

Matthew 5:3-12 // The Way of the Kingdom

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[0:00] Well, today, we're here for a good time and not a long time.

Get that reference, I would love to talk to you later. I wanted to take just a few minutes, just a short time, to look at the way of the kingdom.

We're entering into now a few weeks where we're going to take some time in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Today, we're going to soak in the Beatitudes a bit. And, you know, we can look at that word, the Beatitude, and I've heard people dissect it and all that kind of stuff.

And you know what? I'm not going to waste time. What I am just going to simply say is that if you have ever wondered, if you've ever thought, maybe you're like me, and you're just like, Lord, just teach me how to live.

I can read in the Scripture, I can read passages of the ways that I should forgive, how I should extend mercy, story upon story about merciful situations.

[1:05] I think of David and King Saul. You know, here's a situation where, you know, King Saul had no reason for David to extend mercy. It even got to the point where King Saul was chasing David to kill him.

And David extended mercy after mercy after mercy. And you'd think that was the end of the story, when there was some kind of reconciliation that might have happened.

But it isn't. Because David became king. And he went on to murder, lie, commit adultery, do a whole bunch of things. And you know what God did for David? Showed him mercy.

He showed him mercy. So there's something in here that if we capture it just for a moment, if we read this passage, not like we've just read it a thousand times, but we take it in anew and we say to ourselves, Lord, teach us how to live.

Show us what it means to be a citizen of heaven. Show us, Lord, what it means to be right side up in a very upside down world. So I'm going to get into this.

[2:05] I'm going to read verses 3 to 12, and then we'll just break it down verse by verse. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. And blessed are those who are persecuted for righteous sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You know, blessed is a powerful word to the original language through people who spoke this. It was much more powerful. We kind of think, well, have a blessed day. And that's a nice greeting.

[3:10] It really is. But it meant something so much more beautiful and deep. It was a divine joy. It was like a perfect happiness to be blessed. And as I'm going to get on in a little bit here, if you were to actually work out what the word means, it means, oh, how happy.

It's like a recipe for happiness in that way. Psalm 1 is wonderful for that. If you ever want to look it up. Oh, how happy are the poor in spirit. Well, wait a minute.

That doesn't sound right. But it does describe an inner satisfaction and sufficiency that does not depend on outward circumstance or what's going on in life.

If you've lived enough life, you know that happiness is up and down all the time. Right? You can wake up on a Monday morning and you're not very happy about anything. And by Monday afternoon, you're feeling pretty right with things.

That's happiness. It's circumstantial. It comes and goes. That's normal. It's natural. Joy, on the other hand, is a bedrock to our life. It's something that even in the sad times, even in the good times and the bad times, you can have joy.

[4:18] Because it's something of perspective. Being blessed is like that. Oh, how happy are those. And this is what the Lord offers those who trust him.

It's a sufficiency, an inner satisfaction, that joy and that peace knowing that he's got this. And as crazy as the world seems around us right now, as messed up and upside down as everything seems to be happening, as waterboarded as we can feel by social media feeds on the most vile and evil things we can imagine, blessed are those who follow this recipe to be a citizen of heaven. As we walk through these verse by verse, keep in mind, they're attitudes toward ourselves, attitudes towards sin, attitudes toward the Lord, and attitude towards the world around us. If you've ever asked yourself, or asked the Lord of yourself, teach me how to live, this is a really wonderful set of verses to look. And it is a journey.

I'm not sure any one of us could look in the mirror and say, I've mastered this. You know, I am perfect at the Beatitudes. I am so humble in spirit. You see how ridiculous that sounds, right?

[5:40] We can't. And anybody who does say that, pray for them because they clearly need prayer for that. But it isn't unobtainable. It is just a process.

So let's dive in. Verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Well, what does it really mean to be poor in spirit? It does not mean to think that you're a waste of space. It does not mean to think that your life is a waste of time. It does not mean to think of yourself in such a way where it's just like, I'm terrible. That's not actually what it means to be poor in spirit at all. Being poor in spirit is opposite of the world's attitudes of self-praise and self-promotion. It's having a sober account of who we are, where we start and where we stop in things.

Knowing yourself. Being poor in spirit is kind of like that because as soon as we start down that road, we understand how much we need Jesus. And without him, it's like we're bankrupt.

[6:48] Without Jesus, we have a poverty that is dark. It's hard. It's a tough road. But with Jesus, and we're poor in spirit, it can mean a couple of different things.

It means you know who you are. We accept ourselves as we are. Knowing that we need the Lord's help in our day-to-day life.

