

# We are...Blessed???

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Important Note:** This is a 1-week message. The “**Forged**” series ended last week. The next series starts next Sunday.

## What does it mean to be “blessed?”

- “Enjoy happiness?” “Pleasure, contentment, or good fortune?”<sup>1</sup>
- Is “blessed” sometimes used as a replacement for being “lucky?”

**Numbers 6:24-26:** “**May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace.**” (NASB)

- God does not promise any specific material blessings that we will have by the end of our lives.

**CAN** He bless us in this way? **ABSOLUTELY!!**

Is this the primary way God blesses us? **NO!!**

## The Beatitudes – Matthew 5:1-12

- The Beatitudes are not a checklist OR multiple choice.
- God likes to turn the things of this world upside-down.
- Some versions of the Bible like to use “happy” or “fortunate” instead of “blessed.”

**Blessed are those who are poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3).**

- This is no accident...and it IS good!
- These are not people who are overspent spiritually.

**Reward:** The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them.

**Blessed are those who mourn (Matthew 5:4).**

- This is very similar to poor in spirit.
- This is NOT hopelessness.

**Reward:** They will be comforted.

- Both now **and** later.

**Blessed are those who are meek (Matthew 5:5).**

- Also translated “gentle.”
- Not just being unaggressive.
- It is not advancing our own interests at the expense of others.

**Reward:** They will inherit the earth (**Psalm 37:5-11**).

- An encouragement now and a reward later.

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matthew 5:6).**

- Righteousness = right conduct in God’s eyes.
- A longing/desire that must be satisfied to continue living.

**Reward:** They will be filled.

- All of their longing/need will be satisfied.

**Blessed are those who are merciful (Matthew 5:7).**

- Generosity, forgiveness, compassion.
- A continual **action**.

<sup>1</sup> “Blessed.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blessed>. Accessed 22 June, 2023. Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995. The Lockman Foundation, La Habra, CA 90632. All rights reserved.

- **Luke 6:36** – “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (NASB)

**Reward:** They will receive mercy.

- Both a now and later reward.

**Blessed are those who are pure in heart (**Matthew 5:8; Psalms 51:5-10**).**

- Moral purity, honesty, and integrity.
- Single-minded in their commitment toward God.

**Reward:** They will see God.

**Blessed are those who are peacemakers (**Matthew 5:9**).**

- Both peace with God and peace with others.
- Because someone is first at peace with God, they can then show/give peace to other people.
- This is an active role.

**Reward:** They will be called Children of God.

- Making peace reflects God’s character.

**Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness. (**Matthew 5:10**).**

- Living according to God’s standard does NOT mean that you will be respected for it.
- Christians do not follow God for the applause and recognition of others.

#### **How this applies to us today:**

- The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those pursuing God. Those who wrongly believe they are pursuing God and those who believed they have earned God’s blessing are in trouble (**Luke 6:24-26**).
- The evidence of the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives.
- As Christians, we are called to live in an “upside-down” way compared to the world.
- We may not feel “blessed” in this life, but in the end we will receive a reward that NO ONE can take away from us.

#### **Questions to meditate on and discuss:**

1. How often would you describe yourself as “blessed?” Why?
2. How often do you use “blessed” when you really mean something else?
3. How often do you think about the ways God has blessed you?
4. What are some ways God has blessed you?
5. Read **Psalms 1:1-3**. How does this passage compare to the Beatitudes in **Matthew 5:1-12**?
6. What part of the Beatitudes do you struggle with the most? Why? What can you do about it?
7. Have you ever been persecuted for your faith? What happened?
8. Read **Psalms 51**. How does this passage relate to being “pure in heart?”
9. Is there something in your life (a habit, temptation, secret, etc.) holding you back from pursuing God with an intense “hunger and thirst?” How can you let this go?