

SEEKING TRUE HAPPINESS Sunday School- October 30, 2011

Unifying Topic: LIVING AS GOD'S PEOPLE

Lesson Text

I. The Beatitudes, Part One (Matthew 5:1-6)

II. The Beatitudes, Part Two (Matthew 5:7-12)

The Main Thought: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People seek happiness in their lives. Is there a way to satisfy the search? In the Beatitudes, Jesus lists nine ways that God blesses those who seek first the kingdom of God.

Lesson Aim: To teach students the requirements and rewards of living a blessed life, and to teach them the importance of modeling their lives after the teachings of Christ.

Life aim: To demonstrate to students the blessings that come from obeying the paradigm for Christian ethics that Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount, and to encourage them to practice morality at any cost.

5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

5:2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

HISTORY:

Chapter 4, Jesus was lead into the wilderness by the Spirit of God to be tempted by the devil. We all have an enemy and that is the devil. Jesus showed us that He has overcome our enemy. It is with the help of the Holy Spirit's leading and God's Word, "It is written..." Jesus also lets us know that before we embark upon ministry there will be temptations, disturbances that try to set us back, and therefore, we have to know what steps to take to stand as overcomers.

Jesus begins His Galilean ministry, leaving Nazareth and going to Capernaum in "*Galilee of the Gentiles.*" There He proclaims, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand", as had John. On this journey Jesus enlists disciples (Simon, Peter, James, and John). And from there, the multitudes began to follow Him. Jesus teaches and preaches the gospel in the synagogues, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

During the early period of the Gospels, the message of the kingdom of heaven was directed to the nation of Israel and contained the potential fulfillment of the promised kingdom to the Jews. To the Gentile nations, the proclamation of the message is that God will gather a people for Himself from all nations into this great kingdom. The prerequisite for entrance into this kingdom included repentance (Matt.4:17), righteousness (Matt.5:20), faith (Matt.18:3) or in summary, being born again (Jh.3).

LESSON:

Matthew 5:1-6 Beatitudes, Part One

5:1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

Jesus became very popular with the people, and great crowds followed Him wherever He went. He chose a wide-open space in which to teach because the crowds that gathered around Him were too big to be contained in the narrow streets of a town. Jesus now up in the mountainside Jesus pulled his disciples and spoke to them as He sat down to teach and the crowds of people also gathered around. This "Sermon on the Mount" outlines the right

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attitudes toward ourselves, sin, the Lord and the world. In doing so, we are blessed with rewards. **V2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying.** This following message consists of 9 Beatitudes describing what we should be like as Christ's followers and the rewards we receive.

5:3a Blessed are the poor in spirit: "*Blessed*" (*makarios*) spiritual joy and satisfaction that lasts regardless of conditions; that carries one through pain, sorrow, loss, and grief. Man seeks to be blessed only in this world: position, money, fame, power, and sensual pleasure. Blessed literally means happy; fortunate! What makes us happy? Well, · friends · A good job · Being in love · Recognition or success · Sex · Personal growth · Good health · My religion · Being a parent · A good house or apartment · Being attractive or beautiful · The city that I live in · Recreation and exercise · or my partner's happiness.

Virtually everything named were external things or an external situation. That type of happiness is temporary.

The "**Poor in spirit**" is what we want to look at. The poor in spirit know they are spiritually bankrupt. It does not mean to be "*poor spirited*" or low self-esteem, and have no backbone at all! It is being brought to the place of spiritual starvation which is the opposite of proud, haughty, and self-sufficiency. You have to humble yourself to receive what God wants to give. Poor in spirit is a willingness to be taught by God.

If we honestly know ourselves, we know that whatever we do, it's not possible without God. It means admitting daily, I don't have it altogether, because we don't. It is an attitude of needing God's Spirit to carry every pain. The more you're humbled; the more you open the door to happiness. The first step to happiness, very simple, is be humble. Three ways that humility will bring you happiness:

1. Number one, humility will bring you happiness by reducing your stress.

Jesus talks about this principle later in his Sermon on the Mount in the section about worry that begins in Matthew 6:25, where he basically says, why do you fret about over what you're going to eat, what you're going to wear, and how long you're going to live, and how many hairs you have? He says why do you worry about all that when you've got a God who's bigger than everything you can worry about?

