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In our studies of the Beatitudes so far, we have primarily focused on those things that please God, that He approves of. He approves of a humble, poor spirit. He approves of those who mourn their sinful condition enough to repent. And, He approves of a spirit of meekness, which is defined by strength and power under control.

In this lesson, we will look closer at those blessings He gives that are mentioned in these Beatitude statements. Scripture is filled with blessings that God gives to people. Some are given to everyone. For example, all enjoy the benefits of the sunshine and the rainfall. But there are many spiritual blessings in particular that only believers receive.

The first Beatitude promises the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit, the humble that see themselves as God sees them and receive God for who He is. When a person humbles himself, admits his lost condition as a sinner before God, he can then receive God's free gift of salvation through Christ.

Then we can reign in life as God's heirs – "*joint heirs with Christ*" (*Romans 8:17*). Christ has shown us the way by His example. *Philippians 2:5-11* tells us how Christ humbled Himself, and so then God highly exalted Him. When we follow His lead of humility, God exalts us.

Peter writes it this way, "*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble, therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,*" (*1 Peter 5:5-6*). It may seem a paradox, but this is God's way. We surrender (to God) in order that we might reign.

In the second Beatitude, Christ promises comfort to those than mourn. We recognized this as a *supernatural* mourning; we mourn sin and its effects such that we have repentant hearts. The word comfort is different than sympathy (which means "*to feel with*"). To give comfort is to give strength (*comfort = with strength*). God does this in several ways.

Christ promised that when He returned to Heaven after His first coming, He would send the Holy Spirit who is "*the Comforter*" (*John 14:16*). Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer (*Romans 8:9, 1 Cor. 3:16*). He will give us strength as we yield to Him.

God also gives us comfort through His Word, the Holy Scriptures. In *Romans 15:4*, Paul writes of the encouragement of the Scriptures that we might have hope. We know God most intimately and develop the mind of Christ through His revelation to us through His Word.

God also comforts us through His people. He "*comforts us in all our troubles, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God*" (*2 Cor. 1:4*). We have all experienced the comforting words or deeds of another. "*Carry one another's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ*" (*Galatians 6:2*).

In the third Beatitude, Christ says that the meek shall inherit the earth. The original statement is found in *Psalms 37*, and by studying that psalm we can better understand what the statement means.

Psalm 37 contrasts the righteous and the wicked. As often is the case, it seems that the wicked prosper and are winning in comparison to believers declared righteous in Christ. If we focus on the circumstances in this world, it can often be discouraging. But God's Word has answers.

This psalm reminds us that God executes His perfect justice in His perfect time. As the righteous trust in God, He will protect them and fight their battles. *Psalms 37:1* says not to fret because of evildoers. Rather, meekly (controlling our strength) submit to the Lord, delight in Him, commit our way in Him and trust in Him.

The result is that the righteous, the meek, will inherit the earth. This means we do not have to fear anyone or anything. Because God controls the universe and everything in it, we can reign over ourselves through the power of the Holy Spirit. The wicked may prosper for a season, but after a little while, they will be no more. (*Psalms 37:10*)

God can satisfy us in a far more lasting, fulfilling way than we can satisfy ourselves. Saul sought to fulfill his own desires, and it cost him his crown. David submitted to God, and God gave him the kingdom. (Joseph is another example.)

The meek inherit the earth when they are submitted to their Father in heaven who owns it all. Christ did not fret over the circumstances of the world. He did not worry because He knew His Father was in control.

Meekness requires patience. *Psalms 37:34* tells believers, wait on the Lord, keep His way and (in His time) He will exalt you. "*The testing of your faith develops perseverance, and let perseverance have its perfect result, that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing,*" (*James 1:3-4*). He who lacks nothing has everything. Indeed, the meek will inherit the earth.

Matthew 5

The Sermon on the Mount

5 Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

The Beatitudes

2 And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you on My account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Memory Verse for the Week

“humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God,
that He may exalt you in due time,”
(1Peter 5:6)