

2nd Quarter 2020 Bible Study Outline



THE BEATITUDES OR BE ATTITUDES

STUDY 1: BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" - **Matt.5: 3.**

This idea, along with so many others in the Bible, seems so foreign to the modern mind. How can poverty in any form be good?

This is especially true when we understand that the word here for blessed literally means, "happy or supremely blessed." How can we be poor and still happy?

I. SOME MISCONCEPTIONS CONCERNING THIS PASSAGE:

A. Some equate physical poverty with being pleasing to the Lord.

1. There is no special righteousness in being poor, neither is there a special sinfulness in the possessing of riches.

2. While it is often easier for the poor (because of their lack of being fettered by the cares of the world that comes from wealth) to be saved than the rich, it is certain that there will be rich people in Heaven and also poor people in the depths of Hell.

B. Some believe that a false modesty and self-abasement are the fulfillment of being poor in spirit.

1. Jesus never recommended monasticism (i.e., the complete abasement of the human body and retreat from society). In fact Jesus contrasted His practices and His disciples with that of John - **Matt.11:18-19.**

2. The Bible tells us that we are to be part of society, although we are to be different from the sinfulness of the world - **Jn.17: 14-16; 1Cor.5: 9-10.**

3. We also can become conceited in our humility that we become "humble and proud of it."

4. The Lord is also not talking about those who would mentally beat themselves and have a "poor me" attitude. Christianity is a positive religion that declares, "with God, we will be victorious - **Rom.8: 31; Phil.4: 13.**

II. WHAT THEN DOES IT MEAN TO BE "POOR IN SPIRIT?"

A. It is a person that has spiritual poverty.

1. This is the person who realizes that he or she cannot save himself or herself, that he/she is without any ability to glorify self.
2. The spiritually poor have a keen sense of their own sinfulness and need for God's grace.
3. "This poverty of spirit is a prerequisite to acquiring the other beatitudes. Spiritual beggars who have abandoned pride and self-sufficiency and who rely totally on God for support are in a position to inculcate the mournful, meek, hungry, merciful, pure, and peaceful disposition suggested by the other beatitudes" (Spiritual Sword Lectures, 1988).

B. Some examples of this kind of personality in the Word of God.

1. The publican - **Lk.18: 13.**
2. The attitude of Gideon - **Judg.6: 15.**
3. The attitude of Isaiah - **Isaiah 6: 5.**
4. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself - **Jn.5: 30; Jn.14: 10.**
5. Apostles Peter and Paul - **Lk.5: 8; Phil.3: 8.**

C. We can gain an even more thorough understanding of what the Lord is telling us by looking at some negative examples.

1. The Pharisee in the publican's story. Take note of what the Pharisee said and what Jesus said about both of them - **Lk.18: 11-14.**
2. The Rich Fool - **Lk.12: 16-20.**
3. Nebuchadnezzar - **Dan.4: 30-31.**

III. WHAT IS THE GREAT REWARD FOR THE POOR IN SPIRIT? "THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

A. Humility is required to make heaven.

1. They possess the qualities that are prerequisites for membership in Christ's kingdom, the church - Matt.18: 3-4.
2. It takes an attitude of complete spiritual poverty to accept God's plan of salvation - **Eph.2: 7-9.**

B. No room for pride in heaven.

1. These will inherit that eternal kingdom as well - **Jam.4: 6.**
2. Those who are proud and self-sufficient could never hope to enjoy the blessings of Heaven. They would never accept that they were sinners in need of a saviour, never accept the need to obey God in God's way, and never accept the fact that without God they could do nothing. Thus, they will never enjoy a Heaven filled with sinners cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5).

CONCLUSION:

"What makes humility so desirable is the marvelous thing it does to us; it creates in us a capacity for the closest possible intimacy with God" - Monica Baldwin. It is only through the humility of spiritual poverty that we can draw close to God and truly enjoy life as He wants us to.

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STUDY 2: BLESSED ARE THEY THAT MOURN

INTRODUCTION:

"Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" - **Matt.5: 4.**

As with most of the beatitudes, this one seems to be contrary to popular opinion. It seems that we put off mourning, sorrow and weeping as far from us as possible. One of the largest industries in the world today, the entertainment industry, is dedicated to keeping people happy - away from feeling sorrowful as much as possible.

But Solomon said that there is a time to weep, as well as a time to laugh (**Eccles.3: 4**). Why does Jesus say, "blessed are they that mourn"?

