

Blessed of God – Part III

(Matthew 5:5-6)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I've titled the message this morning, "Blessed of God – Part 3," taken from Matthew 5. Today we'll resume the verse by verse study of Matthew 5 where I left off the last time I spoke by beginning at verse 5, having already covered verses 1-4.

So let's look again at this passage in Matthew 5, commonly called the Beatitudes, and let's begin our reading back at vs. 1 and we'll read down through verse 6 for now.

Matthew 5: 1-6

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: ²And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

³Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

In the two preceding messages of this series, we spent considerable time reviewing the common thread found to be true of each of these verses, commonly known as the Beatitudes – these verses which begin, "Blessed are . . ." We saw how this speaks of being blessed eternally – referring to those who are citizens of the kingdom. You may recall this fits within the broader context of the entire Sermon on the Mount found here in Matthew chapters 5 – 7; the theme being the Gospel of the kingdom, not a physical kingdom with geographical borders, but a spiritual kingdom or dominion, a reign of grace – grace reigning through righteousness.

We saw previously how the ones described here in the Beatitudes as "blessed" are the redeemed ones, given to Christ by God the Father, made blessed in the righteousness of the Son. That is, justified by Christ's obedience even unto death, His righteousness – the satisfaction to the holy

demands of God's law (both in precept & His requirement of perfect obedience being fulfilled & and in satisfaction to the law's penal demands & an extraction of a sufficient payment for sin, no less than the precious, infinitely valuable blood of the God-man, Jesus Christ.

We also saw how in these verses, that the ones Christ refers to as the "blessed" are also the ones whom in each successive generation, have already been regenerated / set apart in spiritual birth and life with an entirely new frame of reference by the power of the Holy Spirit & so that they now manifest (to various degrees) these characteristics or qualities, fruits of the Holy Spirit purchased for them by the blood, the wrought-out righteousness established by Christ.

You'll recall we looked at Romans 4:6-8, which reads: *"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, ⁷Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. ⁸Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."* So, we saw how these spoken of as "blessed ones" have discovered that all this was made theirs by imputation & each and everyone of the sinner's sins (past, present, and future) laid upon Christ (charged to His account) and the very perfect satisfaction He made to God's law and justice, His righteousness, freely imputed or charged to the sinner's account.

You may also recall that we established, these characteristics are not set forth as things we should strive to manifest in order that we might be blessed of God. No, Christ is describing that which is found to be true of those who are the blessed ones, because they have been blessed & because as objects of God's eternal love, they were or would be justified by Christ based upon His accomplishment at the cross of Calvary & justified by the very one preaching this sermon to them. And as a result of their justification, they were given spiritual life & a radically different frame of reference, manifested by these various descriptions.

We reviewed how Christ doesn't say, "blessed are some of those who are poor in spirit," or "blessed are some of those who mourn," or (as we'll look at today) "blessed are some of the meek," etc. & You get the idea. No, Christ says "Blessed are the meek." I believe this means that everyone who is blessed of God displays this meekness to some degree (in the sense meant

here) and everyone who falls in the category of ðthe meekö (in the sense meant here) is blessed of God.

So if we properly understand that sense ó what it means in this context to be ðmeekö ó then we will have come to an understanding such that it must be applied and can only be applied to those who have been redeemed by Christ and given life to look to Him alone.

As such, I want to restate the challenge I mentioned in the previous messages. I believe it is incumbent upon us all, individually, to ask our self: Am I among the meek, in the sense in which this is understood to be true, and only true, of those eternally blessed of God? In that sense, am I likewise one of the meek ones? And the same question should be asked by each of us as we consider the other verses ó am I among the poor in spirit, am I among they that mourn, do I hunger and thirst after righteousness, am I one of the merciful ones, am I pure in heart, am I a peacemaker (and so on) ó (listen, in that same sense) ó in which these descriptions are understood properly as that which is found to be true, and only true, of those eternally blessed of God ó an understanding derived from the whole of scripture and the message of God's Gospel.

Now we considered verses 3 and 4 already in this very light. E.g. ó we saw how the ðpoor in spiritö cannot be referring to the universal spiritual poverty of all humanity, but rather that it must simply refer to those have been brought, by the life giving power of God the Holy Spirit, to know of their spiritual poverty ó to know that they have nothing to pay, nothing to merit or earn them anything before God.

