

# The Beatitudes

Luke 4:17-26

20 Looking at his disciples, he said:  
"Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom of God.

1. *"Blessed are the poor( in spirit), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

a. *Isaiah 61: 1-3 – Preach to the Good News to the Poor*

- i. We tend to think of the "poor" primarily in terms of finances or possessions. That is part of it, but there is a spiritual side to it too. The word Isaiah uses describes the people who had been taken into exile. They were of course poor, having their land and possessions ripped away; but they were also afflicted and oppressed, they were powerless and without hope, and they were desperate. *The physical poverty was intensified by the poverty in their spirit.*
- ii. The words that describe the poor in the Bible include these aspects, for the poor in Jesus' day had few possessions, were usually oppressed, had little power and less hope. They had no resources to fall back on; they had to depend on others for survival. Isaiah brought the people of his day good news--they would be delivered from bondage. But Jesus fulfilled that promise of bringing good news by proclaiming the gospel, the "good news" of God. *He did not make them rich in earthly possessions and power; but he fulfilled their greatest need.*

b. People who are "poor in spirit" are those who are humble before God. They realize that they have nothing in this life that they can contribute to receiving the kingdom of heaven. *Everyone who wishes to enter the kingdom must be "spiritually poor," for salvation is a gift from God.*

- i. The poor person is not excluded because of his poverty; and the rich person is not accepted because of his wealth. Both must humble themselves before the Lord in order to be part of the kingdom. It is often easier for the down and out of this world to do that, than for the rich to do it.
- ii. Now this of course does not mean that all poor people are in the kingdom. One thinks of the self-made poverty of the prodigal son. No, the poverty is not the chief thing, but the qualification of the spirit it. It is the poor in spirit, those who have humbled themselves and become dependent on God--they have the kingdom of heaven. In fact, we must all come with a broken heart and a contrite spirit seeking the Savior.
- iii. God is a crutch - Look at the apostle Paul and what he endured – he was humbled, broken, hungry but he was rich because of what God gave him.

1. **I Corinthians 4:11 "To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless"**
2. **2 Corinthians 6:4,5 "But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger"**

**24"But woe to you who are rich,  
for you have already received your comfort.**

**Let us be careful not to become comfortable with our 'stuff and materialism' – let us not think that we are in need of nothing.**

**Revelation 3:17 – 18 ""So because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see"".**

**21a Blessed are you who hunger now,  
for you will be satisfied.**

2. **"Blessed are those who hunger (and thirst for righteousness), for they shall be filled".**
  - a. **Psalm 42:3 and Psalm 63:1**
    - i. **The image of hunger and thirst compares this drive for righteousness with the deepest and most constant needs we have. Hunger and thirst constantly cry out for satisfaction; it is a basic human drive. The image then is portraying the desire to do the will of God as that constant and strong. Look at people today – God has put in us an eternal longing for which we were created and we look for it by seeking purpose, meaning, validation, acceptance – we look to drugs, alcohol, food, sex, games, jobs, careers... but the longing remains and we are hungry –**
      1. **Now the connection to "Blessed are the hungry." Just as poverty is a blessing only indirectly, not in itself. Likewise hunger. Those who hunger are blessed for at least two reasons.**
        - a. **First, because their hunger provides a chance to realize their dependence on God, as the poor man's poverty does.**
        - b. **Second, because one day the hungry shall be satisfied. They shall have their fill of that for which they hunger – both food and purpose/meaning/acceptance.**

## **2. Isaiah 55:2-3**

**“Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear that your soul may live.”**

## **3. Jeremiah 2:12-13**

**“My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”**

### **25a Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.**

**Many of you here this morning are like this. You are well fed now but Your soul is hungry and your heart is thirsty. You feel an insatiable longing for something. You are restless. Almost everywhere you turn, the grass is greener than where you stand.**

**And everything turns to ashes in your hands. The thrill of the pursuit of things and experiences leaves us empty. The thrill of the vacation, of the new house, the new car, the good food fades so quickly and the new toy is so boring in just a few weeks.**

