

BIRTHMARKS OF THE BELIEVER  
(Introduction to the Beatitudes)

*First Person*

*Why this Series?*

INTRODUCTION: ① The most obvious feature of the church today is its superficiality. This is true not only in the evangelistic sense but in the life of the church in general; especially in matters of holiness, sanctification, brotherly love and unity. The main cause of this is our attitude towards the Bible. We take it literally but fail to take it seriously. We refuse to let it affect our lives. We rebel at it when it seeks to change our lives, thoughts, ambitions, and seeks to destroy our prejudices.

*Means of Revival*

② There is nothing that will tear away the shallowness and superficiality of our lives as will the Sermon on the Mount. The Beatitudes form the basis of the teachings of Jesus in the following chapters. They are the indispensable preface to the rest of the sermon, to its practical demands--they are the Key to the Kingdom. That which follows is a closed book until we have mastered this opening page.

③ The Sermon on the Mount is the most misunderstood sermon that was ever preached. When Jesus spoke these words the twelve were already appointed as Apostles and many others were following Him. The Sermon is addressed to them. It was spoken into the ear of the church and overheard by the world. It is not describing how to be saved but is describing the character of the saved. Jesus is describing the kind of person needed in His kind of world. Christianity is a new atmosphere and it takes new men to live it. This is the description of one person, not different types of people. This is a complete portrait of one person.

④ The Beatitudes are nothing more than the reflections of Jesus' own character. Jesus stands as the perfect example of every Beatitude. He is the Beatitudes in human form. Jesus is imparting Himself to us--this is God's image in Man.

*Second Great Commandment: Love*

⑤ The Beatitudes are the result of being born again. They are the Birthmarks of the Believer. Every person who is born again will have these characteristics. This is for us today. The only one who can practice the Sermon is a person who is obedient to the King.

⑥ This picture of the true citizen of God's kingdom is in striking contrast to the popular dreams of a political re-birth of the nation and of a Kingdom of God erected on the necks on the conquered Roman oppressors. To the enthusiastic revolutionists the Beatitudes would be like a dash of cold water. Not the rich, the rejoicing and proud, not conquering warriors nor popular heroes, are the happy in the Kingdom of God, but these--the poor, the mourning and meek, the peacemakers and the persecuted. Jesus is thinning the ranks of the crowds following Him. The time had come to make clear the meaning of discipleship and to define the Kingdom of Christ over against the popular notion of the people--the same is needed today.

⑦ Each description begins with "Blessed." Here we face the problem of the change in the meaning of words. "Blessed" has become a sanctimonious, musty, remote word. Happy suggests a state too superficial and lighthearted to convey the idea. Happiness depends on the things that happen to us. Blessedness is deeper, it is a matter of character. It can transmute what happens.

*Jesus had more subtractions than additions*

*Sifting*



8 The word used is not the usual word for happiness; this word, signifies the attainment of life's ideal--it is the highest stage of joy. Jesus is offering congratulations. The man who lives like this is getting the best out of life, living the kind of life that is really worth while.

9 Poets, philosophers and religious teachers of all generations have asked the question of how to get the most out of life. Who is the happy man? Who understands the secret of true living? What kind of life is worth living?

10 Happiness is the great question confronting mankind. That is where the utter deceitfulness of sin comes in; it is always offering happiness, and it always leads to unhappiness and to final and wretchedness. Here is Jesus' answer.

11 Jesus places the emphasis on inwardness--on being rather than doing. The tragic condition of the world is due to what men are--the condition of the heart. It is not what you do--but what you are. The Christian is to be free from malice as well as murder. He is to flee lustful thoughts as well as adultery.

Our relation to the Beatitudes is as follows:

I. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE LIKE THIS.

*no standards all are to be holy*

They are Christ's description of every single Christian.

1. A disciple is not a superior brand of Christian, it is the only brand of Christian.

2. There is a fatal tendency in the church--started by the Catholics--to divide the Christians into two groups--the religious and the laity, exceptional Christians and ordinary. The New Testament does not teach this--there is meant to be no difference. These Beatitudes are incumbent on all; don't excuse yourself, saying that you are satisfied the way you are.

II. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE MEANT TO MANIFEST ALL OF THESE CHARACTERISTICS

Each Beatitude of necessity implies the other.

III. THE BEATITUDES DO NOT REFER TO A NATURAL TENDENCY.

1. Each of them is wholly a disposition which is produced by grace alone and to the operation of the Holy Spirit within us.

2. Reveals the necessity of the New Birth--these Beatitudes crush us to the ground, they show our utter helplessness.

IV. THESE CLEARLY INDICATE THE ESSENTIAL, UTTER DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHRISTIAN AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN.

1. Today the difference has become blurred the world has come into the church, and the church has become worldly.

2. The glory of the Gospel is that when the church is absolutely different from the world, she attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hurt at first. This is how revival comes. Our ambition is to be like Christ, not like the world.

- (1) They are different in what they admire--poverty, meekness, etc.
- (2) They are different in what they seek--hunger and thirst after righteousness.
- (3) They are different in what they do,

V. THE CHRISTIAN AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN BELONG TO TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT REALMS.

We are in the kingdom of Heaven--Christ's rule in your life.  
Where Christ is, there the Kingdom is. Do we belong to this Kingdom? Are we ruled by Christ? is He our King and Lord?

*Beings subs - belong to a different kingdom*

CONCLUSION: Some think that Christianity goes but to do the work of salvage on the red fields of battle, picking up the wounded and helpless, and giving them a quiet place of rest--. These Beatitudes were not offered by way of solace for the defeated. They seem at first to offer a consolation prize for the defeated, a comfort for the heartbroken, a message for those who have failed in the struggle of life. Not so--they were spoken to a group of strong, virile men whom Christ was sending out to turn the world upside down in His Name. They are a gauntlet flung down before the world's accepted standards. They become clearer when they are set over against their opposites:

poor in spirit----proud in spirit  
mourn-----lightheaded, always bent on pleasure  
meek----agressive  
persecuted--"play it safe" and compromise.

Your reaction to these Beatitudes proclaim exactly what you are.  
If you do not like this type of character you are not a citizen of God's kingdom--let every man examine himself.



- 2-5-61 - Valley View Bapt. Dallas, Texas  
 9-18-62 Immanuel Bapt - Wagoner, Okla.  
 1-14-63 Immanuel Bapt - El Dorado, Ark.  
 3-11-63 Bluffview Bapt - Fort Smith, Ark.  
 3-18-63 - FBC, Minco, Okla.  
 4-1-63 Oak Cliff Bapt. Ft. Smith, Ark.  
 8-18-64 - Munger Place Bapt - Dallas, Texas  
 10-5-64 - FBC - Pica Ridge, Arkansas  
 7-12-65 - FBC - Bells, Texas  
 10-17-65 - Munger Place - Dallas

Beggar - one who depends on others for his needs, his very life.

Beggar never puts up a front. People with little will go into debt to put up a front, pretend to be rich, something they are not. A Beggar knows if he did that, he would starve. His very existence depends on his being honest about condition.

If an insane man is beside himself, a proud man is inside himself.