I. IS JESUS PROMISING COMFORT FOR EVERY PERSON, NO MATTER HOW BAD OR WICKED, IF THEY MOURN?

A. Mourning and bitterness of sorrow is felt by all.

1. All feel the heartbreak of losing a loved one.
2. Parents feel the terrible sorrow for their children when bad things happen to them. Same for all our loved ones.

B. While these things are true, is it that kind of mourning that will gain us comfort from the Lord?

1. There is a type of mourning that the Bible says is useless because no comfort comes from it - **Isa.16: 7.**
2. Paul says that unbelievers may weep but have no hope - **1Thess.4: 13.**

II. JESUS IS SPEAKING OF MOURNING OVER OUR SINS THAT LEADS US TO COME TO CHRIST.

A. A look at the context of the verse will shed some light on its meaning.

1. **Matt.5: 3** - "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven", shows that the blessing here is a spiritual blessing for the poor in spirit, not poor physically.
2. This should show us that Jesus is talking about spiritual applications that will make someone fit for the kingdom of God.

B. This shows a spiritual progression.

1. In **Matt.5: 3**, we see a person who realizes that he is unable to save himself, that he is wretched and sinful. But this quality alone, without the other beatitudes will not lead one to Christ.

2. But when we add the second beatitude we can see that the spiritual man will not only realize his spiritual poverty, but will also mourn over that sinful condition and desire to have God's healing of his sin sickness.

3. **2Cor.7: 10** shows a difference between the two attitudes. "Godly sorrow" is the attitude of the person who is not only sorry for his sinful condition but also lets that sorrow push him to turn to God. The "sorrow of the world" will torment the sinner but will not cause him to see the need to have God's forgiveness.

Judas Iscariot "sorrowed" over his sin. But he could not, perhaps because of pride, turn to God and submit his life in obedience - **Matt.27: 3-5**.

4. **Matt.5: 5 & 6** continue this progression. The one who truly sorrows after his sins will humble himself and submit his life to God's control. Those who submit their lives to God will naturally have a yearning for searching and doing God's will.

III. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A PERSON WHO MOURNS OVER HIS SINS.

A. It is a mourning of the heart that leads to a desire to change attitudes and actions - **Ps.34: 18; Isa.57: 15; Joel 2: 13; Jam.4: 8-9**.

This is not the hard-hearted person who can feel no sorrow. God's kind of person can be touched with a sense of sorrow.

B. Some examples of men and women who mourned over their sinful condition.

1. David - **Psalms 32:1-6**.

2. Isaiah - **Isa.6: 5**.

3. Paul - **Rom.7: 24**.

IV. THE GREAT BLESSING OF MOURNING AND WEeping OVER OUR SINS - COMFORT.

A. We have the great comfort of salvation - our sins are blotted out - **Ps.32: 2; Jam.4: 9-10**.

Ps.32 is the same passage where David talks about weeping over his sins and receiving forgiveness. David was truly comforted in his grief.

B. This is the great comfort that the Christian has on a daily basis.

1. As we keep the attitude of mourning over our sins, God continues to comfort us with His forgiveness and presence in our lives - **Phil.4: 6-7; 2Cor.1: 3-4**.

2. Even the Greek word for comfort used in Matthew 5: 4, *parakaleo*, is the same word Jesus uses to describe the Holy Spirit, who would come to be a comforter in the lives of the disciples (John 14: 26). The Holy Spirit works through His word in our lives as a comforter as well.

CONCLUSION:

Luke's account of the beatitudes is especially illuminating concerning the depth of mourning that we should feel for our sins. "Blessed *are* ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh" (**Luk.6: 21**).

When was the last time you wept over your sinful condition?

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STUDY 3: BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

INTRODUCTION

According to Bill Farmer's newspaper column, J. Upton Dickson was a fun-loving fellow who said he was writing a book entitled Cower Power. He also founded a group of submissive people. It was called DOORMATS. That stands for "Dependent Organization of Really Meek And Timid Souls - if there are no objections." Their motto was: "The meek shall inherit the earth - if that's okay with everybody." Their symbol was the yellow traffic light.

That is the opinion many people have of meekness. They think that Jesus must have meant this when he said that the meek were blessed (happy). What was Jesus speaking of?

I. A MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT MEEKNESS.

A. Many equate Meekness with weakness.

1. Many associate meekness with an attitude of allowing everyone to run over you because you are afraid of them.
2. This is not meekness. In fact, some of the strongest men who have ever lived have been meek.

