

“What the Beatitudes Are All About, Part 1”
(Matthew 5:1-12)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We’ve been reminded lately,

That we’re called to be like Jesus –

That’s the reason God saved us:

That He might be the first-born

Among many brethren like Himself –

And we’re never more like Him

Than when we share the Gospel –

Jesus’ whole life was centered

On teaching and preaching the Gospel –

In promoting it in every way He could,

By living and dying that there might be a Gospel –

If God saved us to make us like Him,

How can we do otherwise?

2. We saw last week,

That He doesn’t expect us

To transform ourselves into Jesus’ image –

He’s given us His Spirit.

God originally made us like Him at creation –

He made us to be thinking, willing,

Moral, and immortal creatures,

Like Jesus –

We still are, even after the Fall.

But we did lose something precious:

We lost His moral likeness –

His love for everything good and right –

Because we lost His Spirit.

We no longer wanted to do

What He calls us to do –

But just the opposite.

That's why Jesus came:

To bring the Spirit back through His work –

To give Him to us

So that we could be like Him –

Both to those who lived

Before and after the cross:

He saved Adam and Eve through His work –

He restored the Spirit to them,

And with the Spirit, Christ-likeness –

He does this for everyone who trusts Jesus,

Regardless of when they lived.

But He also did something more in the NC:

Since evangelism is different –

Since it's no longer magnetic –

Since there's no longer one country on earth

Where you can learn about and worship the true God –

But now radiant –

Since He has sent us out
To make disciples of all the nations –
He gives us even more of His Spirit,
To empower us –
To strengthen our desire to do this work –
So that we will get the Gospel out.

But there are two things we need:

We must *want* to get His Gospel out –
We already have this desire if we have the Spirit –
If we're trusting Jesus –

And we need to ask for the filling of His Spirit
So that we will have the power we need to do this work.

If we want to reach others,
And we ask for His help –
The help He's promised –
We can know He will give it to us.

B. Preview.

1. But if we are to be effective in reaching others,

There's something else we need
Besides this strong desire:
We need Jesus' character –
We need to grow in Jesus' image –
The indicator that we have Christ –

That His Spirit is in our hearts –

Is that we have the desire to reach out.

The indicator that we've reached maturity,

Is that we are reaching out

As a normal part of our lives.

To reach that maturity,

We need to put on Christ –

But to put Him on,

We need to know more about Him.

2. This morning,

We're going to look further at what it means

To be like Jesus from the Beatitudes,

Because that's what they're really about.

Two Wednesdays ago,

Dr. Ferguson dealt with the Beatitudes

In his series on The Sermon on the Mount.

What he said was very good

And very helpful.

But as Henry pointed out,

The one thing he didn't do

Was explain what they mean.

Now he did have a lot of ground to cover –

And he did at least touch lightly on them –

But he didn't cover them very thoroughly.

So that's what we're going to do today,

And two Lord's Days from now.

This morning,

We'll look at the first two,

Along with some of the introductory material

Dr. Ferguson covered that was very helpful;

This evening,

We'll look at the next two.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's review some things

That will help us better understand the Beatitudes.

The first thing is what we just heard:

That the Beatitudes describe Jesus.

He is the One who is ultimately blessed –

Who has earned these blessings for us

Because He was this kind of person.

Second, they also describe

What the Spirit *has done* in us –

The desires He put in us

When He brought us to Jesus:

These are marks of grace –

Some of the ways we can know

That the Spirit lives savingly in us.

Third, since all of these things come from the Spirit –

Whose work it is to make us like Jesus –

And since they are all characteristics Jesus possessed,

They also come as a set –

We either have all of them or none;

We can't have some without the others,

Anymore than Jesus could.

We don't have any of them

As perfectly as He did –

So we still won't be *exactly* like Him –

But we will be *something* like Him.

Fourth, because this work isn't complete –

Because we're not exactly like Him –

Because we're still called *to put on* Jesus (Rom. 13:14) –

These are also the goals we should be aiming at:

We are this way,

But we need to become more like this.

Fifth, the blessings that are mentioned for each of the Beatitudes –

The kingdom of heaven,

Comfort, inheriting the earth,

Being satisfied with righteousness, etc. –

Are really descriptions of what Jesus has earned:

They all have to do with His kingdom,

With His inheritance,

And so what we will inherit with Him

If we have trusted and are following Him.

Finally we should step back

And see what Jesus is really saying here:

He's telling us that grace comes before obedience –

We don't obey the Law to receive God's grace –

Salvation isn't by keeping God's commands;

We don't earn it by what we do –

He gives us grace that we might obey the Law –

Salvation is by grace through faith alone:

It was earned by Jesus, but given to us as a free gift.

To be free, it must be received by faith.

And the evidence that we've received it

Is that we now obey His commandments

Because that's what we want to do.

The *very next thing* Jesus talks about

Is how important the Law is:

How He *didn't come to abolish it,*

But *to fulfill it;*

That if we would ever hope

To enter His kingdom,

Our obedience has to be better

Than that of the religious elite of His day –

The scribes and Pharisees.

