

A Call To Enjoy Kingdom Living

(Overview of the Beatitudes)

Matt 5:3-10

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 2-7-2010

Introduction

We are going to begin a new series today on the Beatitudes. And it is really a series on enjoying kingdom. It is my desire that every one of you grow in your joy and your sense of fulfillment in this coming year. There is something wrong when we cannot fulfill Paul's admonition to "rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4). Billy Sunday once said, "If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere." And hopefully this series will help to plug up those leaks.

Today I want to give an overview of what these beatitudes are about, and then (Lord willing) we will take eight weeks to look at each one. But because there is a lot of controversy on these verses, I thought it best to give an introductory sermon.

I. The meaning of "blessed"

And the first controversy is over the meaning of the word "blessed." And people are all over the map on this one. Some have gone to great lengths to say that this cannot possibly be a subjective happiness or joy that Jesus is speaking about here, but simply the fact that God blesses or rewards His people objectively who suffer in this way. They say that to translate this "Happy are those who mourn" (as many have done – and which is a more literal translation) is to insult our intelligence. The two don't go together. It's impossible to be happy and to mourn at the same time. Well, I don't agree with that objection. I have seen the radiant joy that comes to those who finally give in, confess their sins, and turn to the Savior. And even while the tears of mourning are still on their cheeks, they are bursting forth with joy at their forgiveness. It's like a huge burden has been lifted from their chest. But there are other ways in which this happiness can be subjective – even in the face of great pain.

Look at verses 10-12 where Jesus expands on what is meant by this blessing:

Matthew 5:10 *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* [That's the eighth beatitude, and now he expands on that"]

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Matthew 5:11 “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Of course he is dealing with an objective blessing. We will after all be blessed in heaven. But this is also clearly describing a *subjective* happiness and joy when he calls them to rejoice and to be exceedingly glad. In fact, in Luke He said to leap for joy.

Now granted, it is a difficult word to translate into English. One commentator spent a whole page on defining this, and said that there really is no English word that is adequate. The usual word for blessing (*eulogetos*) is not used here. The word used is *makarios*. Let me give you some of the range of translations that people have given to the word *makarios*. Happy, blissful, blessed, fortunate, enviable, enviably happy, enviably fortunate, Oh the joy, and Oh the bliss. So what is the blessing? Is it objective, subjective, future, presently experienced, or a combination of all those things? I really believe that it is a combination of all those things. And the Greek translation of the Old Testament translates words with this word that show both subjective and objective happiness; both presently experienced and future anticipated. But I think above all that it is a call to change our thinking about absolutely everything so that we can enjoy kingdom living. These blessings are a call to a very fulfilled Christian life.

II. The structure of these blessings

The second thing that I want to point out is that the structure of the beatitudes teaches us at least five things: First, it teaches us grace. You could not get a greater deathblow to works righteousness than the first words out of Jesus’ mouth – “**Blessed are the poor in spirit.**” The Christian life does not start with our earning the kingdom or contributing to the kingdom. It starts with abject poverty. “Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.” If we have anything in which we can boast, then we have nothing to mourn over, and we will not hunger and thirst for a righteousness outside of ourselves. The very structure of these beatitudes teaches us about grace, because it starts with poverty and ends with riches.

Notice also that it begins with poverty and inability and it progresses in the second half to *deeds* of righteousness. If we were poor where did that righteousness come from? From Jesus. So not only the kingdom flows from Jesus, but our right actions flow from Jesus.

Notice too that it begins with emptiness and progresses to fullness and concludes in the second half to overflowing. So God's grace not only provides everything, it provides above and beyond anything that we could have hoped for.

Notice that it begins with character and ends with conduct. All of these things are lessons on grace.

