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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Right Attitudes Matt 5:1-12

Lesson Background and Introduction

The word beatitude does not occur in the Greek New Testament; it comes into English through Latin and means "a blessing." Beatitudes in the Bible begin with the word blessed. A rich source for such beatitudes is the book of Psalms, which even begins with a blessing (Psalm 1:1). Jesus spoke many blessings that New Testament writers preserved in Gospels and letters. The basis for God's blessing is his love. The person whom God blesses receives an expression of his love, whether the person knows it or not (Matthew 5:45). Some whom God blesses are further singled out for finding favor with God (Luke 1:30, 42). Blessings often have both a present and a future fulfillment. If one is blessed, the benefits are evident now or will come soon. Unlike a curse, a blessing is never earned but is granted by God according to his good pleasure (see Psalm 8). Furthermore, a righteous action itself can be considered a blessing, because virtue is part of its own reward. When Jesus says "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29), he is not advising us to believe so that we can receive a blessing. He is saying that the state of being a believer is a blessing in and of itself. Both Matthew and Luke include the Beatitudes of Jesus in their accounts of one of His sermons (compare Luke 6:20–23). It's quite possible that those two writers recorded different teaching occasions. But if that is the case, there is at least a significant overlap in what Jesus said at both times. The general form of the Beatitudes is (1) to pronounce a certain group of people "blessed" and then (2) give a reason for or result of that blessing. However, some key differences exist between the two writers' accounts regarding how the Beatitudes are worded. Beyond the differences in the Beatitudes themselves, Matthew does not include woes to various groups of people who seem to be enjoying good things in this life (compare and contrast Luke 6:24–26).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

A Different Teaching - Jesus' earthly ministry drew huge crowds. In what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount, He outlined to His disciples and others how to live a life pleasing to God, one that was also against many of the values that His society held.

Be Blessed - The first part of the sermon is called the Beatitudes, from the Latin word meaning "blessed" that Jesus repeats several times. A truly "blessed" person in God's kingdom, Jesus explained, is first someone who confesses his or her sin and admits spiritual poverty. God's arms are outstretched to those who humbly say, in the words of the old hymn "Rock of Ages," "Nothing in my hand I bring, only to thy cross I cling...." The second beatitude talks about those who express a deep sorrow and grief over their fallen state before the heavenly Father. Those who mourn in this way are promised God's tender words and hand of encouragement. The third beatitude deals with meekness. This term is often associated with a person who is being pushed around, but this picture is incorrect. Biblically, meekness refers to a person who is patient, humble, gentle, willing to see themselves as they are, and submitted to God and His Word.

Blessed Assurance - Jesus continued to list God's blessings on those longing to serve Him: the compassionate, those honest from their heart, persons focused on peace and reconciliation, and finally people who take a stand for Christ but are persecuted for doing so. Those who show these characteristics will have rewards and accolades from God in this life and the one to come.

God's Way vs. the World's Way - The Beatitudes describe a radically different way of living that challenges the world's way of thinking and doing things. Christ's followers living out the beatitudes, in the power of the Holy Spirit, give the world a chance to see a reflection of Christ in them to those who need to know Him.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
Attitude. Perspective. As the saying goes, "Life is 10 percent what happens to us and 90 percent how we react to it."

COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:
We are each on our own journey of learning to trust God with hard circumstances. The kind of joy-filled perspective James talked about comes as we learn to see that God can use struggles to produce maturity in our faith

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials
(James 1:2 NKJV)
(from "Our Daily Bread", Jan 22, 2018)

Series: Covenant in God
UNIT: A Heartfelt Covenant
NEXT WEEK
Fulfilling the Law
(Matt 5:13-20)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Blessed In Divine Relationships (Matt 5:1-6)

Through being in the kingdom of Heaven (1-3)

Only those who do the will of God will be in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 7:21)

Christians have been given the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 13:11)

Unless we change and become like little children, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 18:3-4)

Through being comforted (4)

Calling on God relieves sorrow because God is compassionate (Ps 116:3-5)

God promises joy in the place of tears (Ps 126:5-6)

God is the father of Compassion (2 Cor 1:3-4)

Through inheriting the earth (5)

Those that fear God will inherit the earth (Ps 25:12-13)

Those whose hope is in God will inherit the earth (Ps 37:9)

It is a blessing from God to inherit the earth (Ps 37:22)

The righteous will inherit the earth (Ps 37:29)

Faith allows the inheritance of the earth (Rom 4:13)

Through being filled with righteousness (6)

A righteousness that comes through faith (Rom 3:22)

A righteousness that comes from being under grace (Rom 6:12-14)

A righteousness that comes from Christ being in us (Rom 8:10)

A righteousness that comes from Jesus ending the penalty of sin (Rom 10:4)

A righteousness that is part of the kingdom of God (Rom 14:17)

A righteousness that is part of the armor of God (Eph 6:14)

Blessed In Human Relationships (Matt 5:7-12)

Through being merciful (7)

Being merciful is having regard for the weak and troubled (Ps 41:1-3)

For the merciful, there is hope in troubled times (Ps 112:4)

Not being merciful is sin (Prov 14:21)

The type of fasting God desires includes being merciful to others (Isa 58:6-8)

Without being merciful to others, we will not receive mercy from God (Matt 6:14-15)

Mercy is commanded for Christians (Eph 4:32)

Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)

Through being pure in heart (8)

Pure in heart means to have integrity (1 Chron 29:17)

Pure in heart means to walk blamelessly (Ps 15:2)

Pure in heart means to be purified of all that contaminates (2 Cor 7:1)

Pure in heart means to be sprinkled clean by the Holy Spirit (Heb 10:22)

Pure in heart means to be obedient to the truth of God's word (1 Peter 1:22)

We should pray to God out of a pure heart (2 Tim 2:22)

Through being a peacemaker (9)

As much as it is possible, we should live in peace with others (Rom 12:18-19)

Being in unity promotes peace (2 Cor 13:11)

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit provides ability to live in peace with others (Phil 2:1-4)

We must make every effort to live in peace (Heb 12:14)

Through being rewarded for enduring persecution (10-12)

Persecution for the sake of Jesus happens because those who do it do not know God (John 15:20-21)

Persecution cannot separate us from the love of Jesus (Rom 8:35)

We may be persecuted, but we will never be abandoned by God (2 Cor 4:8-9)

The momentary persecutions now are nothing compared to the glory that awaits (2 Cor 4:17)

We must count persecutions as joy because they aid in perseverance (James 1:2-3)

We must never be surprised by persecution (1 Peter 4:12-13)

In our persecution, we have not shed blood (Heb 12:4)