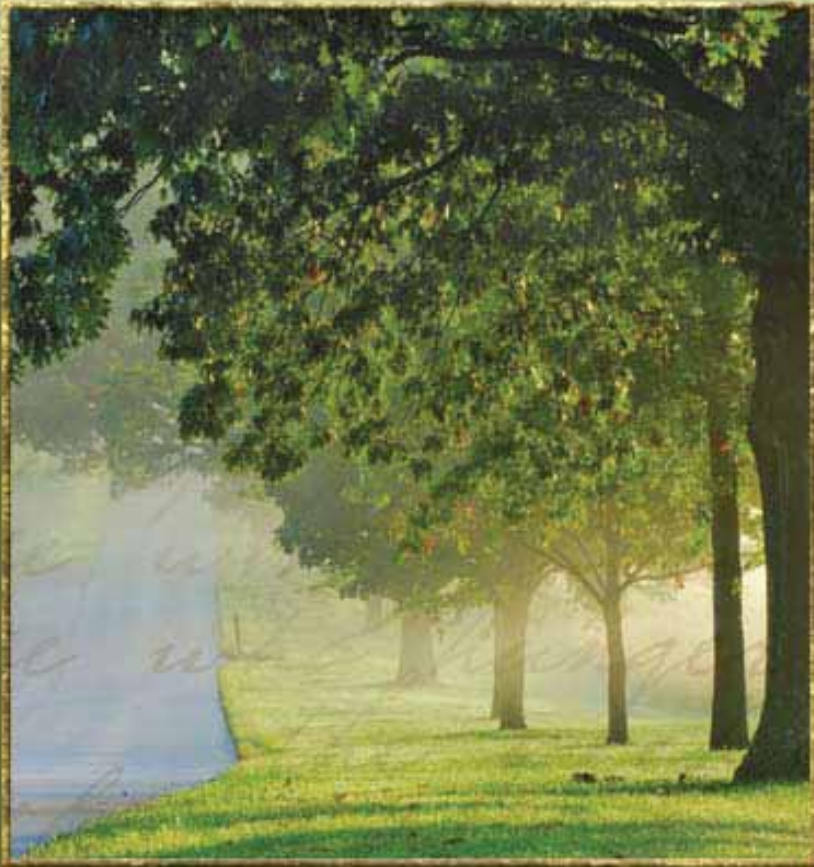


Jesus' Sermon on the Mount

# THE BEATITUDES

*What are the Beatitudes?*

*How do they relate to us today?*



ROSE  
PUBLISHING

# WHAT ARE THE BEATITUDES?

The word *beatitude* comes from a Latin word (*beatus*) that means “happy” or “blessed.” So the word *beatitude* is about some happiness or blessedness. What does it mean to be happy or blessed? The answer to this question is found in the context of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5.

The Beatitudes are the first part of Jesus’ teachings called the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5:1–7:29). In Matthew 4:17 Jesus began his ministry by announcing the coming of the kingdom of heaven: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” In Matthew 4:23–25, Jesus healed the sick throughout Galilee. This healing was a demonstration of the coming kingdom of heaven, of the fulfillment of God’s promises through his prophets in the Old Testament. The teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, then, are descriptions and instructions for those living in the kingdom of heaven.

The Beatitudes are not imperatives; they are not commands the believer must fulfill to enter the kingdom of God. Rather, they are results of the coming of this kingdom. They are part of the Gospel, the good news that Jesus, the Messiah, has come. The good news is that God was about to intervene decisively in history and produce people like the ones described in the Sermon on the Mount.

## Kingdom of God/Heaven

The expression “kingdom of heaven” only occurs in the Gospel according to Matthew. Why? Because the Gospel of Matthew appears to have been for a Jewish audience, Matthew avoids using the name of God—out of respect, Jews avoid pronouncing God’s name.

- The idea of the kingdom uses an important metaphor in the Old Testament: God is King (Psalm 47:7). Kings in the ancient world had absolute power over their dominions. However, they also had responsibilities toward their subjects. Kings were supposed to:
  - *Provide protection for their territories and the people in them*
  - *Provide for the needs of their subjects*
  - *Maintain order in the kingdom, especially legal order*
  - *Represent the deity (in the Old Testament, God)—the king stood for God, representing his authority to the people*



# BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

—Matthew 5:3

## MEANING

The “poor in spirit” are those who recognize their need for God in all things. Like the poor and destitute who depend on others, the poor in spirit know that only God can save and protect them.

What the WORLD Says	What JESUS Says
<p>The world and every kind of human-made religion value the “spiritual master,” the guru, the great teacher. The idea is that if you know and do the right things, you can find your own spiritual salvation. People have their own answers to their problems, if they could only recognize it.</p>	<p>Jesus tells us that the opposite is true. The truly happy people are those who have recognized they are spiritually bankrupt before God. Their happiness consists in relying on God’s strength because they know he cannot fail, and having the certainty that in the kingdom of God, the Messiah will be fully in charge (Isaiah 29:19).</p>

## RELATED TEXTS

“Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord...”  
(Isaiah 29:19). See also: Luke 6:20; Matthew 18:4; Isaiah 61:1.

## QUESTIONS

In what areas of your life are you trying to make it on your own, instead of asking God for help?

### Now and Future Kingdom

- In the New Testament, the kingdom of heaven is God’s gracious rule. In other words, it is where God’s will is done. The gospels make it clear that the kingdom was a present experience (Luke 11:20, 17:21). Jesus’ miracles, teachings, and ministry are all manifestations of the kingdom.
- Yet, the rest of the New Testament, the apostolic letters, makes it also clear that the kingdom is a reality in the future. That is, the fullness of the kingdom will only be experienced when Jesus comes back at the end of times.
- Some theologians call these two realities about the kingdom of heaven the “already-not yet.” The kingdom of heaven and the promises within it are *already* part of the church’s experience. However, the fullness of the kingdom’s power and influence is *not yet* experienced. Christ will bring about the fullness of the kingdom in his second coming.



# BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED.

—Matthew 5:4

## MEANING

“Those who mourn” refers to people wishing God to send his Messiah, hoping God will restore his kingdom and set the world right. Isaiah 61:2–3 tells of the coming Messiah who will “comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion”. These are people who understand the mess the world is in and wish for God’s redemption. Their comfort consists in knowing that the Messiah has come and the redemption they have hoped for is about to occur!

What the WORLD Says	What JESUS Says
<p>Today we avoid grief and pain. “How can a mournful person be happy?” The pursuit of happiness has become for us a goal above all goals. We have become very adept to hiding from pain and reality. Nothing is solved, but we can continue to pretend to be happy.</p>	<p>In stark contrast, Jesus asserts that the way to true happiness must come through a radical shift in thought, a change of mind that first makes us see ourselves as we really are—and our world as it really is—and mourn. Only after we recognize this sorrow can God comfort us. Knowing that the Messiah has come and offers redemption is the greatest comfort for those who mourn.</p>

## RELATED TEXTS

- “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you...” (Isaiah 66:13).
  - “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me” (John 14:1).
  - “I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy” (John 16:20).
  - “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev. 7:17).
- See also: Isaiah 61:2; John 16:7.

## QUESTIONS

Ask God to show you things in your life to which you may be insensitive. Remember that the Lord will always be with you, comforting you through this painful process. If there are areas in your life that need changing, ask God to redeem them.