B. Look at a list of some people that the Bible says were meek and see the fallacy of such thought.

1. Moses was a great leader. He stood up to the most powerful leader in the world, Pharaoh Ramses. He led God's people through the wilderness to the border of the promised land - Num.12: 3..
2. Jesus could stand up to the winds and the waves. He also chased the money-changers out of the temple twice with a whip made out of chords - Matt.11: 29.

II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MEEK?

A. An understanding of the root definition of meek in the original language and how it was used will help us in understanding what Jesus meant.

1. Greek word *praus*

- a. Used to describe a soothing medicine.
- b. Used by sailors to describe a gentle breeze.
- c. Used by farmers to describe a broken colt.

2. What do all these definitions have in common? They all describe great power under control.

B. A good working definition of biblical meekness.

1. Strength under control.

2. Some Bible passages that illustrate this definition.

a. **Matt.11:28-29** - Just as Jesus the all-powerful took upon himself the yoke of earthly obedience to His Father, so too does Jesus call on us to take on the yoke of submission to His will.

b. **Eph.4: 1-2** - Meekness means walking according to the precepts of our vocation and controlling our attitudes toward our brothers and sisters in Christ.

c. **Col.3: 12** - A look at the context of this chapter shows that we are to bury the old man (submit to God) and forbear and forgive one another.

Thus meekness is curbing the "natural" desires to rebel, fight, have our own way, push ourselves forward, etc. We submit to the Lord in obedience to His will.

II. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THIS BEATITUDE AND THE OTHERS BEFORE AND AFTER IT?

A. Notice the first two beatitudes.

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" - The person who realizes their spiritual poverty. They understand that they are powerless to save themselves.

2. "Blessed are they that mourn" - This person not only realizes that they are sinners and powerless to save themselves but also act upon that knowledge in grieving over their sinful state of separation from God.

B. Notice the next two beatitudes.

1. "Blessed are the meek" - These are the individuals who understand their spiritual poverty, mourn over their lost condition and are willing to submit their lives to the will of God.

2. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" - Those who submit their lives to the will of God will naturally desire to learn all of God's will for them and do that will.

III. SOME BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF MEEKNESS.

A. Abraham.

1. He was God's chosen to be the father of the Jewish nation. Through him the Messiah would come. But he was also meek.

2. Instead of demanding his own rights, Abraham sought to keep the peace between his herdsmen and Lot's - **Gen.13: 7-9.**

B. David.

1. He was God's chosen to replace King Saul, whom God had rejected because of disobedience. He was a mighty warrior and a great leader. But David was also meek.

2. Look at how he mourned the death of Saul, who had sought repeatedly to kill him - **2Sam.1: 11-12.**

C. Jesus Christ again.

1. This great powerful man who could heal the sick, cast out demons and stand boldly against the Jewish religious leaders of his day was also meek.

2. Look at his meekness in the Garden of Gethsemane when he knew that he would die on the cross soon - **Matt.26: 39, 42.**

IV. THE MEEK "SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH."

A. Those who are meek (faithful Christians) have an inheritance here in this life.

1. They are truly satisfied. They are content.

2. The wicked, in their rush to possess, usually miss or overlook the best of this world, or else, having seen it, they refuse to pay the price to gain it, or having gained it, they are miserable - **Phil.4: 11.**

B. The meek will also inherit that new heaven and earth - **Rom.8: 17.**

CONCLUSION:

A.W. Tozer once wrote:

"The meek man is not a human mouse afflicted with a sense of his own inferiority. Rather he may be in his moral life as bold as a lion and as strong as Samson; but he has stopped being fooled about himself. He has accepted God's estimate of his own life. He knows he is as weak and helpless as God declared him to be, but paradoxically, he knows at the same time that he is in the sight of God of more importance than angels. In himself, nothing; in God, everything. That is his motto."

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STUDY 4: BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH DO HUNGER AND THIRST

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever looked forward to going to some new place special for a meal, planned for it for several weeks, anticipated how good it would be, only to be greatly disappointed for a meal. Or, really enjoy a meal, tell everyone that you wouldn't be able to eat for the next one month, only to go home and get the urge for a snack later on in the evening?

All of us have desires that we seek to fulfill. These things can never be finally and completely satisfied. But Jesus promises that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied.

