

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

22- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 2  
The Citizens of the Kingdom are “Blessed”

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Church July 24, 2022

## **Matthew 5:3-12**

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

**4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

**5 "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.**

**6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**

**7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.**

**8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**

**9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**

**10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**11 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.**

**12 "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now we are *continuing* to look at what has come to be called, the “*Sermon on the Mount*” that Jesus preached during His earthly Ministry. And the “*Sermon on the Mount*” represents the very first “*Body of Teaching*” that Matthew quotes from the Lips of Jesus as He taught these things- in His capacity as the “*new Moses*”- while He was on the earth- some 2,000 years ago. And, last time, we saw that the Reason it is now called, the “*Sermon on the Mount*” is because of what the former tax collector wrote in **Matthew 5:1&2** that says,

**When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them,**

And *part* of that Teaching- the most perfect Sermon ever preached- is what we read here in verses 3-12. This is where Matthew lists for his Jewish readers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century and for ALL who read this “*Gospel Record*” what has come to be called, the “*Beatitudes*”. And these 8 Beatitudes are actually “*Attributes*” or “*Characteristics*” of the “*new people*” of God- who are now; and who will always be- “*citizens*” of this new “*Kingdom of Heaven.*” In other words, what we read here in these 8 verses- is what it looks like to belong to the *Kingdom of Heaven.*

The old “*Kingdom of Israel*” is attached to the Old Covenant- which Jesus is now bringing to an End. And the new “*Kingdom of Heaven*” is attached to the New Covenant- that Jesus is now establishing. And people were made citizens of that old “*Kingdom of Israel*” through their natural Birth as Jews; through their Tribe’s Bloodline; and through physical Circumcision. But people are made citizens of this new “*Kingdom of Heaven*” through being born again; and through the Blood of Jesus; through having their hearts circumcised; and by believing.

But like all things in the New Testament- we must get the Order of this correct. It is NOT true that people should try hard to have the Characteristics and Attributes that we read here; and if they can achieve it- then they have earned a place as Citizens of this new “*Kingdom of Heaven.*” That is NOT the way this works.

The Way this works is that God chose those who would belong to this new Kingdom- *before* He ever created the Universe. And in, by, and through Who Jesus is; and What Jesus alone has done- those chosen people are:

- Given new spiritual Life
- Granted with the Ability and Desire to repent and believe
- Forgiven and made Righteous
- Adopted into the Family of God
- Placed into the Kingdom

... in other words, being saved in, by, and through the finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ is what allows us Entrance into this new Kingdom. And that means that this new Kingdom will have both Jews and Gentiles as its Citizens.

And as Citizens of this new, spiritual, and eternal Kingdom- *that takes the place of the old, earthly, and temporary Kingdom of Israel*- these people then *respond* to already belonging to God and to Jesus and to the Kingdom- by bearing; or displaying or manifesting these eight Fruit or these eight Attributes and Characteristics that we read here in **Matthew 5:3-10.**

So, having these Attributes does NOT earn you a place in the Kingdom. No, already belonging to the Kingdom by what Jesus alone has done for us- is what empowers us to “put on” these Attributes.

And *establishing* this new Kingdom of Heaven on the earth; and identifying those who will occupy it- is the main Goal of Jesus when He was here the *first* time. So, everywhere Jesus went- He heralded the SAME Message:

### **Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 4:17)**

Now the phrase, “**at hand**” that Matthew wrote comes from a Greek word (*engizoo*; Strong’s #1448) that means: *to bring near*; or *to join one thing to another*. And there is an “*immediacy*” to this “*Nearness*” or this “*Joining*.” So, we should understand Jesus to say that the “*Kingdom of Heaven*” is *near*; and it’s “*joining*” to this earth is *soon* to be carried out.

And this is all in conjunction with the New Covenant which was brought about by the Life; Ministry; Death; and Resurrection of Jesus. So, as Jesus fulfilled portions of the Law- every single day He lived on the earth- that much of the Old Covenant was *finalized*; and that much of the New Covenant was *made manifest*. And that “*gradual but relentless*” fulfillment of the Old Covenant in conjunction with the “*gradual but relentless*” manifestation of the New Covenant went on- every single day for 33-1/2 years until Jesus was murdered by Crucifixion and rose from the Dead.

