

Happiness - and how to find it

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[0 : 00] Go to the Word of God, Matthew 5. Matthew 5. Got your Bibles handy? When he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they, the prophets which were before you.

[1 : 35] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your Word, the truth of it. May it live in our shoes, in our lives, in our hearts. Work in us by your Spirit's power, Lord, we pray.

Help us to put it into action, what we've heard tonight and will here, Lord, that it be to your praise. In Jesus' name, Amen. He opened his mouth and he taught them.

Happiness and how to find happiness. Happiness and how to find it. It's what people desire the most in life. How can I be happy with my life?

How can I find that happiness? Everybody wants to be happy. A Texas millionaire confided, I thought money could buy happiness.

I have been miserably disillusioned. A famous film star broke down, I have money, beauty, glamour and popularity.

[2 : 40] I should be the happiest woman in the world. But I am miserable. Why? People spend their energies on this elusive search.

Happiness. The search for happiness. How to be happy. How to find lasting joy. How to find fulfilment and meaning.

The world says, Blessed are the rich. Blessed are the famous. Blessed are the gifted. Blessed are the powerful.

But the friend of sinners comes to the mountains. And he opened his mouth and he taught them. The keys for living.

A blessed life. A blessed life. A happy life. A blessing filled life. The keys for living. Such a life.

[3 : 40] Really it relates to the character of a person. Someone has said, It's very important that we know what we believe. But it is equally important to know how to behave.

How to live. How to live on this world. The friend of sinners shows us the secrets of a happy life. There was one Sunday. As they drove home from church.

A little girl turned to her mother and said, Mum, there's something about the printer's message this morning that I don't understand. And the mum said, Oh?

What is that? And the little girl replied, Well, he said that God is bigger than we are. And he said that God is so big that he can hold the whole world in his hand.

Is that true? And the mum said, Yes, that's true, honey. But mummy, he also said, God comes to live inside of us when we believe that Jesus is our saviour.

[4 : 41] Is that true too? And the mum assured the little girl, Yes, that's what the pastor said. That's what is true. And with a puzzled look on her face, the little girl said, If God is bigger than we are, and he lives inside of us, wouldn't he show through?

Jesus shows through, doesn't he? The Lord Jesus shows through. That's what the Lord Jesus is talking about. How the Lord Jesus shows through, out of our lives.

And we see that in these character qualities of the blessings that God gives to us here. Blessed. Number one is humility. Humility. Not blessed are the high and mighty, the rich and powerful, the famous and the ones that get all the glory, but the humility here.

Number one, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The poor in spirit. Life is better without pushing your way for pride of place.

And being driven by selfish motives. We can all deep down have that. What's in it for me? Look out for number one. You know, numero uno. The ego, isn't it?

[5 : 58] And it's something we've got to deal with. Well, I have to. You might be different from me. But pushing for pride of place, having that selfish motives in our lives.

Driven by self. But life is better than that. When we don't play one-upmanship over others. You will miss out on the blessings of God when we do that.

When we have that self-righteous, arrogant, inflated view of ourselves. It's not healthy. It's not a good thing. Our Lord says, Blessed rather are the poor in spirit.

The poor in spirit. As we recognise our unworthiness, our sinfulness, without his grace. How lacking we are before the almighty God.

And our utter dependence upon him. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Who see that. Who realise that. Who get to that place where we're all really inadequate and lacking and unworthy.

[7 : 08] God uses the outcasts. Those who are not braggarts and boasters. The small people. He uses the small people. We've got to be small enough for God to use us.

It's like I was talking in an earlier time where, you know, he must increase and I must decrease. Isn't that so? The less of us, the more of him.

And so, we see that being poor in spirit is realising our utter dependence on God. Our utter helplessness without him. Our need of him. To put our trust in him.

It means to recognise ourselves as lost, destitute, needy, apart from God. The giants of the faith are those who will bow under the mighty hand of God.

He will lift us up in due time. So we see the first one there, humility. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Then we see next our Lord praises sorrow.

[8 : 15] We could understand it to be a sorrow for sin. A sorrow over sin. He says, blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.

We know, I know there's some loved ones in our extended family circle. They've got a funeral this week. They're going to be mourning the passing of a loved one. A loss. A sorrow.

Our Lord praises sorrow. Sorrow. What kind of sorrow? I could imagine that it is a sorrow for our sin. It's that realising our need of him again in effect.

As someone has said, there can be no comfort where there is no grief. Sorrow should make us look for the heart and hand of God. And it's such a blessed time really when someone is mourning that sometimes they do cry out to God to help them through that valley of the shadow of death.

