

Happiness and how to find it

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[0:00] Happiness and how to find it.

Matthew chapter 5 from verse 1. It says, And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain. And 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.

[1:16] Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Happiness and how to find it. Who wants to know about that? Happiness and how to find it. It's what we all want.

It's what we desire. Everybody wants to be happy. A Texas millionaire can find it. I thought money could buy happiness. I've been miserably disillusioned.

So look, if you think that flash job you've just got, or your high hopes are going to make life change for you, it's not necessarily so. It's not about such things.

It's like a famous film star who broke down and she said, I have money. I have beauty, glamour and popularity. I should be the happiest woman in the world.

[2:19] But I'm miserable. Why? People spend their energies in this elusive search for happiness. How to be happy.

How to have a lasting joy. How can I find fulfilment and meaning? The world says to us, blessed are the rich. Blessed are the famous.

Blessed are the gifted. Blessed are the powerful. But the friend of sinners says to us, the secrets of a truly blessed life are found in him.

The secrets of a truly happy life are in living a blessing-filled life. And it's found in him.

It's found in Christ. There was a little girl one Sunday, turned to her mum and said, Mum, there's something about the preacher's message this morning that I didn't understand as they're on their way home.

[3:17] And the mum said, Oh, what is that? And the little girl said, Well, the preacher said God is bigger than we are. He said, God is so big that he could hold the whole world in his hands.

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

Is that true too? And the mum said, Yeah, that's true. And the girl said, with a puzzled look on her face, Well, if God is bigger than us, and he lives in us, wouldn't he show through?

And it's true. He's so big and he lives in us, he should show through, shouldn't he? And it's like the Lord Jesus showing through in our lives.

That's happiness. That's blessing, isn't it? When he's at work within and without, flowing through us to others and evident in our life. And we see in these numbers of blessings, some truths that we can find happiness in these truths.

[4:30] And the first one here is humility. Humility. You know, it's not getting all proud and lofty and famous and your name in lights. It's humility.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Humility. Humility. You know, I've got a humility badge that I polish every day.

You know, there's that kind of thinking, isn't there? That we can get so proud of our humility if we're not careful too. But now life is better without pushing away for pride or of place or by selfish motive. Life is better when we don't play one-upmanship, you know, that we're climbing a ladder at the expense of others or, you know, putting others down so we can get higher than them. And we can miss out on the blessings of God if we get proud, if we get arrogant, if we have that selfish, inflated view of ourselves.

Because humility is really much, much better to aspire to than to have some kind of aspiration to make a name for yourself.

[5:39] It's being poor in spirit. It means recognising our sinfulness. It means recognising our unworthiness and our absolute dependence upon God.

God uses the outcasts, not the braggarts and the boasters, but those who are the least, the small people. And being poor in spirit means realising our utter helplessness.

Then God can start taking a hold of our lives and making some revolution on the inside of us. When we realise our need of God and our putting of our trust in Him, it's when it all starts, isn't it?

It's when new life begins, when we recognise we're lost, we need a Saviour, we're destitute, we're empty apart from Him. And the giants of faith are those who have bowed down, the lowest, under His mighty hand, so that He can lift them up.

Humility. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Another one is sorrow for sin. Sorrow for sin. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

[6:52] Like someone has said, there is no comfort where there is no grief. And when we come to that place of realising the sorrow, that should make us look for the heart and hand of God.

But we can realise that the man of sorrows, he was acquainted with our grief and he carried our burdens. Notice there it says, blessed are they that mourn.

It doesn't say, happy are they that moan. We know lots of them. Lots of Christians who moan. It doesn't say, blessed are those who moan.

We can all find something to whinge about. But it's those who mourn. And it's interesting that the Lord Jesus would have to be the strongest man who ever lived, didn't he?

And yet he wept openly. But it's interesting that the Lord Jesus never wept for himself. In Luke 19, 41, and when he was coming there, he beheld the city and he wept over it.

[8:00] He didn't express disgust. He could have done at all the sin that he could have, with his x-ray vision, have known and seen and felt broken up about. But he wept over there, over the city.

He wept over it. Mourning. It can talk about our mourning over sin. Our sorrow over our uncleanness, over our separation.

As Isaiah 59, it says that your iniquities, your sins are separated between you and your God. So he cannot hear. There's a separation.

There's a wall there. And so we should have a genuine sorrow over our sin. That our sins have hurt God. We should mourn over our sins.

We should grieve over our own sins. And want his healing. Want his remedy. Want his forgiveness. It's been said that the Baptists in Russia believe that repentance without weeping is phony.

