

20260118 Kingdom Living – Ps Bijoy

Today we will be preaching from the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5:1–16.

Before getting into the Scripture, we need to understand two main points.

For many mainstream scholars, when studying the Beatitudes, it must be interpreted according to Jesus' original intention, or else we will find ourselves going contrary to His objective for establishing the kingdom of heaven on earth.

These points are:

1. Jesus' Beatitudes are statements of grace, not law. We must not conclude that Jesus is calling His listeners to a meritorious attempt at earning salvation by living out these character qualities in order to enter the kingdom.
2. We must avoid making the Beatitudes into burdensome ethical demands on those who are members of the kingdom. There are no imperatives here except to "rejoice" when one experiences the blessing of God in the middle of persecution (Matthew 5:12).

Let us read the Scripture:

*5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him,² and He began to teach them. He said: **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.⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled..."*

In the first Beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus begins addressing spiritual poverty. He is not merely talking about a material lacking but about recognising our own emptiness before God, our inability to save ourselves, and our desperate need for

Him. Transformation begins when we recognise our own spiritual destitution (when we self-reflect in humility, poverty so extreme that we lack the means to provide for ourselves) and we turn to Christ. God's promise attached to this humility is profound: the kingdom of heaven. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20–21).

Transformation begins when God rules in our hearts, and it culminates in the eternal reward of heaven. To follow Christ, we start by acknowledging our own poverty in spirit, our need for His mercy and grace.

In the second Beatitude: *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Mourning here is both a physical grief of loss and the spiritual mourning over sin and separation from God. Life will bring suffering, and sometimes that suffering shapes our character as God forges us under pressure. But there is also mourning that comes from a repentant heart. Transformed by the Holy Spirit, we grieve over sin, over the many times we fail to meet God's standard. The promise to this mourning is comfort. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that God comforts us in all our troubles so that we, in turn, can comfort others.

As Bijoy introduced, I am currently working towards my PhD, and if you asked me six years ago where I would be today, I would have no idea how to answer. You see, all throughout high school I had a huge video game addiction. I would game every day and could not concentrate on studying. When I went to university, because of that addiction, I failed many papers and dropped out of engineering. In that moment, I felt lost, grief, mourning, and a hopelessness for the future. In that valley of my life, where I felt broken, God found me and met me there. The people that disciplined me and the various church ministries (the Word, the worship) drew me out of the cycles of anxiety and depression.

Mourning leads to a deeper dependence on God, and because of that experience, I can extend that same compassion God showed me into the lives of others who face similar struggles.

In the third Beatitude: *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*

In the Bible, meekness is not the same as weakness. It is not thinking less of ourselves but thinking of ourselves less. When we say, “the meek,” we are talking about those who submit to God’s authority, those who consider others above themselves, and those who allow God to direct their lives. Jesus Himself exemplified this meekness, yet we can all say with confidence that there was nothing weak about Him. The promise given here is the inheritance of the earth. This is very different from what the world teaches and represents today. We are taught that to be successful in this world; we must exert our ego (our personality) onto the world and wrestle it into our control. The world today is tremendously selfish. Everything is about the outside appeal and actions we do in public. But the Bible teaches us we must have total dependence on God and the Spirit. For God does not look at the outside but at our hearts.

In the fourth Beatitude: *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*

This is a turning point in the Beatitudes: after emptying ourselves in humility, mourning, and meekness, we now reach out for fullness in God’s righteousness to fill us. In the historical context of this Scripture, we read that in those days there was self-righteousness, the kind that the Pharisees pursued: obeying rules to elevate themselves above others. But God calls us to hunger for His righteousness. This is a gift freely given, imputed to us not through any of our own means but through Christ. We are filled with righteousness not by our own efforts but by Christ, who became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God.

God promises that when we live a life that hungers for His righteousness, we will be satisfied, for He is faithful to fill those who seek Him. Just like food and water, we must maintain a daily hunger for righteousness, a deep hunger for the intimacy of Christ.

These four Beatitudes show an overview of how, as Christians, our heart's posture should be. It began with a declaration of our need for salvation, to a call of action on how we as believers should spiritually satisfy our hunger. For this next part, as we dive further into the Beatitudes, as we listen to the Word, I invite you all to reflect on your own journey with God and how He has transformed our lives.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. 8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:6–11, NIV).

In the fifth Beatitude: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

Mercy is receiving what we do not deserve and giving that same mercy to others. We have been recipients of God's mercy through Christ, and now He calls us to extend it. To withhold mercy while having received it is both hypocritical and judgmental. Again, mercy is not evading the consequences, but even when others face consequences for what they did, we still pray and ask God for restoration in their life. True discipleship shows mercy because we know what we have been shown. Jesus promises that those who extend mercy will themselves receive it, reflecting God's character to the world.

In the sixth Beatitude: *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

Purity of heart is internal, not merely outward compliance. It is definitely not people-pleasing, nor doing something to win others. The Pharisees focused on ritual cleanliness, but God looks at the heart. He desires inward transformation. Faith in Christ brings purification from the inside out, cleansing our hearts from sin. This is a gift from God, yet we are called to live in continued purity, honouring Him in every thought, motive, and action. The promise is intimate fellowship with God. One day, we will see Him face to face, the ultimate joy of the believer.

In the seventh Beatitude: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

Peacemakers do more than avoid conflict; they actively bring good, correction, reconciliation, and harmony where there is discord. They do so without compromising truth or engaging in evil. God Himself is the ultimate peacemaker, reconciling humanity to Himself through the cross. When we make peace in His ways, reflecting His character, we are called His children. The promise here is relational: the recognition of being part of God's family, living in alignment with His heart for creation.

In the eighth Beatitude: *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Following Christ means expecting opposition. While we may not face the harsh persecution believers endure worldwide, Jesus calls us to be prepared for challenges because of our faith. This Beatitude is amplified in verses 11 and 12: when others revile or falsely accuse us for Christ's sake, we are to rejoice, for our reward is great in heaven. Even the prophets and apostles faced persecution, and so will His followers. The kingdom of heaven is promised to those who endure for righteousness, reminding us to keep our eyes fixed vertically—towards heaven—on eternal reality, rather than horizontally on worldly comforts.

Conclusion

In these eight Beatitudes, Jesus gives us a lifestyle that defines His followers. The Beatitudes are not optional; they are markers of the Christian life. They shape how we relate to God, to others, and to the world. As followers of Christ, we are invited into a life that is counterintuitive, counter-cultural, and revolutionary. In this, we discover that the path to true happiness is found through surrender, dependence on God, and obedience from the heart.

The Beatitudes also teach us to live a Christlike life. Mourning leads to compassion, mercy leads to extending grace, peace-making leads to reflecting God's family, and enduring persecution deepens our commitment to Christ. These promises are not merely theory; they are lived realities that shape our hearts, our communities, and our witness to the world. To walk in the Beatitudes is to participate in God's kingdom now, even as we await His return.

The ultimate reward of living in these ways is the kingdom of heaven, both present and future. God rules within us now, shaping our lives and guiding our actions. One day, we will experience the fullness of His reign in eternity, standing in His presence, seeing Him as He is. Therefore, we are called to fix our gaze on the Lord, to focus on the ultimate reward of Christ Himself, and not to get too comfortable with the fleeting comforts of this world. The world cannot save; the joy of salvation is found only in the Lord. We are to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who strengthens us each step of the way. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:16–17, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."