Then in verse 4, we saw how ðthey that mournö are also those who have been enlightened to their spiritual poverty ó how they too are bankrupt and in need of mercy. We reviewed how that ðthey that mournö cannot refer to anyone who experiences sadness or grieves for just any reason. If that were the case, then all would be eternally blessed of God ó ***“Blessed are they that mourn...”*** We studied how this grief or mourning must be found then of those who find comfort from that which will address the cause of their mourning.

We saw how Christ was referring to those who mourn over their spiritual poverty, whose hearts do melt over an apprehension of their wretchedness before God. They find comfort in Christ and no where else. I am not just

talking about a sorrow over their immorality or indifference, but rather their sorrow over having ever thought them (or anyone else) could be accepted ultimately based on something they did ó something that proceeded from them ó something other than the imputation of the righteousness established by Christ.

Being convinced of sin by God the Holy Spirit ó seeing their absolute, abject spiritual poverty (being õpoor in spiritö) ó they receive no comfort from their mourning (none whatsoever) in falling for the popular suggestion that Christ has done it all and youøll be blessed IF you do your part ó IF you believe, IF youøll receive him ó IF you meet some condition or find something within yourself (your willingness to be more compliant, more objective ó whatever it is) ó that youøll be among those Christ refers to as eternally blessed, heirs of the kingdom of heaven. No ó these õblessedö ones Christ speaks of ó they mourn over such, seeing their own wretchedness, knowing that if not for pure sovereign mercy and grace in Christ, based upon His fulfillment of all that is required, they would have no hope. They that mourn find their comfort in Christø Person and work and no where else!

Now I think youøll see that the common thread we found in our study of the characteristics or qualities ascribed to the blessed of God in these first 2 beatitudes will continue as we move forward. Also youøll notice that each one of these verses confirms the standing in Christ of the ones being described as blessed by linking to that description some aspect of the ultimate and wonderful blessing, inheritance or reward that awaits the blessed of God. So, as we begin to look at the rest of these verses, keep in mind that just as it describes how that the meek, being the blessed of God shall inherit the earth, that it can also be said of the meek (when properly understood in the context here) that õtheirs is the kingdom of heavenö (just like the õpoor in spiritö), that õthey (the meek) shall be comforted,ö that they also õshall be filled,ö that they (the meek) õshall obtain mercy,ö that they õshall <also> see God,ö that they (the meek) õshall be called the children of God,ö and so on. Not only that, but all of the same aspects of the blessing mentioned here can be said to belong to the poor in spirit, to they that mourn, to the merciful, to they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and so on. Theyøre the same group ó the blessed of God.

Having established the common thread found throughout these verses, Iøll try to move a little quicker so instead of covering just one verse per sermon, I hope to get in at least two this week. But in studying this, its been

impressed upon me how the verses in this passage all fit so beautifully together so as to offer descriptions of these called ðblessedö whereby a true believer can be reassured as they identify with that being described in each one of these verses as itðs understood in light of the new frame of reference that accompanies the gift of spiritual life, of being brought to look to Jesus and Him alone as the author and finisher of our faith.

So keep this in mind: In these blessed ones, weðre looking at objects or recipients of unqualified mercy ó the favor or blessedness of God upon a people who possess within themselves no merit whatsoever, but rather finding all of salvation was merited for them in the unblemished, untainted, flawless satisfaction that was made to Godðs inflexible and holy justice at the cross some 2000 years ago ó a satisfaction made by none other than our Substitute and Representative, the God-man, our Lord and Savior ó Jesus Christ.

And further, it became mine based upon nothing done by, in, or through me; but it was something done for me. It was by the imputation of that satisfaction, of His righteousness ó the charging to my account (and to every one else for whom Christ lived and died), the very righteousness wrought out by Christ in His life and death so as to merit all of my salvation. What a Savior!