Don't they? When you see such people that they're feeling very low and grieving that sometimes God is closer at those moments or those times.

[9 : 26] It helps us find the heart and hand of God when we're feeling in those low spaces of life. Now notice it says blessed or happy if you like because blessed means happy.

Happy are they that mourn not moan. It's easy to complain and moan. He's not saying it's a good thing to moan but to mourn to mourn to have that grieving as it were that coming to the end of ourselves if you like.

Someone has said Jesus was the strongest man who ever walked on this earth and he went openly but Jesus never wept for himself. It's an interesting thought isn't it?

A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. When did our Lord weep? As I know I've talked of recent times as in Luke 19.

14 through 40 sorry Luke 19. 41 through 42 and when he was come near he beheld the city and wept over it. And we can weep over the state of our land of our nation of our state the state of our state and the gross things that could face us as our governors and lawmakers allow more and more of what God calls abomination that is vile in God's sight yet the law will make it legal doesn't make it right doesn't make it right whatever happens to the law doesn't make it right but when our Lord came near he beheld the city and he wept over it so our Lord Jesus he did not express disgust he wept and we we can be disgusted we can be disgusted about what our government intends of both persuasions of both parties and both as bad in this regard in my personal opinion

[11 : 36] I know politics is something people get a bit touchy about but nevertheless it's about trying to bring something in that the Bible says is vile and wicked and so whatever our political leanings it's quite clear what the Bible says about such a thing and yeah our Lord did not express disgust but he wept over it so there's a sense where he works in our hearts to cause that grieving over the state of our land of our country of our people of Australia of this nation of this world and we can have that grieving over it as our Lord had and when we think of sorrow we see how the word talks about a sorrow over sin in Isaiah 59 1-2 it says how our sin separates us from God and it's like as it says elsewhere that you will not hear our prayer because we're holding sin in our hearts it's like you might be holding some cherished sin holding on to something that you've not let go of and your prayers just bounce off the ceiling because he won't hear you you've got to let him deal with your heart condition get it right with him get right with God and yet

Isaiah 59 talks about this separation between God and man because of sin it can mean perhaps this sorrow for sin could mean being sorry that we've hurt God with our sins that we've hurt others with our sins we've hurt ourselves that we grieve over our own sins get it right get it dealt with it's interesting the baptists in Russia believe repentance without weeping is phony you know you see some that say that they're calling on God but it's like they're not moved and of course we know emotions and expressions of emotions are not necessarily a key indicator but it does seem to follow and when you see someone who's truly broken up over their sin that you see that they're just really moved and we should grieve over our sins an early missionary noticed that the Russians seemed to define conversion as weeping in public it's an interesting thought isn't it it's just that they were moved before

God they just wanted to get it right get right with God they weren't just toying with it and really repentance brings happiness in Psalm 51 17 it says the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit a broken and a contrite heart these are God he will not despise such a thing a broken spirit a broken and a contrite heart and sometimes when we get to that the depths of ourselves we get to that extremity where we realise our great need of God that then he can really break through and touch us as we have that tender and sensitive heart he gives us his comfort he gives us his presence he can truly come to grasp who he is to know that he is in control so there's a blessing as we mourn! because we shall be comforted we'll know God's comfort we'll know God's meeting with us his presence the third one here is meekness he says blessed are the meek the meek for they shall inherit the earth meekness it speaks of gentleness of calm of patience meekness in the language that was originally penned here in the New Testament was used to describe an animal which has been trained by its master wild and unruly animals are worthless but when trained they become meek that is tangible and quiet and we see you know even a domestic dog can be a wild animal when it is not trained and it's unruly and yet a lion can be brought up to be tame as it is trained up in that careful way and the wild and unruly animals are worthless but when trained to be meek they're teachable and quiet and can be useful someone has said meek is strength under control strength under control doesn't mean weakness it means that our strength is under control James 1 21 it tells us receive the word with meekness receive it with meekness so sometimes we can take this lightly but we just take it humbly take it with meekness receive it with an open heart we can understand and apply the word as we receive the word with meekness James 1 21 meekness it's a surrender of our will to God's will our Lord showed what it means to be meek in Gethsemane when he prayed he was in that torture of Gethsemane as he was already sweating as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground as if almost he was bleeding in the garden before he was whipped because of that intensity of prayer and as he prayed he came to that place where he said nevertheless thy will be done he prayed to the father as he came to that place of testing that he came to that surrender thy will be done the surrender of our will that's meekness do we stoop to listen to care to learn to be meek and sometimes we can be so self-centered that we not got the meekness to think and consider of others consider others around us so meekness is a great quality a great strength under control it's not a weakness it's a strength then we see the next blessed is a desire for God a desire for God our Lord tells us he says blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled do we settle for less in our spiritual lives than God is best for us we can just have a minimal minimalist kind of thinking about our Christianity can't we just do the least rather than aspiring to do to aim for God's best for us for our lives and notice here our Lord says blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled there's this sense of it's actually a continual present tense hunger continual present tense this craving it's now and it's