I. HOW DOES HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS RELATE TO THE REST OF THE BEATITUDES?

A. Matthew 5: 3-6 deal with the attitudes that are necessary for a person to be accepted by God.

1. In verse 3 we see those who realize that they are unable to save themselves, that they are wretched and sinful. But this quality alone, without the other beatitudes will not lead one to Christ.
2. But when we add the second beatitude we can see that the spiritual man will not only realize his spiritual poverty, but will also mourn over that sinful condition and desire to have God's healing of his sin sickness.
3. The meek will gladly be willing to submit their lives to the will of God.
4. This will then naturally create the hunger to do the will of the Lord.

B. Matthew 5: 7-10 deal with those attitudes which cause a person to continue in the love of God.

1. As we are *merciful*, God continues to forgive us.
2. Because we have been forgiven by God, we will try to live as *pure* morally as possible.
3. Christians will always seek to work to keep *peace* among his brethren, even as God is a God of peace.
4. Because Christians follow Christ faithfully, they can expect to be *persecuted*.

II. WHAT SHOULD WE BE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY FOR?

A. Physically, hunger and thirst are two of those things essential for continued survival and well being.

1. Hunger, thirst, shelter, clothing, intimacy, etc. have all been provided by God.
2. We must eat and drink. Shelter and clothing are essential for survival in a hostile world. Intimacy is essential for our continued emotional well-being.
3. All of these things are good and wholesome, when channeled in the proper avenues.

B. Jesus is saying:

Desire to both know and do the will of the Lord, a desire so strong that it is like the person whose throat is parched for water or whose stomach is aching for food - **1 Peter 2:2; Ps.42: 1; 63:1; 107:9; John 4:34.**

C. What are the implications of hungering and thirsting after righteousness?

1. One who hungers and thirsts after righteousness will always seek to do the will of God - **1 Jn.3:7; Matt.7:21.**
2. One who hungers and thirsts after righteousness will always put the Lord first in his life - **Matt.6:33.**
3. One who hungers and thirsts after righteousness will always study diligently from God's will so that he may know how to live a life of righteousness - **Ps.1:1-2; 19:9-10; Matt.4: 4; 2 Tim 2:15.**

III. WHAT IS THE BLESSING RECEIVED BY THOSE WHO "HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUS"? - "THEY SHALL BE FILLED."

A. With every other yearning in life there is never a real lasting fulfillment.

1. If we hunger for food, we will hunger again after a fine meal. If we thirst, we will be thirsty again soon after drinking our "fill."
2. The same is true with all those things people turn to in an effort to fill the spiritual void in their lives. Gluttony, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, illicit sex, all may fill a temporary void, but will never truly satisfy. They will leave the person crippled and dependent, wanting more.

B. But a person who truly hungers after God's righteous will be satisfied deep down to their soul - **Jn.6:35; 15:11.**

3. The sweet Psalmist David declares the joy of spiritual contentment - **Ps.23:5.**

CONCLUSION:

People will do some strange things if they are hungry enough. It is not uncommon to steal in order to eat. In a military survival course you are taught to eat bugs, worms, all kinds of plants, things that you would never eat if well fed. Stranded, starving survivors have even been known to eat each other in order to live. I've heard of elderly persons eating dog food because it is all they have to eat. How hungry are you spiritually? Are you starving to do God's will? If so, you will not stumble over the Gospel Plan of Salvation, which includes faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism into Christ. As a Christian you will never object to doing whatever God wants you to do to be pleasing to His will. How hungry are you?

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STUDY 5: BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL

INTRODUCTION:

A mother once approached Napoleon seeking pardon for her son. The emperor replied that the young man had committed a certain offense twice and justice demanded death. "But I don't ask for justice," the mother explained. "I plead for mercy." "But your son does not deserve mercy," Napoleon replied. "Sir," the woman cried, "It would not be mercy if he deserved it, and mercy is all I ask for." "Well, then," the emperor said, "I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son.

This is the essence of mercy. Mercy is compassion on someone based on their need. It is not justice, for mercy extends compassion on others in spite of their deserving it. The Bible tells us that God's people should extend mercy to others and then be able to receive mercy in turn. What is our Lord teaching us?

