

# *The Beautiful Beatitudes*



*Christian Home Week 2014*

## Introduction of Matthew

Matthew was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, a tax collector when called by Christ. This gospel was written primarily to the Jews, emphasizing the supremacy of Christ to Moses.

## Introduction of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount was delivered to the disciples, but heard also by the crowd, similar but different from "Sermon on the Plain" in Luke.

A simple outline of the Sermon on the Mount is as follows:

1. The Kingdom and Blessings (Matt. 5:1-16)
2. The Kingdom and the Law (Matt. 5:17-48)
3. The Kingdom and God (Matthew 6)
4. The Kingdom and Others (Matthew 7:1-20)
5. The Kingdom's Foundation (Matthew 7:21-27)

## Introduction of the Beatitudes

As a kid, my favorite cartoon was Peanuts and good ole Charlie Brown. I had a book called "Happiness is a Warm Puppy." If we were to put a Charles M. Schulz title to the beatitudes, it might be "Happiness is ..."



The word "Beatitude" comes from the Latin word *beatus* which means blessed but the word is elsewhere translated as "happy," "how fortunate," "God blesses" (NLT), "You're blessed" (the Message), and the amplified Bible expounds to "to be envied and spiritually prosperous...with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions."

We could call these beatitudes the "Be Happy Attitudes." Someone has said that they are not the "Do" Attitudes, but the "Be" Attitudes, meaning it is not what we *do* in the sense of legalism, but rather who we *are* in Christ. We should concentrate on "being," not "doing."

Each beatitude builds upon the previous one, like a staircase. The first and last beatitude promise that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." From the moment of our salvation, the Holy Spirit within us provides for us a

*(Continued on the back cover)*

5:3

Blessed are the poor in spirit:  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

## Spiritual bankruptcy

What does “poor in spirit” mean? Jim Forest explains, “Without poverty of spirit, none of us can begin to follow Christ...It is my awareness that I cannot save myself, that I am defenseless, that neither money nor power will spare me from suffering and death.”

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, “If one feels anything in the presence of God save an utter poverty of spirit, it ultimately means that you have never faced Him. That is the meaning of this Beatitude.”

The Sermon on the Mount and especially the Beatitudes tell us that without Jesus Christ, none of us could ever be saved. Since Christ came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10), He wanted to communicate the complete depravity and sinfulness of the human race.

Only in Matt. 5:3 is the word “poor” used for anything else other than monetary poverty. Those who are *poor in spirit* are those who deny their own spirit so that God’s spirit would be rich in them. It is the condition that is required for us to die to ourselves and live for God.

Born again believers are, as J.M. Boice said, “spiritually bankrupt.” As a result, we have, present tense, the kingdom of heaven. Spiritually poverty is the first step to being where God wants us to be: *saved*.

**Question:** *What is the opposite of being poor in spirit?*

**Question:** *Why would Jesus use a financial word like poor?*

## God’s Standard: Perfection

Later in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commanded the disciples to be “*perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect*.” Even if we define perfect as “to be fully grown, mature, complete,” we are impossibly challenged to be as mature or perfect as our Father in heaven.

To understand the word “perfect” look at Matt. 19:21. Jesus told the rich ruler, “*If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*”

Was Jesus telling the man that selling all and giving to the poor is the way to sinless perfection? Is that what it takes to be saved? No! Jesus

was trying to show the proud man, who thought he had kept all of the commandments, that he too was imperfect.

**Questions:** *Read Matt. 19:16-26. Was the rich man happy? What do his three questions show about the man and his state of happiness? (“Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?” “Which ones (commandments must I keep)?” “What do I still lack?”*

### **Contrition and Humility**

God’s standard of perfection leads us to profound humility. People today view God far too casually, certainly in comparison to those who saw God in the Bible. Here are some Old Testament parallels.

**Psalms 34:18** *“The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.”*

**Psalms 51:17** *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.”*

**Proverbs 16:19** *“Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”*

**Proverbs 29:23** *“A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”*

**Isaiah 57:15** *“For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.’”*

**Isaiah 66:2** *“...but on this one will I look, on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word.”*

“Contrite” can also mean lame, stricken, crushed, broken, even destroyed. It is with that type of spirit that is the first step to salvation and also to happiness and blessedness.

**Question:** *How can a contrite, humble and impoverished spirit bring happiness?*

### **Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven**

What is the Kingdom of Heaven? It is more than going to heaven or even salvation. John the Baptist said the Kingdom of Heaven (KOH) is “at hand,” revealed in part during Jesus’ early ministry (10:7).

There is a present tense (5:3, 10; 11:12) and a future tense (8:11).

There is a spiritual sense (13:11) and a physical sense (11:12).

There is an earthly realm and a heavenly realm (16:19).

**The KOH and Old Testament:** Keeping the commandments is important and brings great praise (5:19-20), but the Law ended with John and the KOH came into being during Christ's ministry (11:12 with Luke 16:16). The KOH includes Old and New Testament believers (8:11), but we have a greater understanding because of Christ (Matt. 11:11).