ongoing a craving for more

of God as I touched on this morning more of God if we want more of God we need to let him have more of us more of God he wants more of us and some appetites will leave us empty the appetite for money there's always more money to make isn't there there's always more overtime you can always get a second job a third job you can always try to get a promotion whatever it be there's always more money to make but it leaves us empty doesn't it there's nothing really satisfying there there's always something more to chase after whether it be an appetite for pleasure there's always some pleasures and more pleasures to go seeking after but they still will leave us empty an appetite for security really it's lacking it's it doesn't satisfy what are you filling up your lives with we can eat all the wrong kind of things we know that

[20 : 13] I'm guilty that I was in a fast food place today all the wrong things it's what we feed has an effect doesn't it has an effect on us and what about what are we feeding our soul with blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness in other words getting right with God knowing God it's not that we sit back and think of ourselves as righteous I've arrived I'm righteous but we longing and desiring for more of him more of God more of his filling more of his righteousness for our lives righteousness means being right with God that's a big thing isn't it I know I like to say how there's an old church in Moonton and it's quite an ancient structure and on the altar rail it says get right with

God get right with God what a slogan that's that's what it boils down to really doesn't it get right with God righteousness means being right with God and there's nothing greater than that to find that to find that that's happiness that's gladness that's blessing and it comes from putting things in perspective placing your priority on the kingdom of God on the things of God seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness there's true riches there the righteousness of God the kingdom of God it's talking here about spiritual hunger we need to get hungry get hungry and this can only be satisfied with God's real truth only God can satisfy the hunger and thirsting of our soul only he can some try to fill it with philosophy with religion with mantras with man's wisdom it falls short we need the righteousness of God to get right with

God the next one we see blessed other merciful for they shall obtain mercy blessed other merciful compassion compassion I know this might be sounding somewhat of a repeat because I've talked about compassion lately too but compassion blessed other merciful for they shall obtain mercy compassion means being tender hearted compassionate God shows us his boundless amazing grace how much more should we show his grace walk in his grace to be gracious to others you know the old me the old Andrew Craig is very lacking in grace that God gives us grace doesn't he helps us to live in grace to walk in grace towards other people so in other words mercy and forgiveness sometimes it's hard to be forgiving isn't it especially when people they don't deserve it we know that sometimes really they don't but do we show

Jesus love it goes beyond our own limited love doesn't it what does Jesus do he ministers to the prostitutes he ministers to the lepers to the the most blatant visible sinners of the day the tax collectors you know government ripping us off again nobody loves the government people who work for the government we see that those that are hated and scorned and rejected but Jesus cares Jesus cares ours is not the place to condemn and stand in judgment over others mercy is the very character of God and really as much as we know what's in the media of late some sins are more in your face than others we're all guilty before God we all need his grace and we're all as lost without Christ as they as any other once when

Frederick the second an 18th century king of Prussia went on an inspection tour of a Berlin prison he was greeted with the cries of prisoners here he was going down into the dungeon this dark smelly dank cold dungeon looking at the prisoners this king of Prussia and the cries of the prisoners were yelling out through the bath screaming out king and he was listening to these cries and some were falling on their knees and they were protesting their unjust punishment and imprisonment and he listened to all these pleas of innocence and Frederick the king's eye was caught by one prisoner standing off in a corner this solitary figure he seemed unconcerned with all the commotion and Frederick the king he said to this one in the corner he said why are you here aren't robbery your majesty were you guilty the king asked oh yes indeed your majesty

