

# The Kingdom-Driven Life #9

## “The Blessed Life”

Matthew 5:1-12

### I. Holy Ground

#### A. The Sermon on the Mount

1. We have now arrived at the famous “Sermon on the Mount”:

- a. Matthew 5-7, Jesus’ lengthiest discourse in scripture
- b. Containing the Golden Rule, the Lord’s Prayer and the entire ethical system of the New Covenant Jesus has come to bring

2. Jesus public ministry is now underway and He’s been preaching the Kingdom of Heaven and demonstrating its power by healing the sick and casting out devils.

3. But now, we read:

**And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And opening His mouth He began to teach them...  
Matthew 5:1-2 NASB**

a. When I visited Israel, I stood on this “mount” near the Sea of Galilee, now home of “The Church of the Beatitudes, built on the site from which Jesus (supposedly) spoke. If you stand there and look down the long, sloping hillside, you can visualize Jesus speaking to a crowd with the beautiful Sea of Galilee below and behind them...a magnificent setting indeed! (Please go online and see the site for yourself!  
<http://www.sacred-destinations.com/israel/tabgha-mount-of-beatitudes.htm>)

4. Many Bible scholars see this event as nothing short of the New Testament version of Moses’ giving of the Law in Exodus!

5. The most dramatic impression of the sermon upon those who heard it “in person” was the *authority* (governmental tone) with which Jesus spoke:

**The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.  
Matthew 7:28-29 NASB**

6. While all the religious teachers and Rabbis of the day taught scripture, none of them assumed the authority to ADD to its meaning or re-present it such a radical form.

7. The Sermon on the Mount has been called, “The Constitution of the Kingdom of God”, and we agree. It is the foundational document for New Testament living.

**The sermon on the mount is a manifesto setting out the nature of life in the kingdom of heaven. The sermon makes no claim to present an ethic for all men...it makes no sense as a moral code. It is concerned not with ethics, but with discipleship...To interpret it legalistically as a set of rules is to miss the point; it represents a demand more radical...going far beyond what human nature can meet, a demand for perfection.**

**R.T. France: Tyndale New Testament Commentary**

8. This study and the next will paint a picture of what “Repent, for the Kingdom is near...” looks like in everyday life.

**Having summarized Jesus’ message as repentance in view of the coming kingdom, Matthew now collects Jesus’ teachings that explain how a repentant person ready for God’s rule should live.**

**Craig Keener: Intervarsity Press New Testament Commentary**

## **II. The Preamble to the Constitution**

### **A. The Beatitudes**

1. The Sermon is introduced by eight “Beatitudes”.

**“Beatitude”-a state of utmost bliss.**

**Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition**

2. These 8 “be-attitudes” (as they are sometimes called) follow a pattern:

- “Blessed are....” The term “blessed” means “happy”, “fulfilled”, “in a condition of joy”

**The Greek word is *makarios*, of which Gingrich writes:**

***blessed, fortunate, happy usually in the sense of privileged recipient of divine favor .  
blessed is one who ; Of God as the source of all benefaction . [pg 121]***

**and Frieberg:**

**(1) of persons characterized by transcendent happiness or religious joy *blessed, happy*  
(Hebrew is “barak”)**

- **“the.....poor in spirit, those that mourn, the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness...” etc.**
- A happy result or a promise, i.e. “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”, “they shall inherit the earth”, “they shall see God” ....etc.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.  
 Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.  
 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.  
 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.  
 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.  
 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.  
 Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.  
 Matthew 5:3-12 NASB

3. If the Sermon on the Mount is the "constitution" of the Kingdom of God, the Beatitudes are the "Preamble", the foundation of the entire discourse.

- a. These are not things we DO, this is what we ARE
- b. How OPPOSITE of our worldly nature is this repentant condition!

### The Beatitudes Versus The World

The disciple is "poor in spirit"; the world is full of pride  
 The disciple "mourns" his sinful condition; the world seeks pleasure  
 The disciple is meek; while the world is arrogant  
 The disciple is hungry for righteousness; the world seeks to have need of nothing  
 The disciple is merciful; the world is cruel and judgmental  
 The disciple is pure in heart, the world coddles corrupt imaginations  
 The disciple is a peacemaker, the world is retaliatory  
 The disciple endures persecution; the world conforms to itself to avoid criticism

### **B. The "Bookend" Beatitudes and Six Promises**

1. The first and last beatitude are vitally connected in that they both refer to the "Kingdom of heaven", as if to show us how the kingdom "enfolds" everything else!

