

# Matthew 5

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Amen. You're round someone's house for Sunday lunch and you've had a great feast and there's! a cheesecake and there's eight of you round the table. It's a big cheesecake. You've gone round once and there is one piece of cheesecake and at least three people want it. And what do you do? You've got the choice there. You've got the choice. Do I divide it up or do I give it to one person? And I have a philosophy that I adhere to in that situation. It is all or nothing, isn't it? It's all or nothing. Either I get it all or I don't want any of it. To me, it's not going to do anybody any good to get a third of one piece of cheesecake. No one will get any real pleasure out of that. It's either all or nothing. You don't divide it up. And that's the way it is with the Beatitudes. You don't divide them up. It's all or nothing.

They all go together. They change the gastronomic analogy. It's like eating good pizza. You know when you eat good pizza and you get a warm slice of pizza and you bite into it as you're holding it and the cheese just keeps on coming, doesn't it? You can't break it off.

And you find that. And you find that your slice of pizza and you're holding it. And you find that your slice of pizza is naked and there's masses of cheese in your mouth as you hold the slice of pizza. It all hangs together.

And it's the same way with the Beatitudes. They all hang together. They are not like spiritual gifts. But we say, don't we, God seems to have given to me this particular gift and hasn't given to me that gift.

It's not, well, I think that I can be a pretty meek person. Or actually, my strength is being merciful. And I'll specialise in hangering and thirsting after righteousness.

[ 2 : 0 0 ] But the rest of the Beatitudes, well, that's not my bag. No, that's not the way. That is not the way to handle the Beatitudes. They come together as a whole and they hang together. And another thing that you and I need to be really clear of as we start this Sermon on the Mount, as we start studying the Beatitudes, is we see who is Jesus speaking to.

And I think that's important for chapter 5, chapter 6 and chapter 7. Look at verse 1. Jesus is teaching his disciples. He's teaching those who've made a commitment to him.

He's speaking to his people. And he wants you to remember that. The Sermon on the Mount is not for every Tom, Dick, and Harry, Molly, and Mary.

It is for Jesus' people. The Sermon on the Mount is for Christian people. The Beatitudes are a description of Jesus' people, of people who belong to the Kingdom of God.

And the rest of the Sermon on the Mount spells out the obligations and the demands and the principles by which Jesus' people are to live. And so what Jesus is doing is he is describing Kingdom people.

[ 3 : 1 5 ] And then he will go on to describe Kingdom precepts. But first he describes this Kingdom congregation. And then he will declare the Kingdom commands.

Chapter 5, chapter 6, and chapter 7 of Matthew's Gospel is not for pagans. It is for Christian people. For Jesus' disciples. Now what do we have in the Beatitudes?

Well first of all we have a description of Kingdom people. And he describes them in several ways. He describes them first of all according to their condition.

Their condition, you'll see it in verses 3 to 6. How do these describe Christ's people? And what kind of condition do they have?

When you look at the Beatitudes and you come to a word like, let's say, a word like meek. Or something like that. You don't go to the Oxford Dictionary.

[ 4 : 1 2 ] You don't go to Wikipedia for a definition. You need to think, how does the Bible use this term? Bible words have Bible meanings.

And when you read the Old Testament, and you understand the Old Testament, it clarifies to you and I what the Beatitudes mean.

We need to understand, how does the Bible use these terms? So Jesus said, how blessed are the poor in spirit. What does that mean? Who are the poor in spirit?

And if you are poor in spirit, what will you be like? So where do you go? Bible words have Bible meanings. And so the most obvious place to go with poor in spirit is the Psalms.

Because it speaks about being poor in spirit a lot. And a number of times, you'll see in the Psalms what it means to be poor and needy. And I think we have to say, that when he's talking about the poor, he's not talking about the economically poor.

[ 5 : 18 ] It's not merely the economically poor. So you could go to Psalm 86 verse 1. Or Psalm 40 verse 17. And you'll find that the wicked try to bring down the poor and needy.

And they try to slay those who walk uprightly. Do you see how the terms are used? The poor and needy are the same as those who walk uprightly.

In other words, the term poor and needy is a term for God's people. For God's people who are in distress. And part of that distress may well be that they are economically poor.

And because they are economically poor, it may be that the rich and the powerful and the wicked may feel free to try and crush them. But you see, when they do that, the poor are not just economically poor, but they are poor in their resources.

It's so important you see it. They are poor in their resources. So what are they going to do? They cast themselves on God. They cast themselves on the Lord for help and deliverance in distress.

[ 6 : 27 ] And that element is involved in this idea of the poor in Psalms. God's people who are in a state of poverty of resources.