Now letðs look at some of these verses, picking up again in Matt 5:5, where it reads:

“⁵Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”

Now turn with me once again back to Isaiah 61. I spent a good deal of time here in the previous message as we studied verse 4, *“Blessed are they that mourn.”* But as we briefly look at it again today, I simply want you to notice how this Old Testament passage supports this notion of a common thread that we find in the opening verses in Christðs Sermon on the Mount ó these beatitudes. In this passage in Isaiah, we see several of these descriptions Christ brought out in Matthew 5 spoken of together in the context of Isaiah 61 where Christ is speaking through the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah 61, beginning in verse 1:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind

up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; ²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

Having reviewed these verses extensively in the preceding message, I won't repeat all of that. But today I simply want to point out how we see here mentioned in these verses (not just *“they that mourn,”* but) several of the descriptions which coincides with those Christ asserts to be true of the eternally blessed in His Sermon on the Mount. Notice, he refers to the *“brokenhearted”* ó that certainly describes the *“poor in spirit.”* Christ says He is sent to bind up the brokenhearted ó those finding themselves broken, with nothing to plea but for mercy ó brought into an awareness of their utter spiritual poverty ó with nothing to offer before a holy God and in need of mercy.

As we emphasized previously, Isaiah certainly refers to those who mourn, the good tidings to be preached to comfort those who mourn ó those that mourn in Zion (His church). But notice also to whom Christ, speaking here through the prophet Isaiah, says He has been anointed ó commissioned by God the Father ó to preach good tidings unto. It is unto the meek.

I'll go even further and suggest to you that this Gospel, these good tidings that Christ is appointed or commissioned to preach is also for the merciful for they shall obtain mercy and Christ speaks here (through Isaiah) of these as objects of mercy. He is certainly speaking of those who hunger and thirst after righteousness because we see that their comfort, their joy, their liberty, their entire relief is based upon this garment of praise ó being planted as trees of righteousness ó for that is what fills their need, quenches their God given hunger and thirst for Him. And so it goes with the rest of the descriptions given in the Beatitudes ó the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for His sake ó for all of these are among the eternally blessed ó who find their remedy in Christ as He is proclaimed in the Gospel, the good tidings mentioned by Christ through the prophet, Isaiah.

You see, they all find their blessedness, their comfort and joy as objects of God's grace ó being declared to be trees of righteousness ó the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified. In the context of the Gospel of God's sovereign grace, at the exclusion of any and all of the residue (or remnants) of man's natural religion ó the religion of works whereby salvation is imagined to be conditioned to any degree whatsoever on me, the sinner ó when that is excluded and comfort is found in Christ and in Him alone, based upon His finished work in satisfying the justice of God, there is where we find the poor in spirit, they that mourn (but who are comforted thereby), the meek, they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted as described in Matthew 5 ó the eternally öblessedö of God.

Now, in the context of the Gospel, the good tidings wherein the righteousness of God is revealed (Rom 1:16 ó 17), we can rightly understand who Christ is describing. For example, who then are the meek? Simply put, meekness is a God given desire to bow and submit to God's rule, God's way, and God's word.

In our common usage of the word ömeekö or ömeekness,ö it sometime seems to carry the connotation of weakness. But we know that doesn't fit the context here. E.g. ó Moses was described as a meek man. In Num. 12:3, Moses was said to be ***A...very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth,...*** yet Moses was bold to withstand the enemies of God, stood up to Pharaoh as God's appointed man to lead Israel out of captivity in Egypt. Our Lord was said to be meek because He always did the will of His Father. So we know that meekness isn't weakness. Christ displayed anything but weakness in His ministry here on earth ó in boldly exposing false professors and proclaiming who He was and what He came to do ó so clearly that it ultimately led men to crucify Him.

No, meekness isn't weakness, nor is it a moral virtue in the context here. Rather, meekness is induced by the fruits of the Spirit of God. It is listed in the scriptures as one of the fruits of the spirit. It is learned ó but it is a divine teaching as Christ said in Matt 11:28-30: ***öCome unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*** You see, Christ displayed meekness because He did the will of the Father ó though co-equal to God the Father (as Deity), Christ humbled Himself and in His office as mediator, subjected Himself to all the

infirmities of humanity, yet without sin, in submission to the Father's will, to willingly live and die as a Substitute for those He had covenanted with the Father to redeem.

