

:: summary

The declarations contained in the Beatitudes reveal inner dispositions in which we orient our souls to God and to others. They are *ways of being* that result in the goodness of God (God's blessing) flowing into believers' lives. Followers of Jesus are different and live differently from the world because of their salvation in Christ.

Matt. 5:1 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him,
2 and he began to teach them. He said:

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 5:11 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

:: discussion

Read Matthew 5:7-12 above and then review these descriptions given in the message:

The merciful are those who extend compassion for people in need. It is care for those who suffer from sin in the world - pain, misery distress. It is also those who give mercy instead of seeking justice.

The pure in heart feel, will, and think in ways that are centered in God.

Peacemakers strive for wholeness, well-being and reconciliation in divine and human relationships.

The persecuted endure opposition and rejection by those who oppose the way of Jesus and his Kingdom.

Read Matthew 18:21-35. How *should* the mercy and forgiveness we have received from God affect the way we act in mercy?

Read Psalm 24:1-6. How is purity of heart both an inward and outward characteristic of believers? Use an example of purity of heart in your answer.

Read Romans 12:18. Peacemaking includes reconciliation (Colossians 1:20). Reconciliation involves a change in personal relationships between people, or especially between individuals and God. How can this kind of peacemaking with others that Jesus calls us to be hard or painful?

Read Acts 5:27-41. Jesus said that when you are persecuted, "rejoice and be glad." What enables us to rejoice in these circumstances?

:: make it personal

Which of these beatitudes challenges you personally the most? Why?

What response do you think Jesus desires from you as a response to his teaching?

The beatitudes are a "summons to live in the present in the way that will make sense in God's promised future; because that future has arrived in the present in Jesus of Nazareth." N.T. Wright