**The KOH and unbelievers:** The KOH is a powerful change, and the mighty take hold of it strongly (11:12). The mysteries of the KOH are hidden from unbelievers, but are revealed in part through the parables of Matthew 13, 19 and 22. The KOH is given solely by grace (22:10), but not to everyone (22:11). We cannot have the KOH through legalism (23:13).

**The KOH and believers:** Entrance to the KOH requires conversion (18:3) and doing God's will (7:21), but even a child can enter by faith brings the greatest praise in the KOH (See Matt. 18:14 and 19:14). It is hard but not impossible for the rich to enter (19:23, 26). Sacrifices made have results in the KOH (19:12), but the KOH is not given by works (19:30-20:16).

The Kingdom of Heaven is going to heaven but so much more. It is for believers right now, Christ reigning in our hearts. The poor in spirit are blessed because we receive the KOH (salvation).

**Question:** *Have you submitted to the Kingdom of Heaven by receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord, Savior and King?*

**SUNDAY'S "BE-ATTITUDE"**

**KID'S KORNER by Morgan Perry**

If you are poor, you may need to depend on others for help to meet your needs. Jesus is telling us we are "poor in spirit," meaning that we need someone to help us spiritually.

*Who do you think that "someone" is?*

*How do we ask Him to help us?*

*What is something you need to ask Jesus to help you with?*

Blessed are they that mourn:  
for they shall be comforted.

### Mourning follows a poor spirit

The first step to spiritual happiness begins with a poor self-spirit, a humility springing from admitting that we cannot save ourselves. In response, God gives us the kingdom of heaven. In verse 4, we see the truly saved will have a godly sorrow over sins. *Happy are those who mourn?* The Apostle Paul explains in 2 Corinthians chapter 7:9-11.

*<sup>9</sup>Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. <sup>10</sup>For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. <sup>11</sup>For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

The second step in the Beatitudes acknowledges our sins in a profound way: to mourn with a deep sense of grief, often associated with the death (Mark 16:10, Luke 6:21). Coming face to face with the seriousness of our sins, we have a deep sense of sorrow that greatly needs comforting. Mourning produces a genuine repentance (a change inside) and a burden is then lifted off, and God's healing comfort will come in.

**Questions:** *How does sorrow bring about repentance and salvation? Do ALL Christians mourn over their past sins? Have you come to a place in your life where you have mourned over your sins? Has God forgiven you?*

### Godly mourning is better than worldly pleasures

Godly mourning is lacking in many "feel good" churches preaching positive messages, affirming the congregation's self-esteem. But the mourning over our sin and the receiving God's comforting forgiveness allows us to come face to face with how sinful we are and there is a very real need for a Savior. Read Ecclesiastes 7:

*<sup>2</sup> Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart. <sup>3</sup> Sorrow is better than laughter, for by a sad countenance the heart is*

*made better. <sup>4</sup> The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.*

The Bible warns against the “pleasures” of sin being short-lived. Hebrews 11 says, “<sup>24</sup> By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, <sup>25</sup> choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, <sup>26</sup> esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” That “pleasure of sin for a season” (KJV) has no eternal rewards.

**Questions:** *How can good come out of sorrow? Give an example. Can people be sorry for their sins, but not repent? Does sorrow without repentance lead to salvation?*

### **Godly mourning is broader than just our sins**

Christians also mourn over sins in the world. Paul lamented over sinners in 2 Cor. 12:21 “*I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness....*” There is a godly sorrow which should burden us to share the gospel.

Some say that Christians shouldn’t judge others or call out sin as sin. But if that were so, would our nation have ever brought to an end the evils of slavery? We should sorrow over sins and the lost world.

**Question:** *What are some of the world’s sins over the ages for which the church has mourned and then seen changed?*

### **Good mourning: comfort from God**

The beatitudes are steps of progress in our salvation. The second reward is in our comfort. The word for comfort is *paraklethesontai*. Those who know Greek will quickly recognize the cognate word, *Paraklete*, a word which Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit.

*<sup>16</sup> And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; <sup>17</sup> Even the Spirit of truth...<sup>26</sup> But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you...<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you... (John 14:16-17a, 26; 16:7.)*

We have the kingdom of heaven and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. If you mourn over your sins and the sins of the world, God will comfort you.

**Question:** *Which is more important: that you have the kingdom of heaven (eternal life) or God's Comforter within you right now?*

### **Others will also comfort you**

Not only will we be comforted by God, but others will also comfort us. The first two chapters of 2 Corinthians uses "comfort" more than anywhere else in the Bible. Do you need some comfort? Read the following:

*<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup> For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. <sup>6</sup> Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. <sup>7</sup> And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.*

If you read 1 Cor. 5 with this passage, you will see a church which did not mourn over sin. Paul prompted the church to have godly sorrow, sinners repented, and the church was restored and comforted.