The meek described by Christ here in Matthew as the ðblessed of God are those who God, the Holy Spirit, has regenerated and brought to submit to God's way of salvation wherein His righteousness is revealed ó to rest in Christ and Him alone as having met all the conditions of their salvation based upon having established exactly what God requires ó righteousness in perfect satisfaction to God's justice at the cross of Calvary. The meek ó they are taught of God.

The word for meekness often is defined as gentleness and kindness, but if we go no further than that broad definition of the word itself, then in this context we will see a contradiction since a gentle and kind attitude could be applied to many lost folks who give no evidence of having submitted themselves to the righteousness of God in Christ ó most never having heard of an imputed righteousness.

The meek, being poor in spirit, might in some ways be compared to a wild horse that's been broke and brought into submission by (and to) its master and willingly so ó made willing in the day of His power. You see, the meek submit to God's rule and God's way of salvation while turning completely away from their former opposing way, the way of man's natural religious persuasions ó a way the scriptures say that seems right unto men but ends in destruction.

This meekness shows itself when a sinner is taught and realizes that it is impossible for God to save him based upon the popular misconception that salvation is ultimately up to you, in the hands of the sinner ó conditioned in some way or in some degree to that which proceeds from him; Being so convinced of sin to expose the futility of such notions, the meek trusts Christ alone for all wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption. This meekness manifests itself in true, God-given faith and repentance ó when a sinner submits to God's way of salvation in Christ (the gospel of the kingdom), seeing that everything he once thought was gain (that he thought would tender some favor before God) is now in the loss column ó dead works, and fruit unto death.

See, meekness is true humility before God, a humility you can't work up. It's given by the Spirit of God. It is the opposite of the religious pride that is manifested when we, like all sinners initially, imagined that salvation was in some way conditioned on ourselves, when we sought and expected salvation and all of God's blessings (including heaven itself) based on something other than (or in addition to) the imputed righteousness of God in Christ.

I know for many years I thought I was humble and meek before God, sincerely thankful that Christ had died for sins ó but in believing that He died for all the sins of all people without exception, I was left with the prideful presumption of assuming that, unlike those who would perish in hell, I would be accepted by God because I had done my part by receiving Him into my life ó in exercising my faith as the crowning event to make effectual what His death on the cross merely made possible.

Today, I pray God will cause others to see what He has graciously shown to me and others in making us truly meek, in bringing us into submission to His righteousness ó to salvation conditioned on Christ and Him alone so as to repent from every thinking that we could be saved and accepted before a holy God based on any condition met by us, the sinner. How dare we assign anything that we might do (or even assume we've been enabled to do) in a place of rivalry with that which the Lord of glory alone could and did accomplish for His people in His life and death?

Notice also we read that the meek shall inherit the earth. As the book of Hebrews reminds us, a will or testament that would convey an inheritance requires the death of the testator ó Christ Himself. We, the sinner, we don't earn or merit it ó not one bit. It's an inheritance. But the meek who have been made so by God the Holy Spirit so as to submit to God's way of salvation, finding themselves justified by God through the imputation of the righteousness established by Christ on the cross, these meek ones inherit the earth.

Of course this speaks of an earth or country that is a heavenly one ó just as heavenly Jerusalem is referred to in scriptures in contrast to the earthly one. It is the heavenly earth where only the õblessedö shall dwell, being heirs and joint heirs with Christ ó to whom the earth belongs and the fullness thereof according to Psalms 24:1. Think of it ó if you're blessed of God, you inherit that which the God-man, the Lord of glory Himself merited ó not one bit less

than what He could earn ó all grace here and all glory hereafter. Now that's a blessing!

Now let's look at vs. 6 of Matthew 5:

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled”

The same applies here ó They which hunger and thirst after righteousness are the poor in spirit, who mourn in having seen their spiritual poverty who find comfort for their mourning in Christ, based upon His accomplished work being imputed (reckoned or charged) to their account. They have been given the gifts of the Holy Spirit which includes their meekness ó having been brought into submission to the only thing that will meet their need before a Holy God who requires and judges in righteousness (Acts 17:31). They need a righteousness to stand before God because that is what he requires ó righteousness ó perfect obedience and satisfaction to His injured justice.

