



A BEATITUDES STUDY

# blessed





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ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT





## Matthew 5:3

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

Here in this passage, “Blessed” refers to a permanent state of happiness, and isn’t just a fleeting happy feeling that can be given or felt. “Blessed” can also be translated from the Greek word makarios which means “happy” , “rich” or “making long His benefits.” The blessings God promises to us through this passage aren’t just a fleeting act of grace, but rather an eternal, long-lasting blessing that will endure through time.

“Poor” as it is used here isn’t a term relating to us being financially destitute, but rather a spiritual depravity that we can only find through Jesus’s death on the cross to cover the cost for all our sins so we could enter into heaven. It can be referred to as becoming humble and realizing our need for a Savior. This kind of humility isn’t a false humility or self-depreciating attitude, but rather recognizing our shortcomings and admitting our need for forgiveness. This is a state of realizing our sin and poverty and our need for God to satisfy us. We can admit our shortcomings and humble ourselves, knowing Jesus has paid the price for us to enter into Heaven.

In James 4:6 we’re reminded that God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. God doesn’t admire someone who has a prideful heart and isn’t willing to submit and surrender their life. We all are unworthy of heaven and are in need of a Savior to pay the price for our sins so we can enter into heaven. When we become arrogant and prideful in our works and all that we’ve achieved, we should be reminded to humble ourselves and surrender our lives to Jesus. He’s the reason why we can enter into heaven, and it’s not by anything we’ve done or attained on our own accord.



Jesus, although He had every right to be treated as a king while He lived on this earth, He still became a servant and humbled Himself (Philippians 2:5-8) to dying on a cross for us. If the Creator and God of the universe could come to earth and still remain humble and appear inferior to the rest of the world, we should put humbleness into practice as well.

### Philippians 2:5-8

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in the very nature of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant and being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even the death on a cross.

In this day and age it is quite difficult to find humility and submissiveness in the culture we live in. Society tells us to rise to the top. Do whatever you can to get there. If you don't boast about yourself, who will? Make yourself look good even if it's stretching the truth. Be competitive. Take pride in your achievements. You can't admit your need for help. Fake your confidence. Pretend you've got it all together. Don't show any signs of failure or weakness.

Society has turned everything upside down. It praises self-reliance and we are taught the lie that we don't need others, let alone a Savior to save us. We were created with a desire to be saved and have that desire be filled with a love only Jesus can offer us. Our poverty and poor spirit, that feels empty and craves for more, can be satisfied when we accept





Jesus into our hearts. When we admit our need for Jesus as our Savior, God promises us that we will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

In Ephesians 2:8-9 it mentions that we've been saved through grace, by faith. It's not by works that we will enter into heaven, but rather accepting God's grace and placing our faith in Him. Our good works won't be an access ticket to heaven. We can act like we have all the "riches" of the world, but they will not be the determining factor that God looks at when we stand before Him.

### Ephesians 2:8-9

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

Before we can enter into heaven, we will need to acknowledge our spiritual depravity and all our good works won't be able to save us. We need a Savior. Jesus paid the price to cover our spiritual poverty and make our lives spiritually "rich" and filled with blessing. When we've asked Jesus into our hearts and we become a child of God, we can find incredible joy knowing that one day we will walk in heaven! A place with no more pain, heartache or struggles. What a glorious day that will be!



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ARE THOSE WHO MOURN



## Matthew 5:4

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Have you ever mourned the loss of something in your life? Maybe a death of a loved one, an end to a relationship or a shattered dream? I find it consoling knowing that those who mourn, God desires to comfort them. In fact, it almost seems like He finds great pleasure in doing so. Maybe because He has felt great pain and suffering and knows what comfort can do for someone who is mourning. He knows how the pain of suffering can cut deep.

Upon my research, I found that mourn can be defined as “having deep sorrow or regret.” Although, in this passage, mourn is most commonly believed to be related to feeling sorrow for the guilt from our sin. In the previous beatitude, we focused on the “poor in heart” and how those who are “poor” need Jesus’ free gift to cover the cost for their “poverty.” Here we move onto the next phase, when we realize our sin and depravity. We mourn the sin we have committed and grieve all that Jesus had to go through for our sins to be forgiven when we accept Him into our hearts.