**Question:** *Has God comforted you and then used you to comfort others?*

**KID'S KORNER** by Morgan Perry

**MONDAY'S "BE-ATTITUDE"**

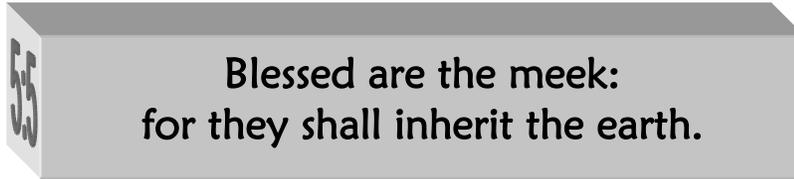
Here, Jesus is telling us we should be sad, or sorry, for the sins we choose to do.

*How does it make Jesus feel when you choose to sin?* (Bad)

*When we choose to sin, over choosing what God wants us to do, what should we do?* (Ask for His forgiveness and help)

*Should you continue to be sad after asking for His forgiveness?* (No)

*Should you keep committing the same sin, knowing that all you have to do is ask God to forgive you?* (No, you need to make every effort to make better choices, asking God to help you.)



## Meek people are happy and vice versa

Have you ever seen a proud, arrogant person who was truly happy? Generally, they find fault with others in order to maintain their perceived superiority. On the other hand, a meek, gentle, lowly and humble person tends to be quite content with what life and circumstances bring.

**Question:** *Who is someone who demonstrates meekness?*

## Humility follows mourning

Meekness is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). But because it rhymes with “weakness,” we often have a misunderstanding of the word. Jesus described Himself as meek (Matt. 11:29) but He certainly wasn’t weak. If you have ever had to genuinely show humility, gentleness and meekness, it is certainly one of the hardest things a Christian is called to do. Someone described being meek as being:

**M**ighty-Being meek is not for the weak or faint of heart

**E**motionally Stable-Meek people control their emotions

**E**ducable-You cannot teach a proud person

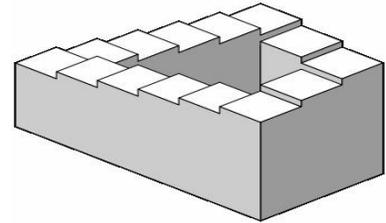
**K**ind-Without loving kindness, all else is clanging noise

In this Beatitude, Jesus quotes Psalm 37:10-11: *For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. <sup>11</sup> But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.*

After an impoverished spirit and mourning over sins, we inherit a sense of lowliness, knowing that only by the grace of God are we saved. The beatitudes grow within us as attitudes and actions we submissively develop. We should be making make steps upwards in our Christian discipleship for the rest of our lives.

If we reject meekness, we need to go back to impoverishing our prideful self-spirit and mourn over our sins, asking the Holy Spirit to infill us, to control us and to impart His spiritual fruit within us.

**Questions:** *How are the beatitudes steps are like the picture to the right?*



## Happy are the mighty

When we think of meekness, mightiness does not come to mind. But it should. A picture of meekness is often given of a strong and wild horse, brought under control, utilizing his mighty strength as a great asset. Paul wrote this in 2 Corinthians 10:

*<sup>1</sup>Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: <sup>2</sup>But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)*

**Question:** *How are you strong in meekness?*

## Happy are the emotionally stable

Jesus was emotionally stable. When insults were hurled at Him, He did not return them. During His crucifixion, he could have called down legions of angels, yet he didn't lose control. He knew who He was, what His inheritance was and what the final outcome would be. See Matt. 11.

*<sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

**Question:** *When are you emotionally out of control?*

## Happy are the educable

James, the half-brother of the Lord, at first rejected Jesus as the Messiah. But with a teachable heart, he learned meekness. He wrote that we should *“receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”* In James 3:13-18, he wrote of meekness and wisdom:

<sup>13</sup> *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.* <sup>14</sup> *But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth...*

**Questions:** *Can you learn from your mistakes? Better yet, do you?*

### Happy are the kind

A meek person is kind, not quick to pounce, having the love described in 1 Corinthians 13. A meek person will show the gospel as described in 1 Peter 3:15-16, *“<sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; <sup>16</sup> having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”*

**Question:** *Why is it hard for believers to be kind?*

### The oxymoronic Beatitude

The teachings of Christ often seem contradictory or oxymoronic. A person who inherits the earth surely is one who fought, clawed, and bargained to win. This beatitude seemingly goes against common sense: the meek often are taken advantage of. They don't inherit the earth.

But notice the word “inherit.” We inherit a kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34). Just as the poor in spirit have the kingdom of heaven, we will someday inherit an earth on which we shall reign (Rev. 5:10, 20:6).

