

The Heart We Need

Matthew 5:1-12

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Introduction:

- For the next several weeks, we're going to be looking at the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7.
 - And in this sermon, we see a picture of what true righteousness looks like.
 - It's a picture of true Christianity.
- And I've titled this series "The Revival We Need", because my hope is that as we look at this sermon, we might gain a renewed passion to serve and love Jesus Christ.
 - Sometimes, in the Christian life:
 - We get distracted by sin.
 - Or we feel stuck and spiritually stagnant.
 - Or we lose motivation.
 - Or sometimes our hearts grow cold.
 - Or we get tired.
 - And so, we need to remember what it means to be a Christian, so we can refocus on God and glorify him.
 - Paul talks about fanning into flame the gift of God.
 - And that's what this sermon does.
 - This sermon leads us to the revival we need in the Christian life.
- Not only that, but as we study the Sermon on the Mount, you may notice how you fall short of what Jesus commands.
 - But the purpose of this sermon isn't to make you feel guilty.
 - Rather it's given to lead you to God's grace.
 - Through this sermon, Jesus is going to say to you, "I know you can't live like this, but because I died for you, because I live in you, this life is possible for you."
 - In other words, it doesn't say, "Live like this, and you'll become a Christian."
 - Rather it says, "Live like this, because you are Christian."
 - And the reason so many Christians fail and feel so defeated, is because they keep relying on their power, and not on God's power.
 - So, instead of despair, this sermon will lead us to trust more in Christ, so we can live in his grace.
 - It'll lead us to trust in the power of the gospel.
- Not only will this sermon lead to renewal, and help us trust more in God's grace, but it also leads us to spiritual blessing.
 - To be blessed in the Bible means that God's favor is over us. It means that you experience divine comfort and peace and joy and mercy.

- When you first become a Christian, you begin to experience God's blessing and joy.
 - But then somewhere along our journey, we may feel that God's blessings are distant from us.
 - But the Christian isn't someone who experiences joy in the beginning and then suffers the rest of his life, or the rest of her life.
 - Rather, the Christian life is supposed to be filled with a lifetime of blessing.
 - David writes in Psalm 23:6, *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life..."*
 - If you're a Christian believer, and you're not experiencing the blessing of God, this sermon will show you how you can once again, experience his blessing.
 - It leads us to deeper joy in the Christian life.
- The Sermon on the Mount leads to revival. It leads to grace. It leads to blessing, and it also is the best way we can draw others to Jesus Christ.
 - Speaking about the need for the Sermon on the Mount, Martin Lloyd Jones writes, "I suggest to you it is the best means of evangelism. Surely we all ought to be urgently concerned about this at the present time. The world today is looking for, and desperately needs, true Christians. I am never tired of saying that what the Church needs to do is not to organize evangelistic campaigns to attract outside people, but to begin herself to live the Christian life," (Lloyd Jones, 1958).
 - Do you see what he's saying?
 - If we want more people to know Christ, then we need to give them a reason to want to know Christ.
 - Let's not let our passion grow cold.
 - Let's not let our sin take our life.
 - Let's not get lazy in living for Christ.
 - Rather, let's show the world the true blessings of following Christ. Let's show the joy, the peace, and the comfort of following Christ.
 - Let's learn to be salt and light to the world.

Why Beatitudes:

- Now, this sermon begins with the beatitudes, or 8 characteristics that describe the Christian believer.
 - In other words, before talking about what we need to do, Jesus begins by talking about the heart we need to have.
 - And here Jesus shows what the inner heart of a Christian looks like.
 - And it's important we look at the heart, because it's possible to do many external things, to even have success in ministry, and not be a true believer.
 - Jesus talks about these people in Matthew 7:22.
 - *"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'"*

And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"

