

THE TRUE DISCIPLE: WHO HE IS AND HIS REWARD (THE BEATITUDES) MATHEW 05:01–12

Introduction

Seldom in history have so few words been spoken with so much meaning. The Beatitudes of our Lord are powerful, holding before the world a descriptive picture of the true disciple of God. The Beatitudes cover the glorious hope and reward the believer can expect, now as well as in eternity.

- I. The multitudes: were seen by Jesus (vv. 12).
- II. The poor in spirit: given the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 3).
- III. Those who mourn: will be comforted (v. 4).
- IV. The meek: will inherit the earth (v. 5).
- V. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: will be filled (v. 6).
- VI. The merciful: will obtain mercy (v. 7).
- VII. The pure in heart: will see God (v. 8).
- VIII. The peacemakers: will be called the children of God (v.9).
- IX. The persecuted: will be given the Kingdom of Heaven (vv. 10-12).

I. *Mathew 05:01–02 The Compassion of Jesus Christ*

Jesus saw the large crowds. It is to be noted that the Sermon on the Mount was given to *the disciples* and not to *the large crowds*. Jesus saw the crowds and was moved with compassion over their desperate plight and need. He knew that He could not reach them by Himself, so He was driven to get alone with His disciples. He had to begin preparing them for their ministry to the large crowds.

How long was He with His disciples on the mountain? A day? A week? Several weeks? It simply says that “when He came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed Him” (Mt. 8:1).

Thought 1. There are two basic ingredients for reaching the large crowds.

- 1) Compassion: Seeing the large crowds; keeping one’s eyes open so people and their needs can be seen.

Mat 9:36 *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Isa 63:9 *In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.*

2) Discipleship: Realizing that one cannot accomplish the task alone. Others must be taught to help in the great commission.

Mat 28:19 *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Mat 28:20 *“And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

2 Tim 2:2 *And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.*

Thought 2. Preaching and teaching are not to be done only in the church, but wherever people are found — on mountains, by the seashore, in homes, on the streets — any place and every place.

Thought 3. Crowds are important, but a small band of disciples is critical to accomplish the great commission. The mission of the Lord is reaching people, but the *method* of the Lord is to make disciples. It is giving intensive training to a small group so they can help in the ministry to the large crowds. Making disciples was also the method of Paul.

Mat 28:19 *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

Acts 16:1 *He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek.*

Acts 16:3 *Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.*

Thought 4. Christian leaders are to call together small bands of disciples for special training and preparation. Mathew says without any explanation that “His disciples came to Him” (v. 1), but Mark and Luke say that Christ called the disciples together for training and preparation (Mk. 3:13; Lk. 6:13).

Thought 5. Three things are needed for training and preparation: a place, a time, and a message. The words “He went up...and sat down” seem to be saying that Jesus had deliberately chosen this place and time for this training. All had been planned; Jesus was personally prepared. What a lesson too often neglected.

MATHEW 05:03 BLESSED (MAKARIOS)

Spiritual joy and satisfaction that lasts regardless of conditions; that carries one through pain, sorrow, loss and grief.

Thought 1. To be “blessed” is what men seek. The problem is that they seek it in the things of this earth: position, money, fame, power and sensual pleasure.

Mat 6:19 *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.”*

Mat 6:20 *“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”*

Mat 6:21 *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

2 Cor 6:17 *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”*

2 Cor 6:18 *“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

1 John 2:15 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

1 John 2:16 *For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

Thought 2. Man seeks to be blessed only in this world. This says several things about his nature.

1) Man is carnal and corruptible, and he is sinful and dying.

Rom 8:5 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.*

Rom 8:6 *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

Rom 8:7 *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.*

Rom 8:8 *Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.*

Rom 3:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2) Man is deceived and blinded to his real need, that of a renewed spirit.

John 3:3 *In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."*

Eph 4:23 *To be made new in the attitude of your minds.*

Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

1 Pet 1:23 *For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

3) Man is ignorant of the Kingdom of Heaven.

=> He is misguided and deceived about it.

=> He is unbelieving about it.

=> He prefers something else to it.

=> He is hardened to it.

=> He is neglectful of it.

