

The Beatitudes (Part 1)

(Matthew 5:1-6)

Introduction

What makes you happy? Share one-word answers. [Teacher, write the children's responses on the board.] Why do these things make you happy? How long does the happiness usually last? Most of these things only last a short time, like candy or a new toy.

What happens when you swallow the candy? Is there kind of a letdown? Do you want another one? Candy doesn't keep us happy forever, does it? But there is Someone who does.

God gives lasting happiness. Not just laughter and pleasure when everything is going right, but peace and hope that brings joy to you even when times are hard.

God's idea about happiness is often very different from our own. We tend to care more about what happens on the outside. God cares more about what happens on the inside.

The key to happiness is who we are on the inside; not where we are, who we are with, what we can do, or what we look like. True happiness comes from having a godly character, not from having toys and candy. God blesses those who live to honor Him.

Today we're going to learn about a kind of happiness called "joy" that is felt deep down inside your heart. When you have this type of joy, no one can take it away; it lasts forever.

Opening Prayer

Father, we know that You are much more concerned about what is going on inside our hearts than how we look or who our friends are. Teach us today, to live to honor You, Lord, in everything that we think or say or do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
(Psalm 32:1)*

Lesson

- Who knows what an attitude is? An attitude is a way we show people how we think or feel about something.
- Can you give me an example of a good attitude? (loving, kind, and honest, etc.)
- Can you give me an example of a bad attitude? (Selfish, hateful, stingy, mean, etc.)
- What makes us have a bad attitude?
- What makes us have a good attitude?
- Do you think God knows about our attitudes?
- What do you think makes God happy?
- Does it make you happy to please God?

There is a special kind of happiness that comes when we know that God is pleased with us. So, Jesus took His disciples up on a hillside and taught them about the 8 kinds of attitudes that please God. We call these the beatitudes, or the "Be-attitudes."

The first four beatitudes describe the kind of attitudes that make our relationship with God happier. The other four beatitudes describe the kind of attitudes that make our friendships with others happier.

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5.

Matthew 5:1-2

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, (2) and he began to teach them.

First Beatitude—Poor in Spirit

[Teacher, write the attitudes on the board as you go through the verses.]

Matthew 5:3

*“God blesses those who are **poor** and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*

If you look down through verses 3 through 10, you’ll see that each beatitude starts with the words “God *blesses*”. So, this verse is saying that God will bless you if you are poor. Now Jesus was not talking about how much money you have or don’t have. He was talking about being “poor” in a spiritual way.

- What does it mean to be poor? (To be poor is to be needy. You don’t have something you need.)
- What does it mean to be poor in spirit? (It means you know you need Jesus—you are lost without Him.)

God is holy and pure. He cannot have anything that is not holy and pure in His presence. Because you are a sinner, you cannot come into His presence. When you realize that you are separated from God because of your sin, you understand you are “poor in spirit”. It is at this point you are ready to ask Jesus to forgive your sins. When you do that, the Scripture says you become a child of God. You become “born again”.

What is the blessing God promises when you realize that you are “poor in spirit” and ask Jesus to forgive your sins? The scripture says, *“for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”*

Once you realize your need for God, and come to Him and ask Him to forgive your sins, you receive the right to go to Heaven when you die.

So, the first kind of attitude that pleases God, is knowing in your heart that you are *poor in spirit*. That is the beginning of your walk with God.

Second Beatitude—Being truly sorry for our sins

- What makes you sad? (Not getting something you really want?)
- Have you ever felt a deep pain in your heart when something really sad happened?
- What do you think makes God sad? (It hurts God when we are naughty.)

Let’s look at the next beatitude...

Matthew 5:4

*God blesses those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.*

The word “*mourn*” means to be extremely sad over something; to grieve, like how you would feel if someone you love died. What Jesus is saying is that it really pleases God when you grieve over your sin.

This is the second attitude that we need to have in order to receive blessings from God. It pleases Him when we are truly sorry for hurting Him.

What is the blessing God promises if you mourn over your sin? The scripture says, *“for they will be comforted.”*

If we are truly sorry for our sins, God will comfort us. The Bible tells us, “If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9)

Even though our sin separates us from God, He wants us to be close to Him. That’s why He’s so willing to forgive us. He’s just waiting for us to come running to Him whenever we know we’ve done something naughty. Whenever we sin, we must ask God to cleanse us from within—cleanse our hearts and spirits—and give us new thoughts and desires.