- To make it personal, on the last day, there will be no salvation value in me saying to Jesus, "Look at what I did for you, I helped start a church in the middle of a pandemic, I served as a pastor, I sacrificed everything for you, look at all the stuff I did for you."
 - My position in ministry, all my works, will not count towards my salvation.
 - What will matter is if I'm a new creation in Christ.
 - If these characteristics are true in my heart.
- If we want to live the Christian life, we need to make sure, we have a Christian heart.
 - That's why the Bible says:
 - *"Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves,"* (2 Corinthians 13:5).
 - As we look at these 8 characteristics, let's test ourselves.
 - Let's see if these 8 characteristics are true of us.
 - A friend of mine said that her new dryer stopped working after a while.
 - Well, she failed to empty the lint filter after each use.
 - And it clogged up the dryer.
 - And the filter and vent were filled with lint.
 - She had to clean it out.
 - By the way, I'm not talking about my wife!
 - We need to open the hood and take an in-depth look in our hearts.
 - I know it's a scary thing to do.
 - But it's by testing that we can strengthen our faith and enjoy God's blessing.
- And what we need to understand is that all these are connected to each other.
 - In other words, you can't just say you possess one, or two, or three, and not the others.
 - If you are a Christian, you possess all 8 beatitudes laid out in these verses.
 - Sometimes, one might be stronger than another, but all these are true of every Christian.
 - All these are connected to each other.
- And notice how none of these things are material things.
 - In other words, it doesn't say, "blessed are those who have the best jobs, and financial security, and the perfect family, and the perfect marriage, and the perfect children, and great health, and go to a perfect church."
 - Rather, it speaks about being poor in spirit. It speaks about mourning, and mercy, and persecution.
 - If you could make a list of 8 things you really feel would make you happy, what would you put on that list?
 - Would it align with these characteristics?
 - There's nothing wrong with enjoying material success.

- But that's not our primary source of blessing and joy.
- For the Christian believer, our blessing comes from God alone.
- And it's through these 8 characteristics that God leads us to blessing.
- And this morning, we really need to ask ourselves if that's something we truly believe or not.
- And it's when you grow in each of these characteristics you can experience more of God's blessing and joy.
 - All these are true of every believer, but God desires that we grow in them.
 - And as we grow in these, we'll be able to experience more blessings in Christ.
 - Some blessings of God are tied to us, seeking after him.
 - For example, the more you read God's word, the more can you grow in the knowledge of God's truth.
 - And last week, we saw how the Psalmist was confused and distraught, but he entered God's sanctuary, he sought the Lord, and he began to worship and trust the Lord.
 - He sought the Lord, and it led to blessing.
 - And the more you seek after these attitudes, the more you'll find comfort, satisfaction, peace, and blessing in Christ.
 - I can't go through all 8 today, but let's look at the first 4 and we'll at the next 4 next week.

Point 1:

- First, we see how we can find blessing when we recognize our spiritual bankruptcy.
- Jesus says in verse 3, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,"* (Matthew 5:3)
 - Now, what does it mean to be poor in spirit?
 - Jesus isn't commanding us to have low-self-esteem, or to always be down on ourselves, or to have a perpetual sad face, or to have an attitude of, "I can't do anything. I'm a good for nothing."
 - We know this because in other places in the Bible, God commands believers to have joy, to be confident, to speak with boldness, to stand strong in battle.
 - Jesus' is also not commanding us to be materially poor.
 - You can be dirt-poor and still be really prideful.
- Rather, Jesus is saying that true believers are those who are spiritually self-aware.
 - They see how they're spiritually bankrupt.
 - How far they are from God and how they can't offer anything to save themselves.
 - To be poor in spirit is to see how you lack, and how the only hope you have is the mercy of God.
 - It's the person who cries out to God, because they're so desperate.

- Jesus speaks about two people who went to the temple to pray.
 - One a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.
 - And when the Pharisee went to the temple, he prayed, *"I thank you that I'm not like other men...like this tax collector, like this sinner,"* (Luke 18:11).
 - Tax collectors would steal money from others to gain more wealth.
 - They were despised.
 - And the tax collector, standing far off, wouldn't even lift his eyes, but beat his breast, and he prayed, God be merciful to me a sinner.
 - And Jesus says in Luke 18:14, *"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified..."*
 - This tax collector, even though he was a very rich man, saw his poverty. He saw his true state. He saw his spiritual bankruptcy. And he found the kingdom of heaven.
- The more successful you are, it's easier to believe that you've done something right, and it's harder to humble yourself before God.
 - When your children are living rightly while others are not, when your marriage is prospering while your friend is falling apart, when your business or ministry is booming while others are failing.
 - Success can blind us from our true spiritual state.
 - Let's not forget, that everything is a gift from God.
 - It's not because of how good we are, but because of God's mercy, and his will, and purpose that things work out the way they do.
 - And so, when things are going well, we need to watch our heart for pride and remember that we are poor in spirit.
- But if you're here today, and you feel like this tax collector, that you have nothing to bring to God.
 - All you can ask is for his mercy.
 - If you feel that you've failed, if you feel ashamed and broken, and lost and desperate.
 - Jesus says you're in the perfect place, because it's now you can receive his mercy and grace and blessing.
 - Thomas Watson, the well-known Puritan preacher states, *"If the hand is full of pebbles, it cannot receive the gold."*
 - Do you see what he's saying?
 - It's when you come empty-handed to God, with nothing to offer, it's when you see your spiritual bankruptcy that you can receive the blessings of God.
 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Point 2:

- Second, we see how we can find blessing when we have sorrow over our sin.
 - *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted,"* (Matthew 5:4).
 - When it says that we mourn, Jesus isn't talking about mourning over death.

- Now of course, we should mourn over death.
 - But in this verse, Jesus is talking about mourning over our sin.
 - It's a godly sorrow over sin that leads to repentance.
- This is important, because it's possible to confess that you're a sinner, and yet have a very low awareness of sin in your life.
 - I know it's not pleasant to think about our sin.
 - But if we want to experience the greatest comfort in this world, the forgiveness of God, we need to first see our sin and how it offends God.
 - We need to learn to have godly sorrow over our sin.
- And one way you can grow in your awareness and sorrow over sin, is by naming particular sins.
 - It's not enough that you generally confess that you're a sinner.
 - That won't lead you to self-examination or self-awareness of sin.
 - You've got to be able to say:
 - "I do things my way, because of my pride.
 - I have an addiction to lust, and I need help.
 - When I said that, I was telling a lie because I didn't want to look dumb.
 - When I got angry, I wasn't trying to be helpful, but I just wanted to be right.
 - I'm bitter right now, because I'm jealous.
 - I don't want to serve God because I just want more time for myself."
 - As you confess your sins, you'll be able to see more clearly how they displease God, and how selfish they are, and you'll be able to mourn and confess.
- Our natural tendency is to hide our sin, to cover our sin, to deny our sin, to blame others for our sin.
 - But let's take a moment to examine our hearts and to confess our sin.
 - We read in 1 John 1, *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* (1 John 1:8).
 - And so, what is the sin that you need to confess today?
 - Let's not deceive ourselves.
 - But let's be honest.
 - Let's name our sin.
- Because when you confess, you'll also be able to find comfort in God's grace.
 - When you truly mourn over your sin, God doesn't hold them against you, he doesn't condemn you.
 - He forgives, and you can find comfort in his love.
 - The prophet Isaiah writes:
 - *"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her, that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins,"* (Isaiah 40:1-2).
 - *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*

Point 3:

- Third, we see how we can find blessing, when we submit to Christ's authority.
 - Jesus says, "*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth,*" (Matthew 5:5).
 - The word to be meek, isn't about being emotionally weak, or quiet, or soft-spoken.
 - As I said before, Jesus commands us to be bold, and strong.
 - So meekness, isn't about being timid, or a doormat with no opinions.
- Rather, this word is used to describe a horse that's been broken in.
 - In other words, a meek person is a person who's learned to submit to God's authority.
 - Instead of insisting on their will, and their way, a meek person is someone who's learned to trust and wait for the Lord.
- Or to put it another way, a meek person is someone who doesn't feel that God owes them.
 - Instead, they're able to thank God and be content.
 - Instead of demanding that God answer their prayer, someone who's meek will say, "*Not my will, but yours be done,*" (Luke 22:42).
 - Instead of trying to forcefully change your circumstances, the meek person will say, "Father, I don't understand why this is happening, but I will still serve you and honor you."
 - It's someone who's learned to accept God's will, to be content in all circumstances, to remember that God owes them nothing, but that he or she owes God everything.
- And so, let's think about our lives and consider how we can grow in meekness.
 - Is there an area of your life where you need to just submit to God?
 - A situation at work, a situation in your family?
 - A prayer that seems to go unanswered.
 - A situation that seems unfair to you.
 - A trial that you just want to quickly pass.
 - What is it that we need to submit to God?
- And the wonderful promise God gives is that those who are meek, will inherit the earth.
 - This has to do with position and power.
 - In this world, those who are loudest, those who demand their way, those who are forceful get their way.
 - But in God's kingdom, God gives more responsibility and power to those who are meek.
 - Matthew 20:16 states, "*So the last will be first, and the first last.*"