[25 : 49] I entirely deserve my punishment at that Frederick summoned the jailer release this guilty man at once I will not have him kept in this prison where he will corrupt all the fine innocent people who occupy it he had compassion he had pardon compassion and we all need God's grace don't

we we're all like those prisoners I don't deserve this but when we realise yeah I deserve I deserve I deserve God's judgment condemnation he gives us his mercy true mercy it forgives those who offend you and reaches out to help it isn't selfish it's kind to people in need like the Lord Jesus he wants to minister to the needs of others the Lord Jesus what did he do he healed the sick he made the lame walk he gave sight to the blind he made the deaf hear and gave life to the dead he loved and forgave prostitutes tax collectors drunkards and adulteresses he wept with the sorrowful and was a companion to the lonely he took children in his arms and blessed them he was the incarnation of mercy and he says blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy so show mercy show mercy walk in grace you know there's some people in my life that I think they get under my skin and I really don't think they deserve anything of my mercy yet

I will show mercy where opportunity comes I will show mercy because forgiven people forgive if you are unforgiving you're missing out on God's blessing on your lives only those who are merciful will receive mercy in Matthew 18 35 so likewise shall my heavenly father do unto you if you from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespassers talked about an unforgiving servant there's a blessing from showing mercy and there's a loss from not showing mercy think of our horizontal relationships affect our vertical relationships it talks about leave you gifted the altar Matthew 5 24 when you want to tend to some act of worship or devotion but there's something you need to sort out with someone that you've wronged or they've wronged you God's interest in human relationships and he's caused us to heal the hurts where we can another blessed is blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see

God purity of heart it's a great character quality the right heart attitude sometimes we just put on a show on an outward but God sees beyond all of the outward and he sees the heart his piercing x-ray vision can see where we're all truly at and he sees our thoughts and our feelings it says he tries the reins of the heart as it were the cords of the heart the very construction of the heart he sees that with his x-ray eyes beyond our outward actions and the veils that we might put he sees our heart attitude and the purity he has spoken of it's like a cleansing from God that comes from getting closer to God someone has said happiness cannot be found in a world of sin and of sinful men true happiness cannot be found from within or from without for true happiness you must look upward beyond yourself beyond men beyond things look to

God himself the only possessor of real happiness in Psalm 144 verse 15 it says happy is that people that is in such a case happy is that people whose God is the Lord happy is that people whose God is the Lord Psalm 144 verse 15 purity of heart another one is peacemakers blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God peacemakers in other words promote and maintain peace God wants us to him helping us to heal those broken relationships his will is reconciliation not hostility and division and conflict sometimes people can they've got this big chip on their shoulder they've got this bitterness eating them up from the inside out where they're bearing grudges and resentment and rejection but Ephesians 4 26 tells us don't give the devil a place don't give him a foothold don't let the sun go down while you're still angry try to sort things out with other people where you can of course we know there's occasions and circumstances where we can't in Romans 12 18 it says as much as life in you live peaceably with all men

Romans 12 18 as much as life in you live peaceably with all men sometimes it takes a lot of grace doesn't it there's people that have wronged us there's one that comes to mind where there was a handyman doing some work for me and I prepaid him for the materials and then suddenly his phone never answered and it was just a disconnected phone and I went round to where he was staying and they said oh he's moved and wow that's unusual that I just paid more of that money and suddenly he's disappeared and you can think oh I can really bear a grudge hold a grudge against him but you've got to let it go sometimes don't you with things like that but as much as life in you live peaceably with all men there was a time in church history where there was a story of a 4th century monk his name was

[32 : 09] Telemachus and while living in a monastery God called him to Rome and he not praising people living in monasteries but I guess that's what some of that time did and he went to Rome and he had a few possessions in a sack so he went off to Rome carrying these possessions in a sack when he arrived in the city it was filled with excitement what's going on he asked the passer by and he was told this was the day that the gladiators fought to the death in the Colosseum and he thought to himself four centuries after Christ and they're still killing each other for enjoyment and so Telemachus ran to the Colosseum and he heard the gladiators crying hail Caesar hail Caesar we

die for Caesar and he jumped over the railing and went out into the middle of the field and got between two gladiators held up his hands and said in the name of Christ forbear the crowd protested and began to shout running through running through a gladiator came by and whacked him in the stomach with the flat side of his sword knocking him into the sand he got up and said in the name of

Christ forbear the crowd kept its chanting running through running through another gladiator came by and this time ran his sword through telemachus stomach and he fell into the sand and as it began to turn red with his blood he weakly cried one last time in the name of Christ forbear a hush a hush came over the 80,000 bloodthirsty Romans in the arena and soon a man stood and left then another then another and in a short time all 80,000 had emptied out of the stadium it was the last known gladiatorial contest in the history of Rome I don't know if that's a true story or not but it sounds good doesn't it but we see that he was a man who was a peacemaker in the name of Christ forbear heal those broken relationships where you can bring peace where you can sow peace not discord so the next one we see is suffering for Christ's sake bearing righteousness sorry bearing suffering for righteousness sake we see blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you bearing suffering for righteousness sake as we know in the workplace as a