So, the second kind of attitude that pleases God is being truly sorry for our sins. If you are truly sorry when you sin, God promises to

forgive you. Isn't it a comfort to know that He still loves us and has forgiven us?

Third Beatitude—Being humble

- Do you ever get angry when you don't get your way?
- Do you ever want to be first or get the best for yourself?
- How about when there's a great big gooey chocolate cake? Do you ever want the biggest piece?
- How about if you were punched in the nose, would you want to hit back? What do you think God would want you to do?

Let's look at the next beatitude...

Matthew 5:5

*God blesses those who are **humble**, for they will inherit the whole earth.*

- What do you think it means to be humble?

The dictionary defines *humble* as having a modest opinion of yourself; not thinking you are more important than other people. A humble person is gentle and patient; not demanding their own way.

This is the third attitude that we need to have in order to receive blessings from God. Jesus is saying, "God blesses those who are humble or who have gentle patient spirits."

Have you ever been around someone who is a "know-it-all?" They seem cocky, don't they? I don't like to be around someone who is always thinking of themselves and trying to impress people, do you?

Have you ever met a humble person? What was he like?

You have to choose to be humble, and this takes great strength of character. To be humble means to stop putting ourselves before others; to stop demanding our own way. Letting your friend be first.

What is the promised blessing in this beatitude? The scripture says, "*for they shall inherit the whole earth*".

This is total appreciation for your life here on earth. We could read this verse like this, "*Happy are the humble for they shall appreciate the world around them.*"

You see, when we humble out and begin to take our eyes off of ourselves, we start enjoying everyone and everything around us. That's when we get the most out of life. And, we look forward to being with Jesus in the life to come.

So, the third kind of attitude that pleases God is being humble. To be truly happy we must become humble and stop trying to be the center of attention.

Fourth Beatitude—Wanting to do what is right and good

Have you ever been so hungry that you felt you could not wait until time for dinner? Or so thirsty that you felt you must have a cold drink right now? Some people have those same cravings for the things of this world. Some people think money will satisfy. Others think they need pleasure.

But, have you ever noticed that even if you eat to the point that you hurt, you always get hungry again? And, you never seem to have enough money or time to do fun things. That's the problem with earthly things; they never really satisfy you permanently.

Matthew 5:6

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

Let's try to understand what Jesus is telling us here. We know what it is to be hungry and thirsty for food, but what does it mean to be hungry and thirsty for justice?

Just as your body needs food and water, the inner you (your soul and spirit) needs something to satisfy it, too. Jesus says the only thing that can satisfy your inner hunger and thirst is justice; that is, doing right in God's eyes. Jesus is saying that you will be truly happy when you hunger and thirst for what is right and good; that is, if you really earnestly desire to do the proper thing.

You could say the verse this way, "*Happy are those who long to be just and good for they shall be completely satisfied.*"

What is the blessing God promises if you *hunger and thirst for justice*? The scripture says, "*for they will be satisfied.*"

Jesus is saying that if you long to be good, you'll be filled with the knowledge of God's love for you and you'll be happy and completely satisfied deep down in your heart and soul.

Do you really want to do what is right and good? What's the best way to know what the right thing to do is? If you hunger and thirst after justice, you will read God's Word and pray. You'll enjoy being with other Christians in church and Sunday school.

How can you tell if you're really hungry and thirsty for justice?

Have you ever been tempted to cheat on a test or to lie about something? Did the Holy Spirit speak to your heart about that being a wrong thing to do? If you knew in your heart and soul that what you were thinking about doing was a sin against a holy God, then you can be sure that you are seeking to please God.

And, as you seek God and do right, you will be blessed with true happiness because you know you are in the center of God's will.

This week we talked about the first four Beatitudes, the one's that make our relationship with God happier. Next week we will learn about the next four beatitudes, the kind of attitudes that make our friendships with other people happier.