The second thing that the structure shows us is that these are kingdom principles. The first beatitude promises, "**For theirs is the kingdom of heaven,**" and the last beatitude says exactly the same thing. This means that the moment a sinner comes in faith to Christ with nothing in his hands, he has the kingdom with all of its resources and all of its power. It's God's kingdom that brings us comfort, stewardship of the earth, satisfaction in righteousness, mercy, closeness to God, and the wonderful title – "sons of God." Those are all things that our hearts long for. Those give us security, a sense of belonging, and fulfillment. And we will be looking at every one of those blessings in the next eight weeks. But they are kingdom blessings because they are sandwiched in between a present tense reality of being in the kingdom.

The third thing I learn from the structure is that it starts with our relationship with God in the first four beatitudes and then it moves on to our relationship with man in beatitudes 5-8. Until we drink from God, the living waters cannot flow out of us to man. Until we enter the kingdom through the cross, learn to deal with our sins by grace rather than legalistically, and we learn to submit to God's Lordship in meekness, and learn to be filled with God's righteousness, we will not be fit to minister to men. We can only give to others what we have received from God. So the structure shows us that as we start with our relationship to God it will automatically move to our relationship to man.

The fourth thing that commentaries point out is that these eight beatitudes all come as a package deal. You can't miss out on one of them. The moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ, these things begin to happen, and you spend a lifetime entering more and more into the enjoyment of this heritage. It's a package deal. You are not going to have certain people who are peacemakers and others who are mourners. No, all of these things should be true of every believer. And the structure shows that.

But the fifth thing about this structuring is that the inheritance of the kingdom in the first and eighth beatitude are present tense, but the blessings sandwiched in between are future tense. Now it is true that if we have the

kingdom, we own all the resources for all of the blessings, but I think there is still significance to the fact that those middle blessings are in the future tense. I think it indicates that our enjoyment of these things is progressive and enjoyed more and more with the fullest experience of those blessings being entered into when the saints inherit the earth at the Second Coming. The Second Coming is the time when we will be most fully comforted, when every tear is wiped away. That is the time when we will be most fully conscious of the mercy that has been shown to us. That is the time when we will most fully realize the incredibly awesome privilege of being adopted as sons. That's why Romans 8:23 speaks of waiting for the resurrection for the adoption of sons. We are adopted now, but there is a sense in which our sonship will be most fully entered into at the Second Coming. We'll talk about the implications of that as we go through each beatitude, but for now we can just know that there is both an already and a not-yet; there is both a present experience and a most full experience in the future. But if you don't have any experience of these things, you are not yet a believer.

So even the structure of these beatitudes teaches us about grace, the present reality of the kingdom, the need to be filled with God if we are to give out to men, the fact that this is a package deal, and the fact that we must enter into the enjoyment of these things more and more. That's pressing into our upward calling in Christ Jesus.

III. The beatitudes were intended to destroy legalism, compromise, revolution, and separatism by pointing to Jesus

I want to highlight the grace part of those things under Roman numeral III. The beatitudes were intended to destroy legalism and to point to Jesus. In fact, they were destroying all of the man-made counterfeits of that age for bringing in the kingdom. There were four counterfeits in their day, and we have similar philosophies in every age.

The Pharisees were the legalists, the traditionalists, and the ones who wanted us to go back to the good old times. They felt that if we could just get the right people appointed to office, pass the right laws, get people to live rightly, and educate the people, man's problems would be solved. Their remedy was always, "Go back!" and change things to the way they were. It's a programmatic approach to sanctification – if you do the right things, you will be transformed.

The Sadducees were the opposite. They were the liberals who urged the people to update their religion and to try to fit in with Rome. "Get with

the times!” Forget the past; let’s get on with the future. They were the broad-minded progressives. So the Pharisees were the Republicans and the Sadducees were the progressive Republicans and the Democrats. And their cry was unless we compromise and get along with Rome there is no way we are going to win; there is no way we will achieve the kingdom. The emergent church shares many of the features of the Sadducees – if we don’t get with the times and get relevant the church will lose out. The Sadducees felt – “We’re living in the Roman times and need to relate to that culture if we are going to retain our youth and influence.” The emergent church says that we live in postmodern times, and we better learn to be more postmodern if we are going to reach the postmodern culture. Really, there is nothing new under the sun. So we have the Pharisee counterfeit and the Sadducee counterfeit.

