

## The Sermon on the Mount: Chapter 5

The most famous sermon ever preached was Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*. He was about a year into his ministry when he went up a mountainside and sat down, assuming the position of a teacher. It's important to remember Jesus' audience. They were his disciples—those who already believed in him as the promised Messiah and Savior from sin. In this sermon, Jesus isn't teaching us what must be done to earn eternal life. Rather, to those who believe in him as their Savior and only Way to heaven, he gives direction for our New Life in Christ—how to live our lives in gratitude for his free gift of eternal life which he purchased for us on the cross.

The sermon begins with the Beatitudes (statements of blessings). Through them he's not teaching us how to earn a blessed and joy-filled life. Rather, he's describing the blessed state in which believers already live. Let's take a quick look at each beatitude:

**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Those who are poor in spirit confess that they are spiritually bankrupt, by nature unable to give God anything of any spiritual value at all. They realize the only way they can have true spiritual and eternal riches is by receiving them as a free gift from Christ. **Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.** As Christians who long to serve God, we mourn over our sins and the negative results of sin in our lives. But Jesus lifts us up and comforts us with the good news that our sins have been carried away in the river of his blood. **Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.** Being meek and longsuffering isn't considered a virtue in a world which says you must promote yourself and put yourself out there to get what you want. But Christians will be meek and longsuffering, enduring the weaknesses—even the injustices—of others, and “turn the other cheek.” **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.** Christians acknowledge that by nature we were spiritually parched and famished, completely lacking the righteousness that gives true life. But Jesus, the Bread of Life, satisfies our spiritual hunger and quenches our spiritual thirst with the waters of the gospel of life. **Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.** Those who have been shown mercy will be willing to show mercy to others: friends, relatives, co-workers, and neighbors who have wronged us. Just as Jesus shows us mercy in our sinful state, so also we will share his mercy with others. **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.** In a world overflowing with all sorts of immoral images and messages, and with a sinful nature that is enticed by them, we seek to keep our hearts and minds pure by focusing on the pure Word of God and on the noble, lovely, and admirable things with which he has surrounded us. **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.** For some reason the world thrives on strife and division. There are forces who actively seek to divide us. But God wants us to be peacemakers, not peace-breakers. God says as far as it depends on *you*, live at peace with everyone. **Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Sometimes Christians are persecuted for saying and doing what God says is right, rather than what the world falsely claims is right. Being ostracized, denounced, and dismissed because of our faith is proof that although we live in the world, we are not of the world, but are citizens 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.** Throughout the history of the world, those who faithfully speak and live God's Word have been treated just as Jesus describes here. But such mistreatment for the sake of Jesus and his holy Word is really a “badge of honor” we can be glad to wear. For bearing shame and disgrace for the sake of Jesus' name labels us as God's dear children and heirs of eternal life.

*After sharing this devotion with your family, take the time to read Matthew chapter 5.*

Pastor Zuberbier