

## Lesson 10

# The Beatitudes of the Psalms

## Introduction

Our connection with the beatitudes is most often tied to the opening of the sermon on the mount at the beginning of Matthew 5. However, there are several other passages in both testaments where we find beatitudes. Remember, in the first lesson we examined the definition of a beatitude which is a statement that refers to *an existing state* of happiness, bliss, or blessedness. A beatitude refers to a present condition of joy resulting from a person's relationship with God. They are a very present reality for the believer.

In the Psalms we find 13 statements regarding the blessed life. They show us very important components of what it means to live inside a relationship with our God.

## Psalm 1.1-2

*Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,  
Nor stand in the path of sinners,  
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!  
<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the Law of the LORD,  
And on His Law he meditates day and night.<sup>48</sup>*

It has been said that these two verses are a statement about human existence.<sup>49</sup> There are two ways to go in life. One way leads to blessedness and righteousness. The other way, through a series of cascading events, leads one farther and farther away from God . . . resulting in ruin. Which road we choose, determines our destiny. Reading the entirety of Psalm 1 we see how godliness is portrayed in a positive light. It is seen in a person who delights in the Lord's instruction. This is a person who grows and flourishes (1.3a) and is not harmed by the trials and storms of life (1.3b). The godly person also thrives because of his or her response to the wisdom God provides and the personal discipline that comes through a life surrendered. The righteous person has the protection of the Lord as they go through life. The heart of the blessed one is focused on the Lord's instruction. They love it because in it they find God's will. Therefore, they meditate on it and take it in constantly.

The contrast presented in this psalm is presented as the difference between a person who is in love with self and sin versus a person who loves God more than anything. The wicked love and indulge in sin. The righteous love God and seek Him through the Word.

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<sup>48</sup> All the Scripture references for this lesson are taken from the NASB 2020 Translation. *New American Standard Bible*. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Mays, James Luther. *Psalms*. Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994, p. 40.

## Psalm 2.12

*Kiss the Son, that He not be angry and you perish on the way,  
For His wrath may be kindled quickly.  
How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!*

Psalm 2 is a Messianic psalm that speaks of the dominance of the Messiah over those who rebel against God. It was used by the first Christians as they praised God after Peter and John's release from a Sanhedrin prison, Acts 4.24-27. It is also seen throughout Hebrews and Revelation. In the final verses of the Psalm, verses 10-12, we read a warning and exhortation to those who have yet to submit to the Messiah. The wicked are invited to "use insight," "be instructed," to "serve the Lord with reverence," and "rejoice with trembling." But mainly, they are to "kiss the Son," in grateful submission. Why? A day is coming when God's wrath will be kindled, and the wicked will be destroyed. The wicked are invited to respond now, while there is the opportunity to repent and submit.

In contrast is the last part of verse 12: *How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!* The only refuge from God's wrath is found in Him. While the wicked may define God's ways as bondage, they are in fact the pathway to security and bliss. It has been said, *there is no refuge from him: only in him.*

## Psalm 32.1-2

*How blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered!  
<sup>2</sup>How blessed is a person whose guilt the LORD does not take into account,  
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!*

Some believe this psalm should be connected to what was written in Psalm 51 ... which presents us with David's broken-hearted repentance before the Lord. While Psalm 51 seems to be in the more immediate aftermath of the prophet Nathan's visit exposing his sin, Psalm 32 appears to be sometime later after a period of reflection and meditation. Some think it is where David carries out his promise found in Psalm 51.13:

Then I will teach wrongdoers Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.

Now, let's look at verse 1. *Blessed is he whose wrongdoing is forgiven, whose sin is covered!* Feel the jubilation and relief that is expressed here. Just like the person who walks in the ways of the Lord (1.1), the repentant sinner, who has not walked in God's way, can experience the state of blessedness through the joy of being restored into relationship with God.