Then there were the Essenes who taught that salvation could only come through separation from the world. They said, “We are not going to get involved in politics. That’s dirty business.” So they established their little communities and remained outside the life of the nation. They almost completely bailed out of every level of culture. Their motto was “Get out!” So the Pharisees said, “Go back!” The Sadducees said, “Go forward!” And the Essenes said, “Get out!” They look very much like the fundamentalists of the last fifty years. But not only did they not rescue culture, they lost the next generation. Retreat is not the solution that Jesus holds forth in the Sermon on the Mount.

At the other extreme were the Zealots; a revolutionary group who sought to overthrow Rome by revolt and force; and they murdered and destroyed Romans and any Jews who helped the Romans. They were the radicals. They had no solution to build up, but they had this urge to tear down.

All four of those are counterfeits. In contrast, the Sermon on the Mount calls us to look to Christ and seek first His kingdom. It calls us to repent of our own sin first, and to seek Christ first, and all of these things will be added to us. It calls us to stop trusting in princes or in our own arm of strength, and to begin trusting God’s grace, even though it may look weak in the eyes of the world.

It is an irony that misery is the gate to happiness, but in the Sermon on the Mount Christ shows why poverty of spirit, mourning, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness is an absolute pre-requisite to happiness in kingdom living. And today, if we feel secure in traditions like the Pharisees

did, we will measure righteousness by how well we fit into the status quo. It won't be God's measurement. And it is not until we become devastated by Christ's statement in verse 20, that we will look to the right solution. Verse 20 says, "**Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven.**" That would have been absolutely shocking to Christ's hearers: who can exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? They were the ones who had tried the hardest. And that was Christ's point – no one but Christ is perfect, and without perfection we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. It's got to be Christ's righteousness imputed to us.

Until we truly see the high standards that Scripture sets before us, we will never experience the utter poverty of spirit that the Beatitudes talk about; we won't mourn because there will be nothing to mourn about. We won't hunger and thirst after righteousness because we will think we have already arrived. It is so easy for us to measure our spiritual status by what others are doing that we need these Beatitudes to shake us up. So the Beatitudes challenge the security that the Pharisees felt in tradition.

They challenge the security that the Sadducees and Herodians found in wealth, connections, and civil government. But Jesus is going to say that until you guys are persecuted by these wealthy barons, and Sadducees, and civil governors, it is unlikely that you are even in the kingdom. What's going on with that? What's going on with that is that Jesus wants to remove all trust in creation; all idols; anything that will keep us from putting our trust in Jesus Christ alone.

But there would have been separatists who would have agreed that the Sadducees should not have trusted in those things. But lest the separatists among us want to run away from persecution and not influence culture, Christ says here, "**the meek shall inherit the earth.**" He's not talking about escape; He's talking about inheritance.

And lest the Zealots try to inherit the earth through violent revolution, Christ called them to work with the Romans, to be peacemakers, and to be merciful to their enemies. You cannot live out these principles apart from grace.

He starts with emptiness in verse 3 to being filled in verse 6 and then finally in overflowing in ministry to others in the second half of the beatitudes. He says, "Blessed are those who mourn." He is basically saying that the key to happiness is misery; not misery with God; not misery with holiness; not misery with church and devotions, but misery with your own faithlessness, sinfulness, pride, and selfishness; misery over the fact that

your sins have separated between you and your God. Until God makes us mourn over self-sufficiency, there can be no kingdom living.

