

Sermon: God Helps Those Who Help Themselves (and other things not in the Bible)

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[0 : 00] All right, if you've got your Bible, go back to Matthew chapter 5, Matthew chapter 5, continuing the series that we started last week on the Sermon on the Mount, focusing specifically on the Beatitudes, and I don't know that I've had more feedback after an introduction.

I mean, some of you are like, I'm reading the whole book of Matthew, I wanted to talk about the Beatitudes, I don't really understand this, and so some of you have already given just some great feedback and excitement for this series, and we're just going to kind of work verse by verse, as we typically do anyways, but one by one through the Beatitudes.

Now, I know there's always some sermon police. I think like three years ago, I preached a message in the series, The Grace Parade, some of you may remember that series, on the Beatitude that we're going to look at tonight, and so just to encourage you, there's about five minutes tops of repeat.

Repeat, everything else is brand new, because some of you inevitably will come up to me afterwards like, I've heard this Beatitude before. Yeah, we'll get over it, all right? Clearly by God's providence, you need to hear it again, okay?

And for your sake, I wrote a brand new sermon just for you. So, there we go. Matthew chapter 5, we're going to look at the first Beatitude, and we gave an introduction last week to the Beatitudes as a whole, and we talked about not minimizing them.

[1 : 42] These aren't little coffee cup verses, Jesus isn't trying to be cute here. We're not to moralize them. This is not the New Testament equivalent of like the Old Testament Ten Commandments, and we're also not going to mellow them.

We're going to let them say what they say, even if it stings, even if it goes against what our culture teaches us is normal, or where the good life is found.

And so, we're going to pick it up here in verse 1 of chapter 5, and I'm going to read down through verse 12 again, even though verse 3 is going to be our primary focus.

So, if you're able to stand, would you please do so as we honor the reading of God's Word? Matthew 5, verse 1 says,

Let's ask God to teach us tonight. God, thank you for the privilege of being able to study your Word. Thank you for these men and women, these families, individuals who've come here tonight because we want to hear from you, and we want to know what your Word has to say to us.

[3 : 43] I pray, God, that you would just give me the words to say. I want to be faithful to what the beatitude means, and not anything else other than to try to communicate what Jesus meant for us to understand.

Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, guide us tonight into truth, even if it hurts. In Jesus' name, God's people said, amen. Amen. You can be seated. Well, if there was one book that you had to read in high school, my guess is this was it.

I'm referring to Harper Lee's famous book, To Kill a Mockingbird. Though, how many of you, show of hands, had to read, you were forced to read that book, all right?

Yeah, a lot of hands are up. So even though a lot of us here have read the book, you may not remember the story. The title, To Kill a Mockingbird, actually comes from a specific event that happens in the story.

One of the main characters, a man by the name of Atticus, he's an attorney. He buys some air rifles for his children. And when he gives them the air rifles, he gives them some specific instructions.

[4 : 56] Namely, they are allowed to kill any bird they want except a mockingbird. And the reason that Atticus gives them for not killing mockingbirds is because mockingbirds are helpless.

They're defenseless. They're harmless. They're small. And they can't defend themselves like an eagle or a hawk. They don't harm anybody's crops or cause damage.

They simply sing pretty songs. But of course, as you read the story, you begin to realize that that command, namely to not kill mockingbirds, is a metaphor for helping the helpless.

You're to defend those that are defenseless. You see, the larger story is that of Atticus as an attorney for a black man by the name of Tom Robinson.

Robinson has been accused of assaulting a white woman. It's obvious in the story that he is innocent, but he is facing an all-white jury, and he is not able to defend himself.

[6 : 06] And so Atticus takes his case. He agrees to defend this person who cannot defend himself. And throughout the journey, throughout the story, as it all unfolds, Atticus takes these little opportunities along the way to teach his children that in life, you help the helpless.

You defend the defenseless. Right here, you never kill a mockingbird. Now, Faith Family, there's a lot of reasons why To Kill a Mockingbird has become a classic in our literature.

But one of the reasons is because every single one of you that's here tonight watching online, every single one of us resonates with the idea of helping the helpless.

Do we not? I mean, do we not all know that's true, that's right, that's something that is good? It's why you feel genuine sympathy for a child with disabilities.

A genuine sympathy for a senior adult who's unable to take care of herself. A kid that's getting bullied at school and unable to fight back.

