

BIBLE READING DAY 11, WEDNESDAY: MARCH 9

Sermon On the Mount

Matthew 5:1–48

And seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the humble in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Read the Beatitudes, and there you have a description of what every Christian is meant to be. It is not merely the description of some exceptional Christians. Our Lord does not say here that He is going to paint a picture of what certain outstanding characters are going to be and can be in this world. It is His description of every single Christian.”

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones,
Studies in the Sermon on the Mount

“Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

“Blessed are those who make peace, for they shall be called sons of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when men revile you, persecute you, and speak all manner of evil against you falsely because you are my disciples. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so did men persecute the prophets who were before you.”

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can it be salted? It is then fit only to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and place it under a bushel, but on a lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give praise to your Father in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come, not to abolish, but to fulfill them. For I tell you truly, till heaven and earth pass away, not one little letter or one little mark will pass from the law until it is all fulfilled. Therefore, whoever disregards one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever observes them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“You have heard that it was said to the people of old, ‘You shall not kill; and whoever commits murder shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you, everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment. Whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be answerable to the council, and whoever shall say, ‘Moreh,’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

“Therefore, if you bring a gift to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then go and offer your gift. Come to agreement with your accuser without delay, lest he hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the jailer, and you be thrown into prison. I tell you truly, you will never get out of there until you pay the last penny.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you, everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Therefore, if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better that one of your members should be lost than that your whole body should be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better that one of your members should be lost than that your whole body should enter hell.

“It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you, everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and whoever marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not take oaths at all—neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make a single hair white or black. But let your word be simply ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ Anything more than this is of evil.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not seek to retaliate against an evil man. Rather, if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you for your shirt, give him your coat as well. If anyone compels you to go a mile, go two miles with him. Give to him who asks anything of you, and do not refuse anyone who wishes to borrow from you.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he causes his sun to rise on both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the wicked alike. For if you love only those who love you, why should you expect to be rewarded for that? Even the tax collectors do that much. And if you greet only your friends, are you doing anything remarkable? Even the heathen do that much. But you, however, must strive to be like your Father in heaven.”

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 st Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	2 nd Feast of BOOTHES	WINTER	2 nd Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	3 rd Feast of BOOTHES	WINTER	FINAL PASSOVER
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 11 (WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9)

Climbing the Steps of the Beatitudes

Based on Matthew 5:1–48

In 2014, members of FBC Killeen went to Israel and one of the greatest thrills for me was to teach a study on the Beatitudes while physically standing on the Mount of the Beatitudes!

When you read through the first few verses of Matthew 5, you can feel a crescendo of thoughts as Jesus guides us through the various “Blessed are” statements, also translated as “happy”. The blessed statements are like a stairway of sanctification, each step leading to a higher calling in spiritual growth.

First, we see we are blessed when we are impoverished in our own spirit. For us to die to self and live to God is the first step of salvation and in the stairway of becoming more Christ-like. Our reward for humbling ourselves, Jesus said is the Kingdom of heaven, our eternal reward both for now and all eternity!

Second, we find a marvelous contradiction: To be happy, we must mourn! When we look at how we’ve failed God, how our sins have hurt us, others, and even God, we climb higher in our spiritual growth, because our mourning leads us to repentance and also we receive comfort from God’s own Spirit.

Our third step is being meek, and while it rhymes with “weak”, they are vastly different. When we are meek, we are strong, stable, teachable, and kind! Our reward is the Earth for our inheritance. Look at Psalm 37:11 and we see both Testaments state that God rewards the meek physically, not just spiritually.

Next is a hunger and thirst for God’s righteousness! Our yearning is for God to declare us to be in right-standing with Him. When God declares us to be righteous, we no longer thirst or hunger to justify ourselves. God satisfies our longings with His filling, His fulness.

We climb the fifth step to being merciful and receiving mercy. Jesus gave a marvelous story about a man who was shown mercy, but unable to give mercy to someone else. Mercy is more than forgiveness, and it is different than grace. Grace is receiving what we don’t deserve, but mercy is not getting the judgment we do deserve. And being merciful means that we release others from our biased standards for perfection.

The sixth beatitude is purity in heart and the reward is seeing God. A sinful heart does not want to see God! It shrinks from holiness in fear and trembling. But a pure heart longs to see Him face to face, and one day that will be our reward.

On our seventh step, we go from purity to peace-making. No, we’re not talking about a quiet prayer for world peace. That will never be long-lasting. The peacemakers of this beatitude make eternal peace between sinful humanity and a holy God. When we bring the good news of peace with God, we are called “children of God”; we bear His image and His inheritance!

Finally, we reach the eighth and final step in the beautiful beatitude staircase! This beatitude takes three verses to describe this final and greatest pinnacle of all the “happy blessings”. And it is? Persecution! And its reward? The same as on the first step, the Kingdom of Heaven! Is this confusing? Not at all. Nothing is more foundational to begin our journey, nor inspirational along the way, nor aspirational to end our ascent than the Kingdom of Heaven. And climbing the beatitudes is worth every step!

Lord Jesus, we praise You for giving us direction on how to live. In these eight steps of life, we aspire to live higher and more noble lives for Your glory. Let us climb higher by humbling ourselves in Your ways. In Jesus’s Name, we pray. Amen.

--By Tim McKeown (see more at bit.ly/FBCKBeatitudes)

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

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