This is not a paradigm for trying harder as Christians. In fact there is no trying here. You are either poor in spirit or you aren't. God is the one who brings you to that place. This is a paradigm for making self-righteous, self-satisfied, apathetic Christians realize that getting into the kingdom is hopeless without God's help. And that's why the first set of beatitudes deals with God and the second set of beatitudes deals with our relation to man. We can't straighten out our relations with others until they are first straightened out with God. We can't start with conduct until God changes your heart and deals with your character. The first beatitudes deal with the change of man from the inside out; God's formation of a new character within him so that he can then have new conduct.

I heard this story from Salem Kirban. I don't know if it is apocryphal or not, but as he tells the story, shortly after the Berlin wall went up, some people in East Berlin, the communist side, took a truckload of garbage one night and dumped it on the West Berlin side of the border crossing. A group of West Berliners took a truckload of canned goods, bread, and milk...and neatly stacked it on the East Berlin side of the border crossing. On top of this stack they placed the sign: 'EACH GIVES WHAT HE HAS.' Apart from grace, we don't have anything but garbage to give. Certainly some of the garbage is wrapped up in nice packaging, but Isaiah reminds us that all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in God's sight. (Is. 64:6).

And don't think He is just talking to unbelievers here. Actually, these words were to His disciples. The realization of poverty that begins our walk with Christ should translate into a daily attitude of dependence upon His provisions. Revelation tells us that the *church* in Laodicea said, "**I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing**" and God's response was "**and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.**" What is true of the beginning of our walk is true also of the whole of our walk. Daily we need to come empty before the Lord that we might be filled by His grace. Daily we must come with the recognition that we cannot get through the day without sinning in thought word and deed unless He grants to us His grace.

So take seriously the order that is given to us in the Beatitudes. This is what distinguishes every religion in the world from true Christianity. And it is what distinguishes true Christianity from a mere outward form of Christianity that denies the power thereof. Our natural tendency is to be busy in our own flesh to please God. I can do that as a pastor – I can do ministry in the flesh, but the flesh profits nothing.

World religion is the story of man seeking after God. The Beatitudes is the story of God seeking after man, bringing him to the place where he recognizes his bankruptcy, inability and total need for God and then taking that empty vessel and filling him so full that he overflows in blessing to others. If we would have a kingdom living that avoids legalism and drudgery, then we must start with emptiness and move to fullness, we must start with inability and weakness so that His strength might be made perfect, we must start with our relationship with God and then being properly realigned move to our relationship with man, we must start with a changed character and only then be fit for right conduct.

How you start every day shows whether you are a legalist, a Sadducee, an Essene, or a zealot. What they all have in common is that they think they can do something without God's help. Do you start your day as an empty vessel in dependence upon God to fill you and give you grace to live that day to His glory? Too many of us don't. Why? Because we think we can do it on our own. The beatitudes are a convincing testimony that we cannot do it on our own.

IV. Seeing the relation of the beatitudes to the rest of the sermon corrects the most common heresies surrounding their interpretation

There is a fourth thing that you need to realize before you can properly interpret the beatitudes, and that is that it is an outline of the Sermon on the Mount. Every faulty interpretation of the beatitudes has yanked it out of its context. One commentary has shown quite clearly that Jesus used the Hebrew chiasm structure of abcc'b'a', where the a's are parallel and the b's are parallel to each other. In other words, each of these eight points is expanded upon in the sermon in reverse order. He gives the outline as ABCDEFGH and then he comments on those topics in reverse order of HGFEDCBA.

So if the last beatitude deals with persecution for righteousness sake, then the first part of the sermon, from verses 11-20 are going to deal with persecution and the standard of righteousness for which they are being persecuted. And if you look at those verses you will see that this is exactly what those verses deal with.

If the second to last beatitude deals with peacemaking, then it makes sense that the next section of the sermon, from verses 21-26 deals with the issues that are involved in peacemaking whether those are heart issues,

speech issues, or inter-personal issues. And in verses 21-26 he deals with all three, and He deals with peacemaking between brothers and peacemaking with enemies.