He goes on to tell us how it must be better:

We have to go beyond
 Just going through the motions –
 Like the scribes and Pharisees –
 We have to want to obey in our hearts;
 Keep the commandments in our minds –
 Not break them in our imaginations –
 And in our words –
 Not use what we say to hurt others.

How can we go beyond the scribes and Pharisees?
 Jesus' point is: we can't –
 At least we can't apart from His Spirit.

This is what He came to give us –
 This is the blessing of the New Covenant –
 To give us the ability to love/obey in this way:
 The Spirit gives us a new heart –
 He gives us the things
 We see here in the Beatitudes –
 He gives us the heart of Jesus.

B. With these things in mind,

Let's consider the first two Beatitudes –
 The first two characteristics
 The Spirit has put in our hearts
 To make us more like Jesus:
 Humility and grief for sin.

1. First, Jesus says, “Blessed are *the poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (v. 3).

The phrase “poor in spirit” means “humility” –

Not being what we would call “full of yourself,”

But being emptied of self –

Becoming lowly.

This was certainly true of Jesus:

This is how He came into this world:

Being in the form of God –

Having infinite majesty and glory –

He emptied Himself –

Not by giving up His deity,

But by taking to Himself humanity –

And becoming a lowly and humble servant.

Listen again to what Paul writes

About Jesus’ emptying of Himself:

He did this not only to save us,

Not only to show us what He wants us to do,

But to make us like this:

He writes, “*Have this attitude in yourselves* which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus tells us that He “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

He was the One who stooped

To wash His disciples' feet at the Last Supper,
 And who bowed His head,
 To yield up His spirit and die,
 To wash them – and us – from our sins on the cross.

Jesus was rich, but became poor,
 So that through His poverty,
 We might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

And it was for this,
 He was exalted.

Paul continues in Philippians 2, “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

We noted earlier,
 Jesus said we can't enter the kingdom of heaven
 Unless our righteousness is greater
 Than the scribes and Pharisees –
 It's equally true that we won't enter it
 Unless we are poor in spirit –
 Unless we humble ourselves,
 And admit our spiritual poverty –
 Our guiltiness and sinful heart –
 We'll never come to Jesus
 To receive His forgiveness and righteousness.

Unless we humble ourselves

And acknowledge that He is the Lord,
We'll never submit to Him as we should –
We'll never be useful to Him
In serving and helping one another
To be the best we can be,
And in helping those who are lost
Find their way to Him.

And so this is what He gives us by His Spirit.
“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) –
It's the only way we can have this characteristic.

And when we have it, we are blessed
Because this is the evidence we belong to Him,
And belonging to Him
That we are the heirs of His Kingdom.
Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
(v. 3).

But let's not forget
That having this quality of spirit
Is only the beginning.
We need to grow in it
If we are to become more like Jesus.

Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom
Because He humbled Himself
To become the least – the servant of all.

If we are to become the great

We must also strive to be the least:

Mark writes, “Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35).

2. Second, Jesus says, “Blessed are *those who mourn*, for they shall be comforted” (v. 4).

The word means to be grieved or sad,

But to be grieved or sad over what?

Are we to be grieved over the fact

That we don’t have what others have –

Especially the rich –

Or that we’re not as beautiful or handsome as others –

Especially celebrities –

Or that we don’t have more natural gifts –

Like those who make their mark in history –

Or that we’re not as healthy or strong as others –

No, because these don’t mean anything to God –

He usually gives them as the inheritance

Of those who won’t enter heaven.

It means to be grieved over

The only thing that should grieve us:

Our sins, the sins of others

And the consequences sin brings.

Of course Jesus didn’t have any personal sin

To mourn over as we do:

But there was plenty of sin around Him.

We read in Mark's Gospel

That when Jesus was in a synagogue

And saw a man with a withered hand,

He asked the Pharisees whether

It was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

When they didn't answer,

“After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored” (Mark 3:5).

When Jesus saw the unbelief of the Jews

Who had come to help Mary and Martha

Mourn the loss of their brother Lazarus,

He was grieved and mourned their lack of faith (John 11:38).

The Spirit works this same kind grief –

This same kind of mourning over sin –

In our souls when He raises us to spiritual life.

When He gives us love for what is good,

It causes us to grieve over evil –

The evil in our own hearts,

As well as the evil we see all around us,

And what we know will be the consequences of that evil.

Is that what you experience?

Are you grieved by your sins?

By the condition of this nation

As well as the world?

Does it grieve you that there are people

Who are on their way to judgment

Because they haven't heard about Jesus,

Or having heard, aren't trusting Him?

If so, you are blessed,

Because this kind of grief

Is the evidence that your sins are forgiven –

And that can bring tremendous comfort.

But let's not forget

That the more our sins grieve us,

The more we will turn from them;

And the more the sins of others grieve us,

The more we will do to try and reach them.

We need to pray that the Lord

Would strengthen this grace in us,

So that we will be moved to do more for Him.

This evening,

We'll consider two more Beatitudes:

Blessed are the gentle,

And blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.

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Fifth, the blessings that are mentioned for each of the Beatitudes –
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Who has earned these blessings for us

Because He was this kind of person.

Second, they also describe

What the Spirit *has done* in us –

The desires He put in us

When He brought us to Jesus:

These are marks of grace –

Some of the ways we can know

That the Spirit lives savingly in us.

