

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 16

(The Beatitudes) (pt B)

In our last study we considered the first two of eight characteristics of a people blessed of God; “Poor in spirit” and “People who mourn”.

I remind you, the results of our Savior’s message is given in (Matt.7:28-29) **And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.**

We brought out the way works religionist put the cart before the horse, they teach you must be this or be that and then you will be blessed, that’s the words of the scribes of this world, yet He who has all Authority declares those who are blessed of Him, are “**Poor In Spirit**”, they are blessed first and the results are spiritual depravity, God reveals to us our depravity, our destitute condition before a thrice Holy God, we “**mourn**” for the sin that continues to dwell in this flesh for our God is Holy, and because He first loved us and gave Himself a Sacrifice for our sin we hate our sin as well. Our only comfort is that the Lord Jesus Christ shed His own Righteous Blood, in our stead, our blessings are in the Son Of the living God, Christ Jesus the Lord!

Am I “**Poor in Spirit**”? In Christ I am. Do I “**Mourn**”? in Christ I do.

(Eph 1:3) **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:**

The Lord Jesus also declares, those who are blessed of Him, are “**The meek of the earth**”.

Someone once said; *“Meekness is the mark of a man who has been mastered by God.”*

Brother Don Fortner wrote; *“The meekness our Lord here pronounces is a blessed thing. It is not that which men call meekness. It is not an outward show of pretended humility. It is that which is wrought in the heart by grace. Meekness is a realization of who I am before God. Meekness is submission to the will of God. Meekness is obedience to God. Meekness causes us to esteem others better than ourselves”* and he refers to (Php 2:1-5) **If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.**

Matthew Henry wrote, *“They are meek who are rarely and hardly provoked, but quickly and easily pacified; and who would rather forgive twenty injuries than avenge one, having the rule of their own spirits.”*

John Gill describes the meek as those who *“have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; do not envy the gifts and graces of other men; are willing to be instructed and admonished, by the meanest of the saints; quietly submit to the will of God, in adverse dispensations of providence; and ascribe all they have, and are, to the grace of God.”*

Moses was the meekest man on earth in his day; but no man looking at his behavior would have thought so. He was meek before God. He knew he was God’s servant, responsible to do God’s will. Therefore, he was as bold as a lion. The Lord Jesus lived on this earth in meekness. It was this meekness that caused Him to speak with authority and drive the money-changers out of the temple.

Robert Hawker explains it this way; “*The meekness the Son of God pronounced blessed, is the meekness inwrought in the soul, by the gracious influence of God the Holy Ghost.*”

*It is learnt of Jesus; **Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart*** (Mat 11:29).

*It is wholly from Jesus; **Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing*** (Joh 15:4-5).

*And it is his regenerated members of whom he saith, the Lord will “**beautify the meek with salvation**”* (Psa 149:4).

*This meekness of the Lord’s own creating in the soul is of great price”; **Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind*** (1Pe 4:1).

And the last part of verse 5 in our text say’s “**They shall inherit the earth.**” — Or They shall inherit all the blessings of the earth, all things working together for their good. And they shall inherit all the new earth, when our God shall make all things new. Referring to (Psa 37:11) “**The meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace**”.

Next let’s consider verse 6 of Matt.5 “**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.**” The religious scribes of this world, would like you to think that our Lord Jesus is telling us here, that those who greatly desire to make themselves righteous are blessed and shall have their hunger satisfied and their thirst quenched. That is a teaching totally foreign to the Scriptures. Mere morality is not righteousness. The Scribes and Pharisees of our Lord’s day prided themselves in the performance of such.

The Son of God did not come into the world to preach righteousness that men can perform. He did not teach men to trust in themselves, but just the opposite. He preached grace. His gospel demands that sinners count all personal righteousness but dung, The Apostle Paul is clear on this in (Php 3:7-9) **“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”**, the people of God look to our Lord and to Him alone for righteousness.

Those who are blessed of God hunger and thirst for His righteousness, the only righteousness by which a sinner can be justified in the sight of God.

