

The Religion of Christ Pt. 2

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, April 26, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! I praise God for the opportunity to CONNECT with you. I INVITE you to have a Bible at the ready, take whatever notes you deem necessary, and purposefully ENGAGE for the next thirty-to-forty minutes. We have MUCH to cover in a SHORT amount of time!

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 1

FYI – Last Sunday I laid the foundation for a NEW series on the BEATITUDES of Christ. Let's re-read Matthew 5.

Matthew 5:1–12 (NIV)

1 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.

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.

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 2

Once again, even the most CASUAL reading of this portion of Scripture makes it clear that one of the most IMPORTANT words in this section is the term BLESSED. Its significance is evident as Jesus uses it NINE times throughout (always take note of repetition in Scripture)!

KEY – Of course, its significance is LOST to us if we DON'T know what the term blessed means. SO...

Q. What is the MEANING of BLESSED in the Beatitudes?

1) Blessed Means HAPPY or FORTUNATE

FYI – Of course, we are NOT talking about some fleeting/temporal earthly happiness or fortune, but an ABIDING spiritual reality (i.e., rooted in the Person and Promise of Christ). Thus, we could read the Beatitudes in the following manner...

Matthew 5:3 [Paraphrase]

3 An abiding happiness and fortune belongs to those who are poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

2) Blessed Means FAVORED

FYI –The underlying term for blessed carries the idea of COMMENDATION. i.e., Those who live in the manner described by Christ ARE and WILL BE commended (i.e., rewarded) by the Lord—in this life and in the life to come. Thus, you could read the Beatitudes in the following way...

Matthew 5:3 [Paraphrase]

3 Favored (for time and eternity) are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3) Blessed Means ENVIABLE or TO BE ENVIED

NOTE – Once again, this could be read as follows (PLEASE pardon the repetition)...

Matthew 5:3 [Paraphrase]

3 Envidable are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

FYI – When the Lord calls these varied traits ENVIABLE, He is SIGNALING that THIS is the life we are to seek and aspire to. i.e., THIