

Week 40 - Kingdom Disposition

Matthew 5:1-12

October 5/6

Summary and Goal:

In this session, we will look at what Jesus says about happiness. We will see that happiness does not come from things that happen to us, but from what is promised to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

Main Passage:

Matthew 5:1-12 (*Chronological Bible pg.1301; October 2nd*)

Session Outline:

1. True Happiness Comes from Poverty in Spirit (Matt. 5:3)
2. True Happiness Comes from Hunger (Matt 5:6)
3. True Happiness Comes from Purity (Matt. 5:8)

Session in a Sentence:

True happiness is found in understanding our spiritual poverty, our spiritual hunger, and our need for purity.

Kingdom Connection:

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows us how those who belong to the Kingdom of God should live. He explains that the heart of the Christian life revolves around the heart of the Christian. God's Kingdom is advanced through those whose outward lives match their inward lives.

Missional Application:

The Beatitudes challenge us to inspect our hearts. Are we living as if we are spiritually bankrupt and dependent on God? Are we living with a hunger for righteousness? Are we living lives of purity?

Introduction:

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” This question plagued most of us throughout our adolescence. If you are like me, you really did not know so you would throw a socially acceptable answer out there like doctor, lawyer, teacher, engineer, professional football player or even astronaut (if you were smart). Business Insider released an article in July identifying the top career choices of 3,000 kids ages 8-12. Shockingly, the top career chosen from kids in the United States was not Astronaut, professional athlete or doctor. The most desired career was “YouTuber”. When looking out across the vast landscape of job opportunities and career choices... they picked YouTuber.¹ It sounds surprising, but in all honesty it should not be.

A recent conference held in Anaheim California called VidCon experienced over 75,000 in attendance. It was not adults alone; it was chock-full of teenagers. Nickelodeon, Hasbro Toys, and even Cinnamon Toast Crunch helped to sponsor the conference. Parents from across the United States reluctantly paid hundreds of dollars and spent their vacation time to take their Junior High and High School children to experience a vlogging conference. Why are we seeing such a huge shift in thinking from traditional careers to becoming a professional video blogger? A published study in *CyberPsychology* reveals that when preteens and teens were interviewed and asked what they wanted more than anything in the future their answer was concise, but not shocking: fame.²

The correlation that we make as a society is that if we can simply be rich and famous than we will have true happiness. We have the misconceived notion that followers among social media accounts will produce happiness, that subscriptions to our YouTube channel will blot out our sadness, and that dollars will fulfill all our desires. The Bible proclaims a different message. In fact, throughout Scripture the rich and famous do not fare too well. Solomon- the richest most famous King in Israel’s history had everything- except happiness.

Today we are going to look at what scripture says is the key to happiness. We will look at Jesus’ words in the Beatitudes and see what really produces a deep sense of happiness in our lives. Spoiler alert: it is not material possessions and it is not fame. Quite the opposite is true. In the Beatitudes, Jesus flips the script. He explains that if we truly want to pursue happiness it is a different type of pursuit than what the world communicates to us. Today we are going to look at three of the Beatitudes and how they unlock the door to happiness in our lives.

Setting the Context:

Where do we get the word “Beatitude” from? What does the word “Beatitude” mean? When we look at our English translation of the Bible, we don’t see the word “Beatitude” anywhere other than at the heading of the paragraph. How did that word get to be on the headings in our Bible? The word “Beatitude” comes from the Latin translation of the Greek New Testament. The Latin translation is called the Vulgate. The word “Beatitude” is the translation of the Greek word

¹ <https://www.businessinsider.com/american-kids-youtube-star-astronauts-survey-2019-7>

² Uhls, Y. T., Zgourou, E., & Greenfield, P. M. (2014). 21st century media, fame, and other future aspirations: A national survey of 9-15 year olds. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 8(4), article 5

“Makarios” which means “blessed”. The word literally means “to be happy”. In most of the usages of the word throughout the New Testament, it is used as a declaration. We are pronounced as blessed people despite our current circumstances. We can be happy despite what is happening around us or to us. Though the present situations in life may seem bleak and difficult we are blessed because of the future reward we have from God.

