

# Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

March 10, 2024

## I. Introduction

### A. Matthew 5:3-12,

1. [3] Blessed are the poor in spirit (*humble who know they (1) deserve eternal damnation, (2) are incapable of solving their sin problem on their own, and (3) need the saving and empowering work of God to live a godly life and be given eternal life*), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. [4] Blessed are those who mourn (*those who feel genuine sorrow over their sin because it has pushed God away, hurt His cause, and needlessly harmed those affected by it*), for they shall be comforted.
3. [5] Blessed are the meek (*those who are committed to putting only good/righteousness into every relationship and situation they are involved in, regardless of how they are being treated*), for they shall inherit the earth.
4. [6] Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (*those who relentlessly pursue godliness as if desperate to obtain a Christ-like heart, mind, attitudes, beliefs, values, words, and deeds*), for they shall be satisfied (*obtain what they seek*).
5. [7] Blessed are the merciful (*those who, from a position of compassion, show mercy to those who seek it and need it*), for they shall receive mercy.
6. [8] Blessed are the pure in heart (*those who whole-heartedly pursue a whole-life godliness that not only transforms their thoughts, words, and deeds, but also the longings and values of their heart*), for they shall see God (*in a mystical way in this life and face to face in the next*).
7. [9] Blessed are the peacemakers (*those who endeavor to live in peace with those around them, and help those around them live in peace*), for they shall be called sons of God.
8. [10] Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

B. All eight beatitudes challenge the world’s ideas, and possibly some of our own ideas of what we have to have or do to be happy.

1. For example, due to our human nature, the influence of the world around us, and maybe even our current Christian way of thinking, we may find it hard to believe we can experience genuine happiness by remaining meek in the face of mistreatment.
2. And yet, Jesus says that these eight truths and their underlying principles are the path to a truly happy life now and throughout eternity. What do you think?

### C. Pray

## II. [9] Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

A. The underlying principle driving peacemaking is the importance of healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships to the well-being of the individual and the community. Therefore, a peacemaker promotes, protects, and perpetuates healthy relationships with those they interact with, and between people they know.

1. The challenge of **peacemaking** in your personal life is its requirement of treating healthy, meaningful relationships as more valuable than freedom from conflict, criticism, rejection or having to endure unpleasant times with someone who is difficult to get along with.
2. Yet without valuing healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships more than your own comfort, you will not be motivated to try and reconcile with someone you dislike, distrust, want nothing to do with, or have demonized for some reason. In fact, your preference will be to cut people like that out of your life, or avoid them as much as possible.
3. The challenge of being a **peacemaker** seeking to help two parties work through their conflict, resolve their differences, forgive each other, and reconcile is that either one or both of them want nothing more to do with the other. They may want to settle their dispute, but too often they don't want to reconcile. Add to that the probability that one or both parties are sinfully angry, hostile, and self-justifying.
  - a. To get involved in such a situation is sometimes thankless and often fruitless.
  - b. Yet, those who know the importance of healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships for the good of all, look for ways to help warring parties reconcile.

B. You may be wondering why peacemaking and healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships are tied together? It is because God ties them together.

1. Why does God tie them together? Because healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships between all is the guarantee of love, security, and happiness for all. And that is what God wants, between Himself and us, and among us.
2. The scriptures verify God wants this between Himself and us.
  - a. **Genesis 1:27**, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
  - b. **Romans 5:8**, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”
  - c. **Romans 5:1**, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
  - d. **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**, Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, [19] namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
3. And the scriptures verify God wants this among us.
  - a. **Matthew 5:23-24**, “Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.
  - b. **Matthew 6:14-15**, “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. [15] But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”
  - c. **Matthew 7:12**, “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”
  - d. **Ephesians 2:13-16**, “But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off (*Gentiles*) have been brought near by the blood of Christ. [14] For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups (*Jews/Gentiles*) into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, [15] by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, [16] and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the (*reason for the*) enmity.”
4. **John 3:16** tells us that God loves everyone, and **2 Peter 3:9** tells us that God does not want anyone to die in their sin and spend eternity

apart from Him. These truths reinforce the fact that relationships are never treated by God as disposable or worthless, but as precious.

5. The reality is, God **wants relationship** with each of us – individually, and with **all** of us as a group or family.
6. If God cannot have this kind of relationship with us, it is not because He doesn't want it, it is because of what we are doing to prevent it from happening.

C. As Christians, we are to have this same mindset and attitude. We are to want healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships with everyone, and we are to do what we can to make that happen. If it doesn't happen, it ought never be because we don't want the relationship, but because of what the other person is doing to prevent it from happening.