=> He is unconcerned about it. □

II. **Mathew 05:03 The Poor in Spirit**

To acknowledge spiritual poverty. It is poverty, absolute and abject poverty of spirit. It is being destitute and conspicuously poor in spirit. Several significant facts can be said about the "*poor in spirit.*"

1. Being *poor in spirit* does not mean that a man must be poverty-stricken and financially poor. Hunger, nakedness and slums are not pleasing to God, especially in a world of plenty. Christ is not talking about material poverty. He means what He says: poor in *spirit*. Being "*poor in spirit*" means several things.
 - a. To acknowledge our utter helplessness before God, our spiritual poverty, our spiritual need. We are solely dependent upon God to meet our need.
 - b. To acknowledge our utter lack in facing life and eternity apart from God. To acknowledge that the real blessings of life and eternity come only from a right relationship with God.
 - c. To acknowledge our utter lack of superiority before all others and our spiritual deadness before God. To acknowledge that we are no better, no richer, no more superior than the next person — no matter what we have achieved in this world (fame, fortune, power). Our attitude toward others is not proud and haughty, not superior and overbearing. To be "*poor in spirit*" means acknowledging that every human being is a real person just like everyone else a person who has a significant contribution to make

to society and to the world. The person “poor in spirit” approaches life in humility and appreciation, not as though life owes him, but as though he owes life. He has been given the privilege of living; therefore, he journeys through life with a humble attitude and he contributes all he can to a needy world out of a spirit of appreciation.

2. The opposite of being “*poor in spirit*” is having a spirit that is *full of self*. There is a world of difference between these two spirits. There is the difference of thinking that we are righteous versus acknowledging that we need the righteousness of Christ. There is the difference of being self-righteous versus being given the righteousness of Christ. Self-righteousness goes no farther than self; that is, it goes no farther than death. Self dies and everything with self including our self righteousness dies. But the righteousness that is of Christ lives forever.

Rom 3:21 *But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.*

Rom 3:22 *This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Phil 3:9 *And he found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

3. Two critical steps are taken by the person who truly acknowledges his spiritual poverty.
 - a. He turns his primary attention away from the things of this world. He knows things can never make him rich in spirit.
 - b. He turns his primary attention to God and His kingdom. He knows God alone can make him rich in spirit (Eph. 1:3).
4. The “poor in spirit” are weary and burdened for the world. They know the truth of this world and of eternity. Therefore, they have set their face to do their part for both.
 - a. They are weary of the deceptive appearances and enticements of this world. They have learned that “all is vanity [empty]” and all is corruptible. All waste away, even human life itself. Therefore, they feel weary and burdened for those who are still lost in the world.
 - b. They are weary from having laboured so much to reach their generation. They have laboured to serve and make their contribution as God has called them. They have toiled so laboriously for one reason only: the love of Christ constrained them to reach their generation (2 Cor. 5:14).
5. The “poor in spirit” are those who approach the world as a child. All children are very, very precious to God and are given angels to look over them (Mt. 18:10 see Psa. 91:11).

MATHEW 05: 03
REWARD OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT: KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The “poor in spirit” are blessed with the Kingdom of Heaven. The “poor in spirit” inherit three significant things.

1. The poor in spirit receive forgiveness of sin and God’s continued remembrance: the assurance that God will never forget.

***Heb 8:12** “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

***Heb 10:17** Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”*

***Psa 105:8** He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations.*

***Jer 31:34** “No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

2. The poor in spirit receive a fellowship with other believers who walk as they walk.

***Acts 2:42** They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

***Eph 2:19** Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.*

***Eph 2:20** Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

***Eph 2:21** In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.*

***Eph 2:22** And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

***1 John 1:3** We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*

3. The poor in spirit receive the gift of life that is forever: the eternal fellowship with both God and the congregation of those who are poor in spirit.

***John 5:24** “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

Rom 8:15 *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”*

Rom 8:16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.*

Rom 8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. □*

III. **Mathew 05:04 Those Who Mourn (Penthountes)**

To have a broken heart. It is the strongest word possible for mourning. It is like the deep mourning and wailing that occurs over the death of a loved one. It is sorrow — a desperate, helpless sorrow. It is a sorrow for sin, a broken heart over evil and suffering. It is a brokenness of self that comes from seeing Christ on the cross and realizing that our sins put Him there (Jas. 4:9). Recognise several significant facts.

