

# THE RED LETTER LECTURES

## NOTES

### THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5:1—12

- I. The Beatitudes (the blessings)
  - A. The Sermon on the Mount is the first major teaching of Jesus Christ to his early followers.
  - B. Notice the "bookends" that introduce and close the Sermon on the Mount. See *Mt. 5:1-2, 7:28-29*.
    1. Jesus was a Rabbi. They often called him Master, Rabboni and Teacher.
    2. What was the setting of this teaching?
    3. What was the reaction of the disciples after Jesus' teachings?
  - C. These were oral teachings. There was no New Testament like we have today. Scrolls of the Old Testament were available in the synagogues and read on the Sabbath and taught. See *Lk. 4:16-19*.
    1. People had to listen carefully and then remember what was said. How did they do that?
    2. Notice as we begin the Beatitudes that there are nine of them. Any significance to this number? See *1 Cor. 12:8-10; Gal. 5:22-23*
  - D. The word "blessed" is used nine times in the following verses. It's primary meaning is "to be blessed, possessing the favor of God, that state of being marked by fullness from God. It indicates the state of the believer in Christ."<sup>1</sup>

*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — Mt. 5:3*

A. *The poor in spirit . . .*

1. The word *poor* literally means "to crouch, cower like a beggar," someone who is helpless.<sup>2</sup>

Matthew 5:1-2: Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them . . .

Matthew 7:28-29: When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

The disciples are blessed because they have answered the call and promise of Jesus. They are blessed because they are "poor in spirit"; they have given up everything for the sake of the call. They are blessed because they mourn; for the world in its lost state. They are blessed because they are "meek"; leaving their rights and protection to God. They are blessed because they "hunger"; for perfect union with the Father. They are blessed because they are "merciful"; having an irresistible love for the downtrodden. They are blessed because they are "pure in heart"; surrendered completely to Jesus. They are blessed because they are "peacemakers"; enduring suffering rather than inflicting it on others. They are blessed because they are "persecuted"; rejected for their message and works. Again, they are blessed because they have answered Jesus' call.

— Shepherd's Notes, Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 35.

<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*, (WSDNT) p. 937.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1253.

2. It refers to our human spirit. If we are poor and helpless in spirit, where lies our hope as a Christian? Only in Christ. See *Psm. 51:17*; *Prov. 29:23*.
3. Utter dependence on Jesus Christ is what brought us to him. We were without hope in this life until Jesus showed up.
4. Don't ever lose that understanding because you have now been introduced and possess "*the kingdom of heaven*."
  - a. The "*kingdom of heaven*" is best described as "*the total sphere of God's rule*."<sup>3</sup>
  - b. The kingdom of which Jesus preached is both "in you" and is yet "to come." The Christian is the spiritual citizen of the kingdom of heaven now.<sup>4</sup>

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*  
— *Mt. 5:4*

A. *Those who mourn . . .*

1. Coupled with *the poor in spirit*, a mourner is one who grieves in death. In the case of a Christian, it is one who grieves at their sin. Comfort comes from "dying to self." See *Col. 3:3-4*; *Jas. 4:8-10*.
2. A Christian understands that in death, as well as life in the Spirit, God is our comfort.
  - a. God is called "*the God of all comfort*"  
See *2 Cor. 1:3-4*.
  - b. The Holy Spirit is called "*the comforter*."  
See *Jn. 14:26*.

*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*  
— *Mt. 5:5*

A. *The meek . . . .*

1. A meek person is one who is mild and gentle. It

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*Psm. 51:17*: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

*Prov. 29:23*: A man's pride brings him low, but a man of lowly spirit gains honor.

<sup>3</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 344

<sup>4</sup> Nelson, *New Bible Illustrated Commentary*, p. 1146

*Col. 3:3-4*: For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

*Jas. 4:8-10*: Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

*2 Cor. 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 have received from God.

*Jn. 14:26*: But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (KJV)

expresses an inward grace of the soul, a calmness toward God in particular—an inner strength.

2. The opposite of a meek person is one who is angry in disposition and expresses that anger toward others.
3. The reward of the meek? *"For they will inherit the earth"*—not the present earth but "the "new earth." See *2 Ptr. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-3*.