[9:04] It's fake. Now there's a lot of repentance or, you know, glib kind of confessions of faith or saying words after someone. Yet sometimes they're lacking that real, genuine repentance.

Where there's a breaking up over our heart, over our sin. There's an anguish over our lost estate.

There's a recognition about the wrath of God that is a cloud about to break over us without his mercy.

And thank God there's mercy when we come in repentance. And Russians seem to define conversion as weeping in public. There's a mourning over our sin.

Blessed, blessed, happy are they that mourn. You know, there's a blessing that comes. You know, we've seen no greater joy I could really imagine than to see a sinner weeping, tears of repentance.

And then to see the weight lifted as they know they're saved. As they know their sins are forgiven. As it says in Psalm 51, verse 17, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite

heart.

[10:16] He will not despise. He will receive that tender, that sensitive heart. There's a comfort knowing as we are broken up over our sin. There's a healing. There's a saving.

Saving. There's a forgiving that He does within. And so we see another characteristic of the happiness that we can seek and find. One of the other characteristics is meekness.

Meekness, it kind of follows on, doesn't it? There's that sense of the humility, of the sorrow for sin and of meekness. It says, Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.

This word meek, it means gentle, calm, patient. Meekness in the Greek, I'm told, means like an animal that's been trained by its master. Wild and unruly animals are worthless.

But when trained, they become meek, they have a teachable spirit, made quiet, they can be trained. You know, I think of some pets that we've had in the past and you just couldn't get them to do anything right.

[11:19] But when you've got an animal that's trained, it's useful, it can respond to the master. And that's what God wants us to be like, to be responsive, to be those that can be trained and can hear his word and act upon it.

Meekness is strength under control, someone has described it. And in James 1.21, it says, Receive the word with meekness. Receive the word with meekness.

That means to understand, to apply it, to have that ready receptivity, that surrender to God's will, that openness. Our Lord showed what it means to be meek.

In Gethsemane, he said, Nevertheless, thy will be done. There's a meekness that our Lord displayed. Now, the one who had all absolute power showed such meekness and he says, Learn of meek.

Learn to be meek, for I am meek and lowly in heart. Do we stoop to listen, to care? Another characteristic of this happiness that we can find is a desire for God.

[12:26] A desire for God as we say, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Do we settle for less than that?

Or do we seek the things above? Do we seek that which is going to be truly meaningful, God's best for us? Notice here where it says, they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.

It's a present tense and it's a continual word as well. There's a continual craving, a continual wanting, more and more and more of righteousness, more and more and more of Jesus, of his word, of himself.

some appetites will leave us empty. You know, those kind of things we talked about, the millionaire and the film star. Appetites that will leave us empty because they cannot satisfy.

A searching for pleasure or security or money. In themselves, they cannot bring happiness. What are you filling up yourself with? Eating all the wrong kind of things.

[13:36] You know, I had to get a new belt lately because there wasn't enough holes in it, the one I had. You know, we've got to be careful what we're filling ourselves up with, don't we? It can show if we're eating all the wrong kind of things.

Not that my wife's feeding me the wrong kind of things, but I'm eating what I shouldn't. But God blesses those who will seek his righteousness. Who will seek for that. Who will long for that and desire for that.

That righteousness that he can bring. That righteousness that only Christ is to us. It's Christ in you. It's Christ is our righteousness. The Lord our righteousness.

Righteousness. It means being made right with God. Being right with God. And happiness is linked to this vital truth.

Happiness comes as we put things in perspective. As we seek God's primary things. As we seek that which God places priority upon. As we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

[14:39] We shall find those true riches that will forever endure. As that spiritual hunger would be birthed within us that will have a true searching and satisfying from God's real truth that will satisfy the hunger and thirst of our soul.

another blessing here is about compassion. Compassion. So we've seen really the first few things there. We've seen humility.

We've seen sorrow for sin. We've seen meekness. We've seen a desire for God or a seeking after his righteousness. I suppose that's a seeking after God. And then these other things you could say perhaps more in the human relationship side of things.

and the first one here of those is blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. So compassion. Compassion. Being tender hearted. It's how we treat others.

You know again it's like sometimes those who think happiness is being someone who's kind of overlording other people or in a place of power that they're abusing.

[15:49] but happiness comes from treating others as fairly as you would want to be treated. I think in many ways blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

You know sometimes we can go through life just kicking others when they're down and treating others like they don't count but that's the exact opposite of what God wants us to do and of how he treats us as much as we deserve so little if anything.

But God has a boundless amazing grace still. And do we show mercy and forgiveness like he does to us? Do we show Jesus love to the least? To the outcasts?