1. Who is it that mourns? Who is it so full of grief that he cries and weeps and utters groanings deep from within? There are three persons who mourn and utter such groanings.
 - a. The person who is *desperately sorry* for his sins and unworthiness before God. He has such a sense of sin that his heart is just broken.

Luke 18:13 *“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”*

- b. The person who really feels the desperate plight and terrible suffering of others. The tragedies, the problems, the sinful behaviour of others — the state, the condition, the lostness of the world — all weigh ever so heavily upon the heart of the mourner.

Mat 14:14 *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.*

Psa 103:13 *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.*

- c. The person who experiences personal tragedy and intense trauma.
2. Men are to mourn over their sins. This leads to confession and humility before God and results in being lifted up (Jas. 4:8-10).
3. The person who mourns is comforted by Christ Himself. Christ was called the “man of sorrows” and was acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:3). He is able to succour and to draw a person ever so close, comforting and strengthening him beyond imagination (Heb. 2:18; 4:15-16).
4. There is a godly sorrow, but there is also a worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). There is also a self-centred sorrow (2 Cor. 1:6-7).

MATHEW 05:04 HEAVENLY COMFORT

They who mourn *will be comforted.*

1. There is a present comfort.
 - a. A settled peace: a relief, a solace, a consolation within.

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

John 16:33 *“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*

- b. An assurance of forgiveness and acceptance by God.

Eph 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 2:1 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.*

1 John 2:2 *He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

- c. A fullness of joy: a sense of God’s presence, care and guidance (Jn. 14:26); a sense of His sovereignty; a sense of His working all things out for good to those who love Him.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

Rom 15:11 *And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.”*

2 Cor 6:10 *Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*

Psa 16:11 *You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

2. There is an eternal comfort.
 - a. *A passing from death to life.*

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

Isa 25:8 *He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.*

- b. A wiping away of all tears.

Isa 25:8 *He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken.*

Rev 7:17 *“For the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”*

Rev 21:4 *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”* □

IV. Mathew 05:05 The Meek, the Gentle (Praeis)

To have a strong, but tender and humble life. It is a strong yet teachable spirit. It is not being weak, bowing or spineless. It is a man who is strong, very strong, yet he is humble and tender. It is a man with all the emotions and ability to take and conquer, but he is able to control himself. It is discipline a man disciplined because he is God-controlled. The opposite of meekness is arrogance or pride. In too many persons there is an air of sufficiency and superiority. A meek person knows that he has needs and does not have all the answers.

1. Who are the meek?

- a. The person who is *controlled, not undisciplined*. The mind and body are disciplined, never let loose. Passion and urges, speech and behaviour, sight and touch are always controlled.

Rom 6:12 *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.*

1 Cor 6:12 *“Everything is permissible for me” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything.*

1 Cor 9:27 *No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.*

James 3:2 *We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.*

2 Pet 1:5 *For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge.*

2 Pet 1:6 *And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness.*

2 Pet 1:7 *And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*

b. The person who is *humble, not prideful*.

1) He is humble before God. He knows his need for God and for God's hand upon his life, his need to be saved and controlled by God.

2) He is humble before men. He knows he is not the epitome of mankind, nor the summit of knowledge among men. He does not have it all nor does he know it all.

Rom 12:3 *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.*

Phil 2:3 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

Phil 2:4 *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

c. The person who is *gentle, not easily provoked*. He is always in control when dealing with people: cool, even-tempered, able to show displeasure without reacting impulsively, able to answer softly. (See *Christ*, Mt. 11:29; 1 Pet. 2:23; *Moses*, Num. 12:3.)

2 Tim 2:24 *And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

1 Cor 13:5 *It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

d. The person who is *forgiving, not revengeful*.

Mat 6:14 *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

Rom 12:19 *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

Rom 12:20 *On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

Rom 12:21 *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

2. The meek person is a *quiet* person. He studies to be quiet.

Psa 4:4 *In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.*

- a. He is quiet before God. He quietly surrenders to God, acknowledging his need without show or pomp, and he quietly goes before God daily, depending upon God for guidance and care.

Psa 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

- b. He is quiet before men. He walks quietly before men, controlled in all things, in both speech and behaviour.

1 Th 4:11 Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you.

1 Tim 2:2 For kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

1 Pet 3:4 Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

MATHEW 05:05

REWARD FOR THE MEEK: INHERIT THE EARTH

There are two points to be stressed in the reward to the meek (Psa. 27:11).