[7 : 22] Someone in financial ruins that's unable to pay the bills. It's why many Christians go on mission trips. Where? To third world countries to help those who are, quote, less privileged.

Everybody here tonight knows you don't kill mockingbirds. You help the helpless. In fact, we would even go so far as to say we would take it a step further and say the good life, the happy life, the blessed life, the life that is satisfied is the life that helps the helpless.

Amen? Amen? But we would never in a million years ever say that happiness, blessedness, and satisfaction comes when you are the helpless.

Nobody would say that. In fact, I don't know everything about you, but I know this about you. Most of you, because I know you, would do anything.

I mean, anything in your power to help the helpless, and at the same time would do everything in your power to avoid being the helpless. You don't want to be that person that can't pay their bills.

[8 : 49] You don't want to be that person that's lost and can't find their way. You don't want to be that person that feels desperate and needy and, God forbid, dependent. You don't want to be that guy.

You don't want to be in that situation. And that's why everybody, including myself, would do anything we could not to kill a mockingbird, but over our dead bodies will I ever be one.

I'm not going to be a mockingbird. A person in a situation where I'm unable to help myself. After all, doesn't the Bible say, in like Second Opinions, Chapter 3, that God helps those who help themselves?

I mean, isn't that in the Bible somewhere? No. Some of you are like, I think so. I read it somewhere. No. It's not in there. And this is why it's so hard for us to wrap our minds around what Jesus is teaching in the first beatitude.

Because in the first beatitude, listen to me, faith family. Jesus is not teaching, blessed are those who help the helpless. We all know that.

[10:03] No, no, no, no. Jesus is saying something far more controversial. He's saying, blessed are the helpless. The good life is being the mockingbird when you can't do anything for yourself.

Look at verse 3 again. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. All right. So for you sermon police, maybe the next three to five minutes, you'll get a little repeat, and then back to new.

Okay, here we go. Let me start by the explanation of the kingdom. Because Jesus says here, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And we don't really use that language very much.

Nobody's really walking around, hey, what kingdom do you belong to? And who'd you vote for a king? I mean, nobody talks that way. And yet it's frequently mentioned in the gospels.

Jesus ends the beatitudes with the same statement, verse 10. Look at it. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[11:09] Verse 11 and 12 only support verse 10. Verse 10 is the last one. So at the beginning, verse 3, and at the end, verse 10, you see the same statement, the kingdom of heaven.

Here's the technical term. It's called an inclusio. All that means is that the beatitudes are meant to go together. These are not, well, let's see.

I want to be meek, and I want to hunger for righteousness, but that persecution stuff, nah, no thanks. I picked my two. You don't get that choice. It's all or nothing.

They either describe you or they don't. You don't get to pick and choose. In a lot of ways, it's like the fruit of the spirit. You don't get to say, love and joy, I'll have some of that.

Patience? Eh. No, no, no, no, no, no. You don't get to pick and choose. It's the fruit of the spirit. As you grow in the spirit, the spirit is producing the fruit, which is love and joy and peace and so on and so forth.

[12:11] You see, you don't get to pick and choose, and you don't get to pick and choose. Here, this is an inclusio. They describe one person, not different people.

And what's the one person? It's the person who gets the kingdom of heaven. That's who it's describing. Now, what do we mean by heaven here?

Because when I mention heaven, this is the expression that comes across some of your faces like, heaven? You mean in that gated community where everybody wears white robes and sings endlessly?

I mean, it's about as fascinating as watching the History Channel or a Steven Seagal movie. If you don't know who Steven Seagal is, my prayer request is that you keep it that way.

I mean, it's better than the alternative. Hell. But it's boring, and you just got to be honest.

[13 : 08] I grew up in church, and most of the descriptions of heaven that I heard was like, what's better than that? But the idea of wearing white robes and just walking around on gold and singing hymns all my...

No. Okay, well, despite the fact that that image isn't biblical, can I get an amen? Okay, you should say amen. It's not even what Jesus is talking about here.

Jesus is not talking about the place where you go when you die when he says the kingdom of heaven. You see, Matthew is a Jew. He's writing to a Jewish audience.

He uses the word heaven because God, Yahweh, the Jews wouldn't say. And so out of reverence of not saying kingdom of God or Yahweh, Matthew inserts kingdom of heaven.

In other words, the kingdom of heaven is the same thing as the kingdom of God. Those are synonymous terms. And you say, well, what's so exciting about the kingdom of God? Well, the kingdom of God is this.