- Or in Luke 14 Jesus says, *“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*
- You might be praying and it may be that God isn’t answering your prayer and asking you to wait, or you may be facing a very difficult trial right now that is weighing on your soul, or you may feel that life isn’t fair as others are flourishing while things aren’t going well for you.
- But instead of growing bitter, instead of turning our back on faith, let’s learn to submit to God’s will.
- Because when you do, in due time, you will see his blessing.
- You will see how he exalts the humble.
- *“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”*

Point 4:

- Fourth and finally, we see in our passage how we can find blessing when we seek after a godly life.
 - *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied,”* (Matthew 5:6).
 - When we become a Christian, the righteousness of Christ is given to us.
 - We are declared righteous through faith in Christ.
 - But here, this isn’t what Jesus is talking about.
- Rather, in this context, he’s speaking about living a righteous or godly life.
 - Even though we’re declared righteous, Christians still need to struggle against the flesh.
 - They need to fight to live a godly life.
 - And here Jesus is saying that the mark of a Christian is someone who seeks to do what is right and godly.
 - Instead of asking, “What’s in it for me? Or what benefit does this give me? Or what’s the easiest way forward?”
 - A Christian is someone who hungers to do what is right and just and merciful.
 - A person who hungers after righteousness is a person who continues to ask, “What’s the right thing to do? What will please Jesus in this situation?”
- We just looked at the life of Jacob in the book of Genesis.
 - Just think about his life.
 - Instead of doing what was right, he kept doing what he thought would benefit him the most.
 - And how did it end up?
 - He had to run away. He had to suffer conflict. He was tricked by his uncle, and he wasn’t able to see his mother again.
 - He lived an unsatisfied life.
 - He was always on edge and never fulfilled.
- As you think about your life, and everything you’re facing today,

- Instead of thinking, “what’s the easiest way forward, or what’s the most beneficial for me?”
- Let’s think, “how can I honor God and please him?”
- “How can I care for others, and put the interest of others before mine?”
- Let’s consider, what’s the righteous thing to do, what’s the God honoring thing to do.
- Sometimes, most of the time, making the godly choice is harder to make, but it’s the choice that brings fulfillment and satisfaction.
- Godly living leads to satisfaction and joy and blessing.
- *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”*

Application:

- Recognize your spiritual bankruptcy. Have sorrow over your sins. Submit to Christ’s authority. Seek to live a godly life.
 - This is what leads to a life of blessing. This is what leads to joy and peace.
 - And it may be that some of us here today have forgotten these truths and have allowed sin and selfishness, and apathy and laziness to control our spiritual lives.
 - If that is you, then pray and ask the Lord to open your eyes.
 - So that you might grow in these 4 traits.
 - Make a decision today, to commit to seeking after these, so that you might find more blessing in Christ.
- And if you’re not a disciple of Jesus Christ, ask God to show you, your spiritual bankruptcy, because it’s the first characteristic, that leads to all the others.
 - There’s an order to these 8 traits.
 - And without first seeing how you lack, you can’t see your sin, you can’t submit to Christ, and you can’t live a godly life.
 - But if you see how you’re poor in spirit, how you have nothing to bring to God, but cry out for mercy, all these blessings can be true of you.
 - Nothing in my hand I bring.
 - Simply to Thy cross I cling.
 - Naked, come to Thee for dress.
 - Helpless, look to Thee for grace.
 - Foul, I to the fountain fly.
 - Thou must save, and Thou alone.
 - (Rock of Ages, 1978)

¹Unless otherwise noted, all references to the Bible are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

²Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*. Eerdmans, 1959.

³Toplady, Augustus M. *Rock of Ages*. 1776. *Hymns of the Christian Life*, edited by Donald Hustad, Hope Publishing Company, 1978, no. 204.