1. The meek inherit the earth *now*; that is, they presently enjoy and experience the good things of the earth.
 - a. The meek have found themselves. They are comfortable with themselves. They know who they are; therefore, they are strong and confident, yet tender and humble.

Phil 1:6 Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

- b. The meek know where they are going; they are teachable. They have nothing to prove. They have purpose, meaning and significance in life.

2 Tim 4:8 Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

2 Tim 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- c. The meek are assured of victory, conquest, triumph over whatever confronts them. They are controlled; therefore, they control circumstances instead of letting circumstances control them. They are free from stress and tension.

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rom 5:2 *Through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

Rom 5:3 *Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance.*

Rom 5:4 *Perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

Rom 5:5 *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*

1 Cor 10:13 *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

- d. The meek have peaceful souls. They carry whatever pressure and tension comes their way to Christ, and He relieves it all.

Mat 11:28 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

Mat 11:29 *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”*

Mat 11:30 *“For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”*

2. The earth is theirs eternally, that is, the new heavens and earth. An inheritance of eternal life and dominion is promised them, for they are joint heirs with Christ.

Rom 8:16 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.*

Rom 8:17 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Titus 3:7 *So that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.*

1 Pet 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

1 Pet 1:4 And into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for you.

Rev 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. □

V. *Mathew 05:06 Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness*

To have a starving spirit. It is real hunger and starvation of soul. It is a parched and dying thirst. It is a starving spirit and a parched soul that craves for righteousness. But there is something more: righteousness means *all righteousness*. The true believer is starved and parched for *all righteousness*. This is shown by the Greek, for the verbs hunger and thirst are usually in what is called the Greek genitive case. This simply means that a person sometimes feels a little hunger and a little thirst; therefore, he hungers and thirsts for a bit of something, for example, an apple or a glass of juice. But in the beatitude, hunger and thirst are in the accusative case. This is most unusual. It means a hunger and a thirst for the *whole thing* — for all righteousness, not for little tidbits. This is significant: it means that the promise of a *filled life* is conditional. A person must starve and thirst for *all righteousness* if he wishes to be filled with the fullness of life. Note several significant points.

1. Who is blessed? The person who hungers and thirsts *to be* righteous and *to do* righteousness. To do righteousness is not enough. To be righteous is not sufficient. Both are essential in order to be blessed.

Thought 1. Many want just bits and pieces of righteousness — just enough to make them comfortable.

2. There are those who *stress being righteous* and *neglect doing righteousness*. This leads to two serious errors.
 - a. The error of false security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has faith in Jesus Christ. But he neglects doing good. He does not live as he should, obeying God and serving man.
 - b. The error of loose living. It allows a person to go out and do what he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his faith in Christ. He knows that wrong behaviour may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behaviour does not affect his salvation and acceptance with God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means being righteous and doing righteousness. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous without living righteously.

3. There are those who *stress doing righteousness* and *neglect being righteous*. This also leads to two serious errors.

- a. The error of self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works, behaves morally, keeps certain rules and regulations, does the things a Christian should do, and obeys the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance — that God loves him and accepts him not because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
- b. The error of being judgemental and censorious. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and censors others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept because he keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized and censored. The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is both *being righteous* and *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without *being made righteous* in Christ Jesus.
4. The answer to righteousness is not what most men think when they think of righteousness. When most men think of righteousness, they think of doing good — doing good deeds, good works and helping their fellow man. As man walks through life, he faces appeal after appeal for help, and he helps. And he feels comfortable with himself because he has helped. He feels his *good deeds* make him acceptable and righteous before God. But the Bible is not saying that men never do good; it is saying that men are not righteous — not perfectly righteous within their hearts.
5. Christ does not say, “Blessed are the righteous,” for no one is righteous (Rom. 3:10). He says, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” Man is not righteous, not perfectly righteous. His chance to be righteous is gone. He has already come short and missed the mark. He is already imperfect. Man has but one hope: that God will love him so much that He will somehow *count* him righteous. That is just what God does. God takes a man’s “hunger and thirst for righteousness” and counts that hunger and thirst as righteousness. God does this because He loves man.

