

The Beatitudes (Part 2)

(Matthew 5:7-12)

Introduction

Who can remember what we learned about last time? We've been studying *The Beatitudes*. Who can remember what *beatitude* is? A *beatitude* is a beautiful attitude that brings us blessings from God.

Jesus came to teach us how to live our lives in a way that pleases God. Jesus knew that when we know that God is pleased with us, it gives us joy deep in our hearts. So, He took His disciples up on a hillside and taught them about the kinds of attitudes that please God. We call these the beatitudes, or the "Be-Attitudes" – attitudes that ought to be in our hearts.

Last week we learned the first four beatitudes. These are the kind of attitudes that make our relationship with God happier. Today we are going to learn about the other four beatitudes. These are the attitudes that make our friendships with others happier.

Opening Prayer

Thank You, Jesus for Your amazing words that teach us how to live for You. Help each of us to learn and understand the important lessons You taught about heart attitudes. We want to shine for You every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Lesson

Open your bibles to Matthew chapter 5. Look at verses 3 through 11 and notice that each verse starts with the same words: "God blesses those..."

If you want blessings from God, then pay attention. Jesus is about to tell you what you need to do to get blessed by Him.

[Teacher, review the first four beatitudes...]

Fifth Beatitude—Mercy

Matthew 5:7

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

The word "mercy" means "compassion". If you are merciful, you are full of love and compassion towards someone who doesn't deserve it.

People who are *merciful* forgive others and show them kindness even if they are wrong. The merciful unselfishly reach out to help others in need, not expecting anything in return. They don't look down on others or condemn them. The merciful don't keep track of wrong things others do to them.

Here's an example: Have you ever done anything embarrassing in front of people? Has anyone ever made you feel dumb because they laughed at you when you made a mistake? Was that merciful? (No!) What would be the merciful thing for someone to do? (They would have compassion on you and try to comfort you. Maybe they would say, "That's OK; I do that all the time, too!")

To show mercy also means to not punish someone when he deserves it.

For example: What kind of punishment do you get when you do something naughty? Have you ever done something really bad that you know you deserved punishment but your mom or dad let you get off without punishment? We call that **mercy — not getting what you deserve**. [Teacher, write that on the board.] Has anyone ever been merciful to you?

Do you know anyone who deserves to be punished, but instead gets mercy? (We do!) The Lord Jesus took the punishment for your sin and mine when He died on the cross. Don't you think we should show mercy to others because He has been merciful to us?

Have you ever been merciful? Can you think of ways you can be merciful? Being merciful may mean giving some of your allowance to someone who can't pay it back, being a friend to someone whom others laugh at, or being patient with your baby brother when he breaks one of your toys. Jesus will help you to be merciful to others less fortunate than you and to those who hurt or disappoint you.

What is the promise to you if you are merciful to someone? The verse says, "*they will be shown mercy.*" If you show mercy to someone, don't be surprised when they are merciful back to you!

Next time someone does something wrong to you and it's "pay back" time, remember what the Lord has done for you. It will help you to be a little more understanding and forgiving. As you allow God to control your thoughts and attitudes, He will bless you big time.

So, the first attitude that makes your friendships better is mercy.

Sixth Beatitude—Having a pure heart

Matthew 5:8

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

What do you think it means to have a pure heart? (Not holding bad feelings about someone, not holding a grudge in your heart against someone, having right motives, being without deceit.) God wants us to be innocent of all wrong doing.

If someone has sinned against you, Jesus says we need to forgive them, even if they don't deserve it because if you hold unforgiveness in your heart, it can give you a headache or make you sick to your stomach or it can make you cranky. If you don't do something about the grudge you are holding, it can make you bitter and angry. You'll suddenly snap at people for no reason at all and it's hard to sleep at night. You'll toss and turn.

Another way to have an impure heart is by harboring secret sin. When you don't confess your sin and get forgiveness, it can make you just

as bitter and angry and cranky as having unforgiveness towards someone else.

So, the second attitude that makes your friendships better is having a pure heart.

What is the blessing God promises if we stay pure in heart? The verse says, "*for they will see God.*"

When your heart is pure, you can come into His presence in prayer and you will be able to "see" God working in your everyday life.

God desires us to have clean hearts. In fact, it's impossible for us to come into Heaven without clean hearts. God is perfect; He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. But there's a big problem. We are sinners by nature. (Romans 3:23, "*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*")

Not a day goes by that we don't do something wrong. Jesus said that if you've ever been angry at someone, it's as if you murdered him in your heart.

So, how can you clean your heart?

God knows that we cannot make our own hearts clean (Proverbs 20:9; 1 John 1:7). Remember God's bar of soap:

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Seventh Beatitude—Being a peacemaker

Matthew 5:9

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

What do you think it means to "work for peace"?

Let's talk about some ways you can be a peacemaker.

One way you can be a peacemaker is by keeping peace at home by obeying your parents. Have you ever noticed that when you don't obey, your parents get mad, raise their voices, and you end up getting punished? It's better to obey and let peace reign in your home!

You can also be a peacemaker among your friends by being truthful and kind and by letting others have their way. God wants us to love others. No one will want to pick a fight with you if you are loving towards them just like God is with you.