To the prostitutes? To the sinful? To those who might be more apparently sinful than we might apparently be? Do we care?

He says be merciful. Blessed are the merciful. Mercy is the very character of God. The very character of our God. You know it's funny isn't it that in the world today sometimes people try to hide their sin.

[17:00] They try to hide their guilt or think that others are more guilty than they. There was a story once where there was a king of Prussia Frederick II of Prussia and in the 18th century he went on an inspection tour of a Berlin prison and he was greeted with cries of prisoners here they were behind those locked doors in those prison cells holding onto the bars if you can imagine it and some were falling on their knees before King Frederick and they were protesting their unjust imprisonment and here were all these prisoners yelling at the king I'm innocent help me get out of here and Frederick's eye was caught by a solitary figure a prisoner sitting in the corner seemingly unconcerned at the commotion and King Frederick went to the man and he said why are you here why are you here today and Frederick was told armed robbery your majesty were you guilty the king asked oh yes indeed your majesty

I entirely deserve my punishment and 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 you know this man at least he acknowledged his guilt and the king showed mercy isn't that how God treats us you know in this world in which we live many people are saying I'm righteous enough to get to heaven I'm not as bad as this guy or that guy or you know I'm not so bad when you balance it out and put it on the scales and compare me against others but no we come to him like this guilty man and say yes I deserve your wrath I deserve your punishment but he says I set you free because Christ has paid the price for you and thank God that's God's mercy that he gives to us and that's the kind of mercy we should extend to people who wrong us you know through life you know the older I get the more people have offended me or upset me or done me wrong but you don't want to carry those chips on your shoulder you don't want to carry that just let it go don't hold that bitterness let it go true mercy forgives those who have offended you it tries to reach out it isn't selfish it's kind to those who are in need it ministers to others as our Lord

Jesus as he healed the sick as he made the lame to walk as he gave the sight to the blind as he made the deaf ears to hear as he gave life to the dead as he loved and forgave prostitutes and tax collectors the drunkards the adulteresses as he wept with the sorrowful as he was a companion to the lonely as he took children in his arms and blessed them as he showed himself to be the incarnation of mercy we should show mercy blessed are the merciful it means think through the days that go ahead of you how can I show mercy how can I not take offense or not lash back or react or get uppity but how can I show grace because blessed are the merciful you'll feel better for it forgiven people forgive if you're unforgiving you're missing out on God's blessing on your life find

and think back maybe there's people in your dark deep recesses of your mind you still haven't forgiven maybe forgive them set them free write them a letter and say you forgive them you know it might make you feel better but you'd be surprised only those who are merciful will receive mercy it's like in

Matthew 18 35 it says so likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you if you forgive from your hearts not everyone his brother their trespasses so it's in the contrary here but if you forgive not or if you forgive your father's going to treat you just like that so our horizontal relationships affect our vertical relationship you know it says leave your gift at the altar when you're coming to worship God there's something you've got to sort out with your human being that you know in your life that there's something behind something that needs sorting sort the human relationships and God will help you restore that happiness that blessedness another blessing comes from purity of heart purity of heart blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see

God the right heart attitude again you could think of that as how you react to others but the purity in heart comes as really the only one who can make our hearts pure is Christ as that cleansing comes as we draw to him he draws near to us as his x-ray vision penetrates and exposes us for who we are for what we are our thoughts our feelings they are all open and evident in his eyesight it is like someone wrote this happiness cannot be found in a world of sin and 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 you must 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 yea happy is that people whose God is the

[22:55] Lord that's a good one isn't it psalm 144:15 happy is that people whose God is the Lord if you're saved today if God is your Lord if you're in right relationship with God by faith in Christ if you found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ he says there's happiness there there's a blessedness there there's a purity of heart and then it says blessed are the peacemakers blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God so again it's urging us to consider that relationship with others promote and maintain peace as much as is in you live peaceably with all men God wants to heal broken relationships God's will is reconciliation not hostility and division and conflict not a bearing of grudges and tension and resentment and rejection but of forgiveness and we see in Ephesians 4 26 it says don't give the devil a foothold don't give him a place don't let the sun go down while you're angry

Romans 12 18 as much as life in you live peaceably with all men you know it was long ago in history there was a believer called telemarcus sounds like he's a telemarketer but no telemarcus and he was living in a monastery and he went to Rome God called him to Rome and he put a few possessions in his sack and he headed out and he arrived in the city and it was filled with great excitement and he asked what's going on to a passerby and they said oh it's all happy today we've got the gladiators in the coliseum you know the blood sports we're going to see some blood shed here today and everyone was getting really blood thirsty and excited it sounds a bit like some of the modern entertainment that's very popular these days and so here it was and here was this man telling Marcus and he thought four centuries after Christ and they're still killing each other for entertainment for our enjoyment and he ran to the coliseum and he heard the gladiators crying out hail Caesar we die for