While mourn in this context most commonly relates to our sorrow for our sin, it can also associate to mourning the loss of someone or something. In Greek, it can also refer to grieving over a personal hope or relationship ending.

I don’t know about you, but there have been many instances where I’ve mourned over a death of a loved one, loss of a personal relationship with someone I admired, or the loss of something I desired never being fulfilled. We all face circumstances that leave us mourning over what once was or what we thought might occur.



As sinners we also mourn over the guilt we feel when we sin and our inability to attain perfection. We grieve when we are reminded of all that Jesus had to endure so we have the ability to enter into heaven. The pain He must have suffered when they falsely accused Him. The agony He faced when they beat Him with the scourging whip digging deep into his perfect body so we could know what true love consisted of.

If I'm being honest, I often don't mourn over what all Jesus had to endure as frequently as I should. I may think about it from time to time, but I don't "show deep sorrow or regret" as much as I should. I take it ever so for granted. I forget all that was done for me so I can have eternal life. Instead, I focus on all that seems wrong with my life rather than remembering all that Jesus had to go through. I search for scraps of love from this world when I forget all the love that Jesus displayed and offers to me every single day. I ask forgiveness for my sins, but sometimes I honestly don't realize all that was done for me so I could seek forgiveness and be forgiven. What an incomprehensible gift that I so often overlook.

### Psalm 94:19

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.

When I've messed up and fallen short in so many areas in my life, how great it is to know that Jesus always will forgive me when I seek Him and ask for forgiveness. He just doesn't forgive me, but still displays His love for me like it never happened. I can't recall any relationships I've had here on this earth that possessed such grace.



While studying this beatitude, I've been convicted of my awareness for all that Jesus has done and is doing for me. When I fall short and act selfishly, causing my example of Christ to be impacted, I can allow regret to eat away at me. It causes me to feed on my imperfection and fallibility.

When we turn to God and feel agony over our pain and seek forgiveness, He will offer it graciously to us. He also provides us with comfort. This comfort, as translated in Greek as *parakaleó* can be defined as “encourage” or “strengthen.” This word for comfort can also be often referred to as the Holy Spirit since He is our Comforter and He indwells in us when we become saved (John 14:26) .

God doesn't just offer us forgiveness for our sins, but He does so with a gracious comfort allowing us to experience His love by encouraging us even when we've messed up. We can be strengthened, knowing that He will always love us no matter what. He's not leaving us. He's not going anywhere. We can find comfort knowing He is near and our mistakes don't make Him love us any less.

### 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.



I'm not sure what you are facing right now, but you can hold onto the promise that when you mourn, God is right beside you comforting you through the darkest of moments you face, even if you've failed or messed up. I believe He desires to draw closer to those who suffer immense pain and use the hardest times to display His loving comfort. When God comforts us we can know that it's genuine. It's not fleeting or for selfish gain. It is solely for the purpose to encourage and console our broken hearts. Now that is something that we can find abundant blessings of comfort in!



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ARE THE MEEK





## Matthew 5:5

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

In this world meekness is commonly viewed as a weakness or vulnerability. Often being meek can be perceived as a personality flaw, and those who possess it are labeled as insecure, vulnerable and defenseless. Meekness isn't a personality trait or flaw, but rather a prized characteristic that God greatly values, even when the world chooses to disregard it's significance.

In this passage "meek" in Greek can be defined as "gentle" or "humble." It also can be referred to as "tranquil" or "untroubled." When we are gentle and possess self-control we can humbly leave our worries in God's hands and find peace knowing God is taking care of our needs and is seeking justice.

I have to admit, when I display meekness in this world it can sometimes allow me to feel like I'm getting "walked on" and "mistreated." Others can view gentleness or humility as an opportunity to mistreat or manipulate. Those who are dominating use it to their advantage of their "power." I love how Psalm 37:7-9 encourages us to wait patiently, because one day the wicked will be eliminated and the meek will flourish.

## Psalm 94:19

Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when people succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes. For those who are evil will be destroyed, but the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.





When we are meek, we are submitting our cause over to God to handle and we don't have to carry the burden to defend ourselves. We can state our cause respectfully to our opposer, but we don't have to "win" the battle. God will take care of it. We can face adversity and criticism without the need to lash back to provoke a heated argument, because God will seek ultimate justice.