[14 : 10] It's life under God's rule. It's life underneath God's rule, God's authority. And you say, okay, I'm still waiting for the exciting part.

Well, life under God's rule, hang with me, hang with me, listen, this is big. It's where the things that are wrong get made right. The things that are broken get put back together.

Listen, life under the rule of God functions according to the design of God. Let me say that again. Life under the rule of God functions according to the design of God.

Let me show you this. Go back to chapter 4 and verse 23. Matthew chapter 4, verse 23. And he went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

So Jesus, and we mentioned this briefly last week, Jesus is teaching the gospel of the kingdom, which is the good news of radical grace, and he's performing miracles.

[15 : 16] Now, what are miracles? Jesus performing a magic show? Is it him showing off? You see that lame guy over there? Watch this, guys. Watch what I do. Is he just like, be impressed with me?

No. What is he doing when he's performing these miracles? Notice it on the screen. This is so good. And if you've never heard this before, you need to hear this. Miracles are putting things back the way they're supposed to be.

That's all they are. Miracles are simply putting things back the way they're supposed to be. You're not supposed to be blind. You're not supposed to have a disease.

Listen, faith family, you're not supposed to die. You were created to live forever in the presence of God.

And speaking of that, you weren't even created to be separated from God. All of these things are the effects of sin at the fall of mankind.

[16 : 17] So what Jesus is doing, oh, this is so beautiful. God, give us this vision. What Jesus is doing as he's walking around performing these miracles is picking up all these broken pieces and putting them back right.

You're not supposed to be lame. Walk. You're not supposed to be separated from God. Be saved. Your sins are forgiven. Do you see?

Jesus is showing that he's the true Adam. He's the ultimate Messiah. He has authority over the creation, a broken creation that's being made whole and right by his very word.

That's what a miracle is. It's why when John the Baptist was in prison and he wonders, did we get the wrong Messiah? Did we pick the wrong guy? What does Jesus say?

What's the email he sends? Here it is. We got a copy of it. Matthew 11, 4. You tell John, here's how you know you got the right Messiah. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news preached to them.

[17 : 27] John, the kingdom's here. Do you know how life under the rule of God, you know why you can know that's here? Because look, things are being made right.

Things are being put back together. The dead are coming alive. The lame are walking. This is the kingdom of God. Now how many of you can get excited about that?

Okay. Endless choir practice. No thank you. Right? Sorry, I didn't mean to cut off your clapping because I want you to rejoice. All right? But endless choir practice, meh.

A place where all is right forever, that'll get you excited because that's what heaven really is. It's the kingdom of God.

It's life under God's reign. And we experience this in the already and the not yet. What I mean by that is there are tastes of that now. Okay? God help me with my time management here.

[18 : 23] There's so much I want to say. If anyone be in Christ, they're a what? New creation. That is, the new birth, the full and final restoration of things has already started in you.

If anyone is in Christ, he, she is a new creation. The old is passing away. Behold, all things are new. That is, the reconstruction effort, the redemption effort, the restoration effort that's going to be final one day has already started today in your life when you accept Jesus.

That's what Paul is saying there. Now, that doesn't mean that it's all perfect. We all know that's not the case. But I guarantee that there are people here tonight that you have gone from a place of despair to hope.

You have gone from a place where you had no meaning or direction in life to now having meaning and direction in life. All of that is part of God's rule working right now.

And that's why Jesus, when he was on earth, can say the kingdom of God is at hand and the kingdom of God is coming. Because the kingdom of God is experienced now, but not in its fullest form, which is the not yet.

[19 : 41] And there are so many passages on this. Romans 8, Revelation 21, that there's a day coming when all of creation will be under the rule of God. And in that day, do you remember when we went through the Revelation study, he wipes every tear from our eyes.

We sang about it earlier. Yes, in a little bit of country twang. All right. Home. I mean, what am I going to see when all the effects of sin are removed and the tears are wiped away from your eyes forever and the fullness of joy enters in?

And there will be no more injustice and no more death and no more disease. All of it will function according to God's design. That's heaven. That's heaven.

That's your future. I may get in a little bit of trouble here. Oh, well. Let me say this. This is why if you think you're ever going to get justice without Jesus, you're fooling yourself.

I'm not going to give much commentary on the political landscape of our day, but there's a lot of outcry for justice, right? There's this justice and that kind of justice, and I'm just telling you, there's only one justice, and that's Jesus.