Third, since all of these things come from the Spirit –
Whose work it is to make us like Jesus –
And since they are all characteristics Jesus possessed,
They also come as a set –
We either have all of them or none;
We can't have some without the others,
Anymore than Jesus could.
We don't have any of them
As perfectly as He did –
So we still won't be *exactly* like Him –
But we will be *something* like Him.

Fourth, because this work isn't complete –
Because we're not exactly like Him –
Because we're still called *to put on* Jesus (Rom. 13:14) –
These are also the goals we should be aiming at:
We are this way,
But we need to become more like this.

Fifth, the blessings that are mentioned for each of the Beatitudes –
The kingdom of heaven,
Comfort, inheriting the earth,
Being satisfied with righteousness, etc. –
Are really descriptions of what Jesus has earned:
They all have to do with His kingdom,
With His inheritance,
And so what we will inherit with Him

If we have trusted and are following Him.

Finally we should step back

And see what Jesus is really saying here:

He's telling us that grace comes before obedience –

We don't obey the Law to receive God's grace –

Salvation isn't by keeping God's commands;

We don't earn it by what we do –

He gives us grace that we might obey the Law –

Salvation is by grace through faith alone:

It was earned by Jesus, but given to us as a free gift.

To be free, it must be received by faith.

And the evidence that we've received it

Is that we now obey His commandments

Because that's what we want to do.

The *very next thing* Jesus talks about

Is how important the Law is:

How He *didn't come to abolish it,*

But *to fulfill it;*

That if we would ever hope

To enter His kingdom,

Our obedience has to be better

Than that of the religious elite of His day –

The scribes and Pharisees.

He goes on to tell us how it must be better:

We have to go beyond
 Just going through the motions –
 Like the scribes and Pharisees –
 We have to want to obey in our hearts;
 Keep the commandments in our minds –
 Not break them in our imaginations –
 And in our words –
 Not use what we say to hurt others.

How can we go beyond the scribes and Pharisees?
 Jesus' point is: we can't –
 At least we can't apart from His Spirit.

This is what He came to give us –
 This is the blessing of the New Covenant –
 To give us the ability to love/obey in this way:
 The Spirit gives us a new heart –
 He gives us the things
 We see here in the Beatitudes –
 He gives us the heart of Jesus.

B. With these things in mind,

Let's consider the first two Beatitudes –
 The first two characteristics
 The Spirit has put in our hearts
 To make us more like Jesus:
 Humility and grief for sin.

1. First, Jesus says, “Blessed are *the poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (v. 3).

The phrase “poor in spirit” means “humility” –

Not being what we would call “full of yourself,”

But being emptied of self –

Becoming lowly.

This was certainly true of Jesus:

This is how He came into this world:

Being in the form of God –

Having infinite majesty and glory –

He emptied Himself –

Not by giving up His deity,

But by taking to Himself humanity –

And becoming a lowly and humble servant.

Listen again to what Paul writes

About Jesus’ emptying of Himself:

He did this not only to save us,

Not only to show us what He wants us to do,

But to make us like this:

He writes, “*Have this attitude in yourselves* which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus tells us that He “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

He was the One who stooped

To wash His disciples' feet at the Last Supper,
 And who bowed His head,
 To yield up His spirit and die,
 To wash them – and us – from our sins on the cross.

Jesus was rich, but became poor,
 So that through His poverty,
 We might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

And it was for this,
 He was exalted.

Paul continues in Philippians 2, “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

We noted earlier,
 Jesus said we can't enter the kingdom of heaven
 Unless our righteousness is greater
 Than the scribes and Pharisees –
 It's equally true that we won't enter it
 Unless we are poor in spirit –
 Unless we humble ourselves,
 And admit our spiritual poverty –
 Our guiltiness and sinful heart –
 We'll never come to Jesus
 To receive His forgiveness and righteousness.

Unless we humble ourselves

And acknowledge that He is the Lord,
We'll never submit to Him as we should –
We'll never be useful to Him
In serving and helping one another
To be the best we can be,
And in helping those who are lost
Find their way to Him.

And so this is what He gives us by His Spirit.
“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) –
It's the only way we can have this characteristic.

And when we have it, we are blessed
Because this is the evidence we belong to Him,
And belonging to Him
That we are the heirs of His Kingdom.
Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
(v. 3).

But let's not forget
That having this quality of spirit
Is only the beginning.
We need to grow in it
If we are to become more like Jesus.

Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom
Because He humbled Himself
To become the least – the servant of all.

If we are to become the great

We must also strive to be the least:

Mark writes, “Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35).

2. Second, Jesus says, “Blessed are *those who mourn*, for they shall be comforted” (v. 4).

The word means to be grieved or sad,

But to be grieved or sad over what?

Are we to be grieved over the fact

That we don’t have what others have –

Especially the rich –

Or that we’re not as beautiful or handsome as others –

Especially celebrities –

Or that we don’t have more natural gifts –

Like those who make their mark in history –

Or that we’re not as healthy or strong as others –

No, because these don’t mean anything to God –

He usually gives them as the inheritance

Of those who won’t enter heaven.