I. WHEN UNDERSTOOD PROPERLY, BEING MERCIFUL SHOULD BE A NATURAL PART OF A CHRISTIAN'S LIFE.

A. Consider what Jesus has said.

1. In verse 3 we see a person who realizes that they are unable to save themselves, that they are wretched and sinful. But this quality alone, without the other beatitudes will not lead one to Christ.
2. But when we add the second beatitude we can see that the spiritual man will not only realize his spiritual poverty, but will also mourn over that sinful condition and desire to have God's healing of his sin sickness.
3. The meek will gladly be willing to submit their lives to the will of God.
4. This will naturally create the hunger to do the will of the Lord.

B. Because the Christian has sought after God, based on a realization of his own sinfulness and has humbly submitted his life to God -

1. He will not be haughty toward others, but will be willing to extend the same kind mercy toward them that he received from God. Mercy here can be equated with the extension of forgiveness.

2. This is not a mercifulness that will wink at or condone sin and rebellion against God. Rather, it is the spirit that seeks to extend forgiveness whenever possible. It does not hold a grudge or remember a slight done toward it.

II. WHAT IS THE BASIS OF OUR EXTENDING MERCY TOWARD OTHERS?

A. A realization of our utter helplessness before God - **Isa.64:6; Rom.3:9-10, 23; Eph.2:7-9.**

It is out of gratefulness for what God has done to us that we can forgive others.

B. A realization that our continued mercy extended to us by God is contingent on our extending mercy toward others.

1. This is not to grudgingly forgive others, but to willingly forgive based on the joy we have in being forgiven by God.

2. The New Testament is full of passages that show the relationship between our forgiveness of others and our own forgiveness by God - **Matt.6:12, 14-15; 18:21-35; Jam.2:13.**

C. What does mercy imply?

1. It implies that we do not seek revenge on others who have done harm against us. We do not hold a grudge - **Rom.12:19.**

2. It implies a loving attitude toward those who have transgressed against us and have not sought our forgiveness - **Rom.12:20-21.**

3. It implies an eagerness to forgive those who repent and seek forgiveness - **Luk.23:34; Acts 7:59-60; Luk.15:20-22.**

III. THE GREAT BLESSING - "THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY"

A. It is a principle that usually holds true in the life. We reap what we sow - **Prov.18:24.**

2. A person usually "reaps what he sows" in this life as well as eternity - **Gal.6:7-8.**

3. Those who constantly set higher standards for forgiveness toward others than they are willing to hold themselves to will have others extend the same treatment toward them.

B. The merciful will receive the mercy of God on Judgment Day - **Matt.6:14.**

When understood in the light of the earlier beatitudes, "Come ye blessed" issued by the Lord to the faithful in Matthew 25:31-46 is not toward those whom have worked and deserved to be saved. It is toward those who have obediently depended upon the mercy of God, and given mercy toward others. They enjoy the blessedness of a Father who has extended mercy toward them.

CONCLUSION:

When we show a merciful attitude toward those who have sinned against us, we are merely imitating God. Let us extend mercy toward those who transgress against us.

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STUDY 6: BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART

INTRODUCTION:

“Purer in heart, O God, help me to be. Teach me to do thy will, most lovingly.” Such begins one of the great gospel hymns. It is a plea to God to help us be purer in our hearts and in our service to our Lord. Jesus speaks of the pure hearted in Matthew 5:8. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” What can we learn about being pure in heart?

I. PURITY OF HEART IS ESSENTIAL IF WE ARE TO BE PLEASING TO GOD.

A. What is Jesus speaking of when he refers to the heart?

1. In this passage, as with most other Bible reference, the heart is really the mind. It is the center of mankind. It is the thinking, reasoning part of man - **Prov.4:23; Rom.10:10; Matt.13:15.**

B. What, then, is a pure heart?

1. The word "pure" *KATHAROS* means clean (we get our word catharsis or cathartic here) thus the idea of cleansed or purified. It also means unmixed (a pure substance - one not mixed with something else, like oil and water).

a. The same word is used in **Matt.23:25-26** - “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, **cleanse (“katharos”)** first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

2. A pure heart is one that is cleansed, free from the control of wickedness, and dedicated to God. It is a heart that has a singleness of purpose, to serve and worship God.

C. A pure heart is required to be pleasing to God - **Ps.24:3-4; Ps.73:1; 1 Tim.1:5; 2 Tim.2:22.** God requires purity because He is pure - **Isa.6:3-5.**

D. Since we have sinned and alienated ourselves from God, how can we be pure in heart?

We have to remove that which makes us impure - sin - **Eph.1:7; 1 Pet.1:22; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet.3:21.**

When we contact the blood of Jesus, our minds are cleansed spiritually. We are forgiven of every sin and stand pure and holy before God.