Thought 1. The question each person needs to ask is this: how much am I seeking for righteousness? Am I seeking at all, seeking a little, seeking some, seeking much, seeking more and more? What Christ says is this: a person has to crave, starve and thirst for righteousness. A person must seek righteousness more and more if he wishes to be saved and filled.

6. Every person has some pull and some influence that urges him to do good. The pull and influence need to be nourished. In fact, it has to be nurtured or else it weakens, and it can be subdued and weakened so much that it is killed completely. It is just hardened against doing anything except what self wants to do (Heb. 3:13 see Prov. 21:29; 28:14; 29:1).
7. Righteousness is the only thing that will fill and satisfy man’s innermost need. Food and drink will not. Any honest and thinking man knows there is nothing anywhere on

this earth that can meet his deep need for life (permanent life, life that never ends). Only God can fill a life and satisfy the deep need for permanent life. This is the reason Christ says to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Thought 1. Being filled means “to be led by the Spirit” or “to be filled with the Spirit” (Eph. 5:18). “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace....” (Gal. 5:22-23).

MATHEW 05:06 RIGHTEOUSNESS

What is righteousness?

In the Bible “righteousness” means two simple but profound things; it has a double meaning. It means to be right and *to do* right. It may be said another way: *to be good* and *to do good*. This is critically important in the Bible.

Mat 19:17 “Why do you ask me about what is good?” Jesus replied. “There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, obey the commandments.”

Rom 3:10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

What is being said is that God alone is righteous; He alone is perfectly good. Man is not perfectly righteous; he comes short. How then can a man become perfectly righteous? What is the answer? The answer is what Christ says: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they will be filled.” It means this:

God takes a person’s “hunger and thirst for righteousness” and *counts* it as righteousness. The person is not righteous, but God counts him righteous. This is the great love of God. A man hungers and thirsts for righteousness; therefore, God fills him.

Several things need to be said about righteousness.

1. Righteousness is explained throughout Scripture in the word faith. Faith is believing God and trusting the goodness of God to take our faith and count it as righteousness. Hebrews 11:6 says it clearly: “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists, and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

It is the person who *diligently seeks God* who really believes God. The man who so *hungers and thirsts for God and His righteousness* shall be counted righteous and shall be filled.

2. The righteousness of God has been shown to man. Just what God wants man *to be* and *to do* has been demonstrated perfectly in Jesus Christ. This is the love of God. God has not given man just the written Word describing His righteousness; He has given man a life — the life of His own Son — to show what He means

by righteousness. Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness; He did nothing but good. This is what the Bible means when it talks about Christ's being "the righteousness of God." Christ is the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of righteousness — of *being right* and of *doing right*.

1 Cor 1:30 *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

2 Cor 5:21 *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.*

3. Righteousness involves the mind. Scripture says righteousness involves being "made new in the attitude of your minds" (Eph. 4:23), and being "renewed in knowledge" (Col. 3:10).

What does this mean? Very simply, the man who seeks after God is "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." He "puts on the new self or the new man" and is "made new in the attitude of [his] minds" (Eph. 4:23).

Another way to say the same thing is this: the man who seeks after God has "taken off [his] old self with its practices and [has] put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Col. 3:9-10). □

MATHEW 05:06 ABUNDANT, FILLED LIFE IN JESUS

The believer who hungers and thirsts for righteousness is wonderfully filled with both abundant life and eternal life.

1. He is "full of goodness, complete in knowledge" (Rom. 15:14).
2. He is "filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).
3. He is "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).
4. He is "filled with the fruit of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11).
5. He is filled with "the knowledge of His [God's] will" (Col. 1:9).
6. He is "filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13:52). □

VI. *Mathew 05:07 The Merciful Act (Eleemes)*

To have a forgiving spirit and a compassionate heart. It is showing mercy and being benevolent. It is forgiving those who are wrong, yet it is much more. It is empathy; it is getting right inside the person and feeling right along with him. It is a deliberate effort,

an act of the will to understand the person and to meet his need by forgiving and showing mercy. It is the opposite of being hard, unforgiving and unfeeling. God forgives only those who forgive others. A person receives mercy only if he is merciful (Mt. 6:12; Jas. 2:13). A number of significant facts need to be noted about mercy.