And I find it interesting that this is the first beatitude. Right? Out of all of the list of this is how you be a citizen in heaven, this is where it starts. Just look in the mirror and have a sober approach to who you are.

If you walk around, it's like, I'm fantastic. Maybe this is the first one to start with for a reason. Right? To be poor in spirit. Understand that you have a need.

Okay? In the language of recovery, it will actually go on to say that the idea is that you have to admit that there's a higher power in your life. And it is very similar if you look at it from this point of view.

[7:52] To admit that you're not on the throne of your heart. Jesus is. You're not the main character of this movie. You're right there.

You're a part of it. But Jesus is. And we're poor in spirit because we know that we're bankrupt without him. We're hungry without him. We're unsatisfied without him.

We're lost without him. Now, being poor in spirit is not a thing of depression. It's actually just a sobering approach to yourself and recognizing that, you know, we need help.

We need help. Verse 4, Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. And this isn't something that's just a little sad.

Mourning wasn't the idea of just like, wow, it's Monday morning. I'm feeling those blues. Got to go to work with that co-worker or whatever. Whoever fills in the blank for you that way. No, it's not like that.

[8:48] Mourning is something else. You know, I talked about social media just a couple minutes ago and if you flip through enough and you've seen enough reels out there, you're going to see some pretty dark stuff these days and you have a choice to do with it, right?

You either go down the rabbit trail following in and not doing anything with it or you look at it and you mourn over the way the world is. Oh, Lord, the evil.

Maybe you've had a bad experience and you said something wrong. Oh, Lord, I'm so sorry. I really need to make amends to that person. It's a mourning because we understand that without him, without the Lord guiding us, the evil can feel soul crushing out there in the world.

So we can intake it all or we can use it as a vehicle for prayer. Father, there is just some disgusting stuff going on and Lord, we need you and it just breaks my heart to think about this.

You know, we talked about it in the discipleship class earlier and I don't, this is going to sound funny coming from the pulpit, don't pray this prayer, okay?

[9:58] And I only say that because I did and my life was changed forever. Lord, break my heart with the things that break yours. Avoid that prayer at all costs because it is a very quick answer.

You start to open your eyes and you see things. He might put things in your way that alter who you are. That's what happened to me. Lord, break my heart with the things that break yours.

Imagine looking at this world, imagine looking at sin from God's perspective. You know, we talk about, I'm going to share an opinion here, okay?

And it's one thing to share, to offend people with the truth, it's another to offend with your opinion.

So, I'm putting that kind of precursor, this is my opinion. I don't like Palm Sunday sometimes.

And you know why? It's because every church, and I know, they bring palm fronds in and all this kind of stuff. And you know, I'm thinking, dude, have you read this scripture? These people were yelling, crucify him just days later.

[11:06] You know, one of the shortest verses in the Bible that Jesus has immediately after that triumphal entry was that Jesus wept. He wasn't going around thinking, all right, finally I'm being celebrated, because he was realizing all of this, oh Lord, they still don't know who I am.

And he mourned for that. Oh, Father. These same people that were, you know, just celebrating his entrance into Jerusalem were yelling, crucify him just days later.

It's a mournful passage when you look at it that way. Jesus wept. That's mourning. And you may look at the world sometimes in some of those situations and maybe it moves you to weep.

Maybe it moves you to some kind of inner sadness where you just don't know what to do with it, where to put it. Take it to prayer because you'll be in good company because this is what Jesus did when he looked around too.

One of the prophecies you're going to find in Isaiah 53 about Jesus is that he was despised, rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. That didn't strike me as somebody that Jesus was a guy hopped up on prosperity and just went, whoo, you know, happy, saved and free.

[12:28] Nothing wrong with feeling those emotions by the way, but he was a man acquainted with grief. And if you look around the world, there are things that bring grief.

So that idea of blessed are those who mourn, it comes with the promise. We can't stop at the comma. We have to look at the promise. You will be comforted.

You'll have comfort. Maybe not this side of heaven. Maybe that's not your path, but you will be comforted. Verse 5, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

We aren't meek towards ourselves. We're actually meek towards others. And meek is one of these funny things where we can look at it and say, well, okay, the person who's the wallflower, you know, that's timid, right, they're going to inherit the earth.

Oh, that's nice. You know, it's not what it means. You have to look at meekness like a horse that is trained for work and does not run wild, but could.

[13:34] Okay? It's like the wind. It's a gentle breeze on a summer just to lower the temperature and bring cool and it can be a tornado that rips through your house. It is strength under control.