[20 : 52] Because he's the only thing that can take what's broken and wrong and make it right. And much of my concern about even what you're hearing in churches is they're trying to give you justice without Jesus.

Okay? He is the one who brings in the kingdom of God. Okay? So that's the kingdom of heaven. That's what's being given. Now, the question is who gets in?

What are the characteristics of those who get that kingdom, who get in that kingdom? Look at verse 3 again. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs. These are the people that get the kingdom of heaven.

The blessed or the poor in spirit are the ones who get this kingdom. So the first characteristic of someone who gets the kingdom, I say first because remember the Beatitudes is an inclusio.

All of these belong to the person who's going to get the kingdom and much more, as we'll see, is the poor in spirit, poverty of spirit. And Jesus is not talking here about financially poor.

[21 : 54] You can be poor in pocket but not in spirit. This word poor means to shrink, to cower like a beggar. It's a word of total spiritual destitution, spiritually bankrupt, beggars, mockingbirds.

Helpless. Defendless. Now, it's important to note here what Jesus does not mean by poverty of spirit. He does not mean self-hatred.

He's not describing the kind of person that goes around saying, I'm so worthless. Let me tell you about it. That's not what he's describing. He's not describing somebody that's insecure or a coward.

He's not describing a personality type. Oh, look at that person. She's really shy. She must be poor in spirit. Oh, look at him. He's really timid and hesitant and nervous and reserved.

He must be poor in spirit. That's not what Jesus is saying at all. It's not a false humility. In fact, listen, faith family, poverty of spirit is not even something you can produce.

[22 : 57] It's not even something you can get that you can do on your own. Do you remember last week? And those of you that weren't here, you can go back and watch the introduction to this series.

This is why I went to Matthew 18 first. Okay, hang with me. Jesus, are y'all with me by the way? All right, I thought so. Okay, that's what I feel. Jesus is teaching the gospel of the kingdom, Matthew 4, and then he teaches the Beatitudes.

What's the gospel of the kingdom? We looked at Matthew 18. The kingdom of God is like this servant who has this impossible debt, 150,000 years worth of salary, a debt he cannot pay.

So, when he came into contact with the debt that he owed, what? His only, listen, natural response was begging for mercy.

You didn't have to say be poor of spirit, right? Beg. He knew that's the only option that he had. It's the realization that before God, you are a mockingbird, Faith Family.

[24 : 07] You are completely and utterly helpless spiritually, and only God can save you. Yeah, but I got a penny.

Big whoop. Your best deeds are like filthy rags. Listen, your penny of imperfection is the wrong currency.

The only currency allowed in the kingdom is perfection, which means you and I are bankrupt. Do you see? And that's what happens in Matthew 18, is this guy realizes the debt and then he's got nothing, absolutely nothing he can do but plead for mercy.

Now, what you might ask is how does this fit with the miracles of Jesus? Jesus is teaching the gospel of the kingdom and he's performing miracles. How do these two things go together? Listen, listen, listen, listen.

If God's kingdom is where things are restored, miracles, then the only people allowed in are the broken, the gospel of grace.

[25 : 19] If the kingdom of God is where things are put back together, uh-oh, then the only people allowed in are those who don't have it all together.

because if you think you have it all together, why would you need a savior who can make you right? Oh no, once you realize that you have nothing, that's when you'll become desperate for the one who can give you everything.

As long as you believe that you have a spiritual penny to your name, you will not understand the gospel of grace. Penniless!

Get that through your head and your heart. You don't have a spiritual penny to your name. You are helpless and defenseless before God.

And this is why I told you last week that the Beatitudes are going to sound very strange to what you're hearing from the world. It's why I'm preaching this right now. You and I are living in a culture right now that says you ought to fight for your rights.

[26 : 34] And we are exalting political agendas and we have a desire for power and control. That's very different kingdom.

It's a very different kingdom than the kingdom of God. God. Because those who enter the kingdom of God who get the kingdom of God aren't fighting for their rights and demanding their own agendas and standing up for themselves and defending the help.

No. They're saying I am the helpless and I'll never have any justice in life without Jesus. I don't look to the next president to give me justice or some policy.

The only justice I could ever get is in Jesus. I got nothing. I'm bankrupt. You don't see that on Fox News or CNN or whatever.

Alright? But let me take this a little closer to home because it's not just an issue within the worldly culture. It's true in many church cultures. Where in many church cultures we have all our welcome signs but we don't really mean it.