1. The person who is merciful has a tender heart a heart that cares for all who have need, seen or unseen. If he sees the needful, he feels for them and reaches out to do all he can. If he does not see them, he feels and reaches out through prayer and giving as opportunity arises. The merciful just do not hoard or hold back any kind of help, no matter the cost.

a. They have the love of God dwelling in them.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

James 2:15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

James 2:16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

b. They know that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."

Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

2. Every believer can be merciful. Some may not have money or other means to help, but they can be tender and compassionate, demonstrating mercy through expression and prayer. In fact, God instructs the believer to be merciful. He charges the believer to do some very practical things:

a. "Share your food with the hungry" (Isa. 58:7; Jas. 2:15).

b. "Provide the poor...with shelter" (Isa. 58:7).

c. Clothe the naked (Isa. 58:7; Jas. 2:15).

d. Encourage and comfort the broken and grieving soul (Job. 16:5).

e. Pity the afflicted (Job. 6:14).

f. Bear the burdens of others — even to the point of restoring them when they sin. But we reach out to them in a spirit of meekness. (Gal. 6:2 see 6:1).

g. Support the weak (Acts 20:35).

3. The results of being merciful are numerous.

a. A person is given the mercy of God — forgiveness of sins (Psa. 18:25; 2 Sam. 22:26).

b. A person does good to his own soul (Prov. 19:17).

- c. A person is paid back what he gives — by God Himself (Pro. 19:17).
 - d. A person behaves like God Himself (Lk. 6:36; Psa. 103:8; Joel 2:15).
 - e. A person is blessed (Psa. 51:1).
 - f. A person is assured of finding “mercy...on that day” (2 Tim. 1:18).
 - g. A person shall inherit the Kingdom of God — forever (Mt. 25:34-35).
4. The unmerciful are warned by God.
- a. They shall face “judgment without mercy” (Jas. 2:13).
 - b. They shall face the anger and wrath of God (Mt. 18:34-35).
 - c. They are not forgiven their sins (Mt. 6:12, 14-15).
5. Two opposite attitudes are shown toward mercy.
- a. The attitude of shutting up one’s compassion from those in need (1 Jn. 3:17; Jas. 2:15-16).
 - b. The attitude of putting on a heart of mercy (Col. 3:12).

EPHESIANS 02:04–05 QUICKENED MERCY; LOVE

The work of God’s mercy is to quicken us, make us alive with Christ. We were dead in transgressions and sins, but God has made us alive. Note three significant points.

1. Why has God quickened us, makes us alive? Because of His very nature. God does not have a nature like most men picture: distant, disinterested, unconcerned, vengeful and fearful.
 - a. God is full of mercy (eleei): feelings of pity, compassion, affection, kindness. It is a desire to succour, to tenderly draw unto oneself and to care for. Two things are essential in order to have mercy: seeing a need and being able to meet that need. God sees our need and feels for us (Eph. 2:1-3). Therefore, He acts; He has mercy upon us...
 - God withholds His judgment.
 - God provides a way for us to be saved.
 - b. God is love; He is full of love (agape): a selfless and sacrificial love; a love of the mind, of the reason, of the will as well as of the heart and affections. It is the love that goes so far...
 - that it loves a person even if he does not deserve to be loved.
 - that it loves the person who is utterly unworthy of being loved.
 - that it is compelled to sacrifice itself for its enemies (Rom. 5:8, 10).

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

2. When did God quicken and make us alive to Him? When we were dead in sins. How can a man be living and yet be dead? To answer this question, we must understand what death means. The basic meaning of death (nekros) is *separation*. Death never means extinction, annihilation, non-existence or inactivity. Death simply means that a person is separated, either separated from his body or from God or from both. H.S. Miller says, “Death is the separation of a person from the purpose or use for which he was intended” (quoted by Lehman Strauss, *Devotional Studies in Galatians and Ephesians*, p. 137). Man was created to know, fellowship, worship and serve God; but man does not do it. If he worships at all, he worships his *own ideas and concepts of God*, creating a god to suit his own notions — a god that will allow him to go ahead and live as he wishes.

The point is this: man does not fulfil his purpose on earth, not the purpose for which he was created. He has little if anything to do with God. He is *separated from and dead* to God.