It means to be grieved over

The only thing that should grieve us:

Our sins, the sins of others

And the consequences sin brings.

Of course Jesus didn’t have any personal sin

To mourn over as we do:

But there was plenty of sin around Him.

We read in Mark's Gospel

That when Jesus was in a synagogue

And saw a man with a withered hand,

He asked the Pharisees whether

It was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

When they didn't answer,

“After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored” (Mark 3:5).

When Jesus saw the unbelief of the Jews

Who had come to help Mary and Martha

Mourn the loss of their brother Lazarus,

He was grieved and mourned their lack of faith (John 11:38).

The Spirit works this same kind grief –

This same kind of mourning over sin –

In our souls when He raises us to spiritual life.

When He gives us love for what is good,

It causes us to grieve over evil –

The evil in our own hearts,

As well as the evil we see all around us,

And what we know will be the consequences of that evil.

Is that what you experience?

Are you grieved by your sins?

By the condition of this nation

As well as the world?

Does it grieve you that there are people

Who are on their way to judgment

Because they haven't heard about Jesus,

Or having heard, aren't trusting Him?

If so, you are blessed,

Because this kind of grief

Is the evidence that your sins are forgiven –

And that can bring tremendous comfort.

But let's not forget

That the more our sins grieve us,

The more we will turn from them;

And the more the sins of others grieve us,

The more we will do to try and reach them.

We need to pray that the Lord

Would strengthen this grace in us,

So that we will be moved to do more for Him.

This evening,

We'll consider two more Beatitudes:

Blessed are the gentle,

And blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.

“What the Beatitudes Are All About, Part 1”
(Matthew 5:1-12)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We’ve been reminded lately,

That we’re called to be like Jesus –

That’s the reason God saved us:

That He might be the first-born

Among many brethren like Himself –

And we’re never more like Him

Than when we share the Gospel –

Jesus’ whole life was centered

On teaching and preaching the Gospel –

In promoting it in every way He could,

By living and dying that there might be a Gospel –

If God saved us to make us like Him,

How can we do otherwise?

2. We saw last week,

That He doesn’t expect us

To transform ourselves into Jesus’ image –

He’s given us His Spirit.

God originally made us like Him at creation –

He made us to be thinking, willing,

Moral, and immortal creatures,

Like Jesus –

We still are, even after the Fall.

But we did lose something precious:

We lost His moral likeness –

His love for everything good and right –

Because we lost His Spirit.

We no longer wanted to do

What He calls us to do –

But just the opposite.

That's why Jesus came:

To bring the Spirit back through His work –

To give Him to us

So that we could be like Him –

Both to those who lived

Before and after the cross:

He saved Adam and Eve through His work –

He restored the Spirit to them,

And with the Spirit, Christ-likeness –

He does this for everyone who trusts Jesus,

Regardless of when they lived.

But He also did something more in the NC:

Since evangelism is different –

Since it's no longer magnetic –

Since there's no longer one country on earth

Where you can learn about and worship the true God –

But now radiant –

Since He has sent us out
To make disciples of all the nations –
He gives us even more of His Spirit,
To empower us –
To strengthen our desire to do this work –
So that we will get the Gospel out.

But there are two things we need:

We must *want* to get His Gospel out –
We already have this desire if we have the Spirit –
If we're trusting Jesus –

And we need to ask for the filling of His Spirit
So that we will have the power we need to do this work.

If we want to reach others,
And we ask for His help –
The help He's promised –
We can know He will give it to us.

B. Preview.

1. But if we are to be effective in reaching others,
There's something else we need
Besides this strong desire:
We need Jesus' character –
We need to grow in Jesus' image –
The indicator that we have Christ –

That His Spirit is in our hearts –

Is that we have the desire to reach out.

The indicator that we've reached maturity,

Is that we are reaching out

As a normal part of our lives.

To reach that maturity,

We need to put on Christ –

But to put Him on,

We need to know more about Him.

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 Just going through the motions –
 Like the scribes and Pharisees –
 We have to want to obey in our hearts;
 Keep the commandments in our minds –
 Not break them in our imaginations –
 And in our words –
 Not use what we say to hurt others.

How can we go beyond the scribes and Pharisees?
 Jesus' point is: we can't –
 At least we can't apart from His Spirit.

This is what He came to give us –
 This is the blessing of the New Covenant –
 To give us the ability to love/obey in this way:
 The Spirit gives us a new heart –
 He gives us the things
 We see here in the Beatitudes –
 He gives us the heart of Jesus.

B. With these things in mind,

Let's consider the first two Beatitudes –
 The first two characteristics
 The Spirit has put in our hearts
 To make us more like Jesus:
 Humility and grief for sin.

1. First, Jesus says, “Blessed are *the poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (v. 3).

The phrase “poor in spirit” means “humility” –

Not being what we would call “full of yourself,”

But being emptied of self –

Becoming lowly.

This was certainly true of Jesus:

This is how He came into this world:

Being in the form of God –

Having infinite majesty and glory –

He emptied Himself –

Not by giving up His deity,

But by taking to Himself humanity –

And becoming a lowly and humble servant.

