Mercy Go?

**Read** Matthew 18:21-35. **Find out** how much the servant was in debt. **Enumerate** what our debt towards God must look like from his perspective.

- The equivalent of 20 years or roughly \$1,000,000 in today's average in USA.
  - When God sees all the sins accumulated over our lifetime, they are more than we realize or like to think about.
- Determine** how much the fellow servant owed. List some examples of weighty sins against us which we might be enraged over and find hard to pardon.

- Just 100 days of wages for a day laborer. Roughly \$12,000 for a service industry worker.
- We hold it hard against someone who offends us, betrays us, or costs us anything big. People will hold life-long grudges over insults and jealousy. People will kill over unfaithfulness in intimate relationships.
- See note to the right. What about the petty things we also get angry over and can't get over like road rage etc.?

**Rate** how severely God views the sin of mercilessness in his people. (see also James 2:13)

- He will not tolerate it at all! He sees it as a terrible cruelty and from a heart that does not appreciate or hold to the gospel.

**Explain** how we might feign forgiveness while failing to forgive "from the heart."

- We might go through the motions to say or show forgiveness because we must, but harbor bitterness in our hearts and wish the person harm or evil so that they can suffer and pay. Or we might not forgive freely until we see they have suffered and begged for it.

### BE PATIENT WITH ME

Our grudges can at times truly be petty. Share examples of trivial things that can enrage us.

## Vengeance is the Lord's

**List** the many reasons we have for showing mercy.

### Rom 12:19-21

- It is God's agenda to repay, not ours.
- We are commanded not to take revenge.
- God instructs us to overcome evil with good.

### Gen 50:15-21

- God works through it for his good purposes for his people.
- "Are we God?" i.e. do we dare to take that mantle of judgment for ourselves?

### 1 Peter 3:9

- We were called to repay evil with blessing.
- We are set to inherit blessing!

### Mat 6:12-15

- We pray this in the Lord's prayer! "As we forgive others." We ask God to give us a forgiving heart as he forgives us.

### 1 Tim 1:16

- God chooses to display his mercy through us! He is mercy for us and our mercy for others is an example for others to see!

What produces mercilessness in us? (2 Peter 1:9)

- We forget how we were cleansed of our own sins! We lose the gospel in our hearts!

## Christ For Us

**Explain:** "Joseph forgave his brothers, but that doesn't mean their sin didn't have a great cost." **Expond** on how Joseph foreshadows the Christ.

- Joseph had to go through a great ordeal for the benefit of everyone else around him. God used Joseph's sufferings to rescue his brothers. It came at a cost only to Joseph.
- Use this to expound on all the aspects of Jesus humiliation and exaltation to save us. The way he is loved by the father but hated by his brothers is a Messianic picture. How he is betrayed by his brothers and innocent and lowly is a picture of the Messiah. His exaltation to the place of judgment and power is a picture of Christ. His mercy for his brothers who betrayed him is a picture of Christ. His saving the people of God is a picture of Christ.

## They Will Be Shown Mercy

What makes Jesus such a perfect high priest? (Heb 4:14-16)

- He is merciful, one who understands temptation and our weakness, one who always lives to intercede for us.

Why can we be confident of mercy?

- Because of our merciful high priest, we can approach God with confidence expecting what he promised!

### ENTIRELY JUST & MERCIFUL

God is absolute in mercy and justice. (Ex 34:1-7) Explain how this is possible (Rom 3:25-26).

### BRAINSTORM

"If (your gift) is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." (Rom 12:8) Explain the opposite of cheerful mercy. Brainstorm some ways we can best display cheerfulness with mercy.



# The BEATITUDES

## 8-part Bible Study

Sundays 10:30am Aug-Sept 2024

### Part 6. Blessed are **THE PURE IN HEART**, for they will see God.

#### What's Behind It All

**List** some of the artificial facades found on modern homes which are used to make them look more appealing. Does your home have any of these features? What matters most about a home?

God cares about more than how we appear on the outside. He cares about the thoughts of the heart. **Explain** why this ought to terrify every person.

- He sees the sin that resides within us!

#### The Pure in Heart Vs Outward Piety

Use the word study to **determine** what “pure in heart” means.

**Explain** why purity of heart is so vital.

- Psalm 24:3-4
- Without perfect holiness and purity we cannot stand before God
- Revelation 21:27
- No impure person will be found in God’s eternal kingdom. (Note our impurity disqualifies us, but it is God’s grace and his covenant that gives us access to his kingdom.)

**Pick one** of the following and **summarize** the major pitfalls of overly focusing on outward piety.

#### Mk 2:15-17

- Might think we don’t really need Jesus because we’re so good.