Christian you sometimes like you know the soldiers lifting the head up above the trenches bang if you make yourself known as a Christian you can expect to get attacked and laughed at and picked on sometimes but persecution can make you stronger and sharper and more solid I look back as a year 12 student and I can remember standing up for Christ and seeing attacks for that and you know where it was a Mormon classmate and I would counter his false teachings and seek to win him to Christ yet he was so well schooled in the Mormon teaching he had his little booklet as he was preparing to be a missionary he was going to dedicate two years of his life to the cause of the Mormon Christ and what a sad thing it was that he said as he showed me Mr. Smith says this Mormon says that Mr. Smith says this Mormon says that they were really schooled in what they were trained to do and he was training intensively training to be a missionary for the Mormon God and what a sad thing it is and yet I was glad to stand up for Christ to him to seek to win him and others that had no faith no religion and when you're a Christian in the school place in the workplace it can be hard it can be in the minority but persecution can make you stronger and sharper now as I studied Mormon doctrine and contrasted that with Bible doctrine it made me stronger and sharper in the word of God so I could find the answers to counter the error bearing suffering for righteousness sake people might say all manner of evil against you falsely he says for my sake they shall revile you what are we to do rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven and we might see those times where wow

I've been really doing it tough getting bashed up here and there with people attacking me for being a Christian our Lord says rejoice there was an anonymous poem that captures some of the truths of the Beatitudes the ones that we've just been covering the blessings it's called the Beatitudes the blessings that Jesus gave and this poem captures some of these truths I'll just read that to close here when I say I am a Christian I'm not shouting I am saved I'm whispering I get lost that is why I chose this way when I say I'm a Christian I don't speak of this with pride

[38 : 27] I'm confessing that I stumble and need someone to be my guide when I say I am a Christian I'm not trying to be strong I'm professing that I am weak and I pray for strength to carry on when I say I'm a Christian I'm not bragging of success I'm admitting I've failed and cannot ever pay the debt when I say I'm a Christian I'm not claiming to be perfect my flaws are too visible but God believes I'm worth it when I say I'm a Christian I still feel the sting of pain I have my share of heart aches which is why I seek his name when I say I am a Christian I do not wish to judge I have no authority I only know I'm loved our Lord opened his mouth and he taught them on the mount many blessings blessed how can we be part of this blessed community this community it's about taking hold of these words and applying these truths into our lives to be this

Bible community not some manufactured thing or some new improved version but to be God's people as it's manifested here in these pages in these words of our Lord the Lord Jesus is at work in lives today he hasn't stopped and these truths of this time are just as real and relevant for the 21st century and just as applicable for you and me to be such a people in contact with God showing

compassion radical living out forgiveness mercy seeing God change lives keeping that humility of heart and seeing God's true spiritual power to be champions for God and going against the flow such that we'll face persecution but it won't stop us we will pay the price maybe suffering persecution maybe such persecution that even to our deaths that's what we should aspire to and seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain and when he was set his disciples came unto him and opened his mouth and taught them saying blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see god blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of god blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you let us pray lord yeah 20 years ago i was reading the scripture in beatitudes and it said blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy and as i read it for some reason i pictured my friend in england for no reason so i rang immediately i won't give his name it was a man given to a quick anger but he never struck anybody but i rang and said to his wife who was very spiritual i said tell your husband to read the scripture blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy now i'd heard a report two days later and i'm sorry i did laugh but he threw a punch a younger man he's a younger man than me and the younger man returned the punch and broke his jaw that is the story so if you want to avoid a broken jaw don't hurt so much or don't get road rage i've been in a Christian recently it's easy for me or those drivers so yeah thank you good illustration yeah well let's pray shall we lord we thank you that you came to the mount you taught your people and these truths are still true today lord help us to put these truths into action help us to be to find that true source of happiness and blessedness which is really to know you to know you to walk in your truth lord we thank you for these truths tonight that we pray that they'll be real in our lives help us to walk in your truth lord we pray if there's any yet to trust you to know you as saviour and lord they'll bow their knee their heart their will to receive your forgiveness and grace your payment of the cross for their sin and know that forgiveness and that new life that you grant that new heart you give lord help us to walk in these truths we pray in jesus name amen