Of whatever situation that may be. And because of their need. Because of their poverty of resources. They cast themselves on the Lord.

In fact, in the way that the Psalms uses, it doesn't necessarily mean economically poor at all. So for example, in Psalm 34 verse 6. You can look at the title of the Psalm.

And you get a bit of an idea of the situation that David is in. And David says, this poor man cries. And the Lord feared him.

This poor man cried. And the Lord feared him. And saved him out of all his trouble. And David was probably not, when he was calling himself a poor man. He was probably not in economic distress.

[ 7 : 25 ] In fact, it was probably more military. It was a dilemma in the land of Philistia. But he was in a situation where he was utterly unable of his own resources.

That he had no resources of his own. And he had to cast himself on God. And that is what it means to be poor in spirit. The poor in spirit is someone who has no resources.

With which to deal the circumstance with which they find themselves in. And you know it. And so he knows he must find in the Lord. In Yahweh.

All his sufficiency. The poor are those who are desperate for God's help. And who know that God's help is their only hope.

And people who live that way. And people who believe that way. Are the poor in spirit. That's their attitude. Let's go on. Blessed are those who mourn.

[ 8 : 25 ] Verse 4. What about this condition of mourning? What does Jesus mean? In the way that he says that? Is it involving mourning over a tragedy?

Over a personal loss of some sort? Of a personal sorrow? Now I don't think that the Bible forbids you to mourn at all. In that way. I'm just saying it to you. I don't think that's the main aim of what Jesus is saying here.

How blessed are those who mourn. Who are the mourners? And again the Old Testament helps us. Isaiah 61. Verses 2 and 3.

You have that passage that's used by Christ in Luke 4. But you have there the servant of the Lord. Who is actually fulfilled in Christ. And at any rate.

He is to make this proclamation. And one of the tasks he's supposed to do. As well as proclaiming good news. He is supposed to comfort those who mourn. And then it says.

[ 9 : 24 ] That he will go on. To grant the mourners of Israel. The oil of gladness. Instead of mourning. Who are the mourners in Zion? Or the mourners of Zion?

When you have them all over Isaiah. Do you remember them? Isaiah 61. 57 verse 18. 66 verse 10. You have this idea of mourning. And you put all of that together.

Judah. And you see it in the context of all of God's people. At that time. Judah. God's professing people. And then you know that within that people. Who have been very very unfaithful. There is still a little group. There is still a remnant. That are clinging on to God. They cling on to the Lord. And I think that if you look at those latter chapters of Isaiah.

Which we did. You say. That the mourners. Are the ones who mourn over the fact. That the Lord is going to have to judge his people. For their sin. And they also mourn.

[10:24] Over their own unfaithfulness. To the Lord. And these mourners. They mourn over. The state of the people of Israel. And they mourn over their own sin. And they long for the Lord to restore his people.

So this mourning. If we put it in our terms. I suppose in our time. For the Christian. It is a mourning over the church. It is a mourning.

Over the unfaithfulness. Of those who call themselves. The people of God. How blessed are those who mourn. That isn't saying to you is it?

It isn't saying to the small name. That you need to be morose. He says to you mourn. Not to mope. He says to you mourn. Don't make it ridiculous. Somebody comes along.

And Jesus is not against you. Being joyful. Or enjoying a laugh. Or something like that. Someone comes to you. And says something funny. That you're not expecting. And you say. Oh please.

[11:29] Don't you know that I'm mourning? Over my sins. It's not stupidity. That Jesus is talking about. He's talking about there. Being a deep seated attitude.

And expression. Of real grief. Over the remnants of sin. And unfaithfulness. In your life.

And in my life. And in the church at large. It is very. Very easy. To moan at the church. Both locally. And nationally. But how many of us. Grieve over the church. And I think we are. In particular danger here.

Because. We. And our denomination. We still hold to a high view. Of the Bible. At least officially. We still hold to the essential doctrines.

[12:25] Of the Christian faith. And the danger is. Isn't it. We look at. All of God's professing people. The church. Whether they be Anglican. Or Baptist. Or Pentecostal. Or charismatic. And we know.

Don't we. We know. That there are some sections. Of the church. Some parts of the church. And they don't even hold. To the basic apostle creed. Kind of Christianity. And it's easy. When the reports come.

About the decline. In church numbers. Well to say. Well it's no wonder. Because they don't believe. Anything anymore. It's very easy. Isn't it. To get into pride. But how many of us.

Grieve. And mourn. Over the state. Of God's professing. The people at large. Does it ever. Grieve us. The unfaithfulness. Of the professing church.