#### Mk 7:1-23

- Try to keep only the easy laws we make and ignore the real law which condemns us.
- Not recognize where evil comes from, within!

#### Mt 23:24-28

- It is easy to put on a whitewashed outer display of goodness and remain dead inside.

**WORD STUDY “PURE”**

The Greek word καθαρός “pure, clean” is used very broadly in Scripture. It could refer to pure gold, pure oil, pure/clean water or ceremonial cleanliness. It carries the idea of being uncontaminated, unpolluted. “You must distinguish between what is holy and what is common, what is unclean and what is clean (טהור → καθαρός, pure).” (Leviticus 10:10. LXX)

#### The Value of Purity

**List** some of the perceived benefits of having a deceitful heart and using hypocrisy.

- We can get away with evil.
- We can convince people to like us
- We can avoid accountability for wrong
- We can then ignore the problem of our sin

**Share** what the pure in heart might be tempted to conclude about living a holy life. (Ps 73:1-14)

- The temptation is to buy into the lie that it isn’t worth it because the wicked prosper and we don’t. Think we are missing out life, that living a pure life is all in vain or worthless. [note how we fail to contemplate the final destiny of the wicked and those who trust the Lord.]

## David's Prayer

**Identify** at least four things David knew was necessary for obtaining and keeping a pure heart.

- Ps 51:1-9 -Confession & Absolution
- Ps 51:10 – A new heart (faith)
- Ps 51:11 – The work of the Holy Spirit
- Ps 51:12 – The joy of the gospel

### THE MEANS OF GRACE

Expound on the dangers of rejecting or withholding baptism. (Compare Numbers 19:20, Luke 7:30, John 3:5)

## It's Impossible

“Who can produce something pure from something that is impure? No one.” -Job 14:4

**Defend** the reasons why the pure in heart must give God all the credit. (1 Th 2:13, Ti 3:4-5, Mk 16:15-16)

- We can contribute nothing; God must do it all when it comes to justification and when it comes to living a new life.

## Christ Fulfills

**Describe** how Christ fulfilled these promises from Ezekiel 36:25-29.

- ◇ “I will save you from all your impurity.”
- ◇ “I will sprinkle purifying water on you, and you will be clean.”
- ◇ “I will cleanse you from all your impurity.”
- ◇ “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit inside you”.
- ◇ “I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh.”
- ◇ “I will put my Spirit within you.”
- He carried out the work of Redemption, he gave us the Spirit in Baptism and the gift of a new heart of faith through the gospel.

## You Are Already Clean/Pure (καθαρίζω)

**Use** purity language to **expound** on the motto, GRACE ALONE, FAITH ALONE, SCRIPTURE ALONE, CHRIST ALONE

- “You are already clean/pure καθαροί because of the word I have spoken to you.” -John 15:3
- “He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.” -Ac 15:9
- “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” -1 Jn 1:7
- It had to be grace because we could not cleanse ourselves. It is not by works that we are clean, but trusting in God's promised cleansing. There are many metaphors in Scripture that point us to our purity and cleansing in Christ. Christ was pure and holy. Only he could supply us with righteousness and only he could wash away our sins as the perfect sacrifice.

## They Will See God

“When he appears, we will see (Jesus) as he really is. Everyone who has this hope purifies himself.”

(1 Jn 3:2-3) **Share** what you are most looking forward to about eternal life.

- Part of the reason we are tempted to not live a pure life is we buy the lie that God doesn't see or notice. Conversely, knowing he cleansed us despite our impurity motivates us to live for him who sees us. We will receive what he has promised and see him one day soon!

### OLD TESTAMENT PICTURES NEW TESTAMENT REALITIES

Recount the practices the priests had to go through before they could approach God's presence and serve in the temple. Use Hebrews 10:19-23 to explain why our Great High Priest Christ gives baptized believers confidence to approach and serve God.



# The BEATITUDES

8-part Bible Study

Sundays 10:30am Aug-Sept 2024

## Part 7. Blessed are **THE PEACEMAKERS**, for they will be called children of God.

### Great Peacemakers

**Share** some of the biggest names in history of people known for securing peace. **Discuss** how they ended up securing peace. **Describe** how widespread it was and how long it endured.

- Examples: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) between President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR. Remember that treaty signing? Maybe not. If you do the news catches up to you. It was ended in 2019 due to China coming onto the scene with nuclear arms and having no interest in joining the terms. Great peacemaking events come and eventually come to an end.

### Peace vs Hostility

Use the following to **explain why** making peace isn't always a good idea or even possible.