Listen again to what Paul writes

About Jesus’ emptying of Himself:

He did this not only to save us,

Not only to show us what He wants us to do,

But to make us like this:

He writes, “*Have this attitude in yourselves* which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus tells us that He “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

He was the One who stooped

To wash His disciples' feet at the Last Supper,
And who bowed His head,
To yield up His spirit and die,
To wash them – and us – from our sins on the cross.

Jesus was rich, but became poor,
So that through His poverty,
We might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

And it was for this,
He was exalted.

Paul continues in Philippians 2, “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

We noted earlier,
Jesus said we can't enter the kingdom of heaven
Unless our righteousness is greater
Than the scribes and Pharisees –
It's equally true that we won't enter it
Unless we are poor in spirit –
Unless we humble ourselves,
And admit our spiritual poverty –
Our guiltiness and sinful heart –
We'll never come to Jesus
To receive His forgiveness and righteousness.

Unless we humble ourselves

And acknowledge that He is the Lord,
We'll never submit to Him as we should –
We'll never be useful to Him
In serving and helping one another
To be the best we can be,
And in helping those who are lost
Find their way to Him.

And so this is what He gives us by His Spirit.
“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) –
It's the only way we can have this characteristic.

And when we have it, we are blessed
Because this is the evidence we belong to Him,
And belonging to Him
That we are the heirs of His Kingdom.
Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
(v. 3).

But let's not forget
That having this quality of spirit
Is only the beginning.
We need to grow in it
If we are to become more like Jesus.

Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom
Because He humbled Himself
To become the least – the servant of all.

If we are to become the great

We must also strive to be the least:

Mark writes, “Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35).

2. Second, Jesus says, “Blessed are *those who mourn*, for they shall be comforted” (v. 4).

The word means to be grieved or sad,

But to be grieved or sad over what?

Are we to be grieved over the fact

That we don’t have what others have –

Especially the rich –

Or that we’re not as beautiful or handsome as others –

Especially celebrities –

Or that we don’t have more natural gifts –

Like those who make their mark in history –

Or that we’re not as healthy or strong as others –

No, because these don’t mean anything to God –

He usually gives them as the inheritance

Of those who won’t enter heaven.

It means to be grieved over

The only thing that should grieve us:

Our sins, the sins of others

And the consequences sin brings.

Of course Jesus didn’t have any personal sin

To mourn over as we do:

But there was plenty of sin around Him.

We read in Mark's Gospel

That when Jesus was in a synagogue

And saw a man with a withered hand,

He asked the Pharisees whether

It was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

When they didn't answer,

“After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored” (Mark 3:5).

When Jesus saw the unbelief of the Jews

Who had come to help Mary and Martha

Mourn the loss of their brother Lazarus,

He was grieved and mourned their lack of faith (John 11:38).

The Spirit works this same kind grief –

This same kind of mourning over sin –

In our souls when He raises us to spiritual life.

When He gives us love for what is good,

It causes us to grieve over evil –

The evil in our own hearts,

As well as the evil we see all around us,

And what we know will be the consequences of that evil.

Is that what you experience?

Are you grieved by your sins?

By the condition of this nation

As well as the world?

Does it grieve you that there are people

Who are on their way to judgment

Because they haven't heard about Jesus,

Or having heard, aren't trusting Him?

If so, you are blessed,

Because this kind of grief

Is the evidence that your sins are forgiven –

And that can bring tremendous comfort.

But let's not forget

That the more our sins grieve us,

The more we will turn from them;

And the more the sins of others grieve us,

The more we will do to try and reach them.

We need to pray that the Lord

Would strengthen this grace in us,

So that we will be moved to do more for Him.

This evening,

We'll consider two more Beatitudes:

Blessed are the gentle,

And blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.

“What the Beatitudes Are All About, Part 1”
(Matthew 5:1-12)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We’ve been reminded lately,

That we’re called to be like Jesus –

That’s the reason God saved us:

That He might be the first-born

Among many brethren like Himself –

And we’re never more like Him

Than when we share the Gospel –

Jesus’ whole life was centered

On teaching and preaching the Gospel –

In promoting it in every way He could,

By living and dying that there might be a Gospel –

If God saved us to make us like Him,

How can we do otherwise?

2. We saw last week,

That He doesn’t expect us

To transform ourselves into Jesus’ image –

He’s given us His Spirit.

God originally made us like Him at creation –

He made us to be thinking, willing,

Moral, and immortal creatures,

Like Jesus –

We still are, even after the Fall.

But we did lose something precious:

We lost His moral likeness –

His love for everything good and right –

Because we lost His Spirit.

We no longer wanted to do

What He calls us to do –

But just the opposite.

That's why Jesus came:

To bring the Spirit back through His work –

To give Him to us

So that we could be like Him –

Both to those who lived

Before and after the cross:

He saved Adam and Eve through His work –

He restored the Spirit to them,

And with the Spirit, Christ-likeness –

He does this for everyone who trusts Jesus,

Regardless of when they lived.

But He also did something more in the NC:

Since evangelism is different –

Since it's no longer magnetic –

Since there's no longer one country on earth

Where you can learn about and worship the true God –

But now radiant –

Since He has sent us out
To make disciples of all the nations –
He gives us even more of His Spirit,
To empower us –
To strengthen our desire to do this work –
So that we will get the Gospel out.

