

# **Challenging Chapters of the Bible**

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# Jesus set new standards.

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- So we have in Jesus a radical young rabbi *preaching a message that had never been preached before.*
- Jesus did not set these standards for us to aspire to; he set them to crush us by their weight and bring us to our knees.
- When we read his words and hear them preached they appeal to the best parts of us.
- We know what he is saying is right, it rings true in our soul, and *we want to be the person that he calls us to be.*

# Jesus set new standards.

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- ***Our frustration*** is that we cannot meet the standard.
- ***Our salvation*** is that we run to the only one who could keep such a standard.
- ***Our mission*** is not to lower the standard so that the lost will feel better; our mission is point them to the same salvation so that they will be better.

# The Beatitudes

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- Some have called the beatitudes 'the norms of the kingdom', and other have referred to them as 'The Manifesto of the Kingdom'.
- It's early in his ministry, but already he is attracting great crowds because of his miracles and his radical preaching.
- The beatitudes deal with 'blessing'; think of this as ***God's approval that leads to happiness as opposed to just 'happy feelings'***.

# Blessed are the poor in spirit.

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- Matt 5:3 God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
- In our world admittance it is often about the credentials you have. In the Kingdom of God you are actually better off without any.
- 1 Cor 1:26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy .... NLT

# Blessed are the poor in spirit.

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- The 'poor in spirit' are those who understand that they have nothing to barter with for entrance into heaven.
- Jesus said that the people who have nothing to offer to God, and know it, are the very same ones who will enter his kingdom.
- How different is that from the kingdoms of our world?
- ***"blessed are those who don't belong; they are the only ones who will be allowed to enter"***.

# Blessed are those who mourn.

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- Matt 5:4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- The mourning that Jesus speaks of here has to do with sorrow over sin; ***personal and the collective effect of sin in the world.***
- God approves of our mourning over our own sin, but he also ***expects that his followers will mourn what sin is doing to our entire world.***
- The comfort? I believe the comfort is found in individuals finding Christ, and in the realization that sin will not always run roughshod over men, but will be done away with once and for all.

# Blessed are those who mourn.

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- When we observe what sin is doing to our world and it grieves us, we are feeling what Jesus feels.
- *Sad is the person who can see the sin around them and not feel pity for those trapped in it.*
- As a rule, our world does not view mourning as something you want to attain, but in Jesus' kingdom, mourning for the right reasons leads to joy.

# Blessed are the meek.

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- Matt 5:5 God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.
- The promise is to those who are not aggressively trying to grab all they can, but choose rather to share their wealth with others.
- Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. KJV

# Blessed are the meek.

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- Most would agree that in this world the meek get very little, let alone the entire earth.
- In our world, few, if any, seek to be known as meek and mild .... It has come to mean 'weak', but meekness is not weakness at all.
- Jesus was the embodiment of meekness; ***he would not strike back at those who struck him, yet could become very aggressive regarding the welfare of others.***
- Those who care about the right things will end up owning it all.

# Blessed are those who seek righteousness.

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- Matt 5:6 God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.
- The promise is to all who seek after God and the righteousness he provides; he will be found to be very satisfying.
- “Seek and you will find” ..... Jesus

# Blessed are those who seek righteousness.

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- This beatitude begs the question .... What are you hungry for?
- What we seek in life is a clear indication of who we are at our core.
- It is required of the Christian that we seek righteousness.
- The promise is that those who seek righteousness will be filled.

# Blessed are the merciful.

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- Showing mercy is evidence of a changed heart and it's our heart that God examines when he extends his mercy.
- Matt 5:7 God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- Those who show mercy will receive the same in return.

# Blessed are the merciful.

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- Merciful people give attention to those in misery.
- Mercy is compassion in action .... R. Kent Hughes
- If you forgive others, God will forgive you. (Math 6)

# Blessed are the pure in heart.

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- I have a friend that teaches a Sunday school class of mentally challenged adults. He tells me their expressions of love for God are as pure as he has seen.
- Purity is a heart issue, not one of understanding or education.
- Matt 5:8 God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

# Blessed are the pure in heart.

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- The word that is translated 'pure' in this beatitude could also be translated as 'unmixed feelings'.
- ***Blessed are those who have 'unmixed feelings' for God;*** sold out, totally convinced that he is all that he says he is.
- Those are the people who will see him; those are the people who also best 'perceive' him.
- As a practical matter, the more pure our hearts become the clearer we see (perceive) God.

# Blessed are the peacemakers.

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- Matt 5:9 God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.
- Jesus puts an emphasis on peace because when there is no peace the people God loves always get hurt.
- Why are they the 'sons' of God? (The ultimate peacemaker was Jesus, the son of God)

# Blessed are the peacemakers.

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- Peacemaking is not necessarily about tolerance, or passiveness, but can actually be about aggression.
- Peacemaking is a dangerous business; just ask any police officer who has been called to a domestic dispute.
- Peacemakers are not always appreciated because the very fact that there is unrest speaks to the nature of the unpeaceful ones.

**Does my life look like the blessed  
ones of the beatitudes?**

# Questions