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. — Mt. 5:6*

A. *Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness . . .*

1. Food and water are basic human needs that we are all familiar with.
2. This is a simile or a figure of speech. It means that just as we seek to satisfy our normal human needs of food and water, we are blessed when we seek righteousness in the same way and with the same fervor.
3. The reward? We will be filled up to the brim with righteousness—even overflowing to those around us. See *Mt. 6:33*:

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. — Mt. 5:7*

A. *The merciful . . .*

1. Mercy is high on God's list of a disciple's attributes practiced toward one another. See *Hos. 6:6*
2. Mercy is a spiritual gift. See *1 Cor. 12:8*.
3. Jesus was emphatic that his followers understand the application of mercy toward one another. See *Mt. 9:13., 12:7*.
4. The blessing for those who are merciful? *"For they will be shown mercy."*

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*2 Ptr. 3:13*: But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

*Rev. 21:1-3*: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

*Mt. 6:33*: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

*Hos. 6:6*: For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

*1 Cor. 12:8*: We have different gifts, according to the grace given us . . . if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

*Mt. 9:13*: But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

*Mt. 12:7*: If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
— Matthew 5:8*

A. *The pure in heart . . .*

1. To be pure is to be clean, clear, unsoiled, unalloyed (meaning nothing in the mix to corrupt or alter).
2. It speaks of what is in the heart. Jesus chastised the religious elite for what was in their hearts as they supposedly taught the Law to others. See *Mt. 12:34-35*
3. How do we make our hearts pure? Through filling it with God's Word. See *Psm. 19:8 (KJV)*.
4. The blessing: "*They will see God.*" See *1 Jn. 3:2-3*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. — Mt. 5:9*

A. *The peacemakers . . .*

1. A peacemaker is one who, having received the peace of God in his own heart, brings peace to others. See *Jn. 14:27, 16:33*.
2. The peace that passes all understanding comes when you pray to the one who brought peace to your heart. *READ Phil. 4:6-7*.
3. Peacemakers "*will be called sons of God.*"
  - a. Who will call them such? That identity is already known by God. It belongs only to the born again. See *Jn. 1:12-13 (KJV)*.

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — Mt. 5:10*

A. *because of righteousness . . .*

1. Notice that persecution comes because of righteousness—right living. The world abhors

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Mt. 12:34-35: You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

Psm. 19:8: The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

1 Jn. 3:2-3: Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Jn. 14:27: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Jn. 16:33: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

Jn. 1:12-13: But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup> Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

people who live their lives according to God's commands.

2. The blessing? Again it is the kingdom of heaven. just as pronounced in Mt. 5:3. for "*the poor in spirit.*"

*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. — Mt. 5:11*

- A. Insults, persecution, slander and evil will come against all who love Jesus Christ and have become his disciple. See *2 Tim. 3:12-13*.

***REJOICE\* and BE GLAD\***, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. — Mt. 5:12*

- A. *Rejoice and be glad . . .*

1. Lit., "be rejoicing and exulting." All continuous action verbs, meaning it should be an ongoing reaction in times of persecution. Why?
2. These are our Lord's first Imperative Commands in the Sermon on the Mount. He tells us His will in response to expected persecution of a disciple. See *Acts 5:40-41*.

- B. Persecution is not unusual—proper response is.

1. Are we ready for this? No, we're not. But God is and He has promised to never leave us or forsake us (*Heb. 13:5*).
2. So we're in good company. There is a "*cloud of witnesses*" cheering us on, and Jesus who is always our role model. See *Heb. 12:1-3*

- C. See *Rom. 12:14*.

- II. Imperative Commands in this section of study:

- A. **REJOICE and BE GLAD.**

## NOTES

2Tim. 3:12-13: In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Acts 5:40-41: His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Heb. 12:1-3: Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Rom. 12:14: Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

# THE BEATITUDES AND THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST

## *Study Assignment*

In *The Sermon on the Mount*, by James Montgomery Boice, he makes this statement: "It is possible to find verses that identify each statement of the character in the Beatitudes with Jesus, to show that He is the meek One, the One who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemaker, the One persecuted for righteousness' sake, and so on." He then gives an example (p. 15). Find as many verses as you can that prove his point.

- Jesus was poor in spirit:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus mourned:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus was meek:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus hungered and thirsted after righteousness:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus was merciful:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus was pure in heart:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus was the peacemaker:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus was persecuted:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus was insulted, persecuted and falsely accused:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- BONUS: Jesus rejoiced and was glad in His suffering:  
Verse(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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