They need righteousness and by God's grace, are brought to see their need for it ó and their spiritual life and sustenance and nourishment depends upon it ó so they do hunger and thirst after it. It's not just some minor point of doctrine to them. And God ó having placed in them spiritual life, having indwelt them with His Spirit, fills the very hunger that He initiates and excites.

God says in Acts 17:31 He will judge the world in righteousness by that One whom He ordained ó His Son ó the One He raised from the dead showing that the merit of His life and death ó His righteousness and that alone purchases, acquires and demands and gains life ó eternal life. That's how vital and needful this righteousness is ó we're all going to be judged by it according to the scriptures. Sinners, all of us, need a righteousness to be among the eternally blessed of God ó but only His righteousness will get the job done. Attempts at establishing our own are futile. That's called self-righteousness and it falls miserably short of that which God requires. We need to be clothed in that priestly garment of praise ó His righteousness. We needed a Substitute to establish one for us and all whom He represented shall be blessed of God to discover that His righteousness was imputed or charged to their account.

Remember as recorded in Romans 4, David described “...*the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.*”

I pray God will create within each and everyone who hears this message a hunger and thirst after His righteousness ó for they shall be filled! Does that mean that God rewards your hunger and thirst for righteousness by granting it to you in exchange for your interest in it? No, that would mean you don’t really need God’s mercy ó you just need to fulfill your end of the bargain. God doesn’t make that offer. That’s the religion of works, not the religion of grace. No ó you are responsible and should seek after God as He is revealed, but know this ó if you’re brought to see your need for His righteousness and for salvation conditioned on Him and Him alone ó you’ll do so at the expense of discovering how diametrically opposed everything was that you previously and naturally thought would commend you to God. Thereby, you’ll also know that this new desire for Him and His righteousness was given to you as a fruit and effect of that which Christ accomplished and merited for you 2000 years ago. None naturally seek after God. As the scripture says in Romans 3:10 ó 11: “*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*” None will naturally hunger and thirst after His righteousness.

But isn’t God gracious! He creates within His people the desire, the hunger, for the very thing that He has already provided for them in Christ ó provided for a people taken from the dregs of fallen humanity who would otherwise never have sought God on His terms. But in regeneration and conversion, by the life giving power of the Holy Spirit ó we’re so taught of him that we enter into it and enjoy it ó having been delivered from our natural lost state of darkness and translated into the marvelous kingdom of His light. God satisfies the hunger He stirs up in our minds and hearts with the very thing His people are brought to hunger and thirst for ó the righteousness of God in Christ.

I’ll leave you with this challenge. First, I’ll remind you of my earlier challenge. I challenge everyone who hears this to search your own hearts and minds and ask yourself, “Do you find these descriptions of the ones eternally blessed of God, to be true, in some degree, to your own life experience?” That is:

- 1) Are you among the meek ó have you been brought into submission to God's way of salvation ó to salvation conditioned on Christ alone, based solely upon His Person and finished work in establishing righteousness by His obedience unto death, and being accounted righteous in Him through imputation ó God's reckoning of the merit of HIS work to your account? Are you submitted to the righteousness of God in Christ?
- 2) In concert with this: Have you been brought to hunger and thirst after this righteousness ó finding your only relief in that which Christ accomplished in strict satisfaction to God's justice on the cross of Calvary? Is that enough for you ó does that fill you? It does those who are blessed of God.

If you're not confident these verses describe you, then I hope and pray you'll continue to consider these things, for as we've seen, when understood correctly, they are true of each and every one (and only true of each and every one) who has been blessed with spiritual life in Christ and thereby assured of their eternal blessing in heaven with Him.

Hopefully many of you can identify with that which has been described in these verses, but if you're like me, you may also be keenly aware of how woefully short we, with our sinfulness ever present before us ó how short we come in living out our lives day by day in accordance with the mindset that springs from these graces which God has blessed us with ó which we can identify with when our minds are focused on things above. To me and you, I challenge us to keep our minds on things above and cultivate these gifts of the Spirit as we grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us remember, that we've been blessed to be adopted into God's family, to be heirs of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be citizens of His kingdom. So, let us then strive to daily walk worthy of our vocation and calling in Christ ó in gratitude commensurate with being among the eternally blessed of God in Christ. Amen.

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself ó the Bible.