

THE BEATITUDES (Matt. 5:10-12)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. As we come to our last message on the Beatitudes, we need to review them, so we can get our duties as Christians solidly cemented in our minds. It is interesting to note that there is a definite pattern set upon the Beatitudes; that is, there is a logical order in the way the Lord gave them to His disciples. Each Beatitude builds upon the one before it.
- B. *"Blessed are the poor in spirit"* - - This is the Christian man who sees himself as nothing before God. He realizes that in himself he is nothing, and that power must come from Christ to live the Christian life.
- C. *"Blessed are they that mourn"* - - The Christian, who sees his nothingness before God and his utter need of Christ, also sees the pollution of sin in his own life and cries out for deliverance from it. He mourns over his spiritual failure, for he knows that sin displeases his Lord.
- D. *"Blessed are the meek"* - - The Christian, realizing the great power of sin in his own life, even after trusting Christ, comes to understand the importance of submission to God, if deliverance from the pollution of sin is to be effective. The meek person is one who sees his place in the total plan of God and quietly submits or yields his life to God, for he knows he cannot live the Christian life in his own strength.
- E. *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness"* - - This is the Christian who sees that in his own strength he cannot live the Christian life, and he realizes that God must give him the power to do so. Now, by faith in God, he begins to seek after righteousness in his own life. He hungers and thirsts for God to produce righteousness in his daily experience. There is an insatiable appetite for positive holiness and conformity to Christ likeness.
- F. *"Blessed are the merciful"* - - When the Christian seeks for righteousness in God's power, then there will be some obvious results in one's life. The life of God in the believer will begin to manifest itself to others. One of these results will be mercy towards God's creatures, and, in particular, to God's people, the elect. The Christian begins to view all men, saved and unsaved, as Christ views them, identifying with the suffering and misery of the world and he stretches forth his hand to help.
- G. *"Blessed are the pure in heart"* - - Another result of righteous living is a pure heart. The Christian deals in sincerity and genuineness towards others with an absence of guile and hypocrisy. The pure in heart are concerned about motives, desires and intents in all their actions towards God and towards men.
- H. *"Blessed are the peacemakers"* - - Another result of righteous living is a peaceable spirit towards all men. A Christian becomes a peacemaker, and sees that there should be peace between individuals, groups and nations, and he finds Biblical means and methods for making peace. A Christian cannot be war like and Christ like at the same time.

II. THE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: *“Blessed are they which are which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

- A. The world says, “Blessed are the popular” but Christ says, “Blessed are the persecuted.”

NOTE: Persecution is the logical result of applying the first seven Beatitudes. When we begin to live in a Christian manner opposition comes. The world does not know who to deal with the Christ-centered person and strikes out at him in frustration as well as having a feeling of personal guilt. Christ is saying that Christians are going to receive some persecution because they are a certain type of people that believe a certain way.

NOTE: This does not mean that Christians are to have a martyr’s complex but the should not be surprised when persecution comes.

- B. Notice carefully the happy or blessed Christian is the one who suffers for doing right, not wrong. When Christians take a positive stand for Christ and His teachings, doing what is right, their lives become a convicting factor to the world and Christians receive unjust persecution (I Pet. 4:15, 16; II Tim. 3:12P)

NOTE: Some Christians suffer because of foolishness or ignorance. Christians may have a false concept of witnessing, going around buttonholing everyone, or having a “holier than thou“ attitude towards others. The Christian is not suffering out of righteousness but out of stupidity.

- C. If Christians suffer for doing right, they welcome it and thank God for the privilege of suffering for Christ.

NOTE: Christians must also be careful about suffering for religion-political purposes. Every good citizen of the state should have political convictions. Yet, if Christians mix religion and politics, then they must not be surprised if the receive persecution. God does not promise blessing for those who suffer politically, only those who suffer for righteousness’ sake.

NOTE: May God give us grace and wisdom to distinguish between political prejudices and spiritual privilege.

- D. Persecution in our day may take many forms. A person could be martyred, for there are many Christians who are being martyred in the enlightened 20th Century. A Christian could be arrested and put in a concentration camp. One could lose his job or fail to get a promotion. It may be sneering or a jeering laugh as one enters a room. It may be a whisper or a stare. It could be a “cold shoulder.” Whatever form it takes, it is real.
- E. Christians are willing to sacrifice for Christ because they are convinced that Christ is the way. No amount of persecution can change a Christian’s feeling about Jesus Christ, for he knows his reward will be the kingdom of heaven. C.T. Studd, the famous missionary said, “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”

III. THE PERSECUTED FOR CHRIST'S SAKE: *“Blessed are ye, when falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”*

- A. The world says, “Blessed are those who do not offend,” but Christ says, *“Blessed are those who suffer on my account.”*
- B. Notice that now the Lord says “ye” He seemly is directing his statements to his twelve disciples who were to be special ministers of the gospel. Although this ninth Beatitude would apply to all who are witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- C. This Beatitude refers more to our verbal witness for Christ than our righteous acts. It is the belittling and mocking, the false accusations, lies and slander that may come the Christian’s way as he seeks to tell others about Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

NOTE: This should not surprise us at all, for the Lord definitely said it would happen (John 15:19, 20).

NOTE: Now lets remember that this is persecution for loyalty and fidelity to Christ, for obedience to the Great Commission and for a refusal to compromise the Holy Truth.

- D. Christians are to rejoice when they can suffer for Jesus Christ, for they know that their reward will be great in heaven. God never forgets the sacrifices His children make for Him.
- E. Notice the words, *“For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”* This refers to the religious world in particular and the secular world in general. The religious Jews persecuted the prophets. For those who faithfully proclaim Christ, there will be opposition from the religious world as well as the secular world. Nominal and formal Christianity is often the greatest enemy of the pure faith.
- F. Christians are not to react or retaliate when persecution comes. They are to accept it because they know that man acts the way he does because of sin. Nor can the Christian feel any resentment to opposition. He must understand that the non-Christian is acting according to his sinful nature. Satan controls him and his actions are consistent with his nature.

NOTE: How the non-Christian world loves to see a Christian get emotionally upset and retaliate when the opposition comes. Why? Now the enemy can call the Christian an emotional, uneducated fanatic and can slander the Christian’s character rather than fight what he believes.

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. For you here this morning without Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour, I want to ask you a question. Do you openly or silently persecute Christians? Did you ever stop to think that in persecuting Christians you are actually persecuting Jesus Christ? And Christ is the only one that can deliver you from sin, self and eternal judgment. You may well perish for all eternity because you will not listen to the message of Christ that

Christians have been telling you. You have not only rejected Christians but you have rejected Jesus Christ, your only hope for salvation.

- B. I plead with you to realize your lost condition and turn to Christ, who alone can give you the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Christ will save all who come to Him by faith, and He will never cast any away who truly come to Him for salvation.