In our own nation. Do we know. What it is. To mourn. And to grieve. On our own. Sinfulness. On our own.

[13:25] Hidden depths. Of sin. But if you do. How blessed you are. Jesus says. Jesus goes on. With our condition. Look what he says. In verse 5.

He said. How blessed. Are the meek. What does meek mean? Well we know. It doesn't mean weakness. It doesn't mean weakness. And Jesus.

Lifts this verse. Out of Psalm 37. At 37. Verse 11. Where we read. The meek. Will possess the lambs. Who are the meek. But if you read.

Psalm 37. Verses 1 to 11. You will have a picture. And a description. Of who the meek are. And if you look there. Sometime. You will see. That the meek. Are like this. They are the ones. That don't brood.

The meek. Are the ones. Who don't lose it. The meek. Are the ones. That don't get themselves. In an uproar. And they don't get themselves. Green with envy. And get mad.

[14:22] That when they see. The prosperity. Of the wicked. And the fact. That they seem. To be in control. And the fact. That the wicked. Seem to be doing. So well. And the fact. That there doesn't seem. To be any justice.

The meek are the ones. Who will not get envious. They will not get envious. Of the prosperity. Of the wicked. But they are willing. To wait. They are willing. To wait. Until God.

Puts things right. And judges the wicked. There is. There is a sense. In which this. Meek attitude. There is a sense. In which there is a certain element. Of control.

And of calmness. That is. You don't lash out. You don't blow your fuse. But rather you submit. To the situation.

And the circumstances. That you cannot change. And you wait for God. To put things right. Now we have to be careful. Only. I am making no attempt. This morning. To balance.

[15:18] All these statements. And consider every situation. That is coming to your mind. So the meek person. Has this element. Not of weakness.

But of control strength. Of control. And lastly. We played on a Friday afternoon. Rugby. With the kids. I think I am allowed. A rugby illustration. Again today. And. We played rugby. With the kids. And there would be. Adults that were there. Marius was there. The Ray boys were there. And there were little.

Little children there. And we played. Full contact rugby. And so. How did the adults. Play at that time. How did Chris Craddock. Play when he got the ball. Did he take the high ball.

And charge at Marius. And put the. Shoulder into him. Knock him to the ground. And send the children. Flying. No. How do adults. Play rugby. With children. You control your strength.

[16:15] Don't you. You walk. Slowly. And so. As they tackle you. You take the impact. And you fall to the ground. It's control. Do you remember. Boris Johnson.

There was a photo of Boris Johnson. Was there. Wiping out that child. With the. With a rugby ball. But that's not how you do it. You play. With controlled strength.

You accommodate. Your strength. That is. Meekness. It is not using. Your full strength. It is not lashing out. In revenge.

Even if it is. Within my power. It is in certain situations. That I will submit. Until God. Puts it right. And the meek person.

Is controlled. By a quiet. Trust. In the Lord. Until he will put it right. In his time. The meek person.

[17:10] Really believes the creed. They really believe the creed. That he will come again. To judge the living. And the dead. The fourth thing. There are those.

Who hunger. And thirst for righteousness. Verse 6. They are blessed. What does it mean. To hunger and thirst. After righteousness. What does Jesus mean. By righteousness. Well.

It is a phrase. That comes up again. And again. In the Sermon on the Mount. In chapter 6. In verse 33. You may be familiar. With that verse. It says. Seek first. God's kingdom.

And his righteousness. Do you see that? God's kingdom. And his righteousness. They go together. And then you remember. In the Sermon on the Mount. In chapter 6. In verse 6.

Verse 10. In the Lord's Prayer. Where we are to pray. That God's kingdom. Will come. Your kingdom. Come. What's that mean? And what will happen.

[18:04] When that kingdom comes. Well the next phrase. Explains that. Your will. Be done. On earth. As it is. In heaven. So when his kingdom. Comes in fullness. His will.

Will be done on earth. And that's very much. Like the kingdom. And righteousness. That we'll see. In chapter 6. Verse 33. Seek first. His kingdom. And his righteousness.

And so we pray. For his kingdom. And his righteousness. To come. So that his will. Will be done on earth. As it is in heaven. That is his righteous will. Being done on earth.

So when you hunger. And thirst. After righteousness. You are hungering. And thirsting. After the time. When God. Will fully bring. His kingdom in. And when his righteous.

Will will be done. On earth. And it also means. Something else. Doesn't it. If that is really. Your appetite. That it means. That you.

[19:02] In your own thinking. And living. You will seek. To hunger. And thirst. To conform. Your own thinking. And living. To God's righteous will. So there is both.

A broad. Kind of. Final. Hangering. And thirsting. After righteousness. And an application. To your daily life. And so.

