The Beatitudes:

“The **Beatitudes** are eight [blessings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blessing) recounted in the [Sermon on the Mount](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon_on_the_Mount) in the [Gospel of Matthew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Matthew). Each is a [proverb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proverb)-like proclamation, without narrative, "cryptic, precise, and full of meaning. Each one includes a topic that forms a major biblical theme". Four of the blessings also appear in the [Sermon on the Plain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sermon_on_the_Plain) in the [Gospel of Luke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Luke), followed by four [woes](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/woe) which mirror the blessings.

“Each Beatitude consists of two phrases: the condition and the result. In almost every case the condition is from familiar [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) context, but [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) teaches a new interpretation.Together, the Beatitudes present a new set of Christian ideals that focus on a spirit of love and [humility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humility) different in orientation than the usual force and exaction taken. They echo the ideals of the teachings of Jesus on [mercy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mercy), spirituality, and compassion” (Wikipedia).

There are two places in Scripture that record the Sermon on the Mount, one in Matthew 5 – 7, and the other in Luke 6:17-49. The preaching tours of Jesus included giving this sermon or portions of it all over Palestine to different audiences.

“Luke says that this same basic material was, on a different occasion, spoken to *a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases* (Luke 6:17). Yet, in the beginning of the teaching, Luke writes: *Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said* (Luke 6:20). The sense of this is much the same as in Matthew; that this sermon was spoken to the disciples of Jesus, but *disciples* in a broad sense of those who had followed Him and heard Him; not in the narrow sense of only the Twelve” (Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

“The great interest of the sermon is that it is a more or less full revelation of Christ’s own character, a kind of autobiography. Every syllable of it He had already written down in deeds; He had only to translate His life into language” (Dummelow 637).

**What Mary Baker Eddy says about the “Sermon on the Mount”**

My 190:13

    Christians who accept our Master as authority, regard   
his sayings as infallible.

271:22

The Sermon on the Mount is the essence of this   
Science, and the eternal life, not the death of Jesus, is   
its outcome.

'01 11:16-19

To my sense the Sermon on the Mount, read each Sunday   
without comment and obeyed throughout the week, would   
be enough for Christian practice.

**Why look up words in Greek?**

24:4

    Acquaintance with the original texts, and willingness   
to give up human beliefs (established by hierarchies, and   
instigated sometimes by the worst passions of   
men), open the way for Christian Science to be   
understood, and make the Bible the chart of life, where   
the buoys and healing currents of Truth are pointed   
out.

**Important words from the Sermon on the Mount in Greek:**

“**Blessed**” is *makarios*: “to be fully satisfied; one who is in the world yet independent of the world; whose satisfaction comes from God and not from favorable circumstances” (Hebrew-Greek Key 1735).

“Blessedness is higher than happiness. Happiness comes from without, and is dependent on

circumstances; blessedness is an inward fountain of joy in the soul itself, which no outward

circumstances can seriously affect. Blessedness consists in standing in a right relation to God, and so realizing the true law of a man’s being” (Dummelow 639).

“**Disciple**” is *mathetes*: a learner or student; an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his own rule of conduct” (Hebrew-Greek Key 1735).

A disciple is one who puts into practice what he has been taught. He is not just a hearer of the word, but also a doer – not only a professor of Christianity, but also a practitioner of it.

“**Kingdom**” is *basileia* in Greek and means “royal dominion, kingdom, government; spiritually thekingdom of God is within the human heart” (Hebrew-Greek Key 1698).

Notice how all the beatitudes are really spiritual equations. There is a requirement or rule on one side and a promise on the other. If Jesus is teaching us how to be Godlike through the Sermon on the Mount, how to have the mind of Christ, then these qualities of thought are extremely important.

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Matt. 5:1-10, 14, 48

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus “is on the mountain: and when he is set” (ready or prepared), he

delivers the sermon. The mountaintop could be a literal place in or around the Capernaum area; it could also imply a mental attitude and altitude of thought.

“St. Luke tells us that the night before this sermon was delivered he spent the entire night in private prayer (Luke 6:12)” (Dummelow 637).

Luke 6:12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

**“The Beatitudes: the character of kingdom citizens.**

The first portion of the Sermon on the Mount is known as the Beatitudes, which means "The Blessings" but can also be understood as giving the believer his "be - attitudes" - the attitudes he should "be." In the Beatitudes, Jesus sets forth both the *nature* and the *aspirations* of citizens of His kingdom. They *have* and are *learning* these character traits.