Although being meek does involve being submissive, it doesn't mean we should be gullible or vulnerable when others mistreat us. In James 1:19-21 it mentions that we should be "slow to anger." God instructs us that we shouldn't lash out in haste, but we are encouraged to become "slow" to anger. Not all anger is wrong, even Jesus displayed righteous anger when He went into the temple, flipping over tables where the people turned God's holy place into a marketplace to do business.

Although most forms of anger can very well lead to sin, there are some cases that righteous anger can be deemed acceptable. When we are "slow" to anger this allows us time to analyze our thinking and actions. Ponder whether this is something Jesus would potentially display righteous anger in, or if it's instigated by a need to criticize, target or defame. When we do speak, we should do so by defending God's truth, not a personal opinion or standard.

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.



Jesus, while on earth, displayed meekness while also actively proclaiming the truth. Even though He remained humble, He didn't back down amidst His accusers, but respectfully presented His cause without blame or revenge. Even in times of anger, He handled it with a righteous conviction.

Referring back to Psalm 37, God tells us to “commit [our] way to the Lord; trust in Him.” When we commit our plans to God and trust Him with our desires, God rewards us with His many blessings. When we're promised that the “meek will inherit the earth” it's like He's bestowing us with all our eyes can see. Not just here on this earth, but the amazing new earth that is yet to be created (Revelation 21:1). This current earth may be full of deceit and wicked ways, but one day all things will be made new. There will be an amazing new earth where peace overflows and the meek will flourish.

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ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER & THIRST  
FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

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## Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.

Looking around at the world we live in today we see so much immorality, wickedness and deceit. It's everywhere we go and seems impossible to escape. With the world's ethics progressively plummeting I crave any sign of goodness. Any hope for justice, integrity or righteousness. Even with all the depravity of this temporary, deteriorating world, we do have a righteous God that is still in control. Kind and noble people still exist, even when Satan wants us to become discouraged. Although, don't get me wrong, evil is still out there and is seeking to overcome God's children.

In this beatitude, we find the beautiful blessing of those who search for righteousness. Let's break down some of the words in this beatitude.

In this passage, "hunger" means to desire earnestly, crave or thirst. "Righteousness" can be defined as "to be right with God and upright and moral in spirit." Lastly, "filled" can be described as being satisfied. When we are earnestly craving to live an upright life and are right in our relationship with God, we can find satisfaction. Not satisfaction in our circumstances or the world around us, but because we know that God has our worries, longings, tears and pain in His hands. We can find fulfillment in Him. He sees and He is taking care of it. He sees your desire to pursue righteousness, and He is blessing you with His peace because you know no matter what happens, He wins in the end. Evil may seem like it is overcoming any sign of goodness now, but one day it will be crushed and defeated forever.



We as Christians should be seeking after what is moral and honorable in God's sight. We should be desiring to honor God and possess qualities that would exemplify God. Sadly, many Christians in today's society don't live any differently than the rest of the world. Nobody would know there's a difference. We weren't called to blend in, but be set apart.

### John 15:18-19

If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you

We as Christians should be living a life that is seeking to glorify God in what we do and say. Others should see a difference in us. Jesus informed us that we will be hated by others who oppose His ways. It's not a possibility, it will occur if we truly stand up for what we believe and hold fast to the truth. While the world around us may be engrossed in corruption and deceit, we should firmly remain focused on God, knowing He will seek ultimate justice and remains in control.

We as Christians know we are forgiven by God, but we also know how far we are from perfection, so we should be continually maturing our faith and growing in our walk with God. When we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we are craving for what is true, right and just. We are seeking the truth and not participating or tolerating immorality. While God accepts us when we admit our need for a Savior, it doesn't give us any more value over others. No one is righteous, so we shouldn't be comparing our lives with others and



setting our own expectations of righteousness. It's God's place to judge; He is the only One that can see the heart. Even the greatest of Christians can fall into sin and live foolishly. Being a Christian doesn't make us more qualified or grant us special privileges. We all sin and all still are in need of a Savior to cover the cost for our sins.