3. How did God quicken and make us alive? By making us alive *together with Christ*. Christ is alive; He is in heaven face to face with God right now. God quickens or regenerates and makes us alive with Christ. It is by God’s grace that we are saved. Salvation is all of Him; none of it is of us. We are saved by the act of God and God alone. □

VII. **Mathew 05:08 The Pure in Heart (Katharoi)**

To have a clean heart; to be unsoiled, unmixed, unpolluted; to be cleansed, purged, forgiven; to be holy; to have a single purpose, that of God’s glory. There are several significant points to note about the “pure in heart.”

1. The person who is “pure in heart” lives a clean life.
 - a. He keeps himself “from being polluted by the world” (Jas. 1:27).

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

- b. He washes his heart from evil that he may be saved.

Jer 4:14 O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbour wicked thoughts?

- c. He obeys the truth through the working of the Holy Spirit.

1 Pet 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

- d. He keeps his hands clean.

Psa 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Psa 24:5 He will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his Saviour.

- e. He seeks to be spotless and blameless.

2 Pet 3:14 So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

2. A person's very best behaviour is seldom (if ever) free from some mixture of self. It is questionable if a sinful creature can ever act perfectly — perfectly free from mixed motives. As the Bible says, "there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:12). The believer is to constantly search his heart and cleanse it of impure motives. Motives involving self are insidious and deceptive.
- a. Is a person employed primarily for self, or to serve Christ and to earn enough to help others who have a need (Col. 3:24; Eph. 4:28)?
- b. Is a person ministering to help the needful, or to have a sense of self-satisfaction (Mt. 5:7)?
- c. Is a person worshipping to honour God, or to satisfy a feeling of obligation?
- d. Is a person praying daily to fellowship with God, or to gain comfortable feelings that he pleases God through praying?

Impure motives enter the believer's heart so quietly, so deceptively. The believer is too often unaware of their presence. He needs to pray often: "Create in me a pure heart, O God" (Psa. 51:10)!

3. The "pure in heart" minister in two very practical areas:
- They visit the fatherless.
 - They visit widows in their distress.

James 1:27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

MATHEW 05:08 PURE IN HEART

There are two wonderful promises made to the “pure in heart.” The pure in heart “will see God” (Mt. 5:8).

1. Presently, the pure in heart shall see God by faith, through a “poor reflection as in a mirror” (1 Cor. 13:12). Just imagine! The “pure in heart” persevere in the faith “because he saw him who is invisible” (Heb. 11:27).

1 Cor 13:12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Heb 11:27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible.

2. Eternally, the pure in heart shall see God face to face. They shall see Him as He is and behold His face in righteousness.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

Psa 17:15 And I — in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. □

VIII. *Mathew 05:09 The Peacemakers*

To bring men together; to make peace between men and God; to solve disputes and erase divisions; to reconcile differences and eliminate strife; to silence tongues and build right relationships.

1. Who is the peacemaker?
 - a. The person who strives to make peace with God (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14-17). He conquers the inner struggle, settles the inner tension, handles the inner pressure. He takes the struggle within his heart between good and evil, and strives for the good and conquers the bad.

Rom 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph 2:14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility.

Eph 2:15 *By abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace.*

Eph 2:16 *And in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.*

Eph 2:17 *He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.*

- b. The person who strives at every opportunity to make peace within others. He seeks and leads others to make their peace with God — to conquer their inner struggle, to settle their inner tension, to handle their inner pressure.

Rom 14:19 *Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.*

- c. The person who strives at every opportunity to make peace between others. He works to solve disputes and erase divisions, to reconcile differences and eliminate strife, to silence tongues and build relationships.

Phil 2:3 *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.*

2 Tim 2:14 *Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen.*

2 Tim 2:24 *And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.*

2. The peacemaker is the person who has made *peace with God* (Rom. 5:1), and knows *the peace of God*.
3. Peacemakers love peace, but they do not passively accept trouble. There are those who claim to love peace, yet they remove themselves from all trouble. They ignore and flee problems and threatening situations, and they often evade issues. They make no attempt to bring peace between others. The peacemaker (of whom Christ speaks) faces the trouble no matter how dangerous, and works to bring a true peace no matter the struggle.
4. The world has its troublemakers. Practically every organization has its troublemakers, including the church. Wherever the troublemaker is, there is criticism, grumbling and murmuring; and, too often, a division within the body — a division that is sometimes minor, sometimes major; sometimes just distasteful, sometimes outright bitter. The peacemaker cannot stand such. He goes forth to settle the matter, solve the problem, handle the differences, and reconcile the parties.
5. The gospel of Christ is to be spread by peaceful means, not by forceful means. There are many kinds of force.