Now, let's take both verses together and see what God does with sin:

- He *forgives* it. God lifts the burden sin creates off our shoulders.
- He *covers* it. This is strongly connected to the concept of propitiation ... which is where God's wrath is turned aside.
- He *does not take it into account*. He does not count it against us.

This beatitude from Psalms reminds us there is no greater blessing than the understanding that our sins have been forgiven, covered by the blood of Christ, and no longer counted against us. The forgiveness God provides is for every sin . . . and the blessing that follows is one of the greatest we can experience in this life.

## Psalm 40.4

*How blessed is the man who has made the LORD his trust,  
And has not turned to the proud, nor to those who become involved in falsehood.*

The best understanding for how this beatitude is true is seen when we consider the next verse: *Many, Lord my God, are the wonders which You have done, and Your thoughts toward us; There is no one to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, they would be too numerous to count,* Psalm 40.5. When we reflect on the past and examine where God has worked in our life, and remember how God's character never changes, then we can face our future knowing that He will always be there providing and protecting us.

How deep is your trust? *Until you trust God, you will never know how good his goodness is.*<sup>50</sup>

## Psalm 41.1

*Blessed is one who considers the helpless;  
The LORD will save him on a day of trouble.*

The theme of Psalm 41 is mercy. Here we have encouragement to show compassion for those who are weak and in need of help. The word *considers* is important. It implies giving careful thought to this person's situation . . . rather than simply offering some type of impersonal help. A New Testament connection to this passage takes us back to the beginning of the sermon on the mount where Jesus said, *blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy,* Matthew 5.7. We also could connect it to Jesus' teaching regarding the standard that will be applied on judgment day, Matthew 25.31-46.

## Psalm 84.4-5

*Blessed are those who dwell in Your house!  
They are ever praising You.*

*Selah*

*<sup>5</sup> Blessed is the person whose strength is in You,  
In whose heart are the roads to Zion!*

This beatitude turns our thoughts to our heavenly home. We are not seeking a place here to dwell, we are looking forward to a heavenly city built on heavenly foundations, Hebrews 12.22-24. We are all on the road to Zion, and we persevere through every valley life presents . . . gaining strength from God and

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<sup>50</sup> Boice, p. 349.

each other. We must always be conscious of others on the pathway, come alongside them, and help and encourage them along the way.

## Psalm 94.12

*Blessed is the man whom You discipline, LORD,  
And whom You teach from Your Law,*

The discipline in view here is not the “discipline” that comes from God for the punishment of sin. Rather this is referencing the difficulties of life and the enduring of mistreatment when we live for Christ. It is these types of discipline that strengthen our motivation to learn more about God ... trust Him more ... and find comfort in His word. We could also connect Psalm 119.23-24 here.

## Other Beatitudes in the Psalms

- Psalm 106:3 - <sup>3</sup>How blessed are those who maintain justice, Who practice righteousness at all times!
- Psalm 112:1 - <sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! Blessed is a person who fears the LORD, Who greatly delights in His commandments.
- Psalm 119:1–2 - <sup>1</sup>Blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the Law of the LORD. <sup>2</sup>Blessed are those who comply with His testimonies, And seek Him with all their heart.
- Psalm 127:5 - <sup>5</sup>Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; They will not be ashamed When they speak with their enemies in the gate.
- Psalm 145:15 - <sup>15</sup>The eyes of all look to You, And You give them their food in due time.
- Psalm 146:5 - <sup>5</sup>Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,

## The Big Picture

What do we learn from the beatitudes of Psalms? Those who are blessed are those who:

- Trust in the way of the Lord as revealed in His word.
  - Seek refuge in the Lord and realize anything else will leave one exposed.
  - Depend on the forgiveness of the Lord.
  - Consider the needs of those less fortunate than them.
  - Help others along the pathway to heaven.
  - View life’s troubles as opportunities to grow.
  - Seek to live as consistently as possible.
1. Place all their hope and trust in the Lord to meet every need.