

The Beatitudes

Who are the blessed ones in our world today? If we ask this question to many people, it should not be surprising if we receive answers like, “the wealthy, rich, prosperous, highly esteemed, or the charismatic leader/CEO of a big company”. However, Jesus answers that question in a way that completely subverts the expectations of our world.

Our passage today is a beloved passage of many Christians throughout the centuries. It is beloved because it has such a precise and succinct way of describing the divinely blessed life. It also functions as a goal to which every Christian can aspire to. The divinely blessed life belongs to those whom we do not expect. The Beatitudes also functions powerfully as the opening section for the whole Sermon on the Mount. Let us read the passage and examine Jesus’ words for ourselves today.

Launch

- 1) What is the blessed life, according to your own thinking or the people around you?

THE BEATITUDES

Read Matthew 5:1-12

- 2) What phrase is repeated in verse 3 and 10?
 - a. What does this indicate about the Beatitudes and how we should read them?

- 3) Take the time to fill out the following table:

<u>Types of People</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Blessing</u>
v3 – Blessed are the poor in spirit		
v4 – Blessed are those who mourn		
v5 – Blessed are the meek		
v6 – Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness		
v7 – Blessed are the merciful		

v8 – Blessed are the pure in heart		
v9 – Blessed are the peacemakers		
v10 – Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness		

4) Why should we rejoice and be glad (v12) when people insult, persecute, and falsely accuse us? (v11)

a. Why do you think people do those things to us because of Jesus?

5) Do the Beatitudes mean that those who do not experience these things are not blessed?

6) How would you summarise the blessings listed here in the Beatitudes? (v12) (refer also to your answer in Q2)

7) How do the Beatitudes encourage us in our Christian life today?

Conclusion

The Beatitudes are given to the disciples of Christ on what it means to be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven (5:1-2). It describes the divinely blessed life in the kingdom of heaven. Contrary to how some have read it, it does not describe what we must do to enter the kingdom, but rather the status of those who are considered “lowly” by those in their society. In those days, the blessed ones are generally perceived to be the Pharisees and the teachers of the law – prominent members of the faith. However, Jesus comes and subverts those expectations, and say that those who are truly blessed are these that society looks down upon.

This is because they recognise their place and status in life, and thus they know that it is only God that they can rely upon. It is because of this that they are blessed and are a part of the kingdom of heaven. It is not something that we “do”, but rather recognising our own sinfulness and depravity that only God and God alone can save us. It is to those that the kingdom of heaven belong.