So, this is a Characteristics of this glorious new Kingdom of Heaven that we need to always keep in mind. It began very simple and *seemingly* insignificant- like a mustard seed. But once that mustard seed was planted in the earth- it began a Process that *cannot* and *will not* ever cease- until Jesus returns.<sup>1</sup> And the *ultimate* Goal of this Process is that,

**... the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14)**

So, the planted mustard seed “*gradually but relentlessly*” grows and expands and increases. And the infallible Promise from God through the Prophet is,

**There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (Isaiah 9:7)**

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 9:7

But all during the Process- there will be periodic moments in the ongoing “*gradual but relentless*” growth and expansion and increase of the mustard seed when it seems that there is no Growth or Expansion or Increasing at all. And that will be times when the Citizens of the Kingdom will have to simply trust God and in what God has spoken- because, during those times- to the natural eye- the mustard seed is completely ineffectual and weak and dying.

But there will also be other times during this “long and extended” Process- when it seems as though there is so much Growth; and so much Increase; and so much Expansion of the mustard seed- that the Citizens of the Kingdom will be tempted to believe that Jesus will return before the end of the day. But once again, the Citizens will have to trust God; and in what God has spoken- because the Will of God is that the Growth and the Increase and the Expansion of the mustard seed will ALWAYS be “*gradual but relentless*”.

And- *after a very long, long, long Process*- measured in Millenniums- not Centuries- the mustard seed will give way to a huge, beautiful, and majestic Tree- that “*dominates the landscape*”; and one in which the birds of the air can make their nests in. Jesus said that this is the way that the Kingdom of Heaven will *increase* in the earth.

It begins *invisibly* in the hearts of every genuine Believer. And then as those Believers go forth and obey the Bible; and live the Christian Life- they will be confronted with Evil; and with Temptation; and with many, many Obstacles.

But as we all persevere in Faith; and in an unshakable Trust in Who Jesus is and in What Jesus has already done- we will see one segment of satan’s domain after the other- be wrestled from his grip and transferred to this new “*Kingdom of Heaven.*”

So, the “*gradual but relentless*” bringing in of the New Covenant by Jesus fulfilling the Old Covenant- is simply a different way of understanding that the Kingdom of Heaven is “*at hand.*”

So, we should NOT think of the Kingdom of Heaven in real estate terminology as being “so many miles long” and “so many miles wide.” That is what Jesus meant when He gave various ways for us to comprehend just what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. For example,

### **Matthew 13:24**

**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.**

### **Matthew 13:31**

**The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field;**

**Matthew 13:33**

**The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."**

**Matthew 13:44**

**The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field**

**Mathew 13:45**

**The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,**

**Matthew 13:47**

**The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea**

**Matthew 18:23**

**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.**

**Matthew 20:1**

**The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.**

**Matthew 22:2**

**The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.**

**Matthew 25:1**

**The kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.**

... think of this. The incarnate God equated the Kingdom of Heaven:

- to a man who sowed good seed in his field.
- like a mustard seed
- like leaven
- like a treasure hidden in the field
- like a merchant seeking fine pearls
- like a dragnet cast into the sea
- to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves

- **like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard**
- **to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son**
- **to ten virgins**

Jesus gave us ten different ways in which we are to understand the Kingdom of Heaven. And *none* of them have any Characteristics of what “normal Kingdoms” have. The way Jesus described the Kingdom of Heaven has more to do with the “*State of Being*” of the people who will inhabit it- than it does with any other kind of Measurement. Because no other King in the history of the world ever talked about his Kingdom like Jesus talked about His. And nowhere in the Bible was the Nation of Israel ever discussed in these terms either.

So, unless we see the Kingdom of Heaven like Jesus portrayed it- in these ten Descriptions, we are NOT understanding it correctly.

Now I want you to back up just a bit and look at **Matthew 4:23**. This is a “*Summary Statement*” of Jesus’s earthly Ministry,

**Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.**

... and one way to restate this is to say that Jesus made the Focus of His Ministry to preach the “coming” of the “Kingdom of Heaven”; teach the “Way” of the Kingdom; and demonstrate the “Purpose and Power” of the Kingdom by healing the sick. So, these three things:

1. Preaching
2. Teaching
3. Healing

Now turn to **Matthew 9:35**. And almost verbatim- we find the very same Summary,

**Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.**

... and when we look at what is sandwiched in between these two “Summary Statements- we see two major Sections of Teaching: Chapters 5–7 are a collection

of Jesus's Teaching that has come to be called, the Sermon on the Mount"; and Chapters 8&9 are a collection of Stories mainly about Jesus' healing Ministry.

