

The Traits of a True Disciple/Believer in the eyes & mind of Jesus.

Concord Community Church

Sunday 8th January 2023

Reading : Matthew 5:1-12

I thank God That He enabled and guided me to have fresh revelations of His Son Jesus Christ in His I AM Statements, that are recorded in the Gospel of John. From May to December 2022, we looked at 8 of them. This year also, I want to teach & preach mainly from the Four Gospels, focusing on our Saviour and His teaching for the Church. For people that would believe in Him and follow Him, till His return. As such, let's have a fresh look at the Beatitudes—the teaching of the Messiah to His disciples, commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5 to 7.

Seldom--if ever—in history of mankind, have so few words been spoken with so much meaning. The Beatitudes of our Lord are powerful sayings and present a descriptive picture of the true disciple and true believer of Christ. The Beatitudes have often been called “attitudes that ought to be” in the lives of church people/believers, on daily basis as we walk with Christ. These traits present the glorious hope and reward, believers & disciples can expect in this life as well as in eternity, if we live as Jesus calls us to live in these simple and beautiful statements.

Here is what a picture of a True born-again believer with his/her rewards.

1. The poor in spirit: Given the Kingdom of heaven (v3)
2. The person who mourns: Will be comforted (v4)
3. The meek: Will inherit the earth (v5)
4. The person who hungers & thirsts for righteousness: will be filled (v6)
5. The merciful: Will obtain mercy (v7)
6. The pure in heart: Will see God (v8)
7. The peacemakers: Will be called the children of God (v9)
8. The persecuted: Will be given the Kingdom of heaven (v10-12)

In His instructions, Jesus proclaimed the character of citizens of the Kingdom of God. Kingdom life contradicts the values most people hold dear. God's blessing

typically rests on unlikely people. The poor, hungry, mourning and persecuted are the ones who will experience the kingdom in its fullness. These pithy statements define reality in such a way that our world's order of things is shown to be upside-down in God's eyes. Throughout His ministry, Jesus stressed such reversals and ironies.

Key Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount				
<i>Beatitude</i>	<i>Old Testament anticipation</i>	<i>Clashing worldly values</i>	<i>God's reward</i>	<i>How to develop this attitude</i>
Realize need for God (5:3)	Isaiah 57:15	Pride and personal independence	Kingdom of Heaven	James 4:7-10
Mourn (5:4)	Isaiah 61:1, 2	Happiness at any cost	Comfort (2 Corinthians 1:4)	Psalm 51 James 4:7-10
Humble (5:5)	Psalm 37:5-11	Power	Inherit the earth	Matthew 11:27-30
Hunger and thirst for justice (5:6)	Isaiah 11:4, 5 ; 42:1-4	Pursuing personal needs	Satisfied	John 16:5-11 Philippians 3:7-11
Merciful (5:7)	Psalm 41:1	Strength without feeling	Be shown mercy	Ephesians 5:1, 2
Pure hearts (5:8)	Psalms 24:3, 4 ; 51:10	Deception is acceptable	See God	1 John 3:1-3
Work for peace (5:9)	Isaiah 57:18, 19 ; 60:17	Personal peace is pursued without concern for the world's chaos	Be called children of God	Romans 12:9-21 Hebrews 12:10, 11
Persecuted (5:10)	Isaiah 52:13 ; 53:12	Weak commitments	Kingdom of Heaven	2 Timothy 3:12

In his longest recorded sermon, Jesus began by describing the traits he was looking for in his followers. He said that God blesses those who live out those traits. Each beatitude is an almost direct contradiction of society's typical way of life. In the last beatitude, Jesus even points out that a serious effort to develop these traits is bound to create opposition. The best example of each trait is found in Jesus himself. If our goal is to become like him, applying the Beatitudes will challenge the way we live each day.

5:1ff **Matthew 5-7** is called the Sermon on the Mount because Jesus gave it on a hillside near Capernaum. This "sermon" probably covered several days of preaching. In it, Jesus proclaimed his attitude toward the law.

Position, authority, and money are not important in his Kingdom—what matters is faithful obedience from the heart. The Sermon on the Mount challenged the proud and legalistic religious leaders of the day. It called them back to the messages of the Old Testament prophets, who, like Jesus, taught that heartfelt obedience is more important than legalistic observance.

5:1, 2 Enormous crowds were following Jesus—he was the talk of the town, and everyone wanted to see him. The disciples, who were the closest associates of this popular man, were certainly tempted to feel important, proud, and possessive. Being with Jesus gave them not only prestige but also opportunity for receiving money and power.

The crowds were gathering once again. But before speaking to them, Jesus pulled his disciples aside and warned them about the temptations they would face as his associates. Don't expect fame and fortune, Jesus was saying, but mourning, hunger, and persecution. Nevertheless, Jesus assured his disciples that they would be rewarded—but perhaps not in this life. There may be times when following Jesus will bring us great popularity. If we don't live by Jesus' words in this sermon, we will find ourselves using God's message only to promote our personal interests.

5:3-5 Jesus began his sermon with words that seem to contradict each other. But God's way of living usually contradicts the world's. If you want to live for God, you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse. By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive everything God has in store for you.

5:3-12 The Beatitudes can be understood in at least four ways: (1) They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers. (2) They contrast Kingdom values (what is eternal) with worldly values (what is temporary). (3) They contrast the superficial "faith" of the Pharisees with the real

faith that Christ demands. (4) They show how the Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new Kingdom. These Beatitudes are not multiple choice—pick what you like and leave the rest. They must be taken as a whole. They describe what we should be like as Christ's followers.

5:3-12 Each beatitude tells how to be *blessed* by God. *Blessed* means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate or enviable state of those who are in God's Kingdom. The Beatitudes don't promise laughter, pleasure, or earthly prosperity. Being "blessed" by God means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

5:3-12 With Jesus' announcement that the Kingdom was near ([4:17](#)), people were naturally asking, "How do I qualify to be in God's Kingdom?" Jesus said that God's Kingdom is organized differently from worldly kingdoms. In the Kingdom of Heaven, wealth and power and authority are unimportant. Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and they have different attitudes. Are your attitudes a carbon copy of the world's selfishness, pride, and lust for power, or do they reflect the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus, your king?

5:11, 12 Jesus said to be happy when we're persecuted for our faith. Persecution can be good because (1) it takes our eyes off earthly rewards, (2) it strips away superficial belief, (3) it strengthens the faith of those who endure, and (4) our attitude through it serves as an example to others who follow. We can be comforted knowing that God's greatest prophets were persecuted (Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel). The fact that we are being persecuted proves that we have been faithful; faithless people would be unnoticed. In the future God will reward the faithful by receiving them into his eternal Kingdom, where there is no more persecution.

In closing, I must say that the characteristics of the Beatitudes are not self-produced, nor can we simply learn or imitate them in an attempt, to integrate them in our lives.

They are by-products of a life energized by the Holy-Spirit. They are like the listing Apostle Paul gave in Galatians 5:22-23, the fruit of the Spirit. The question & challenge is how we as individuals and as church might, cooperate with the Spirit to see these marks/traits/characteristics of true disciples/believers, become more real in our lives.