[27 : 45] Church is for the people who have it all together. Not the people who are coming apart at the seams. Oh, you listen, listen, hear me say this.

Churches build mega platforms to help mockingbirds so long as none of them fly inside. I'm serious.

Mega platforms to help mockingbirds. look at all these people that need help and I'm not against that. I could preach other passages where you ought to serve and help others.

My point is we want to help people get it together but not admit we don't have it together. And so if a mockingbird flies inside we cage them up really quick.

there's a story told about Mayor LaGuardia the airport was named after. He was the mayor of New York City during the Great Depression in World War II.

[28 : 46] Quite a colorful character. He would ride on New York City fire trucks, raid speakeasies with the police department. He would take entire orphanages to baseball games. When the newspapers would go on strike he'd go on the radio and he'd read the funny papers to the kids.

One night January 1935 it said that he turned up at a night court at the poorest ward in New York City. LaGuardia dismissed the judge and took the bench himself.

Within a few minutes a tattered old woman was brought before him charged with stealing a loaf of bread. She told LaGuardia that her daughter's husband had deserted her, her daughter was sick and her two grandchildren were starving.

The shopkeeper from where she stole the bread refused to drop the charges and demand that she be punished. LaGuardia looked at the woman and he said this, I have to punish you.

The law makes no exceptions. Your fine is ten dollars. And as he was pronouncing that sentence he was reaching into his pocket where he pulled out a ten dollar bill and paid the woman's fine.

[29 : 59] He then proceeded to fine everybody in the courtroom 50 cents for living in a town where a person has to steal bread to feed their grandchildren.

The woman received forty-seven dollars and fifty cents fifty cents of that from that angry grocery store owner and about seventy criminals and New York police officers who gave the mayor a standing ovation.

Faith family, we are beggars before God. And shame on any church that creates a culture where the very people who get the kingdom aren't allowed in church.

sooner or later you and I must accept the painful truth of our inadequacy and insufficiency.

We must come to the point of realizing that the spiritual bootstraps we're trying to pull ourselves up with need to be cut. And accept the fact that you and I cannot add a single inch to our spiritual stature.

[31 : 10] That we need to stop trying to impress God. Stop trying to earn brownie points with God. Stop offering up some religiosity that nauseates God.

And accept what you are. A spiritual beggar in need of redeeming grace. And if some of you don't like being told that that's true about you, you have yet to understand the kingdom.

So you might say, okay, I want the kingdom. How do I get this poor in spirit? It's clear that those who are poor in spirit get the kingdom of heaven.

And so I want to become like the apostle Paul in Philippians chapter 3 when he says, I put no confidence in the flesh. I wish we had time. We don't have time to go there. But do you remember in Philippians 3 where Paul lays out all of his worldly accolades, all of his resume, and he says, but it's rubbish.

I mean, I'm like a Pharisee of Pharisee. I'm zealous for the law. I am top of the class. And it's all bankruptcy. Not a cent of it could actually go towards paying off my sin debt.

[32 : 29] I put no confidence in the flesh in what I have done. You say, I want to be like that. How do I get that? Listen, faith family, notice that the first beatitude, and all of them, by the way, is not a command.

Jesus, hang with me, Jesus doesn't say, be poor in spirit. That's not what he says. He doesn't command this. Why?

Because poor in spirit is not something that you can muster up, that you can develop on your own. It's something that you naturally express. Let me give you an example.

If I place you before the Grand Canyon, I don't have to command you to be speechless. Think how foolish that is.

I take you out, you're looking at the Grand Canyon, be speechless. I don't have to do that. That's silliness. If I let you taste my mama's pecan pie, I don't have to command you to shout praises to God.

[33 : 39] It's not a command necessary. If I took some of you, like myself, to the top of a roller coaster, I wouldn't have to say, be nervous. You'd be like, already am, buddy.

Didn't have to command that response at all. Already scared to death. In other words, they would all be natural responses to the experience of something.

So how do you become poverty in spirit? Well, you don't become poor in spirit. You already are poor in spirit. So how do you come to the realization of that reality?

I'll offer three things as we close. Number one, an understanding of the greatness of God. You can't walk away with your chest puffed out high when you're in the presence of Almighty God.