In this passage, the seeking, hungering and thirsting for righteousness isn't passive, but is an active and continual desire and longing. We should crave to deepen our relationship with God and serve others. This is a pursuit of holiness rather than seeking fleshly desires. Our daily lives depend on food and water to sustain us. We too should be placing that same dependence on God in our Spiritual relationship. When we are hungry or thirsty, our every thought is occupied by our need for food or water. When we look around and see the deception, evil and wickedness of this world it can consume us and place a longing in us for justice and righteousness.

When we focus on this world and become blinded to the advertisements for success, happiness and fame, it can greatly leave us with a longing heart, still searching and craving for it to be fed and quenched with something more fulfilling. I've grown weary in trying to live an upright life in such a backwards world. I struggle with the perceptions and acceptance of this world, and it never leaves me satisfied for very long. God is the only thing that will satisfy our longing hearts. He is the only One who can quench our thirst or fill our emptiness with hope and long-lasting peace.

### Psalm 107:8-9

Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.



No matter how much righteousness is shunned in today's world, please remember that it is something so greatly admirable to your Creator. He won't overlook the effort it took to remain faithful and obedient to Him in a world that despises anything associating with Him and His Word. You will be rewarded and blessed for your commitment to Him, even when everything around you seems so twisted. It is so encouraging to know that no matter how crazy this world is getting and all that is happening in today's society, God wins. He not only wins, He defeats evil entirely. Righteousness will no longer be perceived as a weakness, and will be greatly rewarded and valued. We will reap our blessings of obedience. Justice will be served and all immorality will be forever vanquished.

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ARE THE MERCIFUL

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## Matthew 5:7

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Being merciful to someone who has hurt you can be incredibly trying. Showing kindness to your enemies can feel so undeserved when someone has been ever so cruel towards you. I can imagine you can already think of someone who has hurt you, causing a deep wound on your heart that felt like the pain wouldn't ever mend.

The pain of mistreatment of others may feel unbearable. You see the world pressing on like nothing ever happened. People move on with life, but the pain from your past still haunts you, terrifying you that you'll never overcome those agonizing memories of how that person treated you. Do those painful scars etched on your heart feel unforgivable? Do you hold on tight, reliving the agony so that it doesn't feel like what they did doesn't go unnoticed or forgotten? Have you believed the lie that letting go and offering forgiveness erases the immense suffering they caused you?

I'll be honest in saying all those thoughts have ran through my mind many times before, especially recently. I've gripped tightly onto the mistreatment of others and refused to let go because it feels like the pain will go unnoticed and forgotten. When you choose to forgive, it can feel like those who hurt you are getting away with their wrongdoing. I've felt like if I let go of my pain, God would too. I know I've withheld mercy towards others who I felt were so undeserving, when I was so blind to the insurmountable mercy God had already displayed to me. I didn't offer God's mercy and love based on how He saw them through His eyes, but rather how I saw them.



Let's dig in a little deeper at this beatitude and discover four primary ways we can be characterized as being merciful towards others.

Merciful (eleémón) in this passage, is defined by being compassionate. It is characterized as showing sympathy, displaying kindness and refraining from punishment, even when the receiver is undeserving. It's when we have every right to seek judgement and revenge but rather we let it go, giving it to God, and replace our need for justice with love and forgiveness.

### 01. You realize your need for mercy

We are all sinners and don't deserve mercy, none of us are perfect or good enough. To be characterized as a merciful person, we acknowledge our sinful spirit and our need for God's mercy, and we offer that same mercy to others. When we refuse to display mercy to others for their wrongful actions, it shows an absence of appreciation and understanding of God's mercy towards us.

Titus 3:5

He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

### 02. You place yourself in your opposer's shoes

Being merciful runs deeper than just letting go of our pain, it is an understanding someone else's distress and misery and showing love, even when they are still cruel or



hurtful. Displaying mercy is when someone's treatment towards you feels unforgivable, but you choose to view the situation from our offender's perspective. You take into consideration how their circumstances, pain and discontentment could be affecting their heart, causing their frustration to be taken out on you. You never know what leads someone else to inflict their pain towards you. You never know what someone else is going through behind the scenes. Although this certainly doesn't make right for their wrong, it can help you offer compassion for their hurting heart.

