

THE BEATITUDES



WHY JESUS GAVE THEM TO US

Jesus came to save us and to show us how we should live- knowing, loving & serving God. Jesus' Beatitudes give us ways to live His great commandment. (Remember that one?- Love God, Love your neighbor as yourself!)

Living this blessed way will open your mind & heart to the call of God and the needs of others. In the Beatitudes Jesus gave us some special helps for doing what is right and living their faith.

THE 8 BEATITUDES & WHAT THEY MEAN FOR HOW WE SHOULD LIVE

Matt 5:3-11

*** Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** We need God and others. We need to reject selfishness and seek the good of others. We depend on God for everything. Nothing else in life is more important than God.

*** Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.** Reminds us that suffering is part of being human. Jesus says that our suffering, like His, can open our hearts to others and their suffering. Sin, evil, and suffering in the world hurt our hearts. We trust that God comforts anyone who suffers from loss or injustice and we reach out to anyone who needs to be comforted.

*** Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land.** Meekness is strength guided by love. We should be generous. We have nothing to lose & don't force ourselves on others. We humbly remember that all we have comes from God & we share these gifts with kindness and patience serving God and others.

*** Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.** When we don't want or take the easy way out we end up the most satisfied. We should be fair and just towards others. We want God's peace, love, and justice to rule in the world. We work for equality and truth. We share our gifts with those in need.

*** Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.** Mercy means seeing the world & treating it and all in it with compassion. We accept others & are concerned about their feelings & we forgive anyone who has hurt us.

*** Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.** We should have only one focus in mind- to do God's will. We keep our minds and hearts focused outward on God and not on ourselves, seeking good and avoiding evil. This helps us see God in everything and everyone. To keep God first in our lives is to be pure in heart.

*** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.** Everyone wants & admires peace. Jesus says we should do something about it. Peacemakers face up to the challenges of building strong relationships between people. We should bring peace & reconciliation into the lives of others & treat others fairly. We work to be a sign for others of God's forgiveness. We pray for peace and unity in our family, in the community, and in the world. We work to settle arguments.

*** Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Reminds us that following Jesus can make us appear crazy to others. Still we walk God's way. Willing to be ignored or insulted for doing what we feel God wants we will share in God's kingdom. We continue Jesus' mission in the world. We speak out in all situations where God's peace, love, and justice are not allowed to rule; standing up for our beliefs even when made fun of or criticized.

THE BEATITUDES ARE PART OF GOD'S FINAL ANSWER ON HOW WE SHOULD LIVE.

They are guidelines for happiness & living as followers of Jesus. They are surprising because they are not always what we would think would make us happy. But as friends & followers of Jesus, we try to live according to the Beatitudes. To help us God gives us the gifts of faith, hope, and love:

faith - we accept all that God teaches us.

hope - we trust in Jesus and His promise of eternal life.

Love- we love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves.

Living in faith, hope, and love, we gradually understand and live the happiness that Jesus was teaching in the Beatitudes.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus shows us what life is like under God's reign. They tell us how to respond to the problems of poverty, injustice, and oppression that prevent God's kingdom from being shared by all people.

Jesus teaches us that the fulfilling of God's kingdom, (the reign of God) belongs to all humble, kind, peaceful, and loving people. God will welcome into His heart everyone who worked for unity, equality, and justice; and tried to be a sign of God's kingdom by trusting and accepting God's will for the world will share in the kingdom.

The kingdom of God already lives in the minds and hearts of all faithful followers of Jesus. It lives wherever God's justice, peace, and love are lived. When we live the Beatitudes, we are helping God's kingdom grow in the world.

LIVING THE BEATITUDES MAKES GOD'S KINGDOM BECOME REAL IN THIS WORLD.

Ever wonder what God's world is like?
Jesus gave us clues in the Gospels.

**If you read these parables of Jesus,
you can discover some qualities of
the Kingdom of God:**

1. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, yet when full grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the 'birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches'" (Matthew 13:31-32).

In God's kingdom:

2. "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of wheat flour until the whole batch was leavened" (Matthew 13:33).

In God's kingdom:

3. "The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he finds a pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it" (Matthew 13:45-46).

In God's kingdom:

Following the Beatitudes, (like Everything else in living the Christian life!) is a real challenge. To help us God gives us the gifts of faith, hope, and love:

faith - we accept all that God teaches us.

hope - we trust in Jesus and His promise of eternal life.

Love- we love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves.

Living in faith, hope, and love, we gradually understand and live the happiness that Jesus was teaching in the Beatitudes.