- Gen 3:14-15 (There will be hostility between believers and unbelievers)
- Is 48:22 (There is no peace as long as people love wickedness)
- Heb 12:14-16 (bitterness and immorality will get in the way)
- Pr 22:24-25/ 1 Cor 15:33 (bad company corrupts good character)
- Eph 6:10-17 (our struggle is against the spiritual forces of evil)
- Lk 12:51 (Jesus brings division as he brings people out of the dominion of darkness)

#### NO QUARTER

Share some reasons modern militaries might refuse to offer quarter. Expound on why God did not allow Israel to make peace treaties with the inhabitants of Canaan. Dt 20:10-18.

- Note they had 400 years to repent.

Use 2 Kings 9:14-24 to **explain why** at times peacemakers must first fight for peace.

- Jehu couldn't accept peace in Israel as long as the witchcraft and idolatry of Jezebel was tolerated.

### God's Plan for His Peacemakers

**Their value:** Is 52:7-10; 1 Tim 3:1

- They are beautiful and their work is a noble task!

**Their commissioning:** John 20:21, Eph 4:11-12, Mk 16:15

- They are sent by Christ who established the holy ministry and who sends his disciples to preach and baptize.

**Their tools:** Mk 16:15-16, Mt 28:18-20, 1 Cor 11:23-26

- They use the means of grace in Word and Sacrament.

#### CIVIL PEACE & DIVINE PEACE

Explain how civil peace and divine peace are closely intertwined. (Jer 29:7, 1 Tim 2:1-15)

- God wants us to pray for the peace of this world, in turn the gospel can more freely spread.



# God's Plan for Peacemaking

**Read** Jeremiah 23 to **find**:

- ✓ God's Plan for Christ our Peace (23:1-8)
- ✓ The False Peace Problem (23:9-14)
- ✓ The Futility of the False Prophets (23:23-32)
- ✓ The Fate of the False Prophets (23:15-22, 33-40)

- Christ will reign with world-wide peace
- False teachers will proclaim peace for the wicked
- The Word of God is powerful to save and to overcome the lies of the evil one
- False prophets will fail in the end and be crushed under God's holy judgment

## Failed Peacemakers

**Identify** several reasons why God's agents of peace might end up failing in their calling.

- Malachi 2:1-9 "The lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge"
- Isaiah 30:8-11 People will ask for teachers to tell them sweet lies
- 1 Tim 4:1-2 False teachers will come, with no conscience or fear of God
- 1 Tim 4:12 might let people look down on them due to age, might fail to live godly life
- 1 Tim 4:16 might fail to watch doctrine and life closely
- 2 Tim 4:1-5 -fail to be prepared in and out of season, fail to rebuke, correct, and encourage, surrounded by people with itching ears who seek out false teachers.

## Not in Vain

**Review** the various reasons why God's peacemakers might end up feeling rejected or at a loss.

Use 1 Cor 15:58 to **explain why** their work is never in vain and always worth it.

- Jesus lives! The resurrection awaits us in Christ! Our goal of spreading his peace is everlasting and all who believe will rise to live with Christ forever!

## They Will be Called Sons of God

**Expound** on how we become sons of God: Gal 4:4-7

- Through the Redemption of Christ, we are adopted to sonship.

**Expound** on how we reflect God's own heart: Mt 5:44-45

- Love even our enemies! Goal is to display and share the love of God.

## Peace in the Church

*"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."* ~Ro 12:18

**Share** examples of times when you might find it most difficult to make peace with someone.

- Perhaps when they don't want it or refuse any peace-making attempts.

**Pick one** of the following and **discuss** how a peacemaker should resolve conflict with brothers.

1 Cor 6:1-9



1 Co 14:30-33



Eph 4:26-27

- Examples from these three sections on peacemaking
- We give up our "legal rights" in favor of displaying God's grace to one another in the Church
- Instead of fighting over worship life we follow God's direction and submit to orderly worship
- We don't let the sun go down and the day end without trying to reconcile with others, we don't let the devil cause bitterness to grow up and take hold in our lives.

### FALSE PEACEMAKERS

Discern the strategy of false preachers and the tactics they use to carry them out:  
Micah 3:5  
2 Peter 2:1-3  
Ezekiel 13:1-23  
Ezekiel 13:17-23

### WISDOM & PEACE

Read 1 Samuel 25 to see Abigail's wisdom. Explain what wisdom is needed for peacemakers to prevent fights.

### LIVE IN PEACE

Look at 2 Cor 13:11-14 and list the commands, promises, and blessings which allow peace to flourish between God's people. Note how each one can be done in your church and in your own life.