

----- **NOTES** -----

Lesson #2a: A Happy Life

Happiness is a universal human pursuit that has proven to be highly elusive. Where do we find lasting happiness? Is it even achievable? Philosophers, rulers, and commoners have long asked themselves these questions.

Jesus begins His Christian Manifesto by teaching us how to find lasting happiness. It is found in Matthew 5:3-12. This section is known as “**The Beatitudes**”

MEANING OF THE BEATITUDES



The term “beatitude” comes from the Latin word “*beatitudo*”, which means “fortunate, happy”.

The Greek term used in Matthew is “*makarios*”, which Greeks understood to be a “*transcendent happiness beyond care, labor, or death*”.

Jesus said that lasting happiness is not dependent on enjoyable circumstances. It is the result of experiencing the favor of God on your life regardless of circumstances. We call this kind of lasting happiness independent of circumstance “joy”.

In giving us the Beatitudes, Jesus is revealing three realities.

- Our hunger for happiness is righteous.
- Jesus wants people to experience happiness.
- His kingdom is a characterized by happiness.

“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” —Romans 14:17

----- **NOTES** -----

THE PEOPLE WHO FIND LASTING HAPPINESS

Beatitude #1: ***"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."***

The condition of blessing: *Recognizing your moral bankruptcy before God and casting yourself completely on His mercy for salvation.*

The content of the blessing: *You are forgiven of your sin and enter into a relationship with God.*

This relationship is described in three ways:

1. You become a member of the kingdom of God - so you are a subject of God.
2. You become a member of the church of God - so you are servant of God.
3. You become a member of the family of God - so you are a child of God.

One becomes poor in spirit

- By the work of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7-8)
- By seeing God as He really is. (Isaiah 6:1-5; Luke 5:1-11)
- By humbling oneself before God. (Luke 8:13)

Beatitude #2: ***"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."***

The condition of blessing: *Clearly perceiving and deeply grieving over the damage done by sin, both mine and others.*



----- **NOTES** -----

The content of the blessing: **God comes to your side, feeling what you feel and revealing realities that give real hope in the midst of your sorrow.**

- The relational component of comfort - Someone who cares comes alongside you to feel a measure of what you feel.
- The conceptual component of comfort - Someone who understands shares realities that give hope.

Why this comfort in mourning bring lasting happiness? Because you become increasingly confident of 4 realities.

- There is a purpose in the pain
- God is on the move in this broken world
- Justice will inevitably and perfectly be done
- A perfect world awaits you.

Beatitude #3: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”



The condition of blessing: **Using your personal power to benefit other people rather than yourself, even those who are hostile or who hurt you.**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” —Matthew 11:28-29

The content of the blessing: **We are given dominion on the earth.**

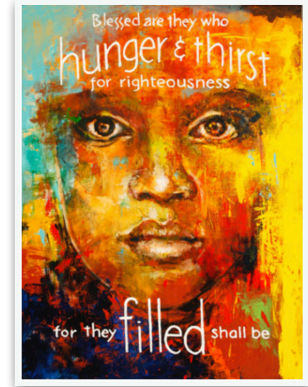
- The literal blessing: We rule over territory on the earth during the millennium.
- The spiritual blessing: We are given greater influence in the present world.

NOTES

Beatitude #4: *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

The condition of blessing: **Zealously pursuing a life that is pleasing to God in everything.**

- Judicial righteousness: Being declared righteous and acceptable to God as a gift because you place your faith in Christ.
- Practical righteousness: Conducting your life in a way that is approved by God.



Some profound implications.

1. The conversion experience gives both to a new set of cravings. (2 Corinthians 5:17)
2. The constant hunger for righteousness indicates we will always need to be changing, growing, and getting better. (Philippians 3:12-14)

The content of the blessing: **As we grow in righteousness, we will become increasingly satisfied with our lives.**

- You can overcome anything that's unrighteous and you can do everything that is righteous!
- Every time you do something that pleases God or overcomes sin, it is deeply satisfying.
- As you do more righteous things and become a more righteous person, you will come to like who you really are.

Before the next class...

Reflect on and record your answers to the following questions.

- ◆ Have you entered the kingdom of God? When? How do you know?
- ◆ What damage has your sin caused? How is God comforting you in this?
- ◆ What are you most hungry for in life? How are you better than you were a year ago? Where are you intentionally seeking to grow right now?

Do the following

1. Share your story of how you entered God's kingdom (were saved) with one person this week.
2. Intentionally practice meekness this week at work, at home, and with friends.