#### 1 John 4:20-21

Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Let me also make clear that there are times where mercy isn't always the appropriate action; whether it be punishing a child for a wrong act, or when someone commits a crime. We also shouldn't allow others to use our merciful character as an opportunity for them to walk all over us. Allowing them to do so, would be harmful for their character, their relationships with others, and also for ourselves too.

### 03. You offer forgiveness, even when it feels undeserved

Offering undeserved forgiveness has been an incredibly difficult area for me to overcome. There have been many instances over the past couple years that have left deep wounds and bitter scars on my heart. Wrongdoings that were intentional and deceptive. Lies of deceit that were spoken about me and were intentionally intended to



inflict pain upon me. Forgiving people like that is one of the hardest things to do, especially when we never receive an apology. How others treat us reveals their character, not ours. We can't control how we're treated, but we can decide how we will react and how we will choose to treat others.

When I'm working through forgiving someone I have to continually remember that forgiveness isn't forgetting. It is relieving myself of the burden and weight of the hurt that person caused me. It's setting me free from the lies I've allowed myself to believe. It's letting go and letting God work through it and handle the injustice. It might not be made right or feel fair right now, but one day it will!

Forgiveness may feel undeserved and circumstances may feel unforgivable, but I have to always remind myself that I am just as guilty of my own sins and am consistently forgiven by my Savior. If a perfect God can forgive an imperfect sinner like me, I shouldn't expect anything less than to offer that same forgiveness to others.

Luke 6:36

Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

#### 04. You let God seek justice

Displaying mercy isn't ridding their harmful or hurtful actions towards you. God saw and He knows the anguish it caused your heart. Nothing that has inflicted pain upon your heart is forgotten. God will bring ultimate justice and will make sure it is taken care of. We don't have to carry the burden to judge, seek revenge or punish, God will take care of it.



We can let go of the pain, giving it to God knowing that He'll be the perfect Judge and bring ultimate justice where it is due. No matter how small or how forgotten it feels, God still sees it. He's aware and handling it. We may not see justice here on earth, but we can rest assured God will hold everyone accountable for their deeds. You can release the need to hold tight to the pain, because God's got it in His hands and He doesn't want you to carry the burden any longer.

### Romans 12:19

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

When we choose to be merciful towards others who have hurt us, God too will show the same mercy towards us. He blesses those who choose to extend that same love towards others that He chooses to display to us. When you don't feel like you have any love to offer others on your own accord, seek God in prayer and ask Him to help give you a merciful heart. Let Him provide you with His love so you can do the impossible and let His love be what shines through. You never know how your actions, no matter how small, are influencing others around you!



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ARE THE PURE IN HEART





## Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Finding purity in our world can be quite an endeavor. We look around and see so much immorality, injustice, deceit and sin. It can be difficult to find goodness and purity amidst it all.

We are reminded in this passage that those who have a pure heart will see God. So let's get started in digging in a little deeper to this beatitude's meaning...

### What does it mean to be “pure in heart?”

Keeping our heart pure is vital in our Christian walk. The heart is the core of who we are. When our heart is full of deceitfulness, anger, lust and selfishness it affects our whole being. When our heart longs for worldly things, our perspective is greatly impacted.

Purity relates to all levels of our lives, including our thought life, words and our actions. I can't count the times when I've allowed my heart to long for things of this world, causing my focus to shift off God. It's an easy trap and Satan can lead us down a road causing us to drift away from God and keep us focused on earthly pleasures, shallow satisfactions and us searching for hope in something that is not eternal.

## Matthew 6:21

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.



When we are living a pure life, we are free from deceitfulness and focused on God. Having a pure heart is when we are focused on God and we aren't lukewarm in our faith. We are committed. We aren't pretending to be holy and upright only in front of others, while behind the scenes we're harboring immorality within our heart. Purity comes from within, and isn't something only seen through actions, it happens deep within the heart. If we have a pure heart it will then transpire in all we do.

Matthew 23:37

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your  
soul and with all your mind.

Purity is defined as “freedom from guilt or evil” and while we should be living an upright life, having a pure heart doesn't mean we will have a perfect heart free of sin. We are still imperfect and human. When we aspire to have a pure heart we are desiring to seek forgiveness for our sins and focus on God, not allowing earthly pleasures to fill us or be our guide.