*All* of these character traits are marks and goals of *all* Christians. It is not as if we can major in one to the exclusion of others, as is the case with spiritual gifts. There is no escape from our responsibility to desire every one of these spiritual attributes” (Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“It is remarkable that Jesus began his ministry in this manner, so unlike all others. Other teachers had taught that happiness was to be found in honor, or riches, or splendor, or sensual pleasure. Jesus overlooked all those things, and fixed his eye on the poor and the humble, and said that happiness was to be found in the lowly vale of poverty more than in the pomp and splendors of life” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“‘Poor in spirit’ are those who feel themselves spiritually poor, and in need of all things, and so approach God as penitents and suppliants, beseeching Him to supply their needs, clothe their nakedness, and enrich their poverty. Poverty of spirit is the opposite of pride, self-righteousness, and self-conceit; the spirit of the publican rather than of the Pharisee; the spirit of those who wish to learn rather than to teach, to obey rather than to command, and are willing to become as little children in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Dummelow 639).

“To be poor in spirit is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; it is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition” (Barnes 19).

“This same word for *blessed* - which in some sense means "happy" - is applied to God in 1 Timothy 1:11: *according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God*. "*Makarios* then describes that joy which has its secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable, and self-contained, that joy which is completely independent of all the chances and changes of life" (Barclay, Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com.

“"The kingdom of heaven is not given on the basis of race, earned merits, the military zeal and prowess of Zealots, or the wealth of a Zacchaeus. It is given to the poor, the despised publicans, the prostitutes, those who are so 'poor' they know they can offer nothing and do not try. They cry for mercy and they alone are heard

" (Carson, Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

“They that mourn” are those who are sincerely sorry and repent, willing to sacrifice the false concept for the true. Comforted means strengthened, reinforced, forgiven.

The sorrows that God sends or permits, if received with humility and submission, ever refine and

ennoble the character, and elevate it into closer union with the Father of spirits. Hence the apostle can even “glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience” (i.e. tried and proved character); “and experience, hope” (Rom. 5:3, 4).

The comfort comes from the exercise of the spiritual faculty, and from the consciousness of growing more like God; but there is also that final comfort in the world to come, when “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

“This mourning is the *godly sorrow* that *produces repentance to salvation* that Paul described in 2 Corinthians 7:10.

“Those who **mourn** over their sin and their sinful condition are promised comfort. God allows this grief into our lives as a path, not as a destination” (Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall in herit the earth.

“**Meek**” is *praus* in Greek and means “mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit” (Thayer 535).

 “In the vocabulary of the ancient Greek language, the **meek** person was not passive or easily pushed around. The main idea behind the word "**meek**" was strength under control, like a strong stallion that was trained to do the job instead of running wild.

“The first two beatitudes are mostly *inward*; the third deals with how one relates to one's fellow man.” (Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

“Meekness produces peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults. It looks upon those who offer them with pity. He that is constantly ruffled, that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard, and to raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him” (Barnes 20).

“Meekness is expressed not in a man’s outward behavior only nor in his relations to his fellow man or his mere natural disposition, but expressed rather as an inwrought grace of the soul, first and chiefly directed toward God. That altitude of spirit in which we accept God’s dealings with us as good and do not dispute or resist … is a virtue born in strength of character” (Hebrew-Greek 1751).

“And the meek—not the strong, aggressive, harsh, tyrannical—will inherit the earth. The verb ‘inherit’ often relates to entrance into the Promised Land” (EBC 8.133).

“This was revolutionary doctrine. Judaism meant pride of race and privilege; Rabbinism, pride of

learning; Roman imperialism, pride of power; Greek culture, either pride of intellect or pride of external magnificence. All agreed that the meek man was a poor creature, and the worldly world thinks so still. Nevertheless, meekness is irresistibly attractive, and exercises a wider spiritual influence than any other type of character…. A meek man is one who is not easily provoked or irritated, and forbearing under injury or annoyance” (Dummelow 640).

Deut. 16:20

20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

“‘Hunger and thirst,’ here, are expressive of strong desire.  Nothing would better express the strong desire which we ought to feel to obtain righteousness than hunger and thirst. No needs are so keen, none so imperiously demand supply, as these. They occur daily, and when long continued, as in case of those shipwrecked, and doomed to wander months or years over burning sands, with scarcely any drink or food, nothing is more distressing. An ardent desire for anything is often represented in the Scriptures by hunger and thirst, [Psalm 42:1-2](http://biblehub.com/psalms/42-1.htm); [Psalm 63:1-2](http://biblehub.com/psalms/63-1.htm).” (Barnes 20).