Our happiness as Believers in Christ is anchored not in what happens to us now, but what will happen to us when we see Jesus face to face. This tells us so much about the heart of God. God is not a cosmic killjoy. He is deeply invested in your happiness. In fact, He has no greater desire than for you to be happy, in Him. The Beatitudes are a sobering reminder that true happiness is impossible without Jesus.

Jesus reminds us that our level of *happiness* is in direct correlation to the *healthiness* of our relationship with the Lord.

1. True Happiness Comes Through Poverty in Spirit –

Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*
(*Chronological Bible pg.1301; October 2nd*)

Jesus is telling us- if we really want to be blessed, happy people then we must become poor in spirit. The Greek word for “poor” that Matthew chooses to use in this verse is the same word that is used elsewhere in the Bible and in extra-biblical literature for a “beggar”. Beggars were destitute. They had no source of income. They had no sources of stability for themselves and could not provide for their own needs. They needed the assistance of *somebody else* for them to survive. But what Jesus is saying is so countercultural because He is taking a physical example that nobody esteemed to be and made it the benchmark for spiritual realm. None of the kids surveyed before said they wanted to grow up to be homeless, or to be a beggar that we avoid making eye contact with at a stoplight. All of us want to have successful careers, lives that we can be proud of, and at the end of the day they leave us with a sense of dignity and importance. But what Jesus tells us is that we must realize no matter how successful we may be horizontally; we have nothing to offer vertically. We are not spiritually sufficient in ourselves.

The attitude that we are to adopt spiritually is that of a beggar. The Christian is to be somebody who looks inward and says, “within myself, I have no resources, no income, no stability, and because of my sinfulness I don’t have the resources I need to stand before a holy God.” J. Dwight Pentecost says, “*The poor in spirit, then, are the people who have no merit or righteousness of their own on which to stand before God.*”³ If we want to experience true happiness, then we must realize that we are spiritually bankrupt. We have nothing to offer spiritually to God, and we need God’s grace like a beggar on the street needs a piece of bread or a handout.

The bad news of the Gospel is that because of our sin and brokenness we are spiritually destitute. But because of His grace, beggars can become kings and queens.

³ *Words and Works of Christ, p. 173*

All these Beatitudes require a spiritual **posture** that we must take, but attached to that spiritual posture is a **promise**.

Jesus promises us that if we recognize our need and spiritual bankruptcy that we will possess the kingdom of heaven. There are no proud people in heaven. Everybody will arrive with a true sense of spiritual poverty. If we adopt a sense of spiritual poverty on earth, we are promised to possess the kingdom in eternity. True happiness comes through spiritual poverty because once we realize the severity of our need we are open to receive help from the only One who can provide it.

2. True Happiness Comes Through Hunger –

Matthew 5: 6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Chronological Bible pg.1301; October 2nd)*

My wife and I like to hike in the Summer somewhere cool away from the Houston heat. We prep our day packs the night before with water, sandwiches, some fruit, and protein bars for lunch on the mountain. We usually hit the trail early in the morning to try to beat the crowds. Typically, we will spend the whole morning climbing up the mountain to get to a scenic view in an isolated area. I try to eat a big breakfast before we head out, but usually I end up getting hungry a mile into our hike. By the time we get to the top my stomach is growling and weakness starts to kick in. There is nothing more satisfying than sitting on the summit of a mountain with crisp wind blowing across your face enjoying a turkey and cheese sandwich looking out on some of the most beautiful scenery in our country. You feel your energy getting restored. Weak muscles regain their strength and you are ready to press on for the rest of the journey. Hunger satisfied. Strength renewed.