This duplication of promises [ed. 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven' in both the first and eighth beatitudes] (the first duplication in the Beatitudes) is Matthew's way of rounding tense promises of the six "middle" Beatitudes tell us that the kingdom of heaven is *mainly* future; but the present-tense promises of these "bookend" Beatitudes tell us that the kingdom's future is so strong that it already impacts the present with joyous anticipation. The promises of the six "middle Beatitudes" are six different ways of describing the *meaning* of "the kingdom of heaven" in the bookend blessings. God's "kingdom of heaven" is (summarizing now the promises of the six intervening Beatitudes): God's Comfort (B 2), God's New Earth (B 3), God's Righteousness (B 4), God's Mercy (B 5), God's Face (B 6), and God's Family (B 7). The future is good! There is hope! "The world may laugh again" (Shakespeare).

Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, the Christ book, Matthew 1-12

2. We can readily see how the “bookend” beatitudes imply *future* expressions of the kingdom; the “middle six” beatitudes definitely apply present-tense expression of the effects of the kingdom right *now*.
3. We must always remember the 3-fold expression of the Kingdom:
  - a. Definitive-Coming to earth in the incarnation of Jesus, the King
  - b. Progressive-Now “leavening” the earth in ever expanding increase and influence
  - c. Final-At the return of Christ, the last judgment, and “all things put under His feet”

### **C. The Foundation of the Foundation**

1. Some scholars believe that the first beatitude is the absolute cornerstone of this section of scripture; not just of the Beatitudes, but for the entire Sermon contained in the next 3 chapters.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”  
Matthew 5:3

2. In our next study, we’ll devote most of our time to plumbing some of the depths of this incredibly important verse.
3. For now, we must see that the absolute entryway into “kingdom-driven living” is humility, meekness and a radical dependence upon God.

**Jesus summons those who would be his followers to radical devotion and radical dependence on God. His followers must be meek, must not retaliate, must go beyond the letter's law to its spirit, must do what is right when only God is looking, must depend on God for their needs and pursue his interests rather than their own, and must leave spiritual measurements of others' hearts to God. In short, true people of the kingdom live for God, not for themselves.**

**Craig Keener, IVP New Testament Commentary**

4. The greatest sign that a work of God has (or is) taking place in our hearts is a deep-felt sense of spiritual “poverty”; a humility that only comes when we recognize who God is compared with who we are; a revelation of our total dependence upon Him to produce anything good in our lives; a recognition that the Christian life is not difficult, it’s impossible; that only the power of God can work the nature of Christ into our hearts!
5. There is no place for pride, arrogance, or pursuit of possessions.
6. Only a meek, teachable spirit can receive the things of God.

**Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. Then he said, "I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.**

**Matthew 18:2-4 NLT**

- a. What parent has not envied the carefree lifestyle and perspective of their own dear children? So unworried, unburdened and free! And yet this is what is promised in a “kingdom-driven life”!
- b. Or for older folks like us, who hasn't envied the life of one of our pampered pets? Don't we long for such an existence?

**That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn't life more than food, and your body more than clothing? Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren't you far more valuable to him than they are? Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?**

**And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don't work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?**

**So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.**

**Matthew 6:25-33 NLB**

7. The very things the world holds dearest are the disqualifications for any hope of seeing the kingdom of God!

**For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:**

**But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;**

**And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:**

**That no flesh should glory in his presence.**

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29 KJV**

### **III. Profile of a Disciple**

#### **A. What KDL Looks Like**

1. Jesus said:

**Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.**

**For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**

**Matthew 11:28-30 KJV**

2. Are our lives joyful? Are our burdens light? No? Then we need to discover the Blessed Life described here in the Sermon.

3. What a difference the Kingdom makes! Matt 6:25-33

4. Next week, we'll unveil a great secret to living the kind of life Jesus intended us to live!
5. And everything begins with being "poor in spirit"!

**Jesus embraces those who humble themselves, acknowledge God's right to rule, even if in practice they are not yet perfect.**  
**Craig Keener, IVP New Testament Commentary**