**Question:** *Where do we reign after the millennium (Rev. 22:5)?*

### TUESDAY'S “BE-ATTITUDE”

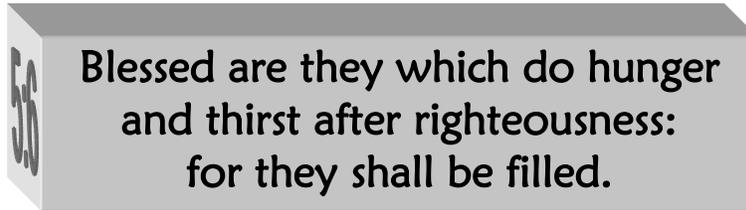
### KID'S KORNER by Morgan Perry

Jesus is telling us we should be meek. Being meek means you are gentle, you don't brag and you obey your parents, teachers and any others you know you should respect.

*How can you be meek?*

*Is it easy or hard for you to be meek?*

*If you find it hard to be meek, what should you do?*



### **Righteousness builds upon meekness**

After meekness, there is a thirst and hunger for righteousness. Righteousness is not merely doing right and avoiding wrong. That is legalism. Without meekness, such a desire would only result in self-righteousness. Righteousness is right standing before God brought about by the righteousness of God and results in a continued path to blessed happiness.

### **The Righteousness of God**

God's righteousness is explained in Phil. 3:9. *"And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ--the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith."* Paul was righteous by the Law, but when judged by God, Paul's righteousness fell short of God's perfection.

We are to yearn not for *our* righteousness, but for *God's* righteousness. Romans 1:17 says that the God's righteousness is revealed by faith.

God's rule says that sacrificial blood brings about forgiveness of sin. *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul"* (Leviticus 17:11). Blood on the altar will make atonement for the soul. But **not** the blood of animals. Psalms 40:6 says, *"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened. Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require."* Hebrews 10:4 says, *"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins."*

So whose blood? The blood of Christ. Hebrews 9:12 says, *"Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

So how can we know that God will keep His promise, to forgive us of our sins? By trusting that God is righteous. This is said again in Rom. 3:21-22a, *"<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, <sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe."*

The famous line of Rom. 3:23 is actually a dependent clause of a sentence explaining God's righteousness is shown by faith:

**We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. (New Living Translation)**

We are saved because God is righteous. We hunger and thirst for God's righteousness. To do otherwise is ignorant Romans 10 says, *"<sup>3</sup> For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. <sup>4</sup> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."*

**Questions:** *Do you feel smug about how good you are compared to others? Are you looking at others' sins rather than God's righteousness?*

### The Righteousness of Christ

Jesus was the only one who was righteous in God's sight. 2 Cor. 5:21 says Christ's sacrifice made us righteous, even though we aren't. *"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."* 1 Peter 3 also explains that Jesus, the just, died for us, the unjust, *"<sup>18</sup> Christ also suffered when he died for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners that he might bring us safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit."* (NLT)

Only Christ fulfills the righteous requirements of the Law; only His blood on the altar is pure. Romans 8 says, *"<sup>3</sup> For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: <sup>4</sup> That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*

**Question:** *How are you affected by the "great exchange" of Christ becoming sin, even though He had none, so that we could have His righteousness, even though we have none?*

## The Righteousness of Man

After we hunger and thirst for *God's* righteousness and the righteousness *in* Christ, we truly long for our righteousness. But unlike a longing for food to satisfy ourselves, we long to bear fruit. 2 Cor. 9 says:

*<sup>10</sup> "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, <sup>11</sup> while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God."*

After we are saved, we bear righteous fruit, as James 3:18 says, "*And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*" Paul said in Eph 5:9, "*For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth.*" and again in Phil. 1:11 "*being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*"

## They shall be satisfied

There is a verse that says "*do not become weary in doing or at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up*" (Gal. 6:9, NIV). If you are not feeling satisfied or filled in all you are doing, it may be because you are looking at the wrong things. Self-righteousness comes in comparison to others. Satisfying-righteousness looks to the harvest.

**Question:** *What type of fruit do you bear? Are you doing good but with the wrong attitude? If you long for righteousness and are not filled, whose righteousness are you hungering and thirsting for?*

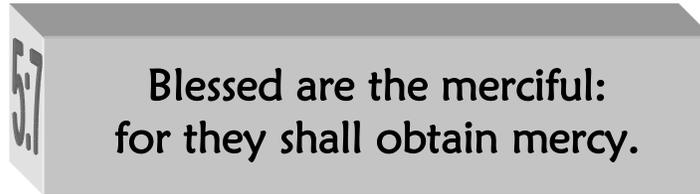
**KID'S KORNER** by Morgan Perry

**WEDNESDAY'S "BE-ATTITUDE"**

When Jesus tells us we should "hunger and thirst for righteousness," He wants us to crave a friendship with Him and God. He wants us to desire to know Him more than any other thing we can think of.

*Tell me examples of how you want a friend to treat you.*

*How can you show God you love Him and want to be His friend?*



A politician went to have his portrait done and upon seeing the results was quite upset about how his pictures had turned out. He went in and griped at the photographer and said, “These pictures do not do me justice!” “Justice?” the photographer said, “with a face like yours, you do not need justice; you need mercy.”