Caesar and telling Marcus jumped over the railing and he went out into the middle of the field and he got between two gladiators and he held up his hands and he said in the name of Christ forbear and the crowd protested and began to shout run him through run him through we want to see some blood you know you can imagine what they were saying and a gladiator came by he whacked him in the stomach with the side of his sword and knocked him into the sand and just hit him with the flat of his sword and telling Marcus got up again and he said in the name of Christ forbear the crowd kept up his chanting running through running through another gladiator came by and this time they ran his sword through telling Marcus his 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 came over the 80,000 bloodthirsty Romans in the arena and soon a man stood and left then another then another in a short while all 80,000 had emptied out the stadium it was the last known gladiatorial contest in

the history of Rome blessed are the peacemakers can we be like that could we be a peacemaker even though we might be hurt ourselves to stand as it were between those who would fight and hurt each other and just lastly bearing righteousness bearing suffering for righteousness sake bearing suffering for righteousness sake!

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 shall 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 rejoice and be exceeding glad it's got the sense of jump for joy you know do one of those toyota jumps you know it's a blessing there's a joy in persecution you know we're a bit masochistic as Christians there's a joy there there's a joy because why because it's for righteousness sake they're not just doing it for the love of it for the martyrdom of it but because we love our Lord we want to stand and we want to stand for righteousness sake and it doesn't matter what people say against us we will stand we will stand strong there's a blessing there as you stand firm and stand strong no matter what no matter what the opposition no matter what the contrary wins you can stand strong for God and there's a joy even there even in the midst as we know accounts of many of the martyrs of the early church and all the present day church their faith is shining it's glowing it's vibrant a testimony to the world around us and persecution can make you a stronger

Christian it can make you sharper it can make you more solid here's an anonymous poem that catches some of the truths of the beatitudes it says 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 am a Christian I don't speak this with pride 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 pray for strength to carry on when I say I am a Christian I'm not bragging of success I'm admitting I have failed and cannot ever pay the debt when I say I am 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 am a Christian I still feel the sting of pain I have my share of heartaches which is why

[29:39] I seek his name when I say I'm a Christian I do not wish to judge I have no authority I only know I'm loved there's a wonderful joy a wonderful happiness that's found in Christ and we can be a community of people like that not some new improved version but a Bible community a community that stands on the truth of God's word that lives the real life of Jesus in our world today as we go out work in our lives as we go about our day by day as people come into contact with you and me they come into contact with the Lord Jesus through us as we are showing compassion as we living radical godly lives as we living out forgiveness as we living out mercy as we living out compassion as we are living they can see God can change lives and God's power can work in the weakest and we can be champions for

God even if it mean that we pay the price of persecution friends we've been talking about how to find happiness humility humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and he will lift you up humility come to him in brokenness in your emptiness in your unworthiness come to him there's happiness found and I'm using the word happiness but I really mean blessedness because happiness is about happenstances about happenings but real genuine blessedness comes from humility it comes as there is a sorrow for sin as we mourn as it were over our state of inclination to do wrong that there is a grieving of God's heart and we feel it we sense it we broken up over our sin as we are repenting as the sense of it is there's a meekness as we realise hey

I've got nothing to brag about nothing to claim virtue for my only claim is on his merits it's meekness as we come to that meek and lowly one and lay our burden down on his shoulders it's that desire for God that hungering and thirsting more than your daily food there's a hungry and a thirsting for that which is tangible that which is substantial that which is everlasting it's the things of God his righteousness seeking after that and we can see then as those things happen there'll be a compassion we'll have a consideration for others we won't be all about living life for ourselves there'll be a purity of heart there'll be that tenderness of heart there'll be that peacemaking where we'll see opportunities and we'll seize opportunities to make peace where we can and even if it means bearing suffering bearing suffering that's the ultimate isn't it it's almost like you graduate in

this class and the top marks the highest aspiration is to actually be cursed!
for Christ's name to actually be ridiculed for your faith you know you're living in a world in a street in
a workplace where you know there goes that Bible basher whacker whatever they want to call you
but that's because you love Jesus so much you don't care about that you just want to be one who's
known as a Christian and you will stand strong and you'll be blessed for that you'll be blessed for
that let us pray a