

# Experiencing Kingdom Blessings

Kingdom Living #1 - Pastor Gary Combs - March 23, 2025 - Matthew 5:1-12

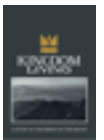
**INTRO:** Good morning church! We're beginning a new sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expositional study of Christ's Sermon On the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived. This is certainly true. For this sermon is not just a collection of wise sayings; it is a call by King Jesus to live under the rule and reign of King Jesus! It describes what life looks like in His kingdom—a kingdom that is radically different from the culture of this world. In these 3 chapters, Jesus turns worldly wisdom upside down. Indeed, as John Stott wrote (Stott, *The Message of the Sermon On the Mount*):

"The Sermon on the Mount is the most complete description anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counter-culture. Here is a Christian value system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, lifestyle and network of relationships – all of which are totally at odds with those of the non-Christian world. And this Christian counter-culture is the life of the kingdom of God, a fully human life indeed but lived out under the divine rule." — John Stott

So in this sermon, Jesus was announcing a new way of life, one that was a "counter-culture" to the world! But we must not misunderstand the Sermon as some external law-keeping way to earn kingdom citizenship by our own effort. No, it is as D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote (Lloyd-Jones, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*):

"In other words, we are not told in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Live like this and you will become Christian'; rather we are told, 'Because you are Christian live like this.' This is how Christians ought to live; this is how Christians are meant to live." — D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

This is why we're calling our sermon series, KINGDOM LIVING. It's because in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed how Christians are meant to live in the kingdom of God. So I hope you picked up a copy of our study booklet for this 16-week series. You'll want to study the introductory material we've written and collect your notes and insights together in this booklet.



We want to be careful as we follow this Sermon that we stay on the path of grace, while avoiding the two ditches on either side of earning and idealizing. For it is not to be followed as earning, saying, "Live like this and you will become Christian." Nor is it to be viewed as so idealized, so utopian as to be impossible to follow, its demands unrealistic for this age. No, the Sermon is for believers in this age. For the Kingdom of God is at hand. The Kingdom of Heaven has already come to those who have received and believed in Jesus as King!

**Trans:** So how does King Jesus begin this sermon? He begins with a declaration of the blessings that belong to the citizens of God's kingdom. He begins with the Beatitudes, which comes from the Latin word for blessing, *beatus*. He speaks of this blessing not as a subjective thing as in "I feel happy." It is more than an emotion. It is as an objective reality of being truly blessed by God. For the citizens of God's kingdom, having been redeemed by Christ and brought into His kingdom, have come under His state of blessing. This is a state of deep spiritual joy and divine favor that comes from living in alignment with God's will and purposes as we follow and become more like Jesus. It goes beyond just happiness in a worldly sense, encompassing a profound inner peace, joyful contentment, and complete fulfillment that comes from living under and by God's grace.

**Need:** Do you know this state of blessing that God offers to those who repent of their sins and follow Jesus as King? Or are you still seeking the temporary happiness that the world offers. Happiness depends on favorable "happenings." When circumstances go our way, we feel happy. When they don't, we don't. But true blessing, true joy and contentment, can only be found in Jesus Christ. This is not based on outward circumstances, but on a new and inner state of being, on being born again spiritually, so that we become citizens of God's kingdom and live under this new and objective state of blessing!

**Trans:** Do you want to experience these kingdom blessings?

**BODY:** In the gospel of Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus began His Sermon on the Mount by declaring the blessings of those who live as citizens of God's kingdom. We can experience the blessings of living as citizens of God's kingdom. How can we experience the blessings of living as citizens of God's kingdom? The text gives **three ways** we can experience the blessings of living as citizens of God's kingdom.

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**Read text:** Matthew 5:1-12 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. <sup>2</sup> And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: <sup>3</sup> "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup> "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. <sup>5</sup> "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup> "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. <sup>7</sup> "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. <sup>8</sup> "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. <sup>9</sup> "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. <sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

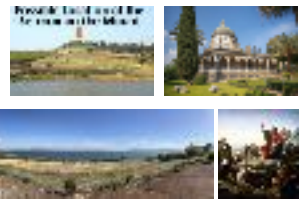
## HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE BLESSINGS OF KINGDOM CITIZENS:

### 1. Understand the paradox of kingdom blessings.

**EXP:** (1-6) The first 4 beatitudes (3-6) are all paradoxical, they turn worldly thinking upside down. The "poor in spirit" (3) get the "kingdom of heaven." Those who mourn get "comforted" (4), the meek "inherit the earth" (5), and the hungry and thirsty are "satisfied" (6). These 4 are all paradoxical. They are other-worldly!