When I'm humble, I don't have to have all the answers.

2. Second, humility will make you happy, by improving your relationships.

If you walk humbly before the Lord, you're almost immune to insults. It doesn't mean that you don't accept criticism; it's just that you don't take it so personally that you get all upset. Humility will improve your relationships. It will make you happy.

3. Third, Humility unleashes God's power which brings happiness.

He channels all His power through the humble believer, **V3b ...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven**, an eternal glory already prepared.

Kingdom of heaven is found only in the Gospel of Matthew (32 times) and Kingdom of God is used in the other Gospels (66 uses including 4 times in Matthew).

Citizens of this kingdom are those who are born again believers. They possess the kingdom of heaven through humility. Jesus Himself makes it clear that to enter this kingdom shows ¹the Paradox of the Christian life: "*We surrender that we might reign.*" We'll reign as kings when we submit as Servants! **God the Father humbles Himself!** *Ps.113:5-6 "Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!"* **God the Son humbled Himself - and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil.2:18).** Think of the humility of the **Holy Spirit** as He lives within us day by day? Humility & Service go together! Happy are the poor in spirit for they are stripped of pride and now sensitive to God's kingdom ministry. Once you realize what you really are, then you know that only Jesus can heal you and save you from your sins. Only then can the kingdom come within you when the King is allowed to rule in the life of the believer. **THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THE POOR IN SPIRIT IS HUMILITY.**

5:4a Blessed are they that mourn: We know what "*blessed*" means, happy, but now we come to the word mourn—(*penthountes*) to have a broken heart. It is the strongest word possible for mourning. This does not speak of casual sorrow; this is an intense degree of mourning. It is like the deep mourning and wailing that occurs over

¹ Brian Bell doc.

the death of a loved one. It is a desperate sorrow over personal sinfulness, evil and suffering. It is a brokenness of self that comes from seeing Christ on the cross and realizing that our sins put Him there. Who mourns?

- The person who is desperately sorry for his sins and unworthiness before God (i.e. the publican and the sinner).
- The person who really feels the desperate plight and terrible suffering of others; the tragedies, the problems, the sinful behavior of others—the state, the condition, the lostness of the world that weighs ever so heavily upon the mourner's heart (i.e. Jesus was sent to bind up the brokenhearted Is.61:1).
- The person who experiences personal tragedy and intense trauma (i.e. at death).

How are we to be happy mourning? Well, God does not only realize your brokenness while you are mourning, but He's aware and He's there in your situation. This ability to mourn is part of the beginning of faith. It causes us to face honestly our condition and stand with God. This sorrow or mourning is designed to produce a faith response. First, it causes us to acknowledge the reality of sin and second, it causes us to repent of our sins. The result is **5:4b ...for they shall be comforted.** There is a present comfort:

- A settled peace: a relief, a solace, a consolation within (Jh.14:27; 16:33).
- An assurance of forgiveness and acceptance by God (Eph.1:3; 1Jh.1:9; 2:1-2).
- A fullness of joy: a sense of God's presence, care and guidance, a sense of His sovereignty, a sense of His working all things out for good to those who love Him (Rom.8:28; 15:11; 2Cor.6:10; Ps.16:11).

And there is an eternal comfort:

- A passing from death to life (Jh.3:16; 5:24).
- A wiping away of all tears (Is.25:8; Rev.21:4).

Knowing this, this comfort brings forgiveness, salvation, and much joy! **THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THEY THAT MOURN IS SENSITIVITY.**

5:5a Blessed are the meek: Happy are the meek (*praeis*). Can we find happiness in meekness? Who are the meek? Meekness is not weakness for both Moses and Jesus were meek men! Meekness is:

- having a strong but tender and humble life—He is humble before God and man; knows his need for God.
- having a teachable spirit; strength under control—He is always in control when dealing with people: cool, even-tempered. Able to show displeasure without reacting impulsively, able to answer softly.
- shows a willingness to submit and work under proper authority—The mind and body are disciplined, never let loose... Passion, urges, speech, behavior, sight, touch are always controlled (under God's controlled).
- and it also shows a willingness to disregard one's own "rights" and privileges—being forgiving, not revengeful.