If the third from last beatitude deals with purity in heart, then it makes sense that verses 27-37 deal with adultery in the heart, lust in the heart, and various forms of heart deceitfulness and insincerity.

In fact, let's just quickly go over each section. Look at chapter 5:38 and quickly scan forward to chapter 6:4. In that section, Jesus is dealing with the most radical forms of being merciful that you can think of – mercy to a person who slaps you on your cheek; mercy to a thief; mercy to a Roman soldier who is abusive; loving your enemies, and in the first few verses of chapter 6, various kinds of mercy ministries. And He was saying, let's get radical and see if you can engage in mercy ministries without anyone seeing you do it. It's an incredibly radical section of the blessing of those who are merciful – mercy in a context where almost anybody would get bitter and want revenge. But you see, kingdom living is not us trying harder. No one can try that hard. Instead, kingdom living is supernatural living. It's living by a power that flows from heaven and keeps us from being conquered by evil. It's a radical mercy.

The next section deals with the fourth beatitude, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. And what expresses that deep hunger for God? Chapter 6:5-18 says that prayers that nobody can see you praying, and fasting that nobody can see you doing, shows a genuine hunger for God rather than a hunger for man's approval. It's easy to pray when others will notice and think well of you. He says that you won't get any reward from that. But evidence of God's Spirit indwelling your hearts is when you hunger for God in prayer and fasting in the secret closet. He says that this kind of hungering will be filled. Do you want to be filled? Then ask God to give you that kind of a radical prayer life.

The next section starts in chapter 6:19 and goes through the end of the chapter. This is dealing with: “**blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.**” And it's obvious in this section that meekness is not weakness. A meek stallion is a stallion that uses all of its energies totally in the master's service. And proof that you are meek can be seen in where your treasure is and where your heart is – is it in Your Master, or are you holding it tightly in your own hand? Meekness can be seen in whether you serve God or mammon. It can be seen in whether you worry, or trust your Master to take care of you. And you might think, “Yes, but the meekness beatitude

says that the meek shall inherit the earth. And that's exactly what Jesus says in this section. He says, "**Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**" Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness is meekness. All these things being added to you is inheriting the earth. God loves to give a stewardship trust of the earth and all things in it to those who are meek.

The second beatitude ("**blessed are those who mourn,**" is dealt with in Matthew 7:1-6 where we grieve so greatly over our own sins (which appear to us like a plank in our eye compared to a speck in our brother's eye) that we are not even remotely tempted to judge our brother. That's how much mourning over our own sin that we must do. And I think to myself – "Oh, Lord! I'm not there. I don't see my own sin as being so great that it is like a plank in my eye compared to the speck in my brother's eye. I can see my brother's sin so much more clearly than I can see my own sin. Oh, Lord! Take away my blindness. Help me to see my sin so clearly that I mourn greatly, am overwhelmed with your forgiveness greatly, and love you greatly.

Now, in that section Jesus points out that it isn't as if we don't mourn over the sins of others. We do. We prepare ourselves to lovingly take the speck out of our brother's eye, and we make sure that we don't give what is holy to dogs and we don't cast pearls before swine. The more we mourn over our own sins, the more we will mourn over the world's sins – but we will mourn without a trace of self-righteousness or condemnation. I am giving you a bird's eye view of these beatitudes so that you can hunger for more of God and recognize that none of us has arrived yet. And if you think you have arrived, you haven't even begun yet. That's the message of the beatitudes.

The first beatitude is "blessed are the poor in spirit," and it shows a heart that is absent of pride because we have nothing to be proud of or that is worth offering to God in ourselves. As Paul said, "**For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find**" (Rom. 7:18). And this makes us totally, totally dependent upon God. The kind of dependence upon God that Jesus talks about is shown in prayer with expectation in verses 7-12 as well as in the parables of the two gates, two trees, and two builders.