But there are two things we need:

We must *want* to get His Gospel out –
We already have this desire if we have the Spirit –
If we're trusting Jesus –

And we need to ask for the filling of His Spirit
So that we will have the power we need to do this work.

If we want to reach others,
And we ask for His help –
The help He's promised –
We can know He will give it to us.

B. Preview.

1. But if we are to be effective in reaching others,
There's something else we need
Besides this strong desire:
We need Jesus' character –
We need to grow in Jesus' image –
The indicator that we have Christ –

That His Spirit is in our hearts –

Is that we have the desire to reach out.

The indicator that we've reached maturity,

Is that we are reaching out

As a normal part of our lives.

To reach that maturity,

We need to put on Christ –

But to put Him on,

We need to know more about Him.

2. This morning,

We're going to look further at what it means

To be like Jesus from the Beatitudes,

Because that's what they're really about.

Two Wednesdays ago,

Dr. Ferguson dealt with the Beatitudes

In his series on The Sermon on the Mount.

What he said was very good

And very helpful.

But as Henry pointed out,

The one thing he didn't do

Was explain what they mean.

Now he did have a lot of ground to cover –

And he did at least touch lightly on them –

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So that's what we're going to do today,

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This morning,

We'll look at the first two,

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This evening,

We'll look at the next two.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's review some things

That will help us better understand the Beatitudes.

The first thing is what we just heard:

That the Beatitudes describe Jesus.

He is the One who is ultimately blessed –

Who has earned these blessings for us

Because He was this kind of person.

Second, they also describe

What the Spirit *has done* in us –

The desires He put in us

When He brought us to Jesus:

These are marks of grace –

Some of the ways we can know

That the Spirit lives savingly in us.

Third, since all of these things come from the Spirit –
Whose work it is to make us like Jesus –
And since they are all characteristics Jesus possessed,
They also come as a set –
We either have all of them or none;
We can't have some without the others,
Anymore than Jesus could.
We don't have any of them
As perfectly as He did –
So we still won't be *exactly* like Him –
But we will be *something* like Him.

Fourth, because this work isn't complete –
Because we're not exactly like Him –
Because we're still called *to put on* Jesus (Rom. 13:14) –
These are also the goals we should be aiming at:
We are this way,
But we need to become more like this.

Fifth, the blessings that are mentioned for each of the Beatitudes –
The kingdom of heaven,
Comfort, inheriting the earth,
Being satisfied with righteousness, etc. –
Are really descriptions of what Jesus has earned:
They all have to do with His kingdom,
With His inheritance,
And so what we will inherit with Him

If we have trusted and are following Him.

Finally we should step back

And see what Jesus is really saying here:

He's telling us that grace comes before obedience –

We don't obey the Law to receive God's grace –

Salvation isn't by keeping God's commands;

We don't earn it by what we do –

He gives us grace that we might obey the Law –

Salvation is by grace through faith alone:

It was earned by Jesus, but given to us as a free gift.

To be free, it must be received by faith.

And the evidence that we've received it

Is that we now obey His commandments

Because that's what we want to do.

The *very next thing* Jesus talks about

Is how important the Law is:

How He *didn't come to abolish it,*

But *to fulfill it;*

That if we would ever hope

To enter His kingdom,

Our obedience has to be better

Than that of the religious elite of His day –

The scribes and Pharisees.

He goes on to tell us how it must be better:

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The word means to be grieved or sad,

But to be grieved or sad over what?

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 And admit our spiritual poverty –
 Our guiltiness and sinful heart –
 We'll never come to Jesus
 To receive His forgiveness and righteousness.

Unless we humble ourselves

And acknowledge that He is the Lord,
We'll never submit to Him as we should –
We'll never be useful to Him
In serving and helping one another
To be the best we can be,
And in helping those who are lost
Find their way to Him.

And so this is what He gives us by His Spirit.
“Blessed *are* the poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) –
It's the only way we can have this characteristic.

And when we have it, we are blessed
Because this is the evidence we belong to Him,
And belonging to Him
That we are the heirs of His Kingdom.
Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”
(v. 3).

But let's not forget
That having this quality of spirit
Is only the beginning.
We need to grow in it
If we are to become more like Jesus.

Jesus is the greatest in the kingdom
Because He humbled Himself
To become the least – the servant of all.

If we are to become the great

We must also strive to be the least:

Mark writes, “Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35).

2. Second, Jesus says, “Blessed are *those who mourn*, for they shall be comforted” (v. 4).

The word means to be grieved or sad,

But to be grieved or sad over what?

Are we to be grieved over the fact

That we don’t have what others have –

Especially the rich –

Or that we’re not as beautiful or handsome as others –

Especially celebrities –

Or that we don’t have more natural gifts –

Like those who make their mark in history –

Or that we’re not as healthy or strong as others –

No, because these don’t mean anything to God –

He usually gives them as the inheritance

Of those who won’t enter heaven.

It means to be grieved over

The only thing that should grieve us:

Our sins, the sins of others

And the consequences sin brings.

Of course Jesus didn’t have any personal sin

To mourn over as we do:

But there was plenty of sin around Him.