**Question:** *What is justice? What is mercy?*

### How mercy builds upon righteousness

Previously we studied the righteousness of God, of Christ and of humans. Longing for righteousness must be followed by mercy. A poor spirit (5:3) leads to mourning (5:4) which leads to humility (5:5), followed by a desire for righteousness (5:6). We have no righteousness apart from faith.

In light of that, how can we have anything except for a merciful heart? The word *for* can be translated *because*. The verse could read, “Merciful people are happy, *because* they too shall obtain mercy.” They do not carry grudges or keep a score of debts. They dispense mercy, knowing that they have and shall receive mercy themselves, and are happier for it.

We sometimes think mercy is the opposite of justice, but actually it is a complement to it. When we see justice, we see the need for mercy. A mother of a man accused of a serious crime went to Napoleon and pled for mercy. “Mercy for that scoundrel? He doesn’t deserve it!” was Napoleon’s reply. The mother said, “Sir, it wouldn’t be mercy if he deserved it!” The mother’s logic prompted Napoleon to relent, “Well, then, I will have mercy.”

Some people use this and other verses on forgiveness to say that God’s mercy on us depends on our mercy towards others. Such thinking is contradictory to what the word mercy means...we shall obtain mercy because of our sins, not because of our good works.

**Question:** *What is the opposite of being a merciful person?*

### **Mercy for the miserable**

The Greek word for merciful and mercy is based on *eleos* which is a descriptive adjective and is not based on emotions. In other words, God doesn't feel sorry for us, but rather He is a merciful in His nature. The Latin word is *misericordia* which sounds a lot like our word, miserable. In fact, the King James translates a Greek word similar to *eleos* to miserable twice. *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"* (1 Cor. 15:19)

*"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"* (Rev. 3:17). A person who needs mercy is miserable and a person who refuses to give it will eventually become miserable.

Read Romans 9:16 *"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"* Luke 6:36 *"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."*

Now read Matthew 6:12,14-15 *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ...For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

**Questions:** *Who is it that initiates mercy, God or us? Do we have to do anything to deserve mercy? What do others have to do in order for us to be merciful?*

### **Being merciful is a Be-Attitude**

What is your attitude towards others who are miserable and pitiable? The worse someone is, the more they need mercy. In God's eyes, how someone acts towards us is not what's most important, but rather how we react. The word merciful is not a noun, but rather an adjective. It describes who the believer is, and not just what he does.

**Questions:** *When you are wronged, do you seek justice or mercy? Now, when you are wrong, do you seek justice or mercy?*

When and how do we obtain mercy?

If we are merciful, we may notice that others are merciful toward us and we will see God's mercy come to us like a reflection in a mirror. It is more than just receiving mercy in heaven, but we shall obtain mercy here as well. So how can we go beyond our hurts and get to healing?

DON'TS AND DO'S

- 1) Don't nurse, burn  
(Job 11:16, Acts 19:19)
- 2) Don't rehearse, spurn  
(Heb. 8:12, 10:17)
- 3) Don't curse, learn  
(Prov. 9:9, 2 Cor. 1:4)

DO'S AND DON'TS

- 1) Immerse, don't churn  
(Mic. 7:19, Prov. 30:33)
- 2) Reverse, don't yearn  
(Isa. 61:3, Ex. 14:12)
- 3) Verse, don't turn  
(Ps. 119:10-11)

**THURSDAY'S "BE-ATTITUDE"**

**KID'S KORNER** by Morgan Perry

Have you ever heard the saying, "Treat others the way you want to be treated"? This is exactly what Jesus is talking about in this Beatitude. He is telling us that we should show mercy, or kindness, to people, even when they don't deserve it. This is because there are times that we need forgiveness and God ALWAYS forgives us. If we show others mercy and forgiveness, we will be given the same from God.

*Give an example of how someone has hurt your feelings.*

*How should you respond to their actions?*

*Give an example of how you have possibly hurt God's feelings.*

*How does He respond to your actions? (When we ask for forgiveness and make every effort to make better choices, God ALWAYS forgives)*

58

**Blessed are the pure in heart:  
for they shall see God.**

### **Climbing from mercy to purity**

The climbing of the stairs of the beatitudes is not only stepping up for the requirements of the “blesseds” but also for the rewards. What that means is not only is it a greater challenge to seek to be pure in heart (5:8) than it is to be merciful (5:7), but the rewards also increase. We are comforted, but even better we shall inherit the earth. Better yet, we shall be filled with the righteousness of Christ by faith. Greater still, we shall receive mercy because even the righteous still need mercy. But what could be greater than that? Seeing God!

In the Old Testament, seeing God was a thing to be feared, because “*no man can see God and live*” (Exod. 33:20). Yet several did see God, including Moses, Isaiah, and Job said he knew that he would see God (Job 19:26, which also supports the resurrection). Seeing God was feared, yet an honor without parallel.

### **Who has a pure heart?**

“Well you know my heart,” some will say. Oh no I don’t! Jer. 17:9 says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” Only God knows all the hearts of humanity (1 King. 8:39).