The souls that hunger and thirst for Him who is **“the Lord our Righteousness”** (Jer 23:6), they are souls desiring to be found in him, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness of God established and brought in by Christ’s obedience to God as our Substitute.

The righteousness that can be obtained only by faith in him, they and they alone are blessed of God with grace, salvation, and eternal life. Hungering and thirsting after Christ’s righteousness, we acknowledge and confess that we have no righteousness of our own. Therefore, we long to be clothed with Christ’s robe of righteousness and His garment of salvation. Christ is that righteousness and holiness we must have, without which no man shall see the Lord **“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”** (Heb 12:14).

Not only does our Savior pronounce those blessed who hunger and thirst after Him, He promises, **“they shall be filled”** as it say’s in our text; (Isa 55:1) **Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;** (Joh 7:37-38) **In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.**

We shall not hunger in vain. All who abandon their own righteousness, seeking righteousness before God in Christ alone, who is **“the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth”** (Rom 10:4), shall be filled;

(Psa 132:8-16) Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy. For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed. The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore. For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

(Isa 61:1-3) The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

And then in (Isa 61:10-11) I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

God's elect shall be filled with (completely satisfied with) Christ's righteousness and never seek any other righteousness. And being filled with Christ's righteousness, they shall be filled "with all other good things in consequence of it" (John Gill).

Next we have in verse 7; "**Blessed are the merciful.**" — The merciful are those who show mercy to others, having obtained mercy themselves from God. Those who are merciful have been made merciful by the experience of God's mercy bestowed upon them in Christ.

Those who have experienced the Love of God for them, have a spiritual desire to be loving and charitable to others; "**Charity never faileth**" (1Co 13:8), as the Lord is kind and gracious to us, Lord help us to; "**be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you... Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour**" (Eph 4:32 to Eph 5:2), and lead your people to be forgiving (Mat 6:14-15) **For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

These graces within, are the fruits and effects of God's saving grace, And the believer's vital union with Christ in regeneration. "**For they shall obtain mercy.**" — This is not a suggestion that our obtaining mercy is in some way dependent upon or determined by our mercifulness to others. Rather, it is the declaration and assurance that all who have obtained mercy in the gift of God's grace shall continue to obtain mercy all the days of their lives in this world and in the world to come; "**The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day**" (2Ti 1:18).

Then we have this "**Blessed are the pure in heart.**" Verse 8 of our text!

The hypocrite Scribes of this worlds religions, use this verse of Holy Scripture to teach that if we will make our hearts pure, we shall see God in heaven. most leave out God's work altogether. Most try to make their doctrine of works appear to be the doctrine of grace. They tell us, of course that God must first make our hearts new in regeneration; but we must make our hearts pure by the discipline of grace in self-denial and the mortification of our sins in sanctification.

These words, as distant from what we see ourselves, are in fact among the most hopeful, comforting, and radiant that ever came from our Master's lips. They proclaim the certain, sure realization of something that seems impossible. They promise the possession of an apparently impossible vision. And they soothe our corrupt, sinful hearts, so sinful that we most naturally shrink from and tremble at the thought of seeing God in all of His glory, assuring us that seeing God shall be our highest, ultimate blessing.

Our hearts, yours and mine, are by nature evil (Gen 6:5) **And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**; folks want to think that was only in that time, I tell you, our Lord see's all things through out all time, the last word of that verse is "**continually**"

(Psa 12:2) **They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak;**

(Jer 17:9) **The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it;**

The promise of grace is, "**I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh**" (Ezem 36:26). Do you see this? Has God taught you the evil, the horrid corruption of your hard, cold, dead, heart of stone?

If this is the state of my heart, if this is the condition of every man, woman, and child by nature, how can we ever hope to know the blessedness of which the Son of God speaks, when he declares, "**Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God**"? Such hearts cannot see God. Such hearts can never see God.

