

Text: Matthew 5:1-12

Along with the 10 Commandments, the 23rd Psalm, the Lord's Prayer, we have the Beatitudes. They are spiritually significant Scriptures in the life of God's people.

The People

There are 8 qualities of the same group who at one and the same end are meek and merciful, poor in spirit and pure in heart, mourning and hungry, peacemakers and persecuted.

The group exhibiting these marks is not an elitist set, a small spiritual aristocracy remote from the common run of Christians. On the contrary, the beatitudes are Christ's own specifications of what every Christian ought to be.

The Qualities

The qualities are spiritual states and not physical states. It is the poor in spirit and those who hunger for righteousness, whom He declares blessed. It is not the poverty stricken as the pious who had put their faith and hope in God.

The Blessings

Each quality is commended, inasmuch as each person who exhibits it is pronounced 'blessed'. The Greek word is *makarios* can and does mean 'happy'. But happiness is a subjective state, whereas Jesus is making an objective judgment about his people. He is declaring not what they may feel like ('happy'), but what God thinks of them and what on that account they are: they are 'blessed'.

What is this blessing? They possess the kingdom of heaven and they will inherit the earth, the mourners will be comforted and the hungry will be filled/satisfied, they will receive mercy, they will see God, they are called the sons of God. Their heavenly reward is great! All these blessings belong together. In verses 4-9, the 'will' emphasises their **certainty** and not merely their futurity.

I have categorized into 3 groups as **Our Blessed Life**

The Christian's relation to God

1. Blessed are the "_____"

The poor in spirit (v3), those who mourn (v4), the meek (v5) are wholly dependent on God.

The Christian's relation to his neighbour and the world.

2. Blessed are the "_____"

Merciful (v7), pure in heart (v8) and peacemakers (v9) with no compromise and no ulterior motive.

The Christian's relation to himself/herself and own vision and values.

3. Blessed are the

"_____"
Hunger & thirst for righteousness (v6), even to the extent of being persecuted

because of righteousness (v10). Honest to God and yourself.

Conclusion

The 8 qualities together constitute the Christian's relations to God, to his neighbour and to himself/herself, and the 8 blessings the privileges, of being a citizen of God's kingdom. This is what the enjoyment of God's rule means.

These blessing are for the present and the future. The kingdom of God is a present reality which we can 'receive', 'inherit' or 'enter' now.

The **eight** qualities in **three** points describe **one** group of people. **Jesus comes to bless them.**

Final Thoughts & Discussion

Purpose 1 of Sermon on the Mount: As we read it, it drives us to despair. We see in it unattainable ideal. How can we develop this heart-righteousness, turn the other cheek, love our enemies? It is impossible. Exactly!

Purpose 2 of Sermon on the Mount: "Christ is saying nothing in this Sermon about how we become Christians, but only about the works and fruit that no one can do unless he already is a Christian and in a state of grace." Martin Luther says.

1. So the Beatitudes set forth the blessings which God bestows (not as a reward for merit but as a gift of grace) upon those in whom He is working such a character. Discuss.