How is your appetite? Jesus says. This is how his people. Will be. They will be the ones. Hangering. And thirsting. For righteousness.

Both finally. But also. In their own living. And thinking. And practice. Nothing matters. To them more. Than to act. According. To God's righteousness.

To what God. May demand. In any situation. We have to say. Don't we. As a matter of fact. That many people. Have their appetites. Messed up. I know.

[19:59] Lots of people. Have problems. With their diets. It doesn't apply. To everyone. But if you had the choice. Of marjorie. Or butter. And you didn't have to worry. About cholesterol.

Or anything like that. What would you choose? You'd choose butter. Of course. Wouldn't you? There are some people. That prefer. Burger King. To McDonald's. Sponishing. Isn't it? When I was a child. My mother would bake bread. Fresh bread. But I preferred. The sliced bread. Can you believe that? There were no holes in it. It came in a perfect shape. It's a terrible. Terrible. Terrible thing. Isn't it? I worked with a guy once. When I was in the post office. And you did a brilliant canteen. And he would get his main dinner. And he'd put his dessert. On his main dinner. It was a nuts thing. And he used to say. [ 20 : 53 ] It all goes down the same way. Some problems with his. Nose or something. That he couldn't really chase. It was just awful. People have messed up. Appetites. Don't they? When you don't know what's good for you.

And we need to ask ourselves. As Jesus people. Am I. If I'm one of Jesus people. What am I hangering and thirsting after? Is it really true that. I keep hangering and thirsting. After conforming my life. Both mentally. And practically. To what God's righteous will is. What do we hunger after.

As Christians. Frequently it's put out there isn't it. That we hunger after joy and happiness. And that may come. But that is a byproduct of something else. And if you hunger or thirst.

And make joy the object of your appetite. You will not find it. Some Christians are told. That they need to hangering and thirst. And they need to go after. The ultimate Christian experience.

[ 21 : 56 ] That they will get to the point. Where they've discovered. The secret of the Christian life. Whatever that is. So they go to their conferences. Or retreats. Or churches. Or groups.

And they're seeking. This sort of Christian experience. That will give them the glow. And you need to watch that. Because can you see what Jesus says? Jesus says. Blessed are those. Who hunger and thirst. Who hunger and thirst. After righteousness. And conformity to his will. Is their highest priority.

Now I'm going to break one of the golden laws. Of preaching this morning. To transgress the golden law. That every sermon should be complete in itself. And that you shouldn't string things along.

And you should certainly never let anything be unfinished. Because if somebody died this week. They'll have only heard half the sermon. But I'm willing to take the risk. And I'm going to stop here.

[ 22 : 54 ] And I'm going to put three words. To be continued. Alright. It's next Sunday morning. But as I finish. I want to make one observation. I want you to notice.

The four beatitudes. That we've looked at this morning. And look at the way he describes his people. Because there's great encouragement here. He describes them in terms.

Of their destitution. He describes them in terms. Of their deficiencies. They lack something. They lack something.

The poor in spirit. Is the one who doesn't have the resources. And he knows it. And he knows that he must have God's help.

And God's help is his only hope. It's not someone who's arrived. And the person who mourns over their sins.

[ 23 : 50 ] They still mourn. And they're still hungry. And they're still thirsty. It is present tense. It's a present continuous thing. It's not something that you get filled with.

But you are continually hungry. And thirsting after righteousness. And I think that's important. Do you see what Jesus is saying? This is the condition of true disciples.

It's not a phase you leave behind. And then you get to a more advanced stage. This is the way Jesus people are. Why do I think that's important?

Why do I mention that? Well because there are many versions of the Christian life going around. And they say things like this. You know. Jesus wants you to get to a point of fulfilment.

Where you won't have this feeling of inadequacy. And hopelessness. And in this crisis. And so on. And where you will largely leave behind mourning after sin. And unfaithfulness.

[ 24 : 54 ] And that is a false gospel. Because the Christian life. Is one of being poor in spirit.

And one of mourning. And one of meekness. Waiting for God to act. And one of hungering and thirsting. Let's pray.

how blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven how blessed are they who mourn for you shall be comforted how blessed are the meek for you shall inherit the earth how blessed are those of you who keep hangering and thirsting for righteousness for you will be filled Amen we're going to sing we're going to sing a hymn that I think expresses this truth I could not do

without you Lord or Saviour of the lost I could not do without you verse 2 I cannot stand alone I have no strength or goodness no wisdom of my own but you beloved Saviour are with me hour by hour and as I lean upon you my weakness will be power will be power let's stand and sing I could not do without you