The first mention of the word heart was in Gen. 6:5, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” It is described as “uncircumcised, hardened, wicked, godless, defiling the whole man, resisting the repeated will of God.”

But Ezekiel promised a wonderful heart surgery in Ezek. 11:19 and 36:26, “*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*” The Psalmist said that God can create in us a clean heart (Ps. 51:10).

In the New Testament, we see that it is with the heart man believes and it results in righteousness (Rom. 10:9-10). And it is only through that

faith are our hearts purified, *“So God, who knows the heart,...(gave) them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith”* (Acts 15:8-9).

Once we are saved, then we can pursue *“righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”* It is only after we are saved can we truly love as it says in 1 Peter 1:22 *“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.”*

Turn to James 4:7-10 and see how closely the brother of our Lord is recalling the beatitudes.

*<sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

### Old Testament parallel

Psalm 24 was undoubtedly in the Lord’s mind when he said this beatitude. It reads, *“The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein. <sup>2</sup> For He has founded it upon the seas, And established it upon the waters. <sup>3</sup> Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully. <sup>5</sup> He shall receive blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation. <sup>6</sup> This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face.”*

### Pure hearts want to see God

In discussing whether or not God was in a sense bribing His children to be good by offering them rewards, C.S. Lewis said, “We are afraid that heaven is a bribe, and that if we make it our goal we shall no longer be disinterested. It is not so. Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to.” (The Problem with Pain)

<p><b>Question:</b> <i>Do you truly want to see God?</i></p>
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Some people don't really want to go to heaven and they definitely would not want to see God in this lifetime. They may say they do but it is because they do not truly see their sinfulness. A pure person's greatest reward is to see the ultimate in purity of heart, the God who created us.

**Question:** *If you don't want to go to church, don't want to read the Bible, don't want to hear sermons, don't want to give, but want to live like the world does, ask yourself this, "Do I really want to see God?"*

### **What keeps us from seeing God?**

Hebrews 12:14 speaks on seeing God, *"Pursue peace with all men and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."*

A filthy person doesn't want to be near a clean person once he realizes his filthiness.

**Question:** *Think of a time when you were absolutely filthy. What did you want to do and did you want to be in a perfectly clean room?*

### **KID'S KORNER** by Morgan Perry

### **FRIDAY'S "BE-ATTITUDE"**

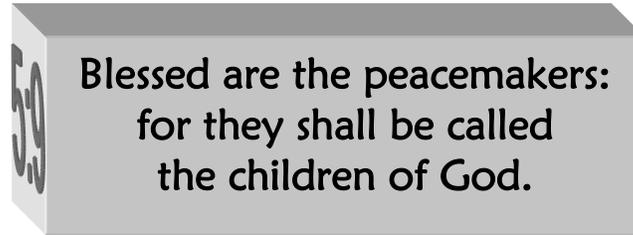
The focus of your life should be to love God. If you truly love Him, then your actions will show your love and friendship with Him. In this Beatitude, Jesus is teaching us that we should not focus on how we look, what we have, or what we wished we had. Instead, we should focus on our love for God. When we have that close friendship, we will not only see God working in our lives, but we are guaranteed to see Him in heaven.

*How do your actions show your love and friendship with God?*

*If you do not know, have you asked God to be your friend and to be a part of your life?*

*Do you believe in Jesus Christ and that He died on the cross to forgive you for your sins and do you believe he rose from the dead?*

*If you have never told God that you believe in Him, you can speak with Him now, in prayer, and tell Him that.*



### From Purity to Peace; from seeing God to sons

What is a peacemaker? Is it only helping others to be reconciled with one another? If that is all, why would that alone result in us being called children of God? The word “peacemaker” is unique to this verse. A close comparison is found in Col. 1:20 as it is applied to Christ.

*<sup>18</sup> And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. <sup>19</sup> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, <sup>20</sup> and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.*

Did you catch it? No, *not* the underlined words of making peace--the other part of the verses, with words like “*firstborn*” “*reconcile*” and “*the Father.*” Isn’t it amazing that the only two places in Scripture where peace-making is explained, it also relates to the family relationship?

Is there a connection? Jesus is not saying “Happy are those who help people get along with each other.” He is talking about making peace with our heavenly Father, and how that gets us to be called His children!

If you have all of the other beatitudes, that is great. But we must help others make peace with God! This is higher than only having our own purity of heart because it brings purity to others. It brings others to Christ, reconciling them and making “peace through the blood of the cross.”

Peace on earth is not lasting. Peace made with Christ is everlasting! “*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,*” (John 14:27). He is not saying “Blessed are people who make peace like the world makes peace.” Jesus said there would never be lasting worldly peace, instead in the world we would have trouble. “*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world,*” (John 16:33).

**Questions:** Combine John 14:27 with John 14:1. What should keep our hearts from being troubled, afraid and essentially give us peace? In John 16:33, What did Jesus say he did to bring peace to believers?

