

## Lesson 2

### The Beatitudes - Part 1

Key Scripture Readings: Matthew 5:1-5

#### Summary

- In Matthew 5:3-11, Jesus announces nine blessings on those who develop certain godly qualities in their hearts. The word “blessed” means to be extremely happy. It refers to the inexpressible joy attached to having a spiritually rich relationship with God.
- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). The first blessing Jesus announces must have stunned the audience. Jews in the times of Jesus attached both physical and spiritual consequences to poverty. Earthly wealth was often viewed as a sign of favor from God. Jesus challenges their thinking by announcing how the “poor in spirit” enjoy spiritual riches in the kingdom of God. These are the people who understand that they would be eternally lost without the love, grace, and mercy of God. They come to God humble and spiritually broken.
  - “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Romans 5:8).
  - “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)” (Ephesians 2:4-5).
  - “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven but beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:13-14).
- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4). While many things cause us to mourn in this life, Jesus is specifically referencing spiritual mourning here. Once someone recognizes their spiritual poverty before God, he should feel a profound sense of guilt over his sins. He should mourn over his sins because of their negative impact on God (Psalm 51:1-5; Isaiah 53:5; 59:1-2).
- “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). The gentle are those who are calm and considerate. They are careful in their interactions with others, even when angered or provoked. Jesus describes Himself in this way in Matthew 11:28-30. He never sought to injure or get revenge against those who persecuted Him (Luke 23:34). When one humbly submits themselves to God and understands their feebleness before Him, like Jesus, they too will treat people with kindness and meekness.

## Study Questions

1. What is your initial reaction to the poverty of spirit Jesus speaks of in this sermon?
2. What often hinders us from being poor in spirit? How do we overcome these obstacles?
3. What is your initial reaction to the mourning Jesus speaks of in this sermon?
4. What often hinders us when mourning? How do we overcome these obstacles?
5. What is your initial reaction to the gentleness Jesus speaks of in this sermon?
6. What often hinders us from living a gentle life? How can we overcome these obstacles?
7. What will the poor in spirit, mourners, and the gentle receive from God? Give the meaning of these blessings.