So if you read the beatitudes as an outline of the Sermon on the Mount, everything opens up. It will show the error of Pietism, Liberalism, Socialism, Pride, Self-Sufficiency, Legalism, Apathy – you name it. You

might be surprised, but yes, there are socialists who have grossly misinterpreted the beatitudes to teach communism. But if you realize that the beatitudes are opened up in reverse order in the Sermon on the Mount, almost every erroneous teaching on these beatitudes, including one novel one that was trying to liken it to Confucianism, will be seen as utter foolishness. And once you see the chiasmic outline, you will be able to interpret it for your family quite easily.

V. The beatitudes tell us how to enjoy the kingdom, find fulfillment, and inherit the blessing of the Lord

There's one more thing that I want to highlight for us to get the maximum blessing from these beatitudes, and that is that Jesus really wanted His disciples to enjoy the kingdom and to show them how to inherit the blessing of the Lord. He is not glorified when we do not enjoy the Lord. He delights to delight His people, and when we never get beyond sadness to happiness, He is not glorified.

Now it is true that the gate to happiness is misery. But if the gate to happiness is misery, and if the road of happiness is holiness, then the destination of happiness is fellowship with God. All you have to do is look at the blessings that are listed in each of the beatitudes and you will see that kingdom living is intended to be rich and fulfilling. It is the best life. It is the most joyful life. It is supposed to be a life that is enviable (as one translation of "blessed" puts it). So if you don't have a life that others will think is enviable, then it means that you still need to be pressing into the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let's look at each one of those blessings:

Verse 3 says, "**Theirs is [present tense] the kingdom of heaven.**" Before we have done a thing; while we are still paupers; utterly bankrupt, God bestows on us a kingdom, with its riches, inheritance, and all its spiritual authority. We have this, not because of anything we have brought to the table, but simply as an inheritance from the Lord Jesus. That ought to be a reason for joy right off the bat – before we have done a thing. So happiness is not a goal that we might get to several years after being a Christian. We might have to continually fight for joy, but we can have that joy the moment we enter the kingdom. And the fact that we have a kingdom means that we can start claiming things. Are you claiming your inheritance? It is yours. The kingdom is yours. This is why Paul can say in 1 Corinthians 3

1Corinthians 3:21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:

1Corinthians 3:22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours.

1Corinthians 3:23 And you *are* Christ's, and Christ is God's.

Verse 4 says, **"They shall be comforted"** - We have the enjoyment of God's comfort and of His encouragement. If you lack comfort this morning, place your faith on the promise of verse 4. He who has said it will do it.

"They shall inherit the earth." Wow! That's an incredible promise. Provision for every need we could possibly have. Christ later says that this should free you up to not worry. God will add these things to you if you are meek. So we have the enjoyment of provisions. But if you are seeking those things rather than meekly seeking to please your Master, then those things will elude you. Some of us spend so much time seeking our own health that we fail to seek the health giver. Some of us spend so much time preoccupied with the 4gs of security that we fail to seek the ultimate Security giver, God. God should be the first "g" that we have in our lives. Some of us spend so much time focused on money that we fail to seek the Lord who blessed Abraham and Job with money. Some of us hold onto our children so tightly as idols that we fail to seek the adequately the One who has given the covenant promises to our children. You can't fully enjoy the "things" without enjoying the Giver of those things.

"They shall be filled" – That is speaking of satisfaction. Any emptiness we may sense spiritually, God can fill to overflowing.

"They shall obtain mercy" - the absence of fear and the freedom from guilt that Christ gives are tremendous benefits of being a Christian; there is security in His grace.

"They shall see God" - spiritual vision. In fact, the church fathers spoke about this a great deal, and called it the beatific vision. God can fill the human heart with the greatest pleasure possible – the pleasure of His presence and His approval through the grace of Jesus Christ.

"They shall be called the children of God" - bearing the likeness of the Father; becoming more like God every day. We want to bear God's character so profoundly, that as the Sermon on the Mount says, men **"may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."** Developing the Father's likeness is the joy we experience down here below.