II. HOW DOES A CHRISTIAN MAINTAIN THAT PURE HEART?

A. There is preventative maintenance. (Things we do to continue to be pure)

1. Keep our minds focused on following God.

a. Never forget who we are. We are children of the King - **Matt.6:33.**

b. Daniel made up his mind to continue focused on serving God and continued focusing on pleasing God, even in Babylon - **Dan.1: 8.**

c. This is the key. We must not have a divided heart. A divided heart (with divided allegiance) will never be able to be pure before God. We must give all of our heart to God. There is not a single part of our mind that we can keep back from God to use for sinning or longing to sin - **Matt.6:24.**

2. Keep our minds on good, right, wholesome things - **Phil.4:8.**

This requires effort on our part. We have to work at it - **Prov.4:23-27.**

3. Draw close to God through prayer, study, and meditation - **Jam.4:8; Ps.119:104.**

4. Always seek to avoid sin as much as we can - **2 Tim.2:22; Prov.4:14, 15; Rom.6:11-13.**

5. And remember, we keep our hearts clean by a continued repentant attitude and confession of sins before our God - **1 Jn.1:7-9.**

B. Corrective measures (when we realize that our hearts are not pure before God) are sometimes necessary to regain that pure heart.

1. We have to come to grips with our sinful condition - **2 Sam.12:13; Ps.51:10.**

2. We have to confess our sins to our God - **Ps.32:5; Jam.4:8.**

CONCLUSION:

What a great blessing! We are going to see God! Who then will be the happiest and most content in this world - those who know their lives are pure and free from sins domination and that they will dwell with God forever. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (**1 Jn.3:2-3**).

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STUDY 7: BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

INTRODUCTION:

Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. In the over 3100 years of recorded world history, the world has only been at peace 8% of the time or a total of 286 years and 8000 treaties have been made and broken. Peace is mankind's heart desire, but has been unattainable throughout our history.

Jesus talked extensively about peace. He promised it for his people. And He gave a blessed promise for all those who would be peacemakers.

I. IF EVER THERE WAS A NEED FOR PEACEMAKERS IN THE HOME, WORLD IN GENERAL, AND IN THE CHURCH, IT IS NOW.

A. Our communities and our nation as a whole is a battleground of hatred, envy, and strife.

1. People hate each other because of their tribe, race, religion, or because they are perceived to have more money than them.
2. People distrust their neighbours, their politicians, their ministers, their doctors, everyone with whom they have dealings.
3. If you doubt that there is a need for peacemakers, just drive around town and get into traffic jams!

B. Families are coming apart with strife and hatred.

1. Husbands and wives are seeking divorce because they cannot live at peace with each other.
2. There is conflict between children and their parents.

II. IN ORDER FOR ONE TO BE A PEACEMAKER WE MUST BE AT PEACE OURSELVES.

A. What kind of peace is Jesus speaking of?

1. It is not simply the absence of conflict. Two nations can be technically "at peace" while planning and working toward the day when they can destroy the other. For example, the US

was not at war with the Soviet Union during the "Cold War" but certainly was not at peace with them either.

2. Peace is not compromise with that which is wicked or evil. This is the pathway of surrender and slavery. It is not meekly submitting to error nor refusing to stand for what is right.

B. The biblical concept of peace.

1. Peace is a positive force - the presence of all that is good.
2. Peace carries the idea of total well-being of mind and heart and body.
3. It implies a complete contentment of soul.

C. How do we have the complete contentment of soul and heart?

1. This complete peace comes from our submission to God and His will. We should realize that conflict and war has at its root our rebellion against God. Man was at peace with both himself and with his Creator before sin entered the world. After sin was introduced it bred rebellion against God's will, the first envy and jealousy that resulted in the first murder (Cain killing Abel). After that mankind had conflict against God, and with each other, ever since.

2. Sin makes us enemies of God - **Jam.4:4 b. Isa.59:1-2.**

3. This is why Christ came to earth and died for us - that we might be at peace with God - **Rom.5:1; Eph.2:14-16; Jn.14:27.**

4. When a Christian is forgiven, he is then at peace with himself and can be at peace with others - **Phil.4:6-7; Gal.5:22.**

III. EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE A PEACEMAKER.

A. Being a peacemaker will naturally follow if we live by the other beatitudes.

1. The Christian who hungers and thirsts after righteousness will understand the supreme value of being at peace. He will seek to bring that contentment to all those around him.

