

The Beatitudes

Jesus > Anything

1/8

Scripture

Matthew 5:3

"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for Him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Please grant me a spirit of humility. Help me see that I am spiritually poor and that I need You. Remind me that Your way is the best way. Thank You for promising me a place in Your Kingdom. I love You, Lord. Amen.

Other translations say that God blesses those who are poor in Spirit. Both can apply in our present era. Whether we have a little or a lot, Jesus calls us to admit that we can't do anything without Him. He even says we're blessed when we realize this truth. We can only inherit eternal life in Heaven by realizing that we can't earn it or get in by ourselves. Sadly, in Western society, wealth and materialism often blind us to this incredible promise. When we replace spiritual richness with material richness, we close our lives off to Jesus and the work He wants us to do. It can be hard to say that we need someone or something, but we do. If not, we're trusting in ourselves more than we're trusting in Him. There is good news: trusting His way is so much better. When we realize our need for God, He comes to us and comforts us. He also promises that one day we can live in eternity with Him!

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God what He wants to show you through this verse.
2. Confess any instances of selfishness or trusting in yourself.
3. Thank God that He promises us eternal life in His Kingdom.
4. Pray that you would have eyes to see what is on God's heart.

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The Beatitudes

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Scripture

Matthew 5:4

"God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for coming to Earth to save us. Thank You that because You suffered and mourned, You can now relate to my suffering and mourning. Please fill me with Your strength and help me through life's challenges. I love You, Lord.

One of the verses that most closely parallels this one is also the shortest Bible verse, found in John 13:35: "Jesus wept." When it comes to memory challenges at youth, this verse can easily become just another sentence we commit to memory in two minutes. But it means so much more. If Jesus hadn't come to Earth, how could we believe the promise from Matthew 5:4? If Jesus had stayed in Heaven, He never would have suffered or experienced hardship. Because He chose to rescue us by being born as a human, He experienced loss. You want to know what made Jesus weep? His friend Lazarus died. If Jesus could endure that kind of loss (and way more in later chapters), He can stand by your side through life's challenges and grief. Because He mourned, He can now mourn with us. More than that, He can comfort us when we mourn. He doesn't leave us in despair; He makes a way for us to break free into His light. If you're discouraged, sad, or mourning right now, know that Jesus understands. He is with you, and if you ask, He will help you.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how He wants to comfort you or someone in your life.
2. Confess not turning to God first when you're in need.
3. Thank God that He alone is our true comforter.
4. Pray that God would comfort those who are going through difficult circumstances.

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The Beatitudes

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Scripture

Matthew 5:5

"God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole Earth." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for humility. Thank You that there is no trace of pride in You. Thank You for coming to Earth, living a life of humility, and dying for my sins. Please help me steer clear of pride and teach me how to be humble. I love You, Lord. Amen.

If there's a virtue we're missing in the West, it's humility. Somehow, the more God blesses us, the less we realize it's Him blessing us. Human nature loves to tempt us by saying that we're responsible for what we have. But as soon as we begin to think of our money and assets as "our" money and assets, we disregard the Creator who gave them to us. Eventually, all the key Biblical figures learned humility. You want to know how they figured it out? They surrendered their will and their pride to God. Pride blinds us to our shortcomings, and it puts others down. Jesus couldn't have redeemed us if He'd been prideful, so let's look to His example. By leaving Heaven and being born in a human body on Earth, Jesus showcased the world's greatest act of humility. Because of this, we can boast in Christ alone. His humility saved us. If we model humility in our own lives, God will one day let us join Him in Heaven. That seems far better than trying to reign over a fallen Earth in the present day.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God for a spirit of humility in your life.
2. Confess any instances of pride or self-sufficiency.
3. Thank God for His great love and humility.
4. Pray that you would model the humility of Christ.

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The Beatitudes

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4/8

Scripture

Matthew 5:6

"God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Please fill me with a hunger and thirst for justice. Help me look out for those who are being treated unfairly or unjustly. Give me the courage to stand up for what's right. I love You, Lord. Amen.

When I read this verse while prepping for today's devotional, the phrase "hunger and thirst" caught me off guard. If justice were something edible, maybe it would make more sense. Then I remembered that Jesus loves symbolism. I can't promise you're like me, but if you are, I'll bet you get hungry and thirsty almost every day. This verse is calling us to apply that mindset to our pursuit of justice. Hungering and thirsting for justice isn't something you're meant to do once and check off your bucket list. We are called to make it a regular pattern, the same as eating and drinking. When we see someone being bullied, oppressed, or treated unfairly, Jesus commands us to stand in the gap and defend them. You can do this on a global scale, but also in your school, workplace, or neighbourhood. Throughout the Old Testament, we see God standing up for orphans, widows, foreigners, and the oppressed. Since God loves justice, shouldn't we also love it?

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God for a passion to pursue righteous justice.
2. Confess circumstances where you've turned a blind eye to oppression.
3. Thank God that Jesus stands in the gap, interceding for all of us.
4. Pray for eyes to see and intervene in situations of injustice.