So, we have a five-chapter Unit designed by Matthew to present to his first-Century Jewish audience (and us) some Teaching by the Lord concerning the Way of this new Kingdom; along with an inspired Account of Jesus performing some physical Healings and powerful Miracles to demonstrate the Power and Glory of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now the reason I am mentioning this over and over again is to warn us to NOT fall into a very common pitfall that readers of **Matthew** almost invariably fall into. We *should not* and we *must not* look at any particular Section of Matthew's Gospel Record in isolation; or as a "stand alone" Passage. Because it isn't. So, for example, **Matthew 24** was NEVER meant to be a "Stand-alone Passage" that supposedly concerns the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. We understand **Matthew 24** correctly ONLY when we attach Chapters 23 and 25 with it- to make a single Unit. And when we do that- we find the correct understanding of phrases like "**this generation**" (that Jesus repeated); and "**the end of the Age**"; and why Jesus quoted from the Old Testament Prophets in **Matthew 24:29**.

And likewise, the "*Sermon on the Mount*" was NEVER meant to be read or studied or understood by itself either. That is taking it completely "*out of context*". The correct Understanding of the Sermon on the Mount is found when we begin with the Summary Statement of **Matthew 4:23** and end it with **Matthew 9:35**.

Matthew was "moved" by God the Holy Spirit to build his Gospel Account in a way that may appear very odd and peculiar to 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Gentile Christians. And what usually happens- is that Preachers and Teachers of this "Sermon" go through all sorts of "*theological gymnastics*" trying to twist this Sermon to make sense to people without first giving them the proper Context.

The ONLY way we will get what Matthew intended to say- is by remembering that God the Holy Spirit "moved" on this former tax collector to write down these Particular words- words that already have a fixed meaning. So, Matthew was the inspired Apostle- and we are simply his Students. We are NOT trying to "re-invent the wheel" and neither are we trying to learn something that Matthew didn't teach. God is not interested in my creativity or my own "spiritual entrepreneurship" as we go through this Gospel. God is interested that we learn and believe and love and obey what God moved on Matthew to write down.

So, for as long as we are on our "journey" through this Gospel Record- Matthew will be our Teacher. "*But Brother Blair, I thought that God the Holy Spirit is supposed to teach us.*" Yes, but we are NOT starting with a clean sheet of paper- waiting for the Spirit to tell us what to write. We are reading and studying a Gospel Account that, 2,000 years ago, this SAME Holy Spirit "moved" on

Matthew to write down. So, the inspired; infallible; and inerrant words have already been written down for us. And so, our job is to find out what Matthew intended to say- NOT listen for some other Message.

Now because God already moved on Matthew to give us this Gospel- the Holy Spirit will NEVER give a meaning to a verse or a Passage that differs from what Matthew had in mind. So, we MUST care why he wrote what he wrote; and how it paints the picture he intended his Gospel to say.

For example, one thing we can say right off the bat is that you CANNOT love and understand and obey and follow the Jesus of the Sermon of the Mount- without also loving and understanding and obeying and following the Jesus, Who cleansed the lepers, and healed the centurion's servant, and stilled the storm, and cast out demons. Because the inspired writer, who gave us the one- also gave us the other- and it is arbitrary foolishness to do what so many modern folks try to do: namely, say that they admire the "ethical Teacher" of the Sermon on the Mount but they don't want to get involved with the spooky, subjective, supernatural Person, Who stilled the storms and cast out the demons.

Or, for some, the opposite Temptation may overcome them. They may have a fascination with the Miracles of Jesus, but when it comes to reckoning with the One who said, "*Don't call your brother a fool, don't lust, don't get divorced, don't swear, don't return evil for evil, and love your enemy*" — well, they're pretty much bored with those tedious Statements and would just as soon- skip over all the Teaching.