- a. There is verbal force through loudness, a dominating conversation, improper sales tactics, threats, bigotry and abuse.
- b. There is physical force through facial expressions, body motions, an overpowering presence and attacks.

IX. *Mathew 05:10-12 The Persecuted*

To endure suffering for Christ; to be mocked, ridiculed, criticized, ostracised; to be treated with hostility: to be martyred. Note several significant points.

1. There are three major kinds of persecution mentioned by Christ in this passage:
 - => Being insulted: verbally abused, scolded, mocked, jeered, (Heb. 11:36).
 - => Persecuted: hurt, ostracised, attacked, tortured, martyred and treated with hostility.
 - => Having *all manner* of evil spoken against oneself: slandered, cursed and lied about (Psa. 35:11; Act. 17:67).
2. Who are the persecuted?
 - a. The person who lives and speaks for righteousness and is reacted against.
 - b. The person who lives and speaks for Christ and is insulted, persecuted and spoken against.
3. Persecution is a paradox. It reveals that the true nature of the world is evil. Think about it: the person who lives and speaks for righteousness is opposed and persecuted. The person who cares and works for the true love, justice and salvation of the world is actually fought against. How deceived is the world and its humanity to rush onward in madness for nothing but to return to dust, to seek life only for some seventy years (*if nothing happens before then*)!
4. Believers are forewarned; they shall suffer persecution.
 - a. Believers shall suffer persecution because they are not of this world. They are *called out* of the world. They are in the world, but they are not of the world. They are separated from the behaviour of the world. Therefore, the world reacts against them.

John 15:19 “*If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.*”
 - b. They shall suffer persecution because believers strip away the world’s *cloak of sin*. They live and demonstrate a life of righteousness. They do not compromise with the world and its sinful behaviour. They live pure and godly lives, having nothing to do with the sinful pleasures of a corruptible world. Such living exposes the sins of people.

John 15:18 “*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.*”

John 15:22 *“If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin.”*

2 Tim 3:12 *In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

- c. They shall suffer persecution because the world does not know God nor Christ. The ungodly of the world want no God other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want to do just what they want — to fulfil their own desires, not what God wishes and demands. However, the godly believer dedicates his life to God, to His worship and service. The ungodly want no part of God; therefore, they oppose those who talk about God and man’s duty to honour and worship God.

John 15:21 *“They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.”*

John 16:3 *They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.*

- d. They shall suffer persecution because the world is deceived in its concept and belief of God. The world conceives God to be the One who fulfils their earthly desires and lusts (Jn. 16:23). Man’s idea of God is that of a *Supreme Grandfather*. They think that God protects, provides, and gives no matter what a person’s behaviour is, just so the behaviour is not too far out, that God will accept and work all things out in the final analysis. However, the true believer teaches against this. God is love, but He is also just and demands righteousness. The world rebels against this concept of God.

John 16:2 *“They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.”*

John 16:3 *“They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.”*

John 15:20 *“Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.”*

John 16:1 *“All this I have told you so that you will not go astray.”*

John 16:4 *“I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.”*

1 Th 3:3 *So that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them.*

Phil 1:29 *For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.*

1 John 3:13 *Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.*

1 Pet 4:12 *Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.*

1 Pet 4:13 But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

1 Pet 4:14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

5. Persecutions can erupt from the most devilish imaginations of men.
6. What is to be the believer's attitude toward persecution?
 - a. It is not to be retaliation, pride, spiritual superiority.
 - b. It is to be joy and gladness (Mt. 5:12; 2 Cor. 12:10; 1 Pet. 4:12-13).
7. The persecuted are promised great rewards.
 - a. The Kingdom of Heaven — now.
 - => They experience a special honour (Act. 5:41).
 - => They experience a special consolation (2 Cor. 1:5).
 - => They are given a very special closeness, a glow of the Lord's presence.
 - => They become a greater witness for Christ (2 Cor. 1:46).
 - b. The Kingdom of Heaven — eternally (Heb. 11:35f; 1 Pet. 4:12-13). ■