That is what meekness is. Those who could flip tables but choose not to. Those who could walk into a room and just start trashing everything and choose not to.

That is being meek. The situation may justify it. Your anger may be justified but being meek is a special call and it's difficult especially in a world gone crazy.

No, meek is strength under control. It shows a willingness to give up our own rights and privileges. Not an easy thing to do but that's what meekness is.

It's surrendering our own rights and privileges. You know, it's like you could imagine the situation if somebody doesn't get their way. Do you know who I am? You know? Do you have any idea who I am?

[14:36] I deserve this. This is my right. That's not a meek attitude. It's even though you think you deserve it's letting the person go in front of you.

No, it's okay. You know, it's fine. That's having a meek heart. The blessed ones, the meek ones, submit to God's will. And while strong, they are humble and gentle, patient, and long-suffering. They're people who can be wronged without becoming bitter or desire revenge. Every movie you're going to see, you know, like there's probably, I should say every, but I mean loads of movies out there have some kind of revenge story to it.

You notice that? Just that sense of getting even, you know? Yes, he deserved that. And the world wants to stoke that chaos and that fire in our hearts.

Don't be meek. Seek revenge. Bitterness is good. Right? That's what the world wants to tell us, but the Beatitudes say something so radically different from this.

[15:40] No. Don't seek revenge. Trust that the Lord has got this and he will be your justice. That is a meek attitude. Verse 6, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied.

Jesus is talking about a profound hunger, something that cannot be satisfied with food. It's that inner longing. And if you know what I mean, then you know what I mean.

You look around in your world, you look around in your church, you look around in your spiritual life and you say, there's got to be more than this. Father, there's got to be more than this.

There has to be something deeper. I should be able to know you more intimately. How can I praise you more freely? Lord, my prayers seem to be bouncing off the ceiling. How can I get it to the point where I'm just back with you again?

Lord, that's a hunger. That is a hunger and a thirst for righteousness. Lord, there's got to be more than this. There must. And I think that is a healthy thing.

[16:46] It's not dissatisfaction. It's just simply looking at our lives and recognizing, you know what? Until we get to heaven, it's always going to feel like there's this pause.

You know, Jesus came, we have this wonderful word, we have stories upon stories of people in our own century of doing wonderful things for his kingdom. And yet, Lord, I want to know you more.

you know, why do I, when I'm singing a worship song, why does one line in particular move me to tears? Why? What are you trying to say, Lord? Hunger and thirst for righteousness and you will be satisfied.

That is a promise. Never be satisfied with where you are with the Lord. It's not about being anxious at all. It's just about coming to him daily and saying, Father, what have you got for us today?

What do you have for us today, Lord? What's here? What's right now? That's a hunger and Jesus promises to satisfy it.

[17:50] Verse 7, blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy. And this speaks to people, I think, that have received mercy. I've noticed, I've been in ministry a while and I tell you, you know, you can always tell the people that have been forgiven much because they forgive much.

You can tell the people who have received a lot of mercy because they usually extend it very quickly. There's something to that. I mean, isn't it mercy to be emptied of our pride and be brought to a poverty of spirit?

Isn't it a mercy to be in that place where we can be shown who we really are in the Lord and know how much he loves us, that we're enough in him? Isn't that a mercy? Isn't it a mercy to be meek and

gentle and hungry for Jesus?

Isn't that a mercy in our lives that we can experience that here and now? The merciful one will always be forgiving and looking to restore broken relationships and will always choose to look at what's best for others.

I've heard people say before, and I tend to think this way myself, that you could boil the gospel down to two words, others first, the merciful will look at life that way.

[19:09] Others first. Maybe they've had a bad day. They were really mean, but man, maybe they just woke up on the wrong side of the bed. Maybe they're back in that Monday and they're not happy, right? We can be merciful towards one another.

They won't expect too much of other people because they're compassionate. Blessed are the merciful. Verse 8, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Now, in the ancient Greek, this purity, this pure of heart, it doesn't mean a purity in this physical sense.

It's not like purity culture. It's not that. It actually has a couple meanings. And one of them is like a clarity. A pure heart has clarity.

They see things as they are in the Lord and the other part of it is an undivided heart. They're pure of heart. somebody who is undivided towards the Lord.

And it's kind of like if you could just imagine if everybody in the room right now just started talking all at once and just loudly, right? It would be like chaos.