Most everybody on earth is impressed with open shows of Glory and powerful, earthshaking Miracles. But people can easily discard any Teaching- even from Jesus- that doesn't fit in with their already developed theology. But what we need to always remember is that not a single Sin was forgiven and not a single soul was saved because of any of those open shows of Glory. People were saved back then the very SAME way they are saved today- by hearing and believing the Gospel; by repenting of Sin; and by trusting in Jesus and in His finished Work. So, whereas Teaching like that will never make the Headlines- nobody goes to Heaven without it.

Matthew's point is that the Lord, Who teaches like this in the Sermon on the Mount, is the *same* Lord, Who calls us to follow Him through Life and depend upon His Power. So, Jesus' personal Work and Power are *inseparable* from His Teaching. In fact, we will see right away that this is clear even in the Beatitudes.

Now normally when Jews sat to listen- they formed several concentric circles: the inner circle would have been those closest to Jesus- the Disciples, and the other circles would have been made up of the "**crowds**" as Matthew called them.



Now, interestingly, in verse 1, Matthew wrote that Jesus taught His disciples. But then in **Matthew 7:28&29**- Matthew also wrote:

**28 When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching;**

**29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.**

So, it *could* have been that Jesus began with simply His Disciples and as the crowds overhead Him teaching- they joined in. But however it was- Matthew makes it clear that the crowds were listening and that Jesus wanted them to listen even though the Sermon was primarily addressed to professing Believers.

Now please allow me to say that this is the way our Sunday Services, here at the Covenant of Peace Church are arranged. Primarily, the Word is prepared to feed and strengthen and inspire the Worship and the daily Life of those, who are already “God’s people” by Faith alone. But I do pray that, more and more, God will draw the Curious; and the Onlookers; even the Skeptical and Doubters; along with the Searchers- who will come here- the very *same* Way the crowds gathered in behind the Disciples on the Mount on that day.

We believe that the Spirit-anointed, authoritative preaching of the Word of God has a peculiar Power to awaken unbelievers to the Truth and Beauty of Jesus Christ. And that is true- even though the Teaching or the Sermon is addressed primarily to those, who have already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth.

So, I would urge all of you to feel free to invite anyone and everyone to our Sunday Services at Covenant. It is precisely the things our Lord has to say to *us* from His Word that can awaken Desire in others to come to Christ and be forgiven and made Righteous.

So, this Sermon began with the Disciples gathered at the Feet of Jesus and with the crowds- sitting further away- listening in. Okay but how will the Lord begin the greatest Sermon ever preached? Well, He began by pronouncing a certain kind of person- to be “*Blessed*”. And this word also has to do with being “*In Favor with God*”; or even “*Happy*”. And this part of this Sermon is called, the “*Beatitudes*” because of the Latin word for either “*Happiness*” or “*Blessedness*.”

Now there are eight Beatitudes worded in the same way. And verses 11&12 are simply *expansions* of verse 10; or *explanations* of what verse 10 looks like.

But now look at the Pattern that Matthew gave us. Notice the Promise from Jesus of the first Beatitude in verse 3, “**Blessed are the poor in spirit.** Okay, Jesus said that they who have the Quality; or the Attribute; or the Nature of being something called, “**poor in spirit**” are “*Happy.*” They are “*in Favor with God*”. They are “*Blessed*”.

Okay, but why are the “**poor in spirit**” considered to be blessed by Jesus? Jesus said, “**For**” or “**Because**” **theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.**” So, it is those, who possess the Quality or the Attribute of being “poor in spirit” that are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But now look at verse 10. Jesus said,

**"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

So, Jesus is teaching that the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven can be EITHER “**poor in spirit**” or “**persecuted for the sake of Righteousness**”; or both. But another thing is that this is a typical Way that Jews taught- with a beginning and ending using the same language.

But please notice that both verse 3 and verse 10 have the *identical* Promise from Jesus: “**For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven**”. Yet the other six Beatitudes, in between these two have different Promises:

- Verse 4: “**for they shall be comforted.**”
- Verse 5: “**for they shall inherit the earth**”
- Verse 6: “**for they shall be satisfied**”
- Verse 7: “**for they shall receive mercy**”
- Verse 8: “**for they shall see God**”
- Verse 9: “**for they shall be called sons of God**”

Now also notice that all of these other six Promises by Jesus are Promises for the Future. Each one uses the word, “**shall**”- which is not only a Guarantee, but also has to do with a *future* Fulfillment.