Meekness is a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 which is gentleness. It is not something that I can muster of my own power, of my own ability; it's got to come from God. This word really is a word that was used to describe a wild animal that had been tamed or had been domesticated. ²Blessed, happy is that person who has all of his strength, and all of his spirit, or all of his personality or energy, but they've allowed someone else to master them and to control them.

Why are you happy if you're meek? - Because you're no longer at the mercy of your own passion. You're no longer at the mercy or the whim of your emotions or your anger or your temper. You can take an insult without giving one back. You can turn the other cheek, not because you're weak, but because you're stable and because you're strong in the Lord. You're happy because you're free, free from bitterness, and you're not easily provoked to anger. You don't have to resort to revenge. You're God-controlled; you've allowed His Spirit to direct your spirit. It takes strength and power to be meek. **V5b** The promise, **for they shall inherit the earth**, in the sense, of really possessing it more than the other person; you possess more of what God has given mankind; you grow more and more alive to the presence of God in the world. Also it may speak of the coming Kingdom Age when the kingdom of heaven will be brought down to earth when the saints will rule with Christ as its supreme Lord.

- You'll prosper because your calmness gives you good judgment.
- Your contentment will give you security and peace of mind, and that's being happy in this life.
- Your gentleness and your fairness with others will gain the confidence of others.

² <http://www.theparkwaychurchofchrist.com/SermonsA-D/beattitudes3.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

So we inherit the earth and we're going to enjoy God's blessings more in this life, but secondly, there is a future blessing. The meek will have their ultimate reward in heaven in that land beyond. **THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THE MEEK IS MEEKNESS.**

5:6a Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: Happy are those who hunger and thirst for being and doing right. ³Hunger and thirst represent the necessities of physical life. Jesus' analogy demonstrates that righteousness is required for spiritual life just as food and water are required for physical life. Righteousness is not an optional spiritual supplement but a spiritual necessity. Most of us have never faced life-threatening hunger and thirst. We think of hunger as missing a meal or two in a row and of thirst as having to wait an hour on a hot day to get a cold drink. But the hunger and thirst of which Jesus speaks here is of a much more intense sort. There is a hunger and thirst for all righteousness.

To "*hunger*" means to crave ardently, to seek with eager desire. It is not something where you hunger now and then stop being hungry. To "*thirst*" means to painfully feel the need for water; it means to be parched and dehydrated to the point of pain. So both hunger and thirst means to be dissatisfied with our present situation. In essence, experience the spiritual satisfaction that only the Savior can provide. Righteousness is the only thing that will fill and satisfy man's innermost need. The righteousness of God has been shown to man. Just what God wants man to be and to do have been demonstrated perfectly in Jesus Christ. This is the love of God for God has not given man just the written Word describing His righteousness but He has given man a life—the life of His own Son to show what He means by righteousness.

5:6b ...for they shall be filled refers to a complete filling and satisfaction. This filling comes from the Spirit of God, who can totally be the source for satisfaction for His people. Until we come to the place where we are single-minded in our pursuit of God, we will never be satisfied. We need to be so famished and so parched that we will become relentlessly passionate about seeking the Savior. When the Prodigal Son was hungry he turned to the food the pigs were eating; when he was starving he turned to his father. It's only when we come to the end of ourselves, empty and depleted, allowing God to have His way, our filling comes. However, this is a strange filling that both satisfies us and keeps us longing for more. Therefore, you want to continue attending places where that hunger can be satisfied; you want to spend time in Bible study; and you want to keep yourself from the things that rob and distract you of that hunger by staying under the power of God's Spirit. The Word and the Spirit will always lead to a true righteousness in Christ Jesus. **THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS IS OBEDIENCE.**

Matthew 5:7-12 The Beatitudes, Part Two

5:7a Blessed are the merciful: Happy are the compassionate (*eleemes*), to have a forgiving spirit and a compassionate heart, and much more—the ability to get right inside the other person's skin until we can see things with his eyes, think things with his mind, and feel things with his feelings. This can only be done through pure mercy, which is a gift of God. It is not a natural attribute of man but is a gift that comes with the new birth. The opposite of mercy is hostility and aggressiveness that expresses itself in an unforgiving and faultfinding spirit. Best of all, God blesses those who show pure mercy; they will receive mercy. **5:7b ...for they shall obtain mercy.** ⁴If people see that we care, their hearts will respond in caring. If we are detached and disinterested in them, they will be detached and disinterested in us. For he who shows mercy has become nothing less than like God and he obtains this mercy when demonstrating God's gift. They know that it is "*more blessed to give than to receive.*" Therefore the results of being merciful are numerous which changes an attitude within to be happy.