### What does it mean to “see” God?

Seeing God isn't necessarily seeing Him in a physical sense, although if we are saved, one day we will see Him in heaven, but in this passage “seeing” is referred to as experiencing His presence and acknowledging He is at work.

Only God is completely pure. Our hearts are defected and sinful, but because of Jesus dying on the cross for us, God sees Jesus' perfection instead of our sin (2 Corinthians





5:21). Because of Christ we are able to experience an intimacy with God, even when we are so undeserving because of our sinful nature. Purity is a pre-requisite for experiencing God and “seeing” Him. If we harbor sin in our lives, it can hinder our relationship with God. When we are living a pure life we are admitted into His presence because we are right with Him and not harboring sin.

### Isaiah 59:2

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

When we allow sin into our lives and don’t seek forgiveness for our wrongdoings it is a barrier in our relationship with God. When we hold onto immorality and choose to grip the fleeting pleasure it brings, it can define our dedication to God. Would we rather relish in our immorality and hide behind deceit instead of letting go of our sin and letting God be our only focus?

Purity can be a tough beatitude to practice, because this world so evidently favors immorality and corruption. It can be a constant struggle with all the world constantly infiltrates into our hearts every day. What once was valued is now frowned upon. What once was upright is now deemed weird. It can be a struggle to possess such a trait in this backwards world we live in. Although, no matter what this world practices, God’s Word still stands true. He still blesses those who remain pure and seek Him, even when the world is screaming at you to live otherwise. If you remain faithful to God and seek purity in your heart it is greatly valued and will be blessed by God.



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ARE THE PURE IN HEART





## Matthew 5:9

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Displaying peace in difficult relationships can be incredibly tough. Can you think of that person that rubs you the wrong way? Maybe you can think of a few. Sadly, I think we all know of at least one. Sometimes it takes all we have to display love even when we feel we have every right to lash out and become angry. Being a peacemaker is something God greatly admires and blesses those who desire to keep peace in their relationships, especially the tough ones.

### What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

Living as a peacemaker starts from within. Often times we carry around pain and disappointments in our lives, and in result, it can be taken out on others around us. When we hold on tightly to pain from our past and let it fester in our hearts, it can affect how we react in our relationships and how we treat others. When we take all our frustrations and leave them in God's hands to judge and use for His glory we can let our distress be replaced with peace so we can extend it to others.

When we are a peacemaker, we exemplify the peace God has given us and integrate it into our relationships in areas that it may typically be difficult to practice kindness and love. Being a peacemaker doesn't mean we avoid conflict, but instead, we encounter those tough relationships with respect for the other person.

In Hebrew, peace is translated as "Shalom" and can be described as "health, prosperity, harmony and wholeness." In Greek, "peacemakers" part of the word (poieo) is translated



as “to do” or “to make.” Peace isn’t just a state of mind, but implies action. This instructs us to practice peace as an action, and therefore, implement it into our lives. We should be the ones to initiate peace, not just talk or wish it for our lives and relationships.

Being a peacemaker, we should display love to others and exemplify peace in all our relationships. We cannot control how others react or treat us, but we can do our part and show God’s love to others. If you encounter difficulty in a relationship, don’t let it be because of your behavior. We shouldn’t allow a ruptured relationship to occur from our offensive actions. We should do our part and show love, even when we don’t receive the same treatment in return.

#### Romans 12:18

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Surprisingly, sometimes living as a peacemaker may actually cause more strife in a relationship. Peacemakers don’t wish to appease or conform to everyone’s wishes, but seek to live out their life for God. In today’s world it has become ever so difficult to live for God and still try to live at peace with others who are living for the world.

Peacemaking isn’t seeking to make everyone happy. It’s not choosing to agree with any opinion or whim to dodge a disagreement. It’s not the absence of conflict. It’s not avoiding problems because you desire things to remain stable. Instead, being a peacemaker means you seek to live in harmony with others and choose to resolve any relational issues in love, despite your differences with others. Living as a peacemaker, we shouldn’t



compromise peace in a relationship by living unrighteously. Living as a peacemaker may in fact cause additional conflict in our relationship with others, but as Christians, we should still show God's love even amidst a severed relationship. When we are living for God and standing up for Him, we aren't in the wrong, even if others don't react in love and decide to display hostility us instead.