If we look at the text, we can see that all of us have a *hunger*. We all have a voracious appetite that longs to be satisfied. Spiritually, we are malnourished and in need of true sustenance. We hunger after approval, so we compromise our character to gain favor in the eyes of people. We hunger after pleasure, so we make decisions that feel good at the moment but leave us guilty and devastated. We hunger after success and end up sacrificing our relationships and time with our family in order to attain it. We have a generation that hungers after fame, at any cost. We try to curb our appetite by nibbling at the crumbs of the world instead of feasting on a meal of righteousness. If we are honest, we are not satisfied- we long for something more.

Jesus tells us that we must change our diet. He promises true satisfaction will come when we desire the right things. He tells us to hunger after righteousness. What does it mean to hunger after righteousness?

Matthew uses the term “righteousness” seven times throughout his Gospel. What does Matthew mean when he says the word “righteousness”? In the OT righteousness meant living the right way in accordance with God’s will. Matthew uses this word the same way. When he is referring to righteousness, he is not talking about righteousness accounted, but righteousness applied.⁴

⁴ William. D. Mounce – *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary*

The best way to illustrate true satisfaction is to look at a baby. When a baby gets hungry it cries out desiring sustenance. Depending on the situation we will stick a pacifier in the baby's mouth and that works... for a while. When the baby realizes there is no life or sustenance flowing through the pacifier, he/she will spit it out and begin to cry out again.

We are hungry people desiring true life-giving satisfaction. But what we often do is let sin pacify our desires instead of letting righteous-living satisfy our desires. Sin will never truly satisfy us it will only pacify us, leaving us hungry and crying out for something more. C.S. Lewis wrote, "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."⁵

Jesus offers you and me true satisfaction for all our desires. In John 6:35, Jesus tells His disciples, "*I am the Bread of Life, he who comes to me shall never hunger. He who believes in me shall never thirst.*" All our gnawing desires are satisfied in the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Jesus, we have the approval we have always longed for. In Him, we belong. In Jesus, we find pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11). In Jesus, we find peace for our anxious hearts. In Jesus, we find our confidence through His acceptance. In Jesus, we find our security in His sovereignty. In Jesus, and in Jesus alone can we truly ever be satisfied. True happiness comes when we hunger for Jesus and the righteous life, he calls us to live.

3. True Happiness Comes Through Purity –

Matthew 5: 8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Chronological Bible pg.1301; October 2nd)*

Happiness and holiness are not juxtaposed to one another. The Christian's happiness is predicated upon his/her quest for personal holiness. The Bible tells us that if we want to see God then purity is a requirement, and not a suggestion. The Greek word for "pure" is the word "Katharos". Its where we get our English word "catharsis". It means to be free from impurities.

In Jesus' day, the Pharisees lived lives of duplicity. Outwardly they projected a sense of holiness and piety, but inwardly they were just as crooked and sinful as anyone else. The ethic that Jesus is imploring Kingdom people to have is the ethic of integrity. That we would live lives of inward purity that would flow to outward actions. Because Jesus knows our hearts, he knows that pure hearts overflow to pure hands.

In Hebrews 12 – The author echoes Jesus' words. I love how the New Living Translation phrases it. "for those who are not holy will not see the Lord." (Heb 12:14). If you and I want to see God work in our lives, then we must be people of purity. With purity comes great power. Being a person of purity means that purity invades every arena of our lives. Purity must be practiced in our entertainment selection, in work lives, in our text messages, and in our conversations with others. Purity leads to seeing God and seeing God leads to true happiness. The Promise that Jesus gives us is that when we are living in purity, then we will see God. We will see God work in our marriages and in our communities. We will see God clearer in our devotional life. We will

⁵ *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis

see God in our parenting. We will see God all around us because purity opens our eyes to the presence of God.

Despite popular belief, happiness will not come through fame or riches. Happiness will not even come from YouTube. If you and I want to be people who are truly happy it starts by realizing our spiritual poverty, hungering for satisfaction that only God can bring, and living pure lives.

Our culture seems so different from the days of Jesus, but people are still the same. The good news of the Gospel is that the message and the means are still the same 2,000 years later. The truth Jesus spoke on the side of the mountain is the same truth today.

Happiness is within reach, as long as you are reaching to Jesus.