### Things that make for your peace

There is nothing that breaks the heart of Jesus more than when people fail to make peace with His heavenly Father. There is Biblical proof that this is true in Luke 19:41-44.

*<sup>41</sup> Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, <sup>42</sup> saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, <sup>44</sup> and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

Do you want to see an absence of worldly peace? Bring up the name of Jesus. Jesus spoke about worldly peace but not in a positive sense.

*<sup>34</sup> "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; <sup>36</sup> and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' <sup>37</sup> He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>38</sup> And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. <sup>39</sup> He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. Matt. 10:34.39*

Paul also made it abundantly clear that making peace means bringing people to salvation, reconciliation between God and man. And that results in us being called the children of God! Read Ephesians 2:

*<sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, <sup>15</sup> having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body*

*through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity...<sup>18</sup> For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.<sup>19</sup> Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...*

**Are you called a child of God?**

What does it take to *be* a child of God? Clearly, it is by grace received through faith, *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,”* (John 1:12-13).

But what does it take to be *called* the children of God? To be *called* a child of God is when others see you as a “chip off the old block.” We are called children of God because we are doing what the Father is doing. It means we are acting like God and bringing peace between humanity and God. Read 1 John 1:1 *“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.”*

We are called children of God because we follow Him, in faith and then in obedience. We are never more like Christ than when we reconcile the world to make peace with God.

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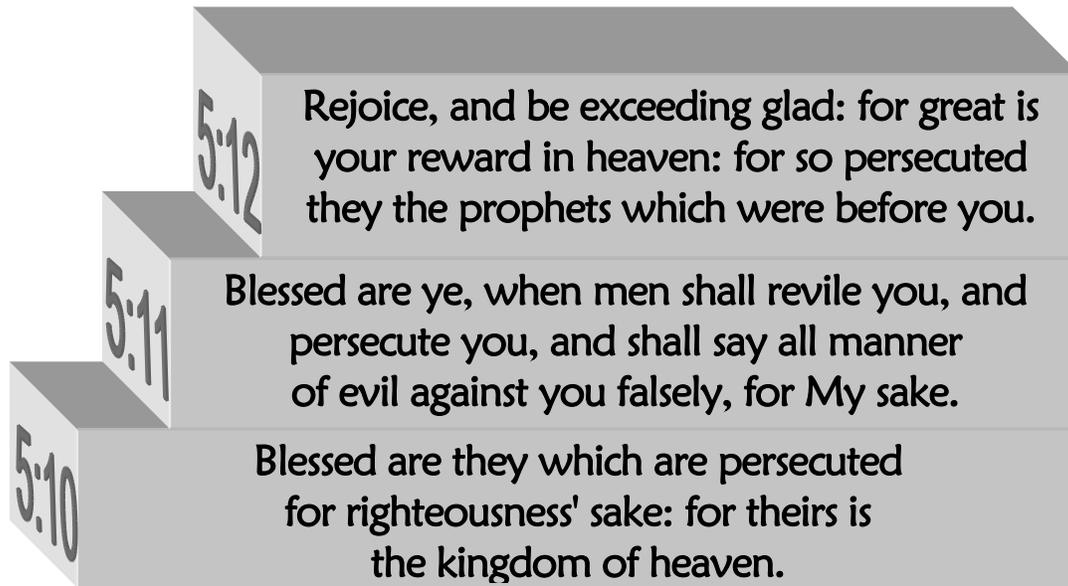
**SATURDAY’S “BE-ATTITUDE”      KID’S KORNER by Morgan Perry**

Jesus wants us to be “peacemakers.” Being a “peacemaker” means that you will help people get along and be friends. In addition you will take time to tell people about how Jesus wants us to treat each other when we have problems. Although it may be hard at times, we should NEVER talk unkindly about others, because we should not cause fights.

*Has anyone ever hurt you so much that you wanted to hurt them back?*

*How did you feel when you were going through that?*

*According to this Be-Attitude, how does Jesus want us to handle these situations?*



### Why persecution follows peacemaking

Why is a believer persecuted? It is for righteousness sake.

D. Martyn Lloyd Jones wrote “it is interesting...that this particular Beatitude follows immediately the reference to the peacemakers...He is persecuted because he is a certain type of person.”

Not exactly a compelling reason to strive for righteousness or peacemaking is it? But it is true throughout Scripture. Why did Cain kill Abel? Why did Saul pursue David? What put Daniel in the lions’ den or the three Hebrew boys in a fiery furnace? What did Job do to deserve what happened to him?

Many times in life and in the Bible, we see that doing the right thing often leads to unpopularity in the world. There is a reason for that. This is not our home, as we live in a fallen world and God has prepared us for the kingdom of heaven.