What about if someone tries to start a fight? You need to stay calm and look for ways to come to agreement on things; look for ways to compromise. Sometimes being a peacemaker means you won't get your way. God's kind of love puts other people first.

What is the blessing God promises us if we are peacemakers? The verse says, "*they will be called the children of God.*"

If we allow God to use us as a peacemaker, we will be showing others that we have godly attitudes. We'll be different; we'll be attractive to others. People will know we are Christians because we aren't behaving like everyone else.

So, the third attitude that makes your friendships better is being a peacemaker.

Eighth Beatitude—Standing for truth, no matter what!

Matthew 5:10-12

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. (11) "God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. (12) Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.

The word "persecute" means *to treat harshly or cruelly*.

What do you think this beatitude is saying? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Has anyone ever laughed at you because you wanted to do the "right" thing or to be good or honest? Has anyone tried to make you feel weird for not wanting to laugh at a dirty joke or join in a mean trick? Have you ever been made fun of because you are a Christian?

The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 3:12, "*Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*" That is, they will be treated harshly or cruelly. This is a promise! You can expect it to happen sometime in your life.

Can you be happy when someone makes fun of you for being good?

How would you react if someone made fun of you for being a Christian? [Teacher, allow the children to discuss this issue.]

Jesus is our example to live by. He never did a wrong thing. He never had a bad thought. He was always kind and loving towards people. He did all kinds of good things for people. He healed the lame and made the blind to see. But the Jews hated Him. They got hold of Him and whipped Him and pushed a crown of thorns down on His head. They put a purple robe on Him and made fun of Him. Then they forced Him to carry a heavy wooden cross up a mountain where they hung Him by nails.

Why did the Jews do that? (They were jealous of Him. They were afraid that Jesus would take their power away in the government.) What was Jesus' reaction to the persecution He received? He was merciful. He asked the Father to forgive them; He said they didn't know what they were doing. He showed love and compassion right up to the end.

What is the blessing that God promises those who are persecuted for being a Christian? (*Yours is the kingdom of heaven; a great reward awaits you in heaven.*)

When people laugh at you or even try to hurt you for doing right, think of the happy days to come in Heaven. God wants us to make a stand for righteousness. He doesn't want us to be afraid of ridicule for being godly. Troubles may last for a while here on earth, but Heaven will be forever and ever!

The fourth attitude that makes your friendships better is making a stand for righteousness sake, even if it means you get persecuted.

God expects us to live our lives with the attitudes that we have been learning from the Beatitudes. He wants us to be humble and to seek to live right. We need to make right choices even when our friends are tempting us not to. We need to ask God to give us the desire in our heart to live godly lives and the strength to make godly choices in our behavior. [Teacher, review verse for today.]

Closing Prayer

Father, we want to live our lives in such a way that it brings You all the honor You deserve. We also want our lives to look attractive to others so that they, too, will want to come to know You and love You in the way that we do. Please control our thoughts and feelings. Give us the power we need to make right choices even when we are tempted not to. 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 Lesson #15 for directions and pattern.)
- **Beatitude Concentration** (See Lesson #15 for directions and pattern. Use the following review questions.)

Review Questions:

1. What is a beatitude? (They are Godly attitudes or beautiful attitudes - types of attitudes that should be in all of us.)
2. The first four Beatitudes teach us four attitudes that make our relationships with God happier. What do the last four attitudes teach us? (Four attitudes that make our relationships with others happier.)
3. What is at least one attitude that makes your relationships with God happier? (Poor in Spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness.)
4. What is the first attitude that makes our friendships better? (Mercy)
5. What does it mean to be merciful? (to be full of love and compassion towards someone, especially when they don't deserve it.)
6. What is the blessing God promises if you are merciful? (If you show mercy to someone; they'll be merciful back to you.)
7. Can you think of ways you can be merciful? (Being merciful may mean giving some of your allowance to a poor family, being a friend to someone whom others laugh at, or being patient with your brother or sister.)

8. What is the second attitude that makes our friendships better?
(Purity of heart.)
9. What does it mean to have a pure heart? (To be blameless.)
10. What is the blessing God promises if you stay pure in heart?
(You'll get to come into the presence of God the moment we die.)
11. How do you keep your heart pure as you live day-by-day?
(Confess your sin to God and He'll forgive you.)
12. What's the third attitude that makes our friendships better?
(Peacemaker.)
13. How can you be a Peacemaker? (To be truthful and kind and by letting others have their way.)
14. What is the blessing God promises if you are a peacemaker?
(You'll be called a 'son of God,' that is, a Christian.)
15. What are some ways you can be a peacemaker? (Obey parents, be truthful and kind to others.)
16. What is the fourth attitude that makes our friendships better?
("Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness sake")
17. What does it mean to be persecuted for righteousness sake? (To be treated harshly for making a stand for righteousness.)
18. What is the blessing God promises if you are willing to do right even if it means you'll be persecuted? (You will be rewarded greatly in heaven.)
19. Can you be happy when someone makes fun of you for being good? (Yes, but we'll need to ask God for help.)

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