- a. A person is given the mercy of God—forgiveness of sins (Psalm 18:25; 2 Samuel 22:26).
- b. A person does good to his own soul (Proverbs 19:17).
- c. A person is paid back what he gives—by God Himself (Proverbs 19:17).
- d. A person behaves like God Himself (Luke 6:36; Psalm 103:8; Joel 2:15).
- e. A person is blessed (Psalm 51:1).
- f. A person is assured of finding "*mercy in that day*" (2 Tim. 1:18).

³ <http://www.theparkwaychurchofchrist.com/SermonsA-D/beattitudes4.htm>

⁴ <http://www.theparkwaychurchofchrist.com/SermonsA-D/beattitudes5.htm>

g. A person shall inherit the Kingdom of God—forever (Matthew 25:34-35).

Through the parables mercy is shown:

- The parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk.10:25-37-helping a stranger).
- The parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matt.18:23-27-the master of the unforgiving servant was moved with compassion at first—later it was a different story by actions of the one mercy was shown).
- The parable of the Two Debtors (Lk.7:40-50-Jesus asks, *which of them will love him more...the one whom he has forgave more*).

There are so many others. Jesus showed mercy through so many ways to His people, including going to the cross and taking our place on that cross and saying, "*forgive them for they know not what they do*" before we ever accepted His love!

THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THE MERCIFUL IS COMPASSION.

5:8a Blessed are the pure in heart: Happy are they who have a clean heart (katharoi); unsoiled, unmixed, unpolluted; cleansed; purged; forgiven; to be holy; have a single purpose, and that's of God's glory. Note: Anything that made the Jews unclean, they didn't touch it or go around it. All of those things were for outside show. God looks at the heart. The heart is the greater matter not the traditions or religion of men. A person's very best behavior is seldom (if ever) free from some mixture of self. It is questionable if a sinful creature can ever act perfectly—perfectly free from mixed emotions or motives. The believer is to constantly search his heart and cleanse it of impure motives. Motives involving self are sinister and deceptive. You might have to ask yourself these questions because God sees behind any mask:

- a. Am I employed primarily for self, or to serve Christ and to earn enough to help others who have a need?
- b. Am I ministering to help the needy, or to have a sense of self-satisfaction?
- c. Am I worshipping to honor God, or to satisfy a feeling of obligation?
- d. Am I praying daily to fellowship with God, or to gain comfortable feelings that I am pleasing God through my praying?

"*Cast every care upon Him for He cares for you*" 1Pt.5:7. There are things we can do to get on the right pathway to purity:

- Admit your sinful impurity before God.
- Ask God for a new heart.
- Pray for that purity God desires in you.
- Draw closer to God.
- Memorize and meditate on the Word of God.
- Avoid complaining and arguing where those things can come back into the heart.
- Guard your heart by the things you watch.
- Wait on the Lord. In that waiting faith builds.
- Find a faithful friend to hold you to that accountability.
- Focus on your future hope. It's a lifestyle.

Can you understand that by allowing God to work on your heart, it brings benefits! **V8b ...for they shall see God.** Seeing God is a lifestyle of holiness! Holiness is not a bad thing because there is a more intimate fellowship reserved, in you seeing what God has to reveal. There will be no disguises in your Christian walk. Presently, the pure in heart shall see God by faith. Eternally, the pure in heart shall see God face to face. What a glorious and happy occasion!

THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THE PURE IN HEART IS HOLINESS.

5:9a Blessed are the peacemakers: Happy are those who maintain peace; to bring men together; to make peace between men and God; to solve disputes and erase divisions; to reconcile differences and eliminate strife; to silence tongues and build right relationships. 3 Types of People:

- **⁵Peace-breakers:** anyone who has lied, cheated, or done violence to someone else; treats someone else with cold indifference for no good reason.