**"Seeing the crowds" (1)** - the multitudes, crowds. Seeing them, he moved up to be seen and heard.

**"Mountain" (1)** - where we get the title: "Sermon on the Mount," which was first called so by Augustine. The supposed location is above the North shore of the Sea of Galilee. The Church of the Beatitudes stands on the site. The sloping terrain created a natural amphitheater, allowing Jesus' voice to carry to a large audience. Seating Himself on the mount, allowed the crowd to see Him too. Inside the church hangs a beautiful painting by Carl Bloch.



**"Taught" (2)** (διδάσκω, *didaskō*) - to teach, to hold discourse. Just as Moses brought the Old Covenant down from Mt. Sina and taught the people, so Jesus brings the New Covenant from this Mount in Galilee.

**"Blessed" (3-11; 9x)** (μακάριος, *makarios*) - supremely blest, fortunate, well off, blessed. "The word differs from that used in Matthew 23:39 (*eulogeō*); as expressing a permanent state of felicity, rather than the passive reception of a blessing bestowed by another." — Ellicott's Commentary

**"Poor in spirit" (3)** (πτωχός, *ptōchos*) - a spiritual beggar. The poor in spirit "cry out to God for help, depend entirely on God's grace to meet their needs, have a humble and contrite spirit, experience God's deliverance, and enjoy His underserved favor" (Charles Quarles, *Sermon*, 43). Spiritually bankrupt.

**"Kingdom of heaven" (3,10 - 2x)** - Also, the "Kingdom of God," is God's sovereign reign and rule over all creation, which is both a present spiritual reality and a future physical fulfillment. It is inaugurated through Christ's first coming, advances as people submit to His lordship, and will be fully realized when Christ returns to establish His eternal reign. The kingdom is characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit and is entered through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

Where is the Kingdom? Jesus said it's "at hand" (Matt 4:17), that it "has come upon you" (Matt 12:28), it's "in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21), that it's "coming" (Matt 6:10). Simply put: Wherever Christ is King!

What is the Kingdom like? Jesus said it's like a "mustard seed" (Matt 13:31-32). It starts small but grows large. It's like "leaven" in dough (Matt 13:33). It works invisibly but transforms. It's like a "hidden treasure" (Matt. 13:44). It's worth everything you have to obtain!

**"Mourn" (4)** (πενθέω, *pentheō*) - to grieve, mourn. "Deep grief over sin" (Akin). Quoting Isa. 61:1-2...

Isaiah 61:1-2 (ESV) The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor... to comfort all who mourn

**"Comforted" (4)** (παρακαλέω, *parakaleō*) - to call to one's side; to console, to comfort. By Jesus.

**"Meek" (5)** (πραῦς, *praus*) - gentleness of spirit, meekness. Like a child, depending on God for all things.

**"Inherit the earth" (5)** (κληρονομέω, *klēronomeō*) - to inherit. Here Jesus quotes Psa. 37:11...

Psalms 37:11 (ESV) But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.

**"Hunger and thirst" (6)** (πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες, *peivōntes kai dipsōntes*) - to crave ardently, to seek with eager desire. Fig., a deep longing for God and His righteousness. A desire to be right with God.

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**“Righteousness” (6)** (δικαιοσύνη, *dikaïosynē*) - in a broad sense: state of him who is as he ought to be, righteousness, the condition acceptable to God. Right with God.

**“Satisfied” (6)** (χορτάζω, *chortazō*) - to fill, satisfy. In Christ, this desire is fully satisfied.

**ARG:** **We are to be different than the world, not conforming, but being transformed by God and His Word.**

Romans 12:2 (ESV) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect..

**ILL:** When Paul and Silas preached in Thessalonica, the Jews were jealous and turned the city authorities against them saying, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also” (Acts 17:6). That’s what the gospel of the Kingdom is doing, it’s turning the world upside down, which is really right side up from heaven’s perspective.

**APP:** Do you understand these four blessings? They may seem paradoxical from the world’s perspective, but from God’s, they are a mark of His Kingdom citizens and the blessed state they live in. The world sees these qualities as weaknesses, but Jesus calls them blessings:

- “Blessed are the poor in spirit” – True blessing begins with broken humility before God.
- “Those who mourn” – True blessing comes through godly sorrow over sin.
- “The meek” – True blessing is found in surrendering our strength to depend on God’s.
- “Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” – True blessing is a deep longing for God’s ways.

## 2. Pursue the practices of kingdom blessings.

**EXP:** (7-9) The next 3 beatitudes flow out of the previous 4. Indeed, all 8 seem to move step by step, each building on the previous. However, these 3 are not paradoxical, but more direct. They appear as grace-received practices of the redeemed. They speak of 3 practices: being “merciful” (7), “pure in heart,” (8), and “peacemakers” (9).