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to be pleasing in Your sight. We want to have Godly attitudes so that everything we think or say or do makes You happy. When we know we are pleasing to You we will have true joy deep down in our hearts that no one can ever take away. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

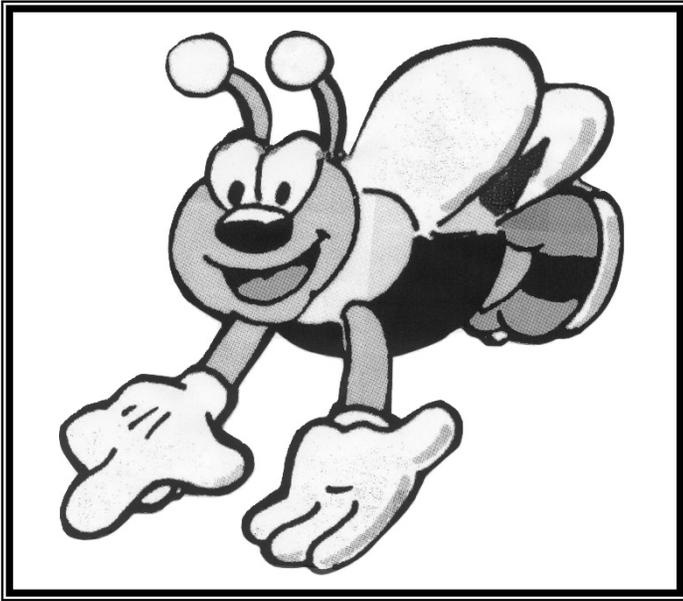
Activities

- Circle the Answers and Match the Attitude word puzzles
- Review with Beatitude Matching Cards. Make flash cards for the beatitudes and their meanings, stick to sticky board as you go through the lesson to facilitate learning.

Game Center

Choose one of the following games:

- **Beatitude Bingo.** (See below for directions and pattern.)
- **Beatitude Concentration.** Using the following graphic, make 2 flash cards for each Beatitude. If a child answers a review question correctly, he has the opportunity to turn over 2 cards, if they match, the child wins points for his team.



Review Questions:

1. Where was Jesus when he taught the Sermon on the Mount? (On a hillside next to the Sea of Galilee.)
2. What is an attitude? (It's a way we show people how we think or feel about something.)
3. What is a beatitude? (They are Godly attitudes or beautiful attitudes, attitudes that should be in all of us.)
4. What does the word "blessed" mean? (Happy)
5. What is the first attitude that is pleasing to God? (Knowing that we are poor in spirit.)
6. What is the meaning of "poor in Spirit"? (Knowing that we are in need of Jesus our Savior.)
7. What is the blessing God promises if you know you are poor in spirit? (The kingdom of God. You become a child of God and get the right to go to heaven.)
8. What is the second attitude that is pleasing to God? (Mourning over our spiritual neediness.)
9. Why does it please God if we "mourn"? (It pleases God if when we are extremely sad about our sin.)
10. What is the blessing God promises if you mourn over your sin? (Comfort.)
11. What is the third attitude that is pleasing to God? (Being gentle or humble.)
12. What does it mean to be meek or gentle? (Putting others first, not demanding our way; not trying to be the center of attention.)
13. What is the blessing God promises if you are meek? (The earth; appreciation for your life here on earth: your health, friends, family, fresh air and sunshine, etc.)
14. What is the fourth attitude that is pleasing to God? (To hunger and thirst for justice.)
15. What does it mean to hunger and thirst for justice? (To have an earnest desire to please God in all that we think, say or do.)
16. What is the blessing God promises if you hunger and thirst for justice? (Complete satisfaction in life; you'll be filled with the knowledge of God's love for you.)

- **Beatitude Bingo.** Call out the words, one-by-one. If a child has that word he places a marker over it. The first child to get a row of markers in any direction is the winner.

Make Bingo cards using the card pattern and the following words:

Beatitude	Blessed	Called Sons of God
Comforted	Compassion	Earth
Grieve	Happy	Hunger & Thirst
Inherit the earth	Jesus	Kingdom of Heaven
Meek	Merciful	Mourn
Obtain Mercy	Peacemakers	Persecuted
Poor in Spirit	Pure in heart	Rejoice
Reward in Heaven	Righteousness	Shall be Filled
Shall See God		

Beatitude BINGO

The following card is an example. Use the blank on the next page to create your own Bingo cards.

Poor in Spirit	Kingdom of Heaven	Mourn	Comforted	Meek
Inherit the Earth	Hunger and Thirst	Shall be Filled	Merciful	Obtain Mercy
Pure in Heart	Shall See God	FREE	Peacemakers	Called Sons of God
Persecuted	Blessed	Beatitude	Rejoice	Reward in Heaven
Jesus	Righteousness	Happy	Compassion	Grieve

Enter words at random into the spaces to create unique Bingo cards for each player. Copy each card onto a different colored card stock and laminate them for future use.

		FREE		

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