2. The Christian who is merciful (willing to forgive) to others in their shortcomings will be able to react with sympathy toward those whom he comes in contact with. He will not be contentious and always demanding of his rights.

3. The Christian who is pure in heart will seek to be peaceable and be a peacemaker among others because he will understand that God is a peaceable being - **1 Cor.14:33; Rom.15:33.**

B. Christians will seek to live at peace with others, as much as is possible, thus cultivating an atmosphere of peace among all we come in contact - **Heb.12:14; Luk.6:35,36 3. Rom.12:18.**

C. Christians will seek to be peacemakers within the body of Christ - **1 Cor.1:10; Rom.14:19.**

CONCLUSION:

The Christian who is a real peacemaker will have the joy of bringing peace too.

2nd Quarter 2020 Bible Study Outline



THE BEATITUDES OR BE ATTITUDES

STUDY 8: BLESSED ARE THE PERSECUTED

INTRODUCTION:

Jesus finishes the great Beatitudes by talking about the consequences of living out the other beatitudes in their lives. For the faithful Christian who lives out these precepts, persecution will surely come. He tells us to rejoice when we suffer persecution.

I. THE FACT OF PERSECUTION.

A. Faithful Christians are told that they will be persecuted for their faith - **Matt.5:12; 2 Tim. 3:12.**

B. Jesus said that His people would be persecuted for their faith - **Jn.15:20-21.**

This promise, written first to the apostles, has been fulfilled over and over in the lives of faithful brethren throughout history.

2. The servant is not greater than the master. If Jesus was persecuted, which He was, then we can be assured of persecution.

II. THE REASONS FOR PERSECUTION.

A. We need to make sure we are being persecuted because we are Christians - not because we have sinned or done something wrong.

Remember it should be for "righteousness sake." - **1 Pet.4:15.**

B. Why are Christians persecuted?

1. Some are ignorant of Christianity and men are often afraid of and lash out at what they do not understand.

Ignorance was one of the factors in the murder of Jesus - **Acts 3:17.**

For example, Paul was sincere in his persecution of Christians, but did it ignorantly - **1 Tim.1:13.**

2. Because those who live the Christian life are constant reminders to the wicked of their lost and sinful condition. It is a constant reminder of their sinful standing before God - **Jn.3:19-21.**

III. THE SCOPE OF PERSECUTION

A. Jesus' words.

1. To revile and say all manner of evil suggest slanders and falsehoods said against others.
2. Persecute in Matthew 5:11 literally means to pursue or chase after.
3. Persecution can take many forms. It can be physical pain, death, shunning by friends or family, public scorn, etc. Any way that is used as punishment toward us because we are faithful Christians is persecution.

B. The extent of persecution.

1. Stephen was stoned by an angry mob - **Acts 7.**
2. James the apostle was killed by King Herod - **Acts 12:2.**
3. Paul suffered constantly because he was a Christian - **2 Cor.11:26-27.**
4. A catalogue of persecution - **Heb.11:36-38.**

III. THE VALUE OF PERSECUTION.

A. It is an indicator of spiritual life.

Just as pain is an indicator that we are alive physically and that our body is functioning properly, so persecution indicates that we are alive physically.

B. It makes the world and its things less attractive - **1 Pet.4:1-2.**

C. It can cause us to lean more strongly on the Lord for help.

Paul learned that God would be with him in persecution and leaned on the Lord in time of need - **2 Tim.4:16-17.**

IV. THE REWARD OF PERSECUTION - "THEIR'S IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."

A. When we emerge faithful from persecution, we will receive the grateful reward of a loving Father - **Rom.8:17, 18.**

B. We will reign with Christ - **2 Tim.2:12.**

CONCLUSION:

Archaeologists digging in the remains of a school for imperial pages in Rome found a picture dating from the third century. It shows a boy standing, his hand raised, worshipping a figure on a cross, a figure that looks like a man with the head of an ass. Scrawled in the writing of a young person are the words, "Alexamenos worships his God." Nearby in a second inscription: "Alexamenos is faithful." Apparently, a young man who was a Christian was being mocked by his schoolmates for his faithful witness. But he was not ashamed; he was faithful. Let us never be ashamed when we are persecuted, but remain faithful - **Acts 5:41.**