⁵ <http://andychristensen.wordpress.com/2008/06/19/peace-breaker-peace-faker-or-peacemaker/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

- **Peace-fakers:** rather than addressing the problem decides to act as if there is no problem; voids all confrontation thinking that negative consequences are avoided, and there will be peace.
- **Peace-makers:** those being proactive and taking constructive actions to bring people together and increase understanding between them; requires losing the attitude of trying to justify ourselves and prove that problems and conflicts are all someone else's fault.
 - They strive to make peace with God by conquering the inner struggle; they settle the inner tension; and handle the inner pressure. He takes the struggle within his heart between good and evil, and strives for the good and conquers the bad.
 - They strive at every opportunity to make peace between others. They work to solve disputes and erase divisions; reconcile differences and eliminate strife; silence tongues and build relationships.
 - They are not social reformers, but rather the ones reformed by the regenerating power of the gospel. They are peacemakers because they themselves are at peace with God.

P.E.A.C.E. — **Pause Everyday Appreciating Christ's Embrace.** When you **Pause Everyday**, you are determining whose in you; when you **Appreciate Christ's Embrace**, you are determining whose holding you Christ on the inside by His Spirit is holding you in a holding pattern that keeps you balanced, keeps you of sound mind, and keeps your focus right. And those who proclaim to be peacemakers are rewarded.

5:9b ...for they shall be called the children of God. These are the ones who have the life-changing qualities herein described as citizens of His kingdom. They will be known and recognized as what they really are – children of God. If we are His children, we pattern our lives by His and we should be happy doing that. **THE CHARACTER**

QUALITY OF THE PEACEMAKER IS RECONCILIATION.

5:10a Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: Happy when persecuted for righteousness sake? Have I got that right? Well we are to endure suffering for Christ; be mocked, ridiculed, criticized, and ostracized; to be treated with hostility; to be martyred. *2Timothy 3:12* says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." ⁶To be persecuted for something we have done wrong is one thing, but to be persecuted because we are, to the best of our ability, serving God is something else.

- Believers shall suffer persecution because they are not of this world.
- Believers shall suffer persecution when they demonstrate a life of righteousness.
- Believers shall suffer persecution because the ungodly of the world want no God other than themselves and their own imaginations.
- Believers shall suffer persecution because the world thinks that God protects, provides, and gives no matter what a person's behavior is, just so the behavior is not too far out,

Paul said to count it all joy when we are persecuted for Jesus. God will provide that those who lose for him for righteousness sake shall not lose by him in the end for righteousness sake. The word "*righteousness*" refers to living the "*straight*" way of following Jesus. We can try to keep that up all day, but it is not enough. So God has provided a second way to obtain righteousness—a way by which our righteousness can be made complete. It is shown ⁷First of all, because the righteousness that we are doing is not the righteousness of man but it is the righteousness of God. You will notice He says, "*because of me*" (or "*for my sake*," in some translations)—**verse 11**. It is the righteousness of Christ that is imparted that we are being persecuted for. Why? Because the moment you become a Christian and you begin to reflect the character of Christ, then you become actively involved in the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan. You can be sure of that. Satan, who is the prince of this world, looks at you as a traitor. He looks at you as an enemy. And since the whole world is under him (1 John 5:19), he will use the world to persecute you, not for being bad, but for being good.

And when that happens, don't give up, because it says, **5:10b ...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** This is like verse 3 when He talks about the poor in spirit. You haven't lost anything by being persecuted; you've actually gained much more. It is the Kingdom of heaven, not the Kingdom in heaven. The word "**of**" denotes possession,

⁶ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/matthew/10.html>

⁷ <http://www.jacksequeira.org/SOTM09.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

not location: It is Heaven's Kingdom. It is rather to the literal reigning of God Himself on and over this earth in fulfillment of the covenants God made with the nation of Israel. Therefore, we have possession of this kingdom's rule also. And to possess anything that God possesses should bring a joy within, even after going through a phase of persecution. **THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS SAKE IS COMMITMENT.**

5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Happy when reviled, persecuted, and evil spoken falsely. There are three major kinds of persecution mentioned by Christ in this passage. What's hard about this beatitude is that we all like to be liked. We don't want to be reviled, persecuted or have evil spoken against us.