Indeed, such hearts as these, the heart of man, cannot see the things of God, much less God himself. Did not the Lord Jesus say to Nicodemus, **“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”** (Joh 3:3)? The natural man simply cannot see God, cannot see Christ, and cannot see the things of God; **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”** (1Co 2:14). That is the state and condition of every man’s heart by nature. It is anything but pure. Yet, our Lord speaks of **“the pure in heart.”**

This purity of heart is, not the external hypocrisy of a Pharisee, or the boasted perfection of a self righteous Scrib, or the empty dream of the carnally secure. They are pure in their own eyes; but they are not pure; **“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness”** (Pro 30:12).

That which our Lord speaks of as a pure heart is not a changed heart. Have you ever had someone ask you to give your heart to the Lord. *“I think to myself What on earth would God want with that filthy thing?”*

Salvation is not me giving God my old, wretched heart. Salvation is God giving me a new heart (Eze 36:26-29) **A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses.**

There are multitudes who talk about conversion as “a change of heart.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Salvation is God giving us a new heart. Those who are blessed of God are those whose hearts the Lord has made new, those who are holy and pure in the cleansing and justifying purity and holiness of the Lord their Righteousness.

They are a people who know their own, personal corruption and groan under its weight. They see God in Christ in all the blessedness of salvation here in the life that now is, and they shall see him in the complete enjoyment of him in the life of glory that is to come.

This purity of heart stands in having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by the sprinkling of Christ's precious blood; **"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God"** (Heb 9:11-14).

What is the meaning of this word **"pure"**? The word means "purified by fire," "purified as a vine that is pruned and made fit to bear fruit," "free from corruption, sin, and guilt," "blameless, innocent," "unstained with the guilt of anything,"

(Heb 1:3) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

(Heb 10:14) For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

(Rom 8:1) There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,

(Rom 8:33-34) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

The pure in heart are those who, looking to Christ, are convinced of God the Holy Spirit concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment (Joh 16:7-11). They are those who openly, honestly confess their sin to God, trusting Christ alone for the forgiveness of sin. These, and only these, are truly blessed of God, **“for they shall see God!”** they shall see the **“God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”**

“Blessed are the peacemakers.” — Again, we must ask, “Of whom does Christ speak?” Clearly, He is not talking about men who make peace with God. That is impossible. Christ alone makes peace between God and men. Our peace with God is found in the blood of His cross. The peacemakers are those men and women whose hearts are ruled by the Prince of Peace, in whose hearts the peace of God rules. They are peaceful themselves. They strive to live peaceably with all men, especially with those who are of the household of faith. They strive to make all men love one another by preaching the gospel of peace.

“They shall be called the children of God.” Their adoption as the children of God by grace is made manifest and they are known to be God’s children by the grace of God that is wrought in them, making them peaceful before God. And those who are at peace with God, by faith in Christ, are at peace with all things and with all men.

And lastly verses 10-12, **“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”** — Many suffer greatly because they are haughty and self-righteous attitude. But God’s people are now, and have been throughout history, and shall be so long as time shall stand persecuted and reviled by the self-righteous world **“for righteousness’ sake,”** because we trust Christ alone as the Lord our Righteousness and assert that there is no righteousness to be found in the world except the righteousness of God in Christ!

Have you ever heard or seen of anyone being persecuted or reviled for living a good life, for doing what men call works of righteousness. No one is going to persecute you for being honest, being a faithful husband, a good wife, or an exemplary citizen.

God's saints are persecuted for declaring that no man can produce righteousness and for declaring that salvation is by the obedience and righteousness of Christ alone. When we declare that salvation is by a righteousness given to sinners freely in Christ, not by a righteousness performed by sinners, we are persecuted as hardliners, unforgiving, unfare.

We are persecuted for believing and preaching free justification by the righteousness of Christ, which all men naturally despise because it excludes all boasting.

Brother Don Fortner wrote; *“Though persecuted and reviled as the offscouring of the earth, these are a truly blessed people”, “for theirs is the kingdom of God.” — “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Mat 5:11-12) “How different Christianity is from that which the world looks upon as Christianity! The very characters the world despises and ridicules, Christ honors and calls blessed. The blessedness pronounced upon believing sinners in this world and in the world to come is the blessedness of pure, free grace, gospel blessedness, which is altogether the gift of God”.*