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The Beatitudes

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Scripture

Matthew 5:7

"God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

*Thank You for giving me what I didn't deserve: eternal life.
Thank You for Your indescribable mercy. Please help me treat others with that same spirit, and by doing so, help me to show a small trace of the mercy You've shown me. I love You, Lord. Amen.*

My pastor likes to explain the differences between justice, grace, and mercy. Justice is getting what you deserve. Grace is getting what you don't deserve. Mercy is not getting what you do deserve. Our world would never have made the deal Jesus made. If He died to save the exceedingly righteous, then maybe it would've made sense. But He died to save us "while we were still sinners" (Romans 5:8). Like in the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, we owed God a lot. In fact, we owed Him more than we could ever pay. Yet He mercifully came to Earth and paid that debt for us. Our response should never be to act like the unforgiving servant, taking advantage of others. God has redeemed us, and that degree of mercy can never be replicated. If we want to receive that unlimited mercy from God, we need to show it to others in the way we treat them. Since God showed us mercy, shouldn't we show it to others?

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God where you can show mercy in your interactions with others.
2. Confess the unforgiving-servant mindset that lives in all of us.
3. Thank God for His goodness and mercy, manifested in His Son.
4. Pray that you would show God's mercy to everyone you meet.

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The Beatitudes

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Scripture

Matthew 5:8

"God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Please give me a pure heart. I want to pray the same prayer as David when he said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me." Thank You for cleansing me of sin. I love You, Lord. Amen.

What does it mean to have a pure heart? Surely there's something that separates a "pure-hearted" Christian from a "pure-hearted" non-believer. If not, shouldn't God equally reward unbelievers and believers who are generous and care for others? The answer is found in today's verse. Jesus reminds us that it comes down to the posture of our hearts and serving with pure, godly motives. If we are only giving or serving or reading Scripture because we want to look good or profit by it, we will not succeed. Likewise, if we have twisted motives, we may look good from the outside, but God knows the attitude of our hearts. Purity in all areas of our lives should be a daily goal. By ridding ourselves of sin and impure motives, God promises that we will see Him as we genuinely bless others. Maybe we won't see Him in this life, but when we're united in Heaven, He can look at our pure hearts and tell us, "Well done." What a promise that is!

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God to search your heart and check your motives.
2. Confess any selfishness or ungodliness in your actions.
3. Thank God that we can pursue purity by looking to Christ.
4. Pray for a pure heart as you serve God and get to know Him better.

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The Beatitudes

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Scripture

Matthew 5:9

"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Please help me to be someone who works for peace. Give me the courage to stand up for what's right and help me overcome my desire to sit back while conflict brews. Help me reflect the peace You offer everyone. I love You, Lord. Amen.

For decades, kids and adults alike have wished for "World Peace". While I doubt that will happen until Christ returns, He's called us to do our part in the meantime. Another translation of this verse reads that we are to be "peacemakers". There's a subtle but profound difference between a peacemaker and a peacekeeper. The latter works to maintain the peace, while the former strives to create it. Hate to break it to you, but Jesus was not a peacekeeper; He was a peacemaker. Jesus' teachings will ultimately lead to the greatest peace the world will ever know. As Christ followers, I believe we should work towards the same goal. When we see conflict in our schools, workplaces, homes, and families, we should try to resolve it. This begins by not stirring up conflict ourselves. After that, we should work to resolve conflicts and point others to Christ. God's desire is not for His children to bicker and fight. Rather, He calls His children to be peacemakers. How can you create peace in the world around you?

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how He wants you to be a peacemaker.
2. Confess allowing conflict and strife into your life.
3. Thank God for His peace and the work Jesus has already done for us.
4. Pray that you would work to create peace in your current environment.

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The Beatitudes

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Scripture

Matthew 5:10

"God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." →

Prayer

Lord Jesus,

Thank You that we can experience Your blessings even through persecution. Please help us stand firm on Your truth despite all circumstances. I love You, Lord. Amen.

As we reach the end of our Beatitudes series, Jesus drops this bombshell. If you didn't catch it, let me rephrase His words: "God will bless you when you suffer for My Kingdom." First, Jesus is not denying that we will suffer. He does not say "if" you are persecuted (see John 16:33). Contrary to modern thinking, having loads of money and possessions doesn't get us into the Kingdom. We inherit God's Kingdom by believing in Christ and following the commands He laid out in the Bible. Second, Jesus is not condemning suffering. Jesus will never look down on you for facing physical, mental, or emotional challenges. Quite the opposite; He says you are blessed when you endure these struggles and continue to love Him. I'd like to finish with a word of encouragement to our fellow believers who are suffering worldwide for following Jesus. My friends, don't give up or give in. Keep going, keep spreading His message, and know that you are blessed for doing so. And for those of us who aren't facing active persecution, let us continue to pray for those in need. One day, the Kingdom of Heaven will be ours.

written by Samuel James

Action Steps

1. Ask God how you can take another step in serving and following Him.
2. Confess not always doing the right thing or committing yourself fully to God's Kingdom.
3. Thank God that He will reward you for serving Him in hard circumstances.
4. Pray that God would continue to work in your life as He transforms you.

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