We read in Mark's Gospel

That when Jesus was in a synagogue

And saw a man with a withered hand,

He asked the Pharisees whether

It was lawful to do good on the Sabbath.

When they didn't answer,

“After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand.’ And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored” (Mark 3:5).

When Jesus saw the unbelief of the Jews

Who had come to help Mary and Martha

Mourn the loss of their brother Lazarus,

He was grieved and mourned their lack of faith (John 11:38).

The Spirit works this same kind grief –

This same kind of mourning over sin –

In our souls when He raises us to spiritual life.

When He gives us love for what is good,

It causes us to grieve over evil –

The evil in our own hearts,

As well as the evil we see all around us,

And what we know will be the consequences of that evil.

Is that what you experience?

Are you grieved by your sins?

By the condition of this nation

As well as the world?

Does it grieve you that there are people

Who are on their way to judgment

Because they haven't heard about Jesus,

Or having heard, aren't trusting Him?

If so, you are blessed,

Because this kind of grief

Is the evidence that your sins are forgiven –

And that can bring tremendous comfort.

But let's not forget

That the more our sins grieve us,

The more we will turn from them;

And the more the sins of others grieve us,

The more we will do to try and reach them.

We need to pray that the Lord

Would strengthen this grace in us,

So that we will be moved to do more for Him.

This evening,

We'll consider two more Beatitudes:

Blessed are the gentle,

And blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.

“What the Beatitudes Are All About, Part 1”
(Matthew 5:1-12)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. We’ve been reminded lately,

That we’re called to be like Jesus –

That’s the reason God saved us:

That He might be the first-born

Among many brethren like Himself –

And we’re never more like Him

Than when we share the Gospel –

Jesus’ whole life was centered

On teaching and preaching the Gospel –

In promoting it in every way He could,

By living and dying that there might be a Gospel –

If God saved us to make us like Him,

How can we do otherwise?

2. We saw last week,

That He doesn’t expect us

To transform ourselves into Jesus’ image –

He’s given us His Spirit.

God originally made us like Him at creation –

He made us to be thinking, willing,

Moral, and immortal creatures,

Like Jesus –

We still are, even after the Fall.

But we did lose something precious:

We lost His moral likeness –

His love for everything good and right –

Because we lost His Spirit.

We no longer wanted to do

What He calls us to do –

But just the opposite.

That's why Jesus came:

To bring the Spirit back through His work –

To give Him to us

So that we could be like Him –

Both to those who lived

Before and after the cross:

He saved Adam and Eve through His work –

He restored the Spirit to them,

And with the Spirit, Christ-likeness –

He does this for everyone who trusts Jesus,

Regardless of when they lived.

But He also did something more in the NC:

Since evangelism is different –

Since it's no longer magnetic –

Since there's no longer one country on earth

Where you can learn about and worship the true God –

But now radiant –

Since He has sent us out
To make disciples of all the nations –
He gives us even more of His Spirit,
To empower us –
To strengthen our desire to do this work –
So that we will get the Gospel out.

But there are two things we need:

We must *want* to get His Gospel out –
We already have this desire if we have the Spirit –
If we're trusting Jesus –

And we need to ask for the filling of His Spirit
So that we will have the power we need to do this work.

If we want to reach others,
And we ask for His help –
The help He's promised –
We can know He will give it to us.

B. Preview.

1. But if we are to be effective in reaching others,

There's something else we need
Besides this strong desire:
We need Jesus' character –
We need to grow in Jesus' image –
The indicator that we have Christ –

That His Spirit is in our hearts –

Is that we have the desire to reach out.

The indicator that we've reached maturity,

Is that we are reaching out

As a normal part of our lives.

To reach that maturity,

We need to put on Christ –

But to put Him on,

We need to know more about Him.

2. This morning,

We're going to look further at what it means

To be like Jesus from the Beatitudes,

Because that's what they're really about.

Two Wednesdays ago,

Dr. Ferguson dealt with the Beatitudes

In his series on The Sermon on the Mount.

What he said was very good

And very helpful.

But as Henry pointed out,

The one thing he didn't do

Was explain what they mean.

Now he did have a lot of ground to cover –

And he did at least touch lightly on them –

But he didn't cover them very thoroughly.

So that's what we're going to do today,

And two Lord's Days from now.

This morning,

We'll look at the first two,

Along with some of the introductory material

Dr. Ferguson covered that was very helpful;

This evening,

We'll look at the next two.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's review some things

That will help us better understand the Beatitudes.

The first thing is what we just heard:

That the Beatitudes describe Jesus.

He is the One who is ultimately blessed –

Who has earned these blessings for us

Because He was this kind of person.

Second, they also describe

What the Spirit *has done* in us –

The desires He put in us

When He brought us to Jesus:

These are marks of grace –

Some of the ways we can know

That the Spirit lives savingly in us.

Third, since all of these things come from the Spirit –
Whose work it is to make us like Jesus –
And since they are all characteristics Jesus possessed,
They also come as a set –
We either have all of them or none;
We can't have some without the others,
Anymore than Jesus could.
We don't have any of them
As perfectly as He did –
So we still won't be *exactly* like Him –
But we will be *something* like Him.