1. **Being reviled:** verbally abused, insulted, scolded, mocked (cruel mockings, Hebrews 11:36).
2. **Persecuted:** hurt, ostracized, attacked, tortured, martyred, and treated with hostility.
3. **Having all manner of evil spoken against:** slandered, cursed, and lied about (cp. Psalm 35:11; Acts 17:6-7; cp. "hard speeches," that is, harsh, defiant words, Jude 15).

The happiness comes when it takes our eyes off of earthly rewards; when it strips away superficial believers; when it strengthens our faith when we endure; and when it serves as an example to others who may follow us, only for Christ's sake. God knows and sees, that's why we can faithfully endure. **THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF THE REVILED, THE PERSECUTED, AND HAVING EVIL SPOKEN AGAINST YOU IS PATIENCE.**

5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. People abused, mocked, attacked cruelly, lied and spoke harshly against the prophets. Isaiah is said to have been sawed asunder; Jeremiah was thrown into a dungeon and threatened with death; Elijah was hunted by Ahab and Jezebel. There were physical and personal attacks and from this the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. During Jesus' ministry His persecution was for our good. This is a command to the believer is to rejoice; be over and above with gladness and celebrate, **for great is your reward in heaven:** The reward is in heaven (a location, a place). This is an occasion of great joy.

⁸Actually, if we live according to the first seven Beatitudes, we will automatically experience the eighth. It's like an equation. If you are the person of verses 3-9, you will get the persecution of verses 10-12. If you are "*poor in spirit*," some will think you are self-righteous. When you "*mourn*" over sin, others will feel convicted and not want you around. The "*meeek*" person might be run over. When you break out of the spiritual status quo and "*hunger and thirst*" for God, some will label you a religious fanatic. Be "*merciful*" and people will call you gullible. Strive to be "*pure in heart*" and feel the tension of a world that lives on lust. And strive to be a "*peacemaker*" and get ready for war. Our faith begins, develops, and matures as we live out the first seven. Our faith is then tested when we come to the last one.

SUMMARY:

⁹Here is Matthew's understanding of the central points in Jesus' teaching. Just as Moses went up the mountain to bring a new law to the people, so Jesus from the mountain describes the way God wants us to live now. Jesus commends the meek, the merciful, those with undefiled hearts, and those who work for peace. These are virtues we have come to know throughout our whole history with God. Others in the list are more surprising. Jesus blesses the poor, the hungry, and the weeping as well as the virtuous, recognizing the injustice of their situation and assuring them of God's care.

¹⁰The poor in spirit know that they need God. It is the humble, the dependent, who will be given the kingdom of heaven. They trust themselves to God's mercy. Jesus says, Happy are the sad, for at least they have the comfort of knowing that their trials are temporary. Everything will be set right. (*Meekness is not weakness, for both Moses and Jesus were meek men having power under control and the earth became theirs*). Those who ache and yearn for justice (the Greek word for righteousness also means justice), will receive what they seek. We know our need for

⁸ http://www.pontiacbible.org/index.php?/sermons/more/the_blessing_no_one_wants/

⁹ <http://rotation.infopop.cc/eve/forums/a/tpc/f/5626088121/m/7626088121>

¹⁰ <http://www.gci.org/bible/matthew5>

mercy in the day of judgment; Jesus is saying that we therefore have a duty to show mercy in this age. A pure heart has only one desire. Those who seek only God will be sure to find him. Our desire will be rewarded. (*We find that there is a blessing in making and keeping peace with our Christian brothers and sisters because we've found peace with God*). Righteous people sometimes suffer because they are righteous. Jesus expects that His disciples will be persecuted not just for being good, but because of their association with Jesus. Rejoice and be glad. You are making a difference in this world, and you will be sure to be rewarded in the next.

Many people seek happiness but it easily fades. Very few were seeking the happiness that Jesus taught that never fades. There is a difference from the religious manner that the Pharisees and Sadducees taught. Doing all that Jesus taught brings a joy knowing that He is in control and enables us to lean on Him.

APPLICATION:

Come to Jesus to be taught as the disciples and the crowds did. Whatever builds our character blesses us for a reward. The reward is here and forever.