There will be times where you've done all that you can do, but peace is just not possible between both sides. You may do your part and exemplify peace in a situation, but maybe the other person just isn't willing to do so. I can recall many moments as a Christian where others disliked my faith. People discouraged me from living a righteous life and it caused a rift in my relationship with that person. In many cases, the relationship was severed and no matter how hard I tried to seek peace, restoration wasn't something they desired to continue with.

### James 3:17-18

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.  
Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

## 3 steps to help you become a peacemaker

### **01. Seek God in prayer**

Go to God first, before you seek others. Ask God to show you the other person's needs and allow you see them through His eyes. Ask God to display any wrong actions, attitudes



or selfishness that could be hindering your restoration in your relationships with others and seek forgiveness. Take a moment and surrender the situation that is causing conflict over to God and let Him work through it.

## **02. Desire restoration**

Take initiative and display love to that person, and if necessary, ask for forgiveness from them, even if they are primarily the one that is in the wrong. Choose to attack the problem, seeking to restore the relationship, and not aim to accuse the person.

## **03. Refrain from defaming**

This one can be tough, especially with those difficult relationships. The first thing we desire to do is tell someone how frustrated we are and seek to share what that person did to us. As peacemakers our duty isn't to defame or speak negatively of others, but rather seek to restore. If restoration isn't something that's possible, we shouldn't continue to spread negative remarks about that person, but still show God's love despite your differences.

## What does it mean to be “children of God?”

As we wrap up the verse, it closes with the phrase that “they will be called children of God.” As God's children, we are included in God's family. This means we share in His name and reputation. Just as we should aspire to have a “good name” we should also live out a life that would exemplify God and bring glory to Him. As Christians, we are sometimes people's only physical interaction with God that they can see. Choose to display love and demonstrate peace in your relationships so others can see your heavenly Father through your heart. So, will you be a peacemaker today?

A decorative border at the top of the page featuring various floral and leaf motifs in a dark teal color.

*blessed*

ARE THE PERSECUTED





## Matthew 5:9

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Have you ever been treated differently because of your faith? Have you tried to be a light and felt like others tried to put out your fire? Have you pushed through fear to display courage and be different, only to be rejected and betrayed for your faith? Have you felt like you've offered God's love to others who instead used your Christ-like character to their advantage? Have you ever been sneered at for your beliefs and professing to be a child of God?

### What does it mean to be a persecuted?

In verse 11, we see God switching from a third person tense and changing to a first person "you," resulting in this beatitude being believed to be the most personal. God instructs us that those who are persecuted for their faith will be rewarded for their commitment and courage to withstand the harassment of others for their faith.

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, "persecute" can be defined as to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict. To cause to suffer because of a belief. To annoy with persistent or urgent approaches such as attacks.

As defined above, persecution can be referred to as being harassed, rejected or enduring





physical suffering for standing up for God or what you believe in. While persecution does certainly include physical abuse for our faith it can be a much different kind of treatment in the world most of us live in today. While there are many missionaries and Christians living out their faith in countries across the world that endure extreme physical persecution every day, other forms of persecution also exist that we may suffer as Christians. This could result in losing a job, being bullied, enduring harassment at school or work, rejection from friends or relationships due to you living out your faith.

### 1 Peter 2:20

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

In this passage, we are told that we will be blessed for the persecution we face for our righteous acts. To clarify, this refers to those who are persecuted for being “righteous” and does not include persecution that has occurred for doing evil or standing up for something immoral. True righteousness is not offered for our benefit, but solely to bring glory and honor to God.

As I’ve grown older I’ve experienced many difficult circumstances involving standing up for my faith. God has tested me if I would choose to stand up for what is true, or if I would be swayed by the world and its lies. I’ve lost friendships, relationships and even job opportunities in result of living out my faith. While many of us may not have endured through physical abuse for our faith, many of us have been treated unfairly as a result of standing up for God. Some of the toughest struggles we face can be criticizing words coming from those we seek to impress the most.