Fourth, because this work isn't complete –
Because we're not exactly like Him –
Because we're still called *to put on* Jesus (Rom. 13:14) –
These are also the goals we should be aiming at:
We are this way,
But we need to become more like this.

Fifth, the blessings that are mentioned for each of the Beatitudes –
The kingdom of heaven,
Comfort, inheriting the earth,
Being satisfied with righteousness, etc. –
Are really descriptions of what Jesus has earned:
They all have to do with His kingdom,
With His inheritance,
And so what we will inherit with Him

If we have trusted and are following Him.

Finally we should step back

And see what Jesus is really saying here:

He's telling us that grace comes before obedience –

We don't obey the Law to receive God's grace –

Salvation isn't by keeping God's commands;

We don't earn it by what we do –

He gives us grace that we might obey the Law –

Salvation is by grace through faith alone:

It was earned by Jesus, but given to us as a free gift.

To be free, it must be received by faith.

And the evidence that we've received it

Is that we now obey His commandments

Because that's what we want to do.

The *very next thing* Jesus talks about

Is how important the Law is:

How He *didn't come to abolish it,*

But *to fulfill it;*

That if we would ever hope

To enter His kingdom,

Our obedience has to be better

Than that of the religious elite of His day –

The scribes and Pharisees.

He goes on to tell us how it must be better:

We have to go beyond
 Just going through the motions –
 Like the scribes and Pharisees –
 We have to want to obey in our hearts;
 Keep the commandments in our minds –
 Not break them in our imaginations –
 And in our words –
 Not use what we say to hurt others.

How can we go beyond the scribes and Pharisees?
 Jesus' point is: we can't –
 At least we can't apart from His Spirit.

This is what He came to give us –
 This is the blessing of the New Covenant –
 To give us the ability to love/obey in this way:
 The Spirit gives us a new heart –
 He gives us the things
 We see here in the Beatitudes –
 He gives us the heart of Jesus.

B. With these things in mind,

Let's consider the first two Beatitudes –
 The first two characteristics
 The Spirit has put in our hearts
 To make us more like Jesus:
 Humility and grief for sin.

1. First, Jesus says, “Blessed are *the poor in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (v. 3).

The phrase “poor in spirit” means “humility” –

Not being what we would call “full of yourself,”

But being emptied of self –

Becoming lowly.

This was certainly true of Jesus:

This is how He came into this world:

Being in the form of God –

Having infinite majesty and glory –

He emptied Himself –

Not by giving up His deity,

But by taking to Himself humanity –

And becoming a lowly and humble servant.

Listen again to what Paul writes

About Jesus’ emptying of Himself:

He did this not only to save us,

Not only to show us what He wants us to do,

But to make us like this:

He writes, “*Have this attitude in yourselves* which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Jesus tells us that He “did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

He was the One who stooped

To wash His disciples' feet at the Last Supper,
 And who bowed His head,
 To yield up His spirit and die,
 To wash them – and us – from our sins on the cross.

Jesus was rich, but became poor,
 So that through His poverty,
 We might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

And it was for this,
 He was exalted.

Paul continues in Philippians 2, “For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

We noted earlier,
 Jesus said we can't enter the kingdom of heaven
 Unless our righteousness is greater
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 It's equally true that we won't enter it
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 And admit our spiritual poverty –
 Our guiltiness and sinful heart –
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If we are to become the great

We must also strive to be the least:

Mark writes, “Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all’” (Mark 9:35).

2. Second, Jesus says, “Blessed are *those who mourn*, for they shall be comforted” (v. 4).

The word means to be grieved or sad,

But to be grieved or sad over what?

Are we to be grieved over the fact

That we don’t have what others have –

Especially the rich –

Or that we’re not as beautiful or handsome as others –

Especially celebrities –

Or that we don’t have more natural gifts –

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Is that what you experience?

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We'll consider two more Beatitudes:

Blessed are the gentle,

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“What the Beatitudes Are All About, Part 1”
(Matthew 5:1-12)

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In promoting it in every way He could,

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If God saved us to make us like Him,

How can we do otherwise?

2. We saw last week,

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To transform ourselves into Jesus’ image –

He’s given us His Spirit.

God originally made us like Him at creation –

He made us to be thinking, willing,

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Like Jesus –

We still are, even after the Fall.

But we did lose something precious:

We lost His moral likeness –

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There's something else we need
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We need Jesus' character –
We need to grow in Jesus' image –
The indicator that we have Christ –

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The evil in our own hearts,

As well as the evil we see all around us,

And what we know will be the consequences of that evil.

Is that what you experience?

Are you grieved by your sins?

By the condition of this nation

As well as the world?

Does it grieve you that there are people

Who are on their way to judgment

Because they haven't heard about Jesus,

Or having heard, aren't trusting Him?

If so, you are blessed,

Because this kind of grief

Is the evidence that your sins are forgiven –

And that can bring tremendous comfort.

But let's not forget

That the more our sins grieve us,

The more we will turn from them;

And the more the sins of others grieve us,

The more we will do to try and reach them.

We need to pray that the Lord

Would strengthen this grace in us,

So that we will be moved to do more for Him.

This evening,

We'll consider two more Beatitudes:

Blessed are the gentle,

And blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Amen.