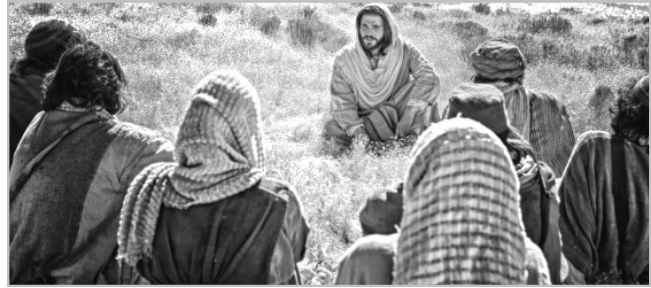


## THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-10, begin with the expression, "Happy is..." However, "happy" means far more than the contemporary meaning. The idea is that happiness and peace, are based upon circumstances but on Divine conditions.



1. Blessed are the poor (ptochos) in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
  - A. One who has nothing and is completely empty, who realizes that they can never achieve salvation on their own and place their complete faith and trust in Jesus Christ.
  - B. In Luke 15:21, the prodigal son became poor in spirit and realized his sin. In Luke 18:10-14 the beggar was justified before God because of his humility.
2. Blessed are they who mourn (pentheo), for they will be comforted.
  - A. To grieve, to strike/beat the chest, an outward sign of an inward grief.
  - B. In Nehemiah 1 we see the sorrow of Nehemiah over the result of the sins of Israel.
  - C. Jeremiah, although timid, was a mighty intercessor for Israel and saw the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity. It broke his heart and wrote the book of Lamentations. Yet in the midst of this indescribable tragic writing come the words of Lamentations 3:22-25 *Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness...*
3. Blessed are the meek (prautes), for they will inherit the earth.
  - A. The word refers to a strong and powerful horse or an ox that has been trained and disciplined. This is a person who is controlled by God in thought, word, and action.
  - B. Moses was the meekest man above all men (Numbers 12:3); it is the meek (humble) whom God guides in His way.
4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for Righteousness (dikaiosune), for they will be filled.
  - A. Righteousness is a life style that is in conformity to the will of God. It focuses on virtue, being morally right and ethical, as opposed to lawlessness.
  - B. A hunger for God transcends a hunger for anything this world may offer. Psalm 42:2 *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?*

5. Blessed are the merciful (eleemon), for they shall be shown mercy.
  - A. Compassionate, involving the heart, mind and action. Jesus had compassion on the crowds and healed and fed them (Matthew 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34).
6. Blessed are the pure (katharos) in heart, for they will see God.
  - A. Something cleansed by shaking it as in a sieve. It is free from impurities and other contaminates. (Psalm 24:3-4)
  - B. Mark 7:20-23 states that every unclean thing comes from the heart, the origin of our emotions and will. David cried out to the Lord in Psalm 51:10, *“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”*
7. Blessed are the peacemakers (eirenopoios), for they will be called sons of God.
  - A. They make peace in others having first received peace with God in his own heart. They are peace makers, not peace keepers and are led by the Spirit to bridge chaos.
  - B. Peace with God (Romans 5:1), the peace of God (Philippians 4:7), the God of Peace (Romans 16:10).
  - C. The Hebrew word for peace is “Shalom.” When the Hebrew characters, read from right to left, are placed together the meaning is surprising: Peace comes when you destroy (Sheen) the authority (Lamed) that causes (Vav), or is bound to, chaos (Mem). Peace is the result of conquering and subduing chaos!
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom.
  - A. The blessing is for those who are being persecuted not for doing wrong or evil acts for doing righteousness as in the case of the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7:54-60.

## **BELIEVERS AS SALT AND LIGHT**

Following the Beatitudes, His declaration of the character of disciples, He tells us that we are salt and light. (Matthew 5:13-16; Luke 14:34-35)

1. The Church has been called by Christ to be salt and light, two very different characteristics. This is not necessarily saying or doing anything but simply *being* something. Salt affects its environment simply by being what it is, salt. The same holds true for light. God’s Word is telling us to be totally different from our environment as described by the Beatitudes.
2. Although salt was used to enhance flavoring and to preserve, Israel used salt from the Dead Sea in two major ways:

- A. To mix with the dirt to enhance plant growth because it was high in potash. The other thing it was used for was to disinfect human waste.
  - B. Luke says that we are the salt of the earth (literally soil). In other words, salt was used to help good things grow and to prevent bad things from spreading. And a large amount was needed for both.
  - C. Although salt cannot become less salty (Luke 14:34-35), it can be diluted when it is mixed with other substances. Sellers would scrape sand into the salt pile and sell it for the same price as pure salt making it “less salty.” (Matthew 5:8)
  - D. Salt cannot remain in the container and be effective. Salt has to be in contact with the soil to do any good. As believers, we must be in direct contact with our society. And it needs to be in large amounts, a sprinkling will not do. If the church is the only place we exhibit our love for God we remain in the container.
3. Being the light of the world is one of the greatest compliments Jesus ever paid a follower. By calling us “light” He commands the Christian to be what He was, the “Light of the world” (John 9:5)
- A. Christianity is meant to be seen in the world. Jesus did not say, “You are the Light of the Church.” Christianity must be seen outside the walls of the church.
    - A light is a guide as the headlights of an automobile. A light is also a warning light as a lighthouse. (Psalm 119:105)
    - Working alongside non Christians, Prayer Outside the Walls, outdoor worship events, praying with neighbors, etc. are a few ways we can take our Christianity outside the “shaker.” What other ways can we shine God’s love to an unbelieving world?

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**For more information contact:**

Christian Life Center Discipleship Institute  
9085 California Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92503  
951-689-6785  
clcriversideoffice@gmail.com  
www.DiscipleshipDevelopment.org