[20:15] And what if I'm over to go over to Derek and I have, I know Derek has a story that he needs to tell me but I can't hear a word he's saying because everybody's talking all at once. I'd have to go over to Derek and say, Derek, I need to go in the hallway with you and I need to hear this story right now from you.

That is an undivided heart but our lives can be like that example that I just gave, crowded and noisy and loud and God can be off there in the distance saying, son, daughter, I love you so much.

I have such a plan for you and even though what you're going through right now is challenging, I have a way through. Follow me. But we can't hear it because our heart is divided.

It isn't clear, it's fogged up. Purity of heart is clarity and an undivided heart for they shall see God.

And it's just like the example I just sent. I'm going to see Derek in that situation because we'll be alone out in the hall just one on one. You don't have to over mysticize that.

[21:22] It's that simple. You'll see God if you have an undivided heart towards him. You'll have that clarity of what he is trying to speak with you through his word, through his Holy Spirit if he's the one voice that you're listening to.

Yeah. You'll see God. What a promise. I think Jesus was talking to the Pharisees a lot with all of this.

I mean, they seem to have purity in the heart on the outside or sorry, on the inside but not on the outside. No, the other way around. Pardon me. Gosh. That's when you have two thoughts that collide right there at the same time.

They seem to have purity on the outside and not on the inside. And when we were in Jerusalem there was one thing that I, a story that somebody told me that kind of stuck with me in that, you know, when you go to like say the Galilee during the time of Passover back in the day they would whitewash the tombs okay, so that it would be very clear this is a tomb stay away because back in the day if you stumbled into one or if you tripped onto one you'd actually have to go and be ceremonially cleaned which means you'd miss Passover.

You didn't want to travel all that way some traveled for a great distance and then miss it because you stumbled into a tomb so what a lot of people do is they would whitewash the tombs and it would look beautiful I mean on a sunny day with that water and then the white it would kind of like you know I was told that would look like diamonds in some ways and I mean I'm thinking what a beautiful sight and then he said yeah but there's dead things inside and this is the way it was with the Pharisees on the outside they looked like they had purity of heart but on the inside it was divided by religion it was divided it was not clear because they had sins that they would not confess they were more concerned about their power or their control or positions what a challenge we can't be like whitewashed tombs and look perfect on the outside and have something gunky in there the Lord wants to change us from the inside out and that's how we be pure of heart blessed are the

peacemakers verse 9 for they shall be called sons of God he's not talking about people that love peace or love peaceability and if you've been a parent you know exactly what I mean stop touching me he's breathing on me okay would you just stop right that's actually being a peacemaker believe it or not just cut it out go to your rooms it's being a peacemaker you're not going to necessarily have everybody love you for doing that but sometimes adults need it too would you guys just stop arguing come on you both believe in the same Lord he loves you love one another you don't have to get along with one another right now you don't have to be friends but come on that's being a peacemaker not a popular thing you know what also is being a peacemaker if I've offended you it's coming to me and saying you've offended me because the opposite is the weak-willed

[24:39] Christian well I'm not going to say anything to him I'm just going to go and gossip and just tear down his character and destroy him all over his place and stuff like that yeah I'll feel better then that is not an attitude that is a beatitude if you've hurt me I'll come to you and say you know what I think you might have just had a bad Monday morning but it kind of hurt when you said or did that and you know what happens well I hope peace oh that's not what I meant or everything clarity peace making is messy business and especially in the church it is difficult business because it takes courage that is not necessarily something we wake up in the morning with and feel like having but it is all important and especially in the body of Christ especially in a relationship Matthew 18 the Lord says you know go it's not really an option there your brother sins against you go and you go and you present the ill you say look this happened and you know what happens about nine times out of ten dude I'm sorry

I didn't mean for that I just had a rough day somebody cut me off in traffic it wasn't you know you just kind of caught the brunt of that it's all good no problem and you get through it easy right and if that wound still persists if the person says oh you're crazy I don't know what you're talking about and you still feel hurt well the word says go and take someone else just you know maybe I'm not communicating this right I was kind of having a bad day and I feel like what happened it kind of hurt me and I'm still thinking about it it's keeping me up at night so I actually brought you know our brother someone here not to gang up or anything but just so that I'm not saying it wrong because maybe how I'm saying it is hurting you and I don't want to do that I want peace and that that brother can listen to both sides right and get through it and if the person that stepped on your toe or whatever you know says oh hey yeah I'm sorry I see it the way that they said it just makes more sense I'm glad you brought them thank you then you've won a brother peace peacemaking but you always have that one person that just still doesn't quite get it and at that point if they say you're crazy you're both crazy