But the first and last Beatitude use the word, “**is**”- “**theirs IS the Kingdom of Heaven.**” And because Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven was “**at hand**” (**Matthew 4:17**)- the Promise of becoming a citizen of this new Kingdom is a current Reality- NOT a distant Promise. Every single soul, who experienced the Miracle of the New Birth during Jesus’ earthly Ministry- *instantly* became a citizen of the new Kingdom of Heaven. Yet those who put on the Attributes of the other six Beatitudes may not receive the Promise for several years in the future.

So, what was Matthew trying to teach us? And keep in mind- we are NOT trying to see what these words mean to *us*- but what they meant to Matthew as he wrote them down- 2,000 years ago. So, what was Matthew trying to say here? There are at least two Possibilities.

1. The other 6 Beatitudes are Blessings *within* the Kingdom; while the first and last have to do with what it takes to become a citizen of the new Kingdom
2. The “*Kingdom of Heaven*” is both a present Reality and a future Promise

... so, let’s look at both of these.

## 1. The Blessings of the Kingdom

By placing six *future* Promises in between two *current* Assurances Jesus meant to tell us that those six future Promises are Blessings of *already* belonging to the new Kingdom that Jesus brought with Him that will completely replace the old Kingdom that the Jews have been living in for Centuries. In other words, these six other things are what you can count on AFTER you have already become a part of God’s new Kingdom- by Faith alone. So, these six Promises are what the Kingdom itself brings to each citizen:

- Comfort
- Ownership of the whole earth
- A Righteousness that satisfies
- Mercy
- A better Vision of God (through Jesus)
- The priceless Glory of belonging in God’s Family

... so, nobody has to pick and choose between these Promises. They all are part and parcel of what the Kingdom of Heaven is.

## 2. A Present Yet Future Kingdom

The other Way to understand what Jesus was teaching here is to know that, in one sense, the Kingdom of Heaven was present with the Disciples back then. But, in another sense- the full Blessings of the Kingdom will have to wait for the next “*Age*” in God’s Calendar- the “*Age to Come*” – which is when the citizens of this new Kingdom will inherit the whole earth!

In other words, Jesus has brought the Kingdom of Heaven to earth in His first Advent; and we can enjoy many “foretastes” of it right now. But the full experience of the Life of the Kingdom will have to wait for the “*Age to Come*.”

Now I’m going to mention something here that I will get into in greater Detail when we get further into **Matthew**. But in the Bible- there are ONLY two “*Ages*” mentioned. The popular notion that there are three “*Ages*”: the “*Present*

Age”; the “*Millennial Age*”; and then the “*Age to Come*”- is NOT found anywhere in Scripture. It is an entirely made up; Man-made Teaching that *originated* with the advent of what is called, “*Dispensationalism*” in the mid to late 1800’s. The Bible ONLY speaks of two Ages: the “*Present Age*” and the “*Age to Come*”; and like I said- this will all become apparent as we deeper into **Matthew**.

So, Jesus brought the Kingdom of Heaven to earth when He came the first time. And because that is true- we may enjoy many aspects of that Kingdom right now- even though we will not experience the fullness of the Kingdom until He comes back. And this is apparent when we look closely at the Beatitudes.

So, let’s look at the first Beatitude again:

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

The man, who is “blessed” and “favored by God” and “happy in Jesus” is the one who has been gifted by God with the Knowledge that- *in himself*- he is NOTHING but a wicked sinner, who *deserves* eternal Damnation. So, his “*spiritual poverty*” has to do with his understanding of his own lack of “*spiritual purity*” or “*spiritual value*” outside of it being a Gift from God. The blessed man understands that he NEEDS a Savior; and that the Savior is Jesus. He knows he *cannot* simply apply various techniques to improve his Condition before God; and that trying to merely adopt some “moral code” will noy suffice. He cannot educate; medicate; or use Technology to improve his own spiritual Condition- but he needs to be given “new, spiritual Life” or he will perish forever in a devil’s Hell.