### Same reward, different degree

Secondly, look at the reward. We are back where we started. After climbing the steps of the Beatitudes, have we come to the bottom rung? Hardly! Look at Matt. 20:1-16. Laborers hired at the end of the day got exactly what those who worked for at the beginning of the day. They complained, but the owner said, “*Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?*”

When we see all that we have suffered for righteousness’ sake compared to what we *might* have received *without* the salvation through Christ, no wonder we will cast our crowns at the feet of Jesus. The reward of the kingdom of heaven is no more deserved at the top of the staircase than it

was at the bottom. A true servant of Christ will say as the servant He spoke of said in Luke 17:7-10, *“We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.”*

So is there a point in attempting to live the Beatitudes, if we are going to get the same reward as everyone else? By all means! Persecution has the same reward of the kingdom of heaven as being poor in spirit, but so much more.

Matthew 13:43 explains the story of the wheat and tares, *“Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”* God will remember our labor and our persecution and He will reward us. Matthew 5:12 explains further, *“Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”*

### Verses about God rewarding us.

God will reward you openly for righteous works done secretly.

*<sup>4</sup> Give your gifts in secret, and your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you. <sup>6</sup> When you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Then your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you. <sup>18</sup> No one will suspect you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in secret. And your Father, who knows all secrets, will reward you. <sup>24</sup> Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and the Master you are serving is Christ. <sup>18</sup> The nations were angry with you, but now the time of your wrath has come. It is time to judge the dead and reward your servants. You will reward your prophets and your holy people, all who fear your name, from the least to the greatest.*

(Matt. 6:4, 6, 18, Col. 3:24, Rev. 11:18, 22:12).

Rewards for small acts will never be lost. Salvation is free, but rewards are according to our works, especially loving our enemies.

*<sup>42</sup> And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded. <sup>8</sup> they will be rewarded individually, according to their own hard work. <sup>35</sup> Love your enemies! Do good to them! Lend to them! And don't be concerned that they might not repay. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to the unthankful and to those who are wicked. (Matthew 10:42, 1 Corinthians 3:8, Luke 6:35)*

Some outwardly righteous works won't receive any heavenly rewards. (See Matthew 6:1-2, 2 John 1:8, 1 Corinthians 3:14)

### **Why are you being persecuted?**

Finally, let us note again what righteousness is and why that is the source of our persecution. It is not the act of being noble or good or even being what the world would call "right." The Biblical definition of righteousness is "right standing with God," and not with the world.

This is not Murphy's Law of "No good deed will go unpunished." This is Kingdom's Law that says that "*the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking* (that is, living selfishly), *but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*" In Matthew 5:10, He says "*for righteousness' sake,*" and then in the very next verse, He says, "*for My sake,*" making persecution for righteousness and for Christ as being equal.

*Blessed are you who have spent time in this devotional this week for Christian Home Week. May God richly bless you and make you a blessing to others. Amen.*

**KID'S KORNER** by Morgan Perry

**SUNDAY'S "BE-ATTITUDE"**

Jesus knows *exactly* what it feels like to be "persecuted for righteousness." He was cruelly and harshly treated because he had done *everything* right, because he was the son of God. Jesus wants us to do what is right, to share how God wants us to make good choices, and generally live our life in a way that makes Him proud. Sometimes, when we do this, people will make fun of us. Here, in this Beatitude, Jesus wants us to understand that He will bless our life for being faithful to Him and our Heavenly Father.

**Have you ever felt persecuted, treated cruelly or harshly, by someone?**

**How did that make you feel?**

**Have you every persecuted someone else?**

**Take a moment to think about how that made them feel.**

**Is it easy or hard to do what is right?**

**Pray for God to help make you strong, able to know what to do to make Him proud!**

*(Continued from the front cover)*

portion of the qualities found in each beatitude, but we must nourish and encourage each aspect to grow in our lives.

### Other Beatitudes in Scripture

Four other times in Matthew, there are pronouncements of “blessedness.” Chapter 11, verse six speaks about not being offended in Christ; Matt. 13:16 speaks on those who were able to see and hear Jesus at work, 16:17 pronounces a blessing up Peter for his proclamation of Christ as the Son of the living God, and 24:46 proclaims a blessing on those who are faithful when Christ returns.

Luke records similar uses of “blessed” in chapter 6 and uses the word a total of 15 times in his gospel. John’s two beatitudes include the famous rebuke of Thomas’ doubting when Jesus says “blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe.”

Romans and James also have some beatitudes, and Peter echoes Jesus’ beatitudes in respect to suffering and facing reproach in 1 Peter 3:14 and 4:14. King James there translates μακαριος or *makarios* as “Happy” rather than “blessed.” And in typical numerical fashion, the Apostle John records precisely seven beatitudes in Revelation.

The practice of issuing blessed promises goes back as far as the Old Testament, most notably Psalm 1: *“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night”*

A beatitude can be traced back to the first occurrence in Scripture, found in Deut. 33:29, *“Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will trample down their high places.”*

As you study these blessed promises this week, look for blessings and sources of happiness in keeping God’s word and these “Be Happy Attitudes”. As Pharrell Williams might sing, clap along if you feel a beatitude is for you. Thanks Morgan Perry for making this happy for the kids too!

