

## Sola 5 Sermon of the Week No 22-2008

(Distributed to subscribers on 19 July 2008)

**Scripture reading: Matthew 5:1-12**

**Title: The Beatitudes**

*Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. [Mat 5:1-12 ESV]*

### Introduction

We saw in the opening sermon of this series that the burden of Sermon on the Mount is to reveal true righteousness in order to counter Pharisaic righteousness of that day. But this sermon should also be seen as an introduction to the whole of the gospel according to Matthew. We will commence with individual Beatitudes next week but today I will just give you an overview of all the Beatitudes. First we shall be stating generally what the Beatitudes are and then their outworking in a believer.

### What are the Beatitudes?

The word *beatitude* is derived from a Latin root word "**beatus**," which connotes beautifying. It refers to a blessedness or happiness of the highest kind or consummate bliss. It is used to describe the joys of heaven, and portrays a most enviable state or condition.

Psalm 32 tells us that a really blessed person is one who is made righteous by removing his or her sin and that the wicked are not blessed. The Psalm then concludes by stating that only the righteous can really be happy: "*Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*"

Righteousness, formally spelt **right.wise.ness** is a quality that defines God-likeness and a fountain of good behaviour rather than just an outward performance. Christ, therefore, being not just a righteous person but righteousness itself, is the epitome of true blessedness.

### What Do the Beatitudes Describe?

Someone once told me that these are the **Be-Attitudes** or the attitudes we must be to be regarded righteous. There are some four attitudes or dispositions that should characterise believers.

a) *Attitude towards ourselves* described by the phrase **poor in spirit** in verse 3. This attribute is about what you think about yourself in terms of value or esteem. Who do you think you are before God and before men? Is your disposition one of humility and meekness or is it one buried in egotism (an exaggerated opinion of your own importance or an

inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others)? Christ demonstrates what attitude we must have towards self and so the Bible exalts us to be like Him (Philp 2:3-8).

- b) *Attitudes towards our sins* described by the words **mourn, meek** and **hunger** or **thirst** in verses 4-6. This is about what constitutes our greatest source sorrow and regret, our reaction to that which properly downsizes our esteem or worth, and about what our heart craves for most. Who is at the centre when it comes to goals and priorities in life? Do you admit failure and share in the blame when you are blameworthy?
- c) *Attitude towards the Lord* described by the words/phrases **merciful, pure in heart** and **peacemakers** in verses 7-9. These are graces or communicable attributes which when they are shed abroad in our hearts, we are made able to manifest them in our lives. Apart from God, we cannot be truly gracious. It is those who are right with God and are dependent upon Him who overflows with these attributes. All others may only imitate for some selfish agenda.
- d) *Attitude towards the world* described in verses 10-16 by terms: **persecuted for righteousness, salt of the earth, light of the world, and let your light shine before others**. This is about your action and reactions in this world as its wrath and malice are brought to bear upon your life. Do you grumble and retaliate or do you graciously endure leaving everything to God?

### Application

The Lord gives us these four attitudes in the introductory part of the Sermon on the Mount to show us what a righteous person is. Are you righteous and on your way to heaven? Let me answer this question for you. You are not righteous if:

- a) You are a selfish or proud person who always wants to get the glory by demeaning others or always right and winning arguments. It is arrogance to insist that others respect your opinion. Christ's challenge is that if you want to be first, go to the bottom rung and start climbing from there. Remember God humiliates the proud (Mat 19:30; 20:27; Mar 9:35).
- b) The problem of sin does not bother you, you always blame your wrongs on others or circumstances. It means you are not meek.
- c) You don't crave for Godlikeness this is because your heart overflows with the abundance inside of it (Mar 7:18-23; James 4:1-4).
- d) You are cruel, full of impure thoughts or you are a troublemaker. These are attributes of Satan and if you resemble him you are his child (John 3:19-21; 8:44).
- e) You are a friend of the world (Mat 6:31-32; Eph 2:1-3; James 4:1-4; 1John 2:15-16).

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