1. Once again, the value of healthy, meaningful relationships is in their ability to promote love and protect the good of everyone.
2. Wherever there is a breakdown in relationship, some form of evil enters in – an evil which further diminishes, damages, or even destroys the relationship and thwarts the good that would come to everyone involved if the relationship was what it ought to be.
3. Think about how true this is just in the home. Where relationships are healthy, the home is healthy. Where relationships are damaged or broken, the home is dysfunctional – and a dysfunctional home produces dysfunctional children.

D. [9] Blessed are the peacemakers (*those who value healthy, meaningful, mutually satisfying relationships, who endeavor to be at peace with those around them, and who work at helping others restore damaged or broken relationships*), for they shall be called sons of God (*because they are following in the footsteps of their Father*).

III. [10] Blessed are those who have been persecuted **for the sake of** righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

A. To the normal person, there is nothing appealing or inviting about being persecuted – especially when it includes forced impoverishment, unjust imprisonment, or physical torture.

1. However, persecution is a fact of life – not only for Christians, but for anyone whose ethnicity, religion, political views, or way of life is despised and hated by those in power. Beyond that, there is the persecution of those who speak out against the abuses, injustices, and evils of those in power.
2. Today, however, we are only dealing with the persecution of God's people – which has gone on for centuries and is still going on today.

3. We know from the OT and Jesus' own words that many prophets were persecuted or killed simply for speaking God's words to His people. We know from **Hebrews 11:35-38**, that some of the persecution was horribly cruel and unspeakably painful.
  4. On the night leading up to Jesus' brutal treatment and crucifixion, He fervently prayed for another way – if another way was possible. Why? Because He knew painful persecution awaited Him, and He preferred to avoid it if possible.
  5. When sending out His disciples, Jesus said, “But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next...” (**Matthew 10:23**). Why? Because there is no reason to stay and be persecuted if you can flee.
  6. And yet, Jesus also said, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you...” (**John 15:20**).
  7. And in **2 Timothy 3:12**, Paul adds, “Indeed, **all** who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Why? Because ungodliness does not want to be exposed or hindered. Therefore, evil does what it can to extinguish the light and silence the truth.
- B. The Bible provides two primary reasons for why we ought to endure persecution – if it cannot be avoided.
1. **First**, we should accept and endure persecution for the sake of righteousness, that is, for the sake of standing for and promoting righteousness in order to ensure it remains present, active, and visible in our world – in spite of the efforts of evil people to eradicate it.
  2. **Second**, we should accept and endure persecution for the sake of Jesus and His gospel, that is, for the sake of ensuring that the name and message of Jesus is heard – especially in settings where evil people are trying to eliminate Christians and silence their message (**Matthew 10:16-18**).
  3. The point is, when we treasure righteousness and all the good it brings into our world, and when we treasure Jesus and His message of salvation and teaching about godly living – because of all the good they bring into our world – than persecution becomes an acceptable means to keep righteousness active in our world, and to promote Jesus and His message – even if no one in that moment is listening.
  4. This doesn't mean you cannot flee when persecution comes. According to Jesus' words to His disciples, if you can flee, go.
  5. But if you can't, remain and endure, knowing that your suffering has the purpose – the purpose of promoting the only God, and the only truth, and the only way of life that promotes and protects the good

- of all – for it is only when God and His truth have their way that goodness, kindness, love, and justice have their way in our world.
6. As Jesus said, we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. In other words, we are God’s primary means of keeping the flavor of God’s ways and the light of God’s truth spreading their influence when the darkness of evil wants to stamp out that influence.
- C. Three final thoughts about persecution for the sake of righteousness.
1. **First**, if we Christians are going to be persecuted, may it be for the sake of righteousness, and not because we are obnoxious or hypocrites or hateful toward sinners who commit the sins we deem reprehensible.
  2. **Second**, though there may be no relief from the sufferings of persecution in this life, there will be abundant relief and reward in the next.
    - a. Therefore, let us not live for the moment, but for eternity; not for the good of self, but for the good of God and others.
    - b. Remember **Romans 8:35,37-39**, “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...[37] In all these things we over-whelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. [38] For I am convinced that [nothing]...[39] will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
  3. **Third**, persecution is painful, so now is the time to decide if you are going to value God, righteousness, and the good of all more than your own ease of life. The reality is, if you do not nurture a high value of God, righteousness, and the good of all, now, then you won’t value them when persecution comes.

#### IV. Conclusion

- A. [11] Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you **because of Me**. [12] Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets (*God’s highly esteemed servants*) who were before you.
- B. If you will learn **now** how to be confident of God’s love and God’s eternal rewards when facing insults, persecution, and false accusations, you will find an enduring happiness that will exceed any happiness you can gain from this world.
- C. As Jesus said, “Happy are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”