**We drink at broken cisterns. And we eat bread which does not satisfy. And the words of C.S. Lewis ring more and more true. He said,**

***“If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.”***

### **21b Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.**

#### **3. *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”***

- a. *Isaiah 61:1-3* Isaiah also said that the Messiah would bind up the brokenhearted and proclaim the hour when the mourners would be comforted, when their ashes would be replaced by a crown of joy, and their mourning would be replaced with the oil of gladness. Mourning indicates the pain and the grief and the anxieties of the soul over some loss, often the death of a loved one. But it could be over the loss of a valued life, such as those Israelites who went into exile had to mourn. Or it could be over the loss of possessions, or status, or health. People mourn over any disaster or tribulation. And in times of mourning they look for hope. And most often in this world there is little hope.**

- i. The focus here is on the people of God who mourn, because they will be comforted. Everyone experiences sad and tragic losses at some time or another in this life.**

**But the mourning that leads to comfort is the mourning due to our sinfulness, recognizing that we have offended our Creator. Jesus came to save us from our sin, the cause of the mourning.**

- b. But again, there is a correlation between the sadness of life, life's circumstances and pitfalls and our sinful state. God created us to live in a perfect world (Garden of Eden) but our sin brought us into this imperfect world – one of death, destruction, disappointment, etc.**
  - i. Revelation 21:4 - But one day, we will return to a world of 'no more tears' – no worries, no problems. We know that our weeping and grieving is but for a time only. We know that death does not have the final victory, for the dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible. We know that the Messiah will turn all that away someday. And that hope brings them comfort.**

**25b Woe to you who laugh now,  
for you will mourn and weep.**

**Let us be weary of envy of having a life too perfect without it's share of trials and problems. Charles Swindoll wrote, "Pain, when properly handled, can shape a life for greatness. History is replete with stories of those whose struggles and scars formed the foundation for remarkable achievements. In fact, it was because of their hardship they gained what they needed to achieve greatness.**

**Swindoll says that he too, just like myself, wrestled with that concept. It seemed to be a cruel philosophy. Why should anyone need to suffer? What do you mean, "There are benefits that come only through struggles?" I have now come full circle. I agree with A. W. Tozer, who said, "It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply."**

**22 Blessed are you when men hate you,  
when they exclude you and insult you  
and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.**

- 4. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."**
- a. John 15:20, 20 Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.'<sup>[a]</sup> If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.**
  - b. In this fallen world when people try to promote peace, or champion righteousness, or live a life of gentleness and meekness, they find opposition. One would think that such a life would attract people to the kingdom of God. People might want a form of justice, but in their own terms. They much prefer power, and privilege, and possessions. And so John the Baptist called for righteousness and went to an early death. And Jesus proclaimed all the right virtues but found opposition to his message because it called for them to enter his kingdom. And if they persecuted these, will they not also oppose the disciples?**
  - c. I'm not sure that any of us really suffer for Christ' sake – not in the U.S. and not here in Mexico. Perhaps if we lived as in other parts of the world. Nonetheless, if we have been identified by faith with Christ and carry His name, and if we proclaim the good news that there is a kingdom of righteousness and peace that is spiritual and eternal, then we will find opposition, as light as it may be. And we should rejoice, for our reward in heaven will be great. God will make it up to them, and more. Think that you are having to give up some things here? – the reward is great! Many of you are disciplined for earthly rewards – exercise and have a good body and good health. Work hard – and succeed.**
    - i. The blessing stated here for those who suffer such persecution in this world is that their destiny will be a complete contrast to their present humiliation--theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**Woe to you when all men speak well of you,  
for that is how their fathers treated the false  
prophets.**

**Herein lays the warning not to seek the world's approval – not that we shouldn't seek to be respected but seek respect based on doing that which honors God. Peer Pressure is powerful because young people want to be accepted and similarly we all want to be approved and validated – but the lesson here is simply that we should be living for Christ in this world, living the way members of the kingdom should live, championing righteousness and justice, showing mercy, remaining meek and poor in spirit--all the things that the beatitudes praise. But beware and know that genuine righteousness is offensive to many, and so we must be prepared for opposition.**