Conclusion

And so we are going to be seeing that the Beatitudes will tell us how to enjoy kingdom living, and how to find maximum fulfillment. It's not through being self-centered, but by abandoning self, dying to self, and living for Christ. And He will never, ever let you down when you do so. A minister in the 1800's said, "The Lord Jesus spreads a large table every day," and He

wants us to enjoy His wonderful spread.¹ Jesus said, “**I have come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.**” May it be so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

¹ William Secker, *The Nonsuch Professor in His Meridian Splendor* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1899), p. 151.

A Call To Enjoy Kingdom Living

Matt 5:3-10

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 2-7-2010

Introduction

I. The meaning of “blessed”

- Which of the following translations are involved in the meaning of this term? Happy, blissful, blessed, fortunate, enviable, enviably happy, enviably fortunate, Oh the joy, and Oh the bliss.
- Is this blessing objective, subjective, future, presently experienced, or all of these?

II. The structure of these blessings

- Give 2-4 evidences that the structure teaches us about grace:
- The structure teaches us that these are k_____ principles
- Why does Jesus start with relationship to God (beatitudes 1-4) and end with relationship to man (# 5-8)?
- The structure teaches us that this is a p_____ d_____.
- What does the present tense in "theirs is the kingdom" teach us? What about the future tense of six of the blessings?

III. The beatitudes were intended to destroy legalism, compromise, revolution, and separatism by pointing to Jesus

- Can you think of similar issues that these beatitudes confront?
- Pharisees
- Sadducees and Herodians
- Essenes
- Zealots
- Why are the beatitudes not a paradigm for "trying harder"?

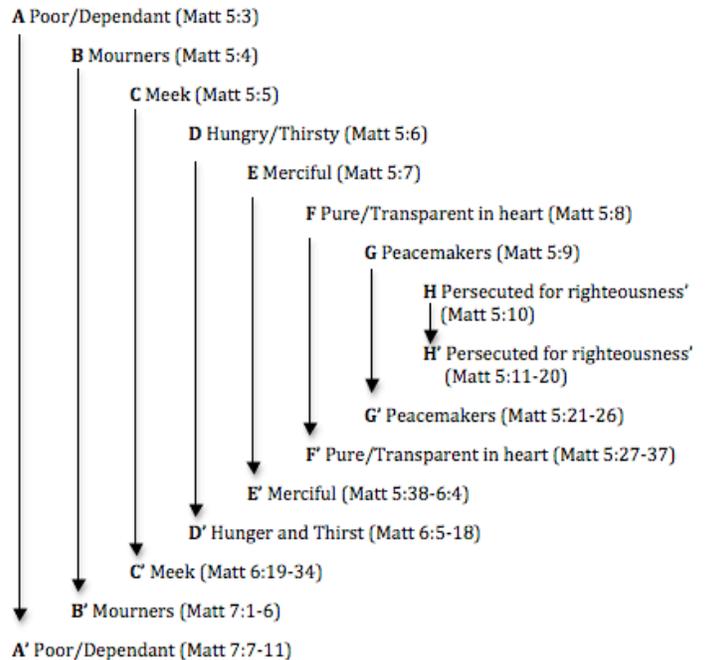


Sermon on the Mount Developed as a Chiasm
With the Beatitudes as the Outline

IV. Seeing the relation of the beatitudes to the rest of the sermon helps to correct the most common heresies surrounding their interpretation

V. The beatitudes tell us how to enjoy the kingdom, find fulfillment, and inherit the blessing of the Lord

- What are some of the blessings listed that you would like to enter into more fully?
- If there is an order to these beatitudes, how should you enter into these blessings without legalism?



Conclusion:

1. Two Gates (Matt 7:12-14)
2. Two Trees (Matt 7:15-23)
3. Two Builders (Matt 7:24-27)

Conclusion