

40-05-01.wpd —The Happiness of True Christians, Part 1
discipleship, happiness, lifestyle, character, reward
Mt.5:1-5

True happiness is *taught by* and *caught from* Christ Himself.

INTRODUCTION:

–**TITLE.** Part One of three messages on the Beatitudes.

–The **Beatitudes** (or "*Happitudes*," ["*blessed*" lit. = "*happy*"]) are a blueprint for blessedness or true spiritual happiness. It's a *philosophy of life, a standard of behavior, a pattern of spiritual empowerment*, that is not only **taught by Christ** but **caught from Christ**.

–The **Beatitudes** are not empty *idealism*, but *tested principles*, lived out by Jesus Himself before family, friends, foes, and His Father, then sealed with His blood at Calvary. **HOM.idea.**

I. Taught by Christ (re-read vs.1-2)

A. We speak of "*mountaintop experiences*" – Jesus, in bringing forth this sermon, moved from a plain to a mountain...

1. OT Law was given on a mountain; Jesus was bringing NT Law.
2. He was also making a distinction by bringing His disciples away from the crowd (much is learned in the crowd, but Christ offers us His presence to be where "two or three are gathered in My name.")

B. Notice that He "*sat down*" to teach His disciples:

1. *Sitting* was a rabbi's official posture, and by taking that position, Christ showed both His authority and importance of His message.
2. Also, this idea of sitting among disciples echos God's pattern of intimacy throughout Scripture whenever addressing the faithful.

C. And Jesus didn't whisper [lit. Gk. is "*He opened His mouth*"]– He spoke about *kingdom living* directly to the disciples, but loud enough for the crowd to hear. (The Church is a *believer's meeting*, but it has a message that the world should feel welcome to come and listen to.)

TRANS: Jesus had announced *the kingdom*. In the Beatitudes, He was teaching about the character of *its citizens*. Robert Schuller called them "**BE-attitudes**," ways we should think about God and life. They preface the whole Sermon on the Mount, because our attitudes are the context for proper kingdom living). They are not just **taught by Christ, but...**

II. Caught from Christ – Jesus told His disciples "Follow Me," because He wanted to share the *happiness* He had in the attitude of *kingdom living*: living a life **dependent on God, in tune with God's heart, and in humble submission to God's will**. The first of these is...

A. The attitude of personal poverty– v.3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

1. *Poverty "in spirit"* is the underlying theme in the other Beatitudes [the Hebrew concept of poverty developed from the idea of "*the poor*" being *without power*; and because without power, *oppressed*; and because *oppressed, dependent on God*.] (Realizing our utter helplessness, we can look only to God for spiritual life and salvation.)
2. The accompanying promise is "*theirs is the kingdom of heaven*"
 - a. Spiritual poverty and dependence on God makes a person a *citizen of God's kingdom right now!* It's a present reality!
 - b. [Christians often get accused of putting all our eggs in a future basket, but when He came, Christ brought God's future basket with Him.] The Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is answered when people confess spiritual poverty and become totally dependent on God. This turns *the poor* into *the truly rich!*

B. The attitude of sincere sorrow– v.4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

1. "*those who mourn*" [the strongest Gk. word for *grieving*] (How can God say that this is a "*happy*" state for anyone?)
 - a. Death, and the separation it brings, does something for us that nothing does better: it highlights the really important things in life and casts a shadow on the frivolous. (*Sorrow* always has more to teach us than *Enjoyment* does. It takes us from surface things down to the depths. Someone wrote...

"I walked a mile with Pleasure,	I walked a mile with Sorrow,
She chattered all the way,	And ne'er a word said she,
But left me none the wiser	But, oh, the things I learned from her
For all she had to say.	When Sorrow walked with me!"
 - b. There's another kind of grief: *grieving over the sufferings of the world* [for just that reason, Luther translated this word *mourn* as "*sorrow-bearing*"] (True disciples should mourn over the wrongs in the world and should long for and work towards social reform.)
 - c. There's also sorrow for our sins that can bring us to God. (*Grief over sin is the only proper prelude to true repentance.*)

2. This beatitude's promise is "*they will be comforted*," which means...
 - a. encouraged by the compassion of fellow travelers in life. (This should especially be the testimony among fellow believers.)
 - b. and strengthened by the God of comfort-- 2 Co.1:3-4, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (This is the source of our encouragement to others.)

C. The attitude of a tamed temperament-- v.5, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

1. This word "*meek*" is hard to translate; it **carries the idea of...**
 - a. Aristotle's virtuous "mean" (a place between wrong anger at insult or injury to self and no anger (at wrongs done to others));
 - b. or the idea of taming a wild animal by breaking and bringing its will under human control (like the Spirit-fruit of *self-control*);
 - c. or the idea of a humble heart, one that is willing to learn, honest about weaknesses (able to face the truth when being corrected).
2. What is the promise to the "*meek*"? "*they will inherit the earth*." (where Adam and Eve failed, the meek, led by Christ will fulfill that dominion over this planet and over the whole creation, which was the original destiny God planned for humanity.)

CONCLUSION: (with some questions)

- If **true happiness** is not just **taught by Christ but caught from Him**, *where are we today?* with the crowd, or learning at Christ's feet?
- Do we recognize our spiritual poverty and our dependence on God?
- Are we sorrowing over separation and sin? Christ defeated them both.
- Have our haughty hearts, wild wills, and turbulent tempers been tamed by the power of Christ to fit us for citizenship in God's Kingdom? (**His Spirit still has work to do in my own life!**)
- These first three characteristics are like foundational stepping stones into a relationship with Christ: **first**, enlightenment about spiritual poverty; **next**, sorrow over our sins, and **finally**, willingness to come humbly to Christ, and become like Christ: Matt. 11:28-29, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Mat 5:1-5 (NIV) Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, {2} and he began to teach them, saying: {3} "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. {4} Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. {5} Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.