### **2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted**

The “**mourning**” in mind here are those, who have been gifted by God, to be able to genuinely hate their Sin; and who truly grieve over their Transgressions against God. Their “mourning” has nothing to do with their financial status; or the health of their bodies; or any other aspect of this Life. They know that they are sinning; and they know that their Sin *dishonors* God- and that Knowledge cuts them to the core.

The best example of this “**mourning**” is found in **Luke 18:10-14**,

**10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.**

**11 "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.**

**12 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'**

**13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'"**

**14 "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

... and the “**Comfort**” Jesus is talking about here may be received, to some extent now in Salvation. But it will absolutely be possessed in fullness when Jesus returns.

### **3. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth**

Now for Centuries, thanks to the King James Version, this Beatitude spoke about the “**Meek**” rather than the “**Gentle**”. But even though “Meek” or “Gentle” is close to what the Greek word (*praus*; Strong’s # 4239) actually means- the *best* translation is actually “**Humble**.”

But the “*Humility*” that Jesus mentions here is NOT the kind of “*soft-spokenness*” that some people naturally have- whether they are saved or lost. There are lots of people, who are very gentle and soft-spoken and yet they are NOT saved. What Jesus is talking about here is a Gift from God where the individual no longer trusts in himself or his own Ability- TO PLEASE GOD.

Now he may trust in his own Abilities all day long to change a tire or build a bridge<sup>2</sup>- but he knows that if he is to please and honor God- he is *totally* dependent upon God to do it. So, the humble man- the one, who will inherit the whole earth when Jesus comes back- is one, who has been graced by God- to not only need God to tell him *what* to do- but he also needs God to *empower* or *enable* him to do what God has told

him to do. And in operating like that- God receives all Glory. And that is simply NOT normal or natural.

Now as to just how these Humble citizens of the new Kingdom will inherit the whole earth- is a very powerful Mystery- and is usually explained using a whole lot of conjecture and guessing. And the reason for that- is because the Bible doesn’t say a lot about it. Most all the saved people I have ever met are planning on spending Eternity in Heaven- NOT on the earth. And, as far as I know, not a single song that discusses us inheriting the earth is in the Hymnal.

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<sup>2</sup> Even though a person might trust in his own abilities to carry on earthly duties- a citizen of the new Kingdom will always do what he does- to the Glory of God.

Yet Jesus promises the Humble with inheriting the earth- so that is what we will do. But other than believing and trusting in this Promise- I don't know much more.

#### **4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.**

Now there is a group within the modern Church who teach that believers are NOT to have what they call, "*Personal Experiences*". But this Promise by Jesus is NOTHING BUT a personal experience. So, this Promise is NOT something that we are to merely believe. If we are to be citizens of the new Kingdom that Jesus talks about- we MUST personally experience this spiritual Hunger and Thirst.

Now the Righteousness of Jesus that is imputed to us by Faith alone that forgives us and makes us Righteous- is NOT what Jesus is talking about here. How do I know that? Because that Righteousness has already been credited to us by Faith alone or we wouldn't be citizens of this new Kingdom in the first place. In other words, we already have that Righteousness- or we wouldn't even be in the Kingdom to begin with. And that tells me that this Righteousness is our own, personal, intrinsic Righteousness.

Now Righteousness is the by-product of Obedience. As we obey God and His Word- we develop our own, personal Righteousness. And that means that Righteousness is the Main Objective of Salvation. God loved us so He saved us- so that by saving us- we would love God. And the ONLY way we can prove our Love for God- is to obey what He said.

But we all know that we do NOT obey God perfectly. Our daily walk with God is filled with many Flaws and with much Rebellion. And so, we hunger to be more yielded to God. We thirst for the day when we can overcome our inherit Rebellion. And as we experience that kind of spiritual hunger and thirst (that ONLY God could give to us)- we see some improvement.

Now our personal Righteousness will NEVER rise to the point of being able to reward us with Heaven. We need Jesus' spotless Righteousness for that. But our personal Righteousness can and it does improve over time. So, while it is true that we will NEVER be sinless- it is also true that we will sin a whole lot less- as we continue to hunger and thirst for Righteousness. And as we see that incremental improvement now- we are satisfied to a certain extent. But when Jesus comes back; and we get a new glorified body- we will be satisfied in fullness.

... and Lord willing, we will finish these amazing Beatitudes next time.

## Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.