When persecution occurs our common reaction is to revert to the comfort of turning to our sinful human nature and not react in love. Our natural instinct is to seek revenge and overtake evil with anger. We can remember that persecution isn't between us and our offender, but is in fact, Satan attacking God. There is a battle being fought and we can only see a tiny sliver of what is really going on in the supernatural realm.


When we live righteously, those who are living in evil desire to persecute us for our faith. When we stand up for God's truth, those who are living in evil and loving the ways of the world will despise our standards. They don't want to feel guilty for their sins and immorality. They seek to persecute Christians for their faith to remove the guilt they feel for their acts of injustice.

John 3:20; 15:19

Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

## Biblical examples of persecution

- Stephen was stoned to death.
- James, the brother of Jesus, was stoned and his head was beaten with a fullers club.
- Matthias was stoned and beheaded.
- Thomas was pierced by four soldiers with swords.

- 
- Mark was dragged to death by horses.
  - Andrew, Jude, Simon and Peter were crucified on a cross. Peter requested to be crucified upside down as respect to Jesus' crucifixion.
  - Luke was hung on an olive tree.
  - John was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but escaped by a miracle and later wrote the book of Revelation. He is the only apostle to escape a tragic death.
  - Paul was tortured and executed.

### Revelation 22:12

Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

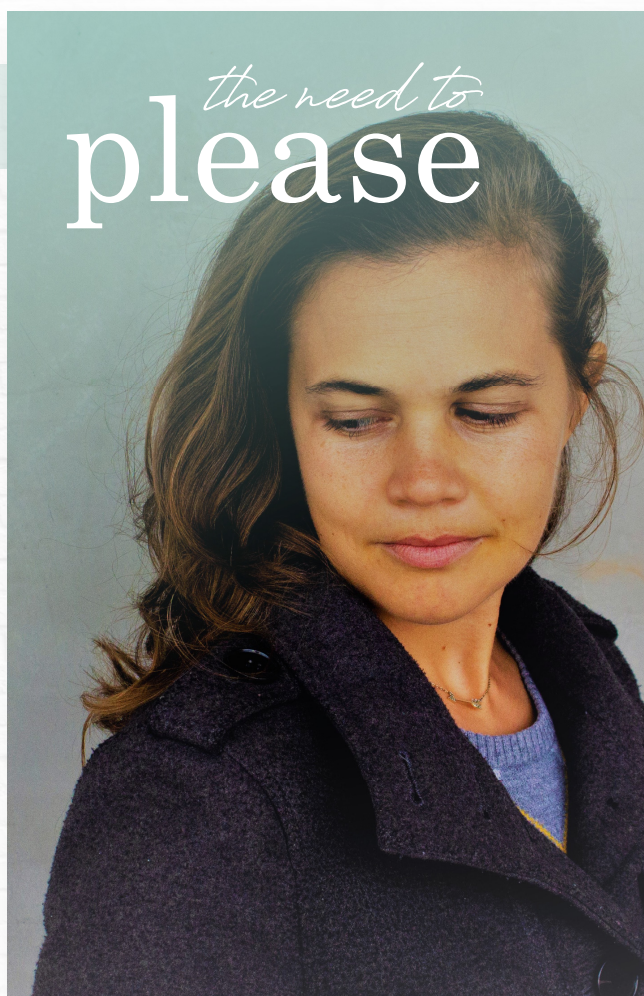
What we may view as unfair, unjust, inappropriate or cruel, God sees this pain for living righteously as a blessing. He knows that even when we are harassed for our faith, we are deepening our faith and courage to stand up for what we believe. He is proud of His children who remain faithful to Him no matter what the circumstance.

In Matthew 24:21 it states that all Christians will be persecuted. It's not an "if" statement and is no surprise, but is a fact and is something we will face. In Revelation 22:12, we are told that God's reward is coming and we will all be rewarded for our obedience to God.

Persecution isn't pretty or attractive, but it is pleasing to God when we remain obedient to Him, hold fast to our faith and glorify Him even when the world tries to tear us down. Keep holding fast and living for God, it's honored in His sight and we are achieving eternal blessings that await for us one day!

## Conclusion

I hope you've enjoyed this study of the beatitudes and have been reminded of the blessings God bestows upon those who seek and follow after Him. I know in my study of this passage I have found myself greatly convicted of how my life can drift far from the characteristics in this passage.



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