



“STEPS TO BE BLESSED!”

> **Step #1 – BLESS THE LORD! - Psalm 103**

> **Step #2 – BE BLESSED IN THE WORD! – Psalm 1**

> **Step #3 – BE BLESSED! BE A BLESSING! (Matthew 5:1-16)**

- In Matthew 5:1-11 the word *blessed* is found nine times, in Greek it is *makarios*, which means *blessed* or happy. Let's discover the conditions of true *happiness* and its *reward*:

(v3) **“Blessed are the poor in spirit”** – To be poor in spirit is to have a humble heart, which is the opposite of pride. Humility is the foundation for salvation and a lifestyle that brings happiness to all! Pride on the other hand has no part in Christ's Kingdom, and until a person surrenders pride, he cannot enter the Kingdom.

- Even nations are called to humble themselves, 2 Chronicles 7:14 - *if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

- What does it mean to be humble? Jesus is the supreme example of humility (Matt 11:29; Mark 10:45; John 13:4-17; Phil 2:5-8). Biblical humility is not a belittling of oneself (Matt 6:16-18; Rom 12:3), but an exalting or praising of others, especially God and Christ.

- What is our reward for being *poor in spirit*? *Happiness* and the kingdom of heaven!

(v4) **“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”** – Paul writes in 2 Cor 7:10 - *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. This mourning leads to repentance and conversion.* But it does not stop there. It continues throughout the life of the conscientious Christian.

- In addition, through conversion comes the indwelling of the *Holy Spirit*, also known as the *Comforter*. Jesus said in John 14:26-28, *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”*

- Finally and eternally we will be comforted in heaven, whereas all our tears shall be wiped away - Rev 21:4 - *And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there*

shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

(v5) *"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth"* – Meekness is an attitude of humility toward God and gentleness toward men, springing from a recognition that God is in control. Although weakness and meekness may look similar, they are not the same. Weakness is due to negative circumstances, such as lack of strength or lack of courage. Whereas, meekness is strength and courage under control, coupled with kindness. Meekness is a virtue practiced and commended by our Lord Jesus (Matt 11:29).

- There is the saving, *"implanted"* word which is to be received *"with meekness"* (James 1:21); a man is to *"show by his good conduct his works in the meekness of wisdom"* (James 3:13); and in witnessing we are to give *"a reason for the hope that is in him (us), with meekness and fear"* (1 Peter 3:15).

- Jesus said the meek *"shall inherit the earth,"* what does this mean? In Rev 5:9-10 it says *"... and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."* We will reign with Christ on earth in His millennial (1000 years) kingdom (Rev. 20:1-10).

(v6) *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled"* - Daily we hunger and thirst, yet Christ says we are to hunger and thirst for *righteousness!* If we do this, we will be *blessed* (happy) and *filled* (satisfied).

~ The word righteousness is found 323 times in the Bible, let's look at a few:

- Believe unto righteousness - Rom 10:9-10 - *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

- Live unto righteousness - Rom 14:17-18 - *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.*

- Awake unto righteousness – 1 Cor. 15:34 – *Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

- The blessings of righteousness - Matt 6:33-34 - *But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

- Suffering for righteousness - 1 Peter 3:14 - *But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed.*

- The proof of righteousness - 1 John 2:29 - *If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.*

- The hope of righteousness - 2 Peter 3:13 - *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

(v7) “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy” - “Mercy” is a distinctive Bible word characterizing God as revealed to men. In the Old Testament it is oftenest the translation of *chechedh*, “kindness,” “loving-kindness,” but *rachamim*, literally, “bowels” (the sympathetic region), and *chanan*, “to be inclined to,” “to be gracious.” Psalm 145:8 – *“Yahweh is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great lovingkindness.”*

(v8) “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God” - The “heart” is the laboratory and origin of all that is good and evil in thoughts, words, and deeds according to Jesus in Mark 7:21-23 - *“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”*

- How can sinners, like us, acquire a “pure heart” since we live in such a wicked and perverse world? As Christians we must obey the command, on which both the Old Testament and New Testament revelation of love is based: *“Thou shalt love Yahweh thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”* (Deut. 6:5; Mt. 22:37).

- The process of heart-renewal begins with:

(1) The removal of a “stony heart” - Ezek 11:19-20 - *Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh,²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God.*

(2) Pray that your heart will become “clean” - Ps 51:10 - *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.*

(3) A believer’s heart must “trust” - Ps 112:7 - *He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.*

(v9) “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God” - As all men are represented to be in a state of hostility to God and each other, the Gospel is called the “gospel of peace,” because it reconciles men to God and to each other. Hence, our Lord here terms *peacemakers*, the *children of God*: for as he is the Father of peace, those who promote it are reputed his children.

- In James 3:17-18 it says, *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality*

and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

(v10-12) These verses deal with the topic of *persecution* and offers a double “blessed” plus “rewards!” – One commentator writes, “Our responsibility is not to seek out persecution, but to be willing to endure whatever trouble our faithfulness to Jesus Christ may bring, and to see it as a confirmation of true salvation. The way to avoid persecution is obvious and easy. To live like the world, or at least to “live and let live,” will cost us nothing. To mimic the world’s standards, or never to criticize them, will cost us nothing. To keep quiet about the gospel especially the truth that apart from its saving power men remain in their sins and are destined for hell, will cost us nothing. To go along with the world, to laugh at its jokes, to enjoy its entertainment, to smile when it mocks God and takes His name in vain, and to be ashamed to take a stand for Christ will not bring persecution. Those are the habits of sham Christians. Jesus does not take faithlessness lightly, in Luke 9:26 - *For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels*. If we are ashamed of Christ, He will be ashamed of us. Christ also warned in Luke 6:26 - *Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets*. To be popular with everyone is either to have compromised the faith or not to have true faith at all.”

(v13-16) **“YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH AND THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!”** – Salt purifies and preserves!

Salt had two purposes in the Middle East of the first century. Because of the lack of refrigeration, salt was used to preserve food, especially meat, which would quickly spoil in the desert environment. Believers in Christ are preservatives to the world, preserving it from the evil inherent in the society of ungodly men whose unredeemed natures are corrupted by sin (Psalm 14:3; Romans 8:8). Light is active, attractive, affects everyone and everything!

Second, salt was used then, as now, as a flavor enhancer. In the same way that salt enhances the flavor of the food it seasons, the followers of Christ stand out as those who “enhance” the flavor of life in this world. Christians, living under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in obedience to Christ, will inevitably influence the world for good, as salt has a positive influence on the flavor of the food it seasons. Where there is strife, we are to be peacemakers; where there is sorrow, we are to be the ministers of Christ, binding up wounds, and where there is hatred, we are to exemplify the love of God in Christ, returning good for evil (Luke 6:35).

The idea of light is similar—the presence of light in darkness is something that is unmistakable. The presence of Christians in the world must be like a light in the darkness, not only in the sense that the truth of God’s Word brings light to the darkened hearts of sinful man (John 1:1-10), but also in the sense that our good deeds must be evident for all to see. And indeed, our deeds will be evident if they are performed in accordance with the other principles that Jesus mentions in this

passage, such as the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-11. Notice especially that the concern is not that Christians would stand out for their own sake, but that those who looked on might “glorify your Father who is in heaven” (v. 16, KJV).