Need an example? Okay. How about Isaiah? Isaiah 6 fell on his face when he saw the glory of God and the angelic beings crying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

- [34 : 54] He's like, oh, snap. I'm done. I'm unclean. I live among a people that are unclean. His natural reaction was poor in spirit.
- I got nothing. If that's perfection, I don't have a penny. And nobody I know has a penny. The whole nation of which I'm a prophet of doesn't have a penny.
- I am unclean and I live among a people who are unclean. What about John in the book of Revelation? We saw this several times when we went through that series. He repeatedly falls down at the vision of God.
- Get up, John. Get up. And he's just catching glimpses and visions. Here's my point, faith family. No one has to command poverty of spirit when you're in the presence of God.
- That's why we sang how great thou art. You can't sing how great thou art and I'm a little bit great at the same time. It doesn't work.
- [35 : 56] So if you're struggling with this, notice I said you don't need to become poor in spirit. You are poor in spirit. The question is, do you realize your poverty? And you'll realize it with just a glimpse of the greatness of God.
- Secondly, an understanding of the greatness of our sin. An understanding of the greatness of our sin. And again, this runs against our secular age because we're consumed with the good self-image.
- And this is the message we must grab. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. And as you read through the Sermon on the Mount, you're going to find Jesus saying, perfection is what's demanded to be in relationship with God.
- You must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. I'm out. I'm out. My sin is too great.
- No matter what you've done, it is a sin against the holy, righteous God. And none are righteous.
- [37 : 15] No, not one. You see, once you get a glimpse of the greatness of God and once you get a glimpse of what sin really is, I'm not going to have to command, Jesus is not going to have to command you to be poor in spirit.
- You'll just realize I already am. Are you with me? One last one. One last one we're done. Is a real, and I mean real, real understanding of the essence of the gospel.
- If you've zoned out, zone back in. Because I want you to hear this. What had to happen to make your salvation even an option?
- A six-week course taught by Pastor Nate. Is that all it takes? A little community service? How about the death of God?
- That was the only option. The only option by which you could be right with God was the death of God. God becoming a man in the person of Jesus Christ and dying for you on the cross.
- [38 : 33] That ought to tell you something about the nature of your poverty. If you had a little bit of money in your bank account, then maybe you could do the six-week course and pay off the rest.
- But you're so, and I, spiritually bankrupt. The only option was God dying in your place. Or let me say it a different way.
- Ready? You ready? You with me? You and I are so poor in spirit, the only way you could get into God's kingdom is for God to become poor in spirit. You and I are so poor in spirit, the only way we could get God's kingdom is for God to become poor in spirit.
- That's the essence of the gospel. You say, what do you mean? Here's what I mean. Isaiah 53, verse 3. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. I mean Philippians chapter 2, verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, he didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped or taken advantage of.

- [39 : 56] But he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, being found in human form. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

And if I might give you one more that I think is the most clearest of all, look at the essence of the gospel in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verse 9. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor.

So that you, by his poverty, might become rich.

That's the gospel. That we are so poor in spirit, the only hope for our eternity was for God to do the most radically gracious thing that's ever been done, namely, to become poor in spirit.

God became a mockingbird. Or let me say it this way. Faith family, 2,000 years ago, God became a mockingbird.

- [41 : 14] God became a mockingbird. And our sin killed him. Not that Jesus was actually helpless, but he refused to help himself by coming down off the cross.

Not that Jesus was actually defenseless, but he refused to defend himself so that he could defend you against the all-holy jury that is the righteousness of God.

And one glimpse, one taste of that fact that God became poor in spirit in the person of Jesus Christ, and you won't need to be commanded to be poor in spirit.

You will naturally accept you already are. And that's when the good life begins. That's when the happy life begins.

That's when the blessed life begins. For blessed are the poor in spirit. For it's theirs that is the kingdom of God.

- [42 : 34] And all God's people said, Amen. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. God, I pray that we're just starting to begin to understand what Jesus is teaching in the Beatitudes.

This is radical thinking. It goes against everything our world has taught us.

Blessed are the self-sufficient. Blessed are those who help themselves. And here you come along teaching where the good life actually begins.

And it's not helping the helpless. It's realizing we are the helpless. And there's nothing we can do about it. Except ask for mercy.

And you love us so much. You will give it to us in abundance.

- [43 : 50] Rewire our thinking. And may our lives be more representative of the Beatitudes and not the news. For all the chaos and commotion in the world right now.

Help us look past this kingdom and see the real kingdom, the one that lasts forever. The one whose leader will always be on the throne.

That's the good life. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.