**“Merciful” (7)** (ἐλεήμων, *eleēmōn*) - compassionate (actively), merciful. Willing to forgive others: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matt. 6:12). “Mercy comes from mercy. Our mercy to each other comes from God’s mercy to us.” — John Piper

**“Pure in heart” (8)** (καθαρός, *katharos*) - clean, pure; ethically: free from corrupt desire, from sin and guilt. To be pure in heart is to have a dirty heart made clean by God. As David prayed:

Psalm 51:10 (ESV) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

**“See God” (8)** (ὀπτάνομαι, *optanomai*) - to look at, behold. “Only the pure in heart will see God, see him now with the eye of faith and see his glory in the life of the world to come, for only the utterly sincere can bear the dazzling vision in whose light the darkness of deceit must vanish and by whose fire all pretence is burned up.” (Stott, 51).

**“Peacemakers” (9)** (εἰρηνοποιός, *eirēnopoios*) - pacificatory, (subjectively) peaceable, peacemaker.

**“Sons of God” (9)** (υἱός, *huios*) - a son, children of God. For they are doing as the Father has done.

**ARG:** **We are to pursue what?**

Romans 14:19 (ESV) So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

**ILL:** Our hearts are like a well or a spring of water. Jesus said, “For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of” (Matt 12:34). When we live with mercy, purity, and a spirit of reconciliation, we become like a fresh spring, bringing life to those around us.

**APP:** Those who live under God’s blessing have these character traits:

“Blessed are the merciful” – True blessing is found in extending God’s mercy and forgiveness to others.

“Blessed are the pure in heart” – True blessing comes from a heart fully devoted to God and His people.

“Blessed are the peacemakers” – True blessing is bringing reconciliation through Christ.

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## 3. Pay the price of kingdom blessings.

**EXP:** (10-12) Kingdom living invites worldly opposition, but the blessing of eternal rewards await. This is the 8th and final beatitude. Verses 11-12 are an expansion on it. Once again, it seems paradoxical: “Be happy when people persecute you.” But that’s the wrong sense of the phrase. It’s actually more like: “You are under God’s blessing when you’re being persecuted on account of Jesus, so rejoice and be glad.”

“**Persecuted**” (10; 3x) (διώκω, *diōkō*) - in any way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one; to persecute, to be mistreated, suffer persecution on account of something.

“**Righteousness’ sake**” (10) - Christ specifies the object of persecution here, we could be persecuted for any number of reasons and some could have nothing to do with faith. Christ is making a promise to those who suffer for righteousness’ sake. Peter makes this clear:

1 Peter 2:20 (NIV) But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.

“**Revile you**” (11) (ὀνειδίζω, *oneidizō*) - to reproach, revile. Call by evil and contemptuous names; ridicule.

“**Utter all kinds of evil**” (11) (ψεύδομαι, *pseudomai*) - to lie, to speak deliberate falsehoods; lie about.

“**On my account**” (11) (ἕνεκα, *heneka*) - on account of, for the sake of, for this cause. Again the blessing is for those who are receiving this sort of persecution because of their faith in Jesus.

“**Rejoice and be glad**” (12) (χαίρω, *chairō*) (ἀγαλλιάω, *agalliaō*) - two imperative verbs seemingly increasing in their value: rejoice, yes, rejoice exceedingly, be glad, exult.

“**Reward is great in heaven**” (12) (μισθός, *misthos*) - wages, reward: used of the fruit naturally resulting from toils and endeavours. The eternal reward will greatly outweigh the temporary trouble.

**ARG:** Kingdom living necessarily will bring persecution.

2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV) Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

**ILL:** According to the World Watch List put out by Open Doors International, 1 in 7 Christians are persecuted, 1 in 5 are in Africa, 2 in 5 are in Asia. Last year, 4,478 were murdered, 7,679 churches attacked, and 4,744 are in prison for their faith. David Curry, president of Open Doors says: ‘You might think the [list] is all about oppression. ... But the [list] is really all about resilience. The numbers of God’s people who are suffering should mean the Church is dying—that Christians are keeping quiet, losing their faith, and turning away from one another. But that’s not what’s happening. Instead, in living color, we see the word of God going forth!’”



As the 2nd century Church Father Tertullian said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

**APP:** Kingdom living invites worldly opposition, but the blessing of eternal rewards await. Are you willing to pay the price of being a kingdom citizen in this world? Those who do live under God’s blessing now and more in the future.

**CONCLUSION:** Do you want to live under God’s blessing, experiencing the deep spiritual joy and divine favor that comes from living in alignment with God’s will and purposes? You can. These 8 beatitudes are a portrait of Jesus. We can look at the Beatitudes and see Jesus. We can look at the Beatitudes and see who we’re becoming as we believe and follow and grow in Him!

**In Christ, we can...**

- 1) Understand the paradox of kingdom blessings.
- 2) Pursue the practice of kingdom blessings.
- 3) Pay the price of kingdom blessings.

Let’s pray.