“*Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness*— That, instead of desiring the possessions of others, and endeavoring to obtain them by violence or deceit; and instead of coveting this world’s goods, sincerely, earnestly, and perseveringly desire universal holiness of heart and life, or deliverance from all sinful dispositions and practices, and a complete restoration of their souls to the image of God in which they were created: a just and beautiful description this of that fervent, constant, increasing, restless, and active desire; of that holy ardor and vehemence of soul in pursuit of the most eminent degrees of universal goodness which will end in complete satisfaction: *For they shall be filled*— Shall obtain the righteousness which they hunger and thirst for, and be abundantly satisfied therewith” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“**For they shall be filled**: Jesus promised to *fill* the hungry; to fill them with as much as they could eat. This is a strange filling that both satisfies us and keeps us longing for more” (Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

“‘**Mercy’** is *eleeo* which means to help one afflicted or seeking aid; to bring help to the wretched; to show compassion or pity, to show mercy” (Thayer 203).

“Nowhere do we imitate God more than in showing mercy. In nothing does God delight more than in the exercise of mercy, [Exodus 34:6](http://biblehub.com/exodus/34-6.htm); [Ezekiel 33:11](http://biblehub.com/ezekiel/33-11.htm); [1 Timothy 2:4](http://biblehub.com/1_timothy/2-4.htm); [2 Peter 3:9](http://biblehub.com/2_peter/3-9.htm)” (Barnes’ Notes, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“Our salvation is made dependent upon our showing mercy to every creature that can feel. Every kind of cruel amusement or cruel punishment, as well as every wanton act of cruelty, is strictly forbidden. It should be remembered that cruel speeches no less than cruel acts are forbidden by this commandment. Words can lacerate more deeply than stripes” (Dummelow 640).

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

“**Pure**” is the word *katharos* in Greek and means “to be clean and pure, physically purified by fire, like a vine cleansed by pruning and so fitted to bear fruit. Ethically it means to be free from corrupt desire, from sin and guilt, from every admixture of what is false; to be blameless, innocent, unstained with the guilt of anything” (Thayer 312).

“The pure in heart are those “whose minds, motives, and principles are pure. Who seek not only to have the external actions correct, but who desire to be holy in heart, and who are so. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart” (Barnes 20).

“Some take it to mean inner moral purity as opposed to merely external piety or ceremonial cleanness. Others take it to mean singlemindedness, a heart ‘free from the tyranny of a divided self’” (EBC 8.135).

“The heart both in the OT and NT stands for a man’s inmost soul, and so the purity here required is not the ceremonial cleanness of the Levitical law, nor even the blamelessness of outwardly correct conduct, but complete purity of inward thought and desire. A thing is pure when it contains no admixture of other substances. Benevolence is pure when it contains no admixture of self-seeking; justice is pure when it contains no admixture of partiality; love is pure when it contains no admixture of lust. A man’s heart is pure when it loves only the good, when all its motives are right, and when all its aspirations are after the noble and true. Purity here is not synonymous with chastity but includes it” (Dummelow 640).

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

“**Peacemakers**” is *eirenopoios* in Greek and are those who “love peace” (!ayer 183).

“This does not describe those who *live* in peace, but those who actually bring about peace, overcoming evil with good. One way we accomplish this is through spreading the gospel, because God has entrusted to us the *ministry of reconciliation* (2 Corinthians 5:18).

“Peacemakers are those who reconcile men at variance, whether individuals or classes of men or

nations; those who work earnestly to prevent disputes arising or to settle them peaceably; those

who strive to reconcile men to God and so bring peace to their souls. Because in this aspect they are especially like their heavenly Father, who has sent peace and goodwill down to earth in the person of His dear Son, who is charged with a message of reconciliation” (Dummelow 640).

The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary states: “. . . the most important work of the peacemaker is the practice of the presence of God” (IB 7.287).

This beatitude is the only place in the New Testament where the word “peacemaker” is found.

In this beatitude Jesus is referring not to peacekeepers, but peacemakers – those who end hostilities –those who actively overcome evil with good.

10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“To persecute, means literally to pursue, follow after, as one does a flying enemy. Here it means to vex, or oppress one on account of his religion…. They do this because they are righteous or are the friends of God.

“For righteousness' sake - Because they are righteous, or are the friends of God. We are not to seek persecution. We are not to provoke it by strange sentiments or conduct; by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech that are unnecessarily offensive to others. But if, in the honest effort to be Christians, and to live the life of Christians, others persecute and revile us, we are to consider this as a blessing. It is an evidence that we are the children of God, and that he will defend us. "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," [2 Timothy 3:12](http://biblehub.com/2_timothy/3-12.htm).” (Barnes 21).

“The character traits described in the Beatitudes are not valued by our modern culture. We don't recognize or give awards to the "Most Pure in Heart" or "Most Poor in Spirit." Though our culture doesn't think much of these character traits, they do describe the character of the citizens of God's kingdom” (Sermon on the Mount, www.biblehub.com).

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Abbreviation Key:

EBC = The Expositor’s Bible Commentary

IB = The Interpreter’s Bible