



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 037: The Beatitudes

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Read Matthew 5:1-12.

Introduction: Much has been written on this well-known passage of our Lord's teaching, but we can never study it too much for there is much to learn. Before looking at the Beatitudes individually, make sure you know what the word 'beatitude' means. An ordinary dictionary will give you some idea, but it may be clarified by looking at the translation of 'blessed' in some modern translations. The Greek word for 'blessed' is *makarios*, which was a term of congratulation, so the thought of each beatitude is along the lines of 'if you have this quality you are to be congratulated, you will not lose out'* Now look at each of the Beatitudes in turn, find out what they mean if it is unclear, using a Bible Commentary, and note the results of holding them. It will help to read them in a modern paraphrase, such as the *New Living Translation*, alongside a traditional translation.

- 1. The poor in spirit.** What does this mean? Why should the Kingdom belong to such?
- 2. Those who mourn.** How can mourning be a blessing, even if the mourner received comfort; or does it mean something other than bereavement?
- 3. The meek.** Where is this stated in the Old Testament and in what context? Is meekness weakness; if not, what is it?
- 4. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.** How will they be filled and with what?
- 5. The merciful.** How does this compare with something in the Lord's prayer and Jesus' comment on it (Matt 6:5-15)?
- 6. The pure in heart.** No one has literally seen or can see God (1 John 4:12). In what way, then, can He be seen?
- 7. The peacemakers.** Are not all believers children of God (John 1:12; Gal 3:26)? Why does Jesus single out peacemakers here?
- 8. The persecuted for righteousness' sake.** Why is the Kingdom theirs? (Is there a clue in the following verse, perhaps?) Note the cause of the persecution – seeking or living righteously.

To think about: You have had plenty to think about for each Beatitude. Are you one who is blessed by them – to be congratulated?

To dig deeper: Read the four beatitudes Jesus taught on another occasion, in Luke 6:20-23. In what way are they similar to four in Matthew and how do they differ?

* Amended from the New Bible Commentary (IVP).