

Morning Program Curriculum 2017: The Beatitudes

Blessedness

To be blessed means, literally, to “enjoy God’s favor.”

- Blessedness is something different from and greater than luck or happiness.
- That which is blessed enjoys God’s favor because it “belongs to God” (or is set aside for God’s use).

Poverty of Spirit

The poor in spirit are those who humble themselves before God, recognizing that they are nothing apart from Him.

- To be poor in spirit is to completely rely upon—and acknowledge our reliance upon—the Lord.
- While poverty of spirit does not require us to assume physical poverty, it does involve detaching ourselves from worldly things and material possessions.
- Poverty of spirit requires us to humble ourselves before the Lord, to look at ourselves honestly, and to recognize our lowliness and sinfulness before God.
- Poverty of spirit also requires us to humble ourselves before the people around us.

Mourning

Those who mourn are those who realize the awfulness of their sin and are genuinely sorry for it.

- For those who love Christ, mourning is the natural result of a proper self-assessment.
- Unlike shame or despair, mourning leads us to repentance.
- When we mourn over our sins and repent of them, we will be comforted by the forgiveness and healing of Christ.

Meekness

The meek are those who express their strength through gentleness. They are those who are secure in Christ and self-controlled—or, rather, “Christ-controlled.”

- Meekness, like poverty of spirit, requires humility. To be meek is to be completely given over to the will of God and guided by the Holy Spirit.
- Meekness also requires boldness and confidence. Those who are meek are confident and secure in Christ, unaffected by the opinions, words, actions of others.
- It is through this example of extreme patience, mercy, gentleness, and self-control that the meek express their strength, exert their influence, and shine as lights in a darkened world.

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are those who long for righteousness and holiness, continually seeking Christ as their true source of nourishment and life.

- All human hunger, though often displaced, is ultimately a hunger for God Himself.
- Hunger and thirst are signs of life. Hunger and thirst for righteousness are indications of a healthy, living faith. We must remain hungry for God, continually seeking after Him.
- To be “filled” means not just to be full but to be overflowing. When we are filled with righteousness, it flows out of us, touching the people around us.

Mercy

The merciful are those who show mercy to others in the same way that Christ shows mercy toward us, by offering what is undeserved to the undeserving and without expectation of anything in return.

- God's mercy toward us is an undeserved gift of forgiveness, comfort, and love.
- To be merciful is to give forgiveness, comfort, and love even when it is "undeserved"—and to do so without hope for anything in return.
- If we are not merciful to those around us, the Lord will not be merciful to us. We will be judged by the way we treat our neighbor.

Purity of Heart

The pure in heart are those who are single-minded, blameless, and sincere in their devotion to Christ.

- In order to become pure in heart, we must prepare and maintain a clean room in our hearts for Christ.
- To be pure in heart is to be wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord. Our hearts must not only be clean but undivided.
- When we become pure in heart, our lives become characterized by innocence. We not only become innocent ourselves but begin to see the whole world as good and pure.
- When we are pure in heart, we have clarity of heart. We begin to clearly reflect the image of Christ and to see the truth with unhindered vision.

Peacemaking

The peacemakers are those who participate in the peace Christ offers and, in doing so, promote peace with those around them.

- The peace that Christ offers us is different from and far greater than worldly peace. It is the peace of being reconciled to Him.
- Often our false sense of peace must be disturbed before we can accept true peace.
- When we have accepted Christ's peace, we are able to make peace with others, maintaining the unity we have with fellow believers.
- When we have embraced Christ's peace, it will be contagious to the people around us.

Persecution

The persecuted are those who willingly suffer for Christ's sake.

- Persecution is something to be expected in the life of a Christian.
- Persecution brings us closer to Christ.
- Christ promises that, despite persecution, He will deliver us.
- The persecution of Christians gives testimony to the Gospel of Christ.
- We will be rewarded for enduring persecution.