I don't want to have anything to do with you you take it to the church you go to church leadership and say look we've really tried man this guy has got such a bad attitude I don't know what to do maybe I'm wrong can we get some opinion right there's a graduated step but the thing is is the responsibility is on you if you're feeling it go be a peacemaker not a peace lover peace lover is peace at any price okay a peace lover is just like well let's everybody just get along we're going to compromise right we're not going to seek the truth we're not going to expose sin we're just going to compromise so everybody's happy what ends up happening is nobody's happy these things fester for years and they blow up in your face right that's not fun be a peacemaker take the challenge have the courage take the step there will be fruit in it because Jesus is in the ministry of reconciliation 2 Corinthians 5.18 says all this from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation isn't Jesus a peacemaker then he came between ourselves and God and made peace by what he did on the cross we just celebrated this in communion you know we had this rift that happened because of sin in the garden of Eden and I'm not going to dive too far into what happened there but essentially Adam and Eve both in different ways turned their back on the simplicity of what God told them and they sinned there was a rift that happened between now now all of a sudden that perfect nature that perfect situation that God provided for us was now ruined there was a canyon in between God and man and you know what we did we did what very very human things are to do well let's make a religion and we'll follow a whole bunch of rules and that's going to help us get across the problem is

nobody ever follows 100% of the rules nobody so that means that that's not going to work well okay we're just going to be really good people okay we won't lie we won't steal I can tell you right now I grew up with a brother nobody taught me how to lie nobody did right somebody broke the vase on my grandma's you know bookshelf kind of thing he did it right even though I did he did it nobody taught me how to do that it was a reflex okay we have sin that we have to deal with so that means being a good enough person doesn't matter because by God's standard you know I'm a liar based on that story right if you've ever hated somebody in your heart and I mean okay let's be honest with ourselves we have hated before okay Jesus likens that to murder that means I'm a liar and a murderer because I've hated before I need a rescue so I couldn't do it through religion I couldn't do it through good works all right or sorry by morality by being a good person so I'll do it through good works I'm going to help people in with their groceries you know in their homes I'm going to I'm going to go there I'm going to do like 10 a day I'll find people that need help carrying the groceries from the car to their house hopefully they know what I'm doing and it doesn't seem like I'm stealing the groceries but that's beside the point I'm going to try and do that what if the guy beside me only has to do that once per day in order to get it in heaven how is that fair why do I have to do 10 that means good works doesn't work because there's no even measure no this is what it comes down to we are desperate for a rescue we need Jesus we are poor in spirit without him we have to have a rescue and that's what that was was him coming on the cross to bridge that place between man and God and Romans 10 9 says very clearly if you believe in your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord you will be saved that's it there's no religion attached to it there's no Sunday service attached to it that is what's happening in your heart and you can't help yourself but say it oh I don't know that sounds weird well you know

[31:13] I've said this before when I find a new restaurant I don't shut up about it I'll tell everybody you're not going to believe the ribs of that place right that's the same thing if Jesus is in your heart and you know it Jesus is Lord coming out of your mouth it's not so hard right now we need a rescue we're desperate for it verses 10 to 12 blessed are those who persecute you for righteousness sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you the last beatitude folds into a little bit on how the world receives the person trying to live a kingdom lifestyle like we've been talking about they won't receive it well they haven't before they aren't going to in the future but the thing is is you're in good company we all are because as the Lord has just said all the prophets before us this happened to them all the people we've known that have tried to live this kingdom lifestyle that's just different from the world it happened to them our children's children if the Lord hasn't returned by then it'll happen to them the world is going to persecute people for living as citizens of heaven in the Lord's kingdom they will because they're not going to understand what do you mean you're forgiving take revenge feel better what do you mean you need Jesus isn't that a crutch absolutely

I cannot go anywhere without him these days I tattooed him on my arm so I'm not rude to people sometimes I tell you right now I need him I'm not going to skirt around that for a second I do need him and you do too we are poor in spirit we mourn over sin we choose to be meek instead of using strength or the wrong way we desire righteousness we have a hunger and we want more not accumulate more things we just want more we want a bigger heart Lord break our hearts so the things that break yours help us to see help us to see these beatitudes are not valued by our culture but we do have a great reward in heaven I like to think through all of our dark days and through all of our good days there's going to come a time where you know Jesus you're going to wake up one day you'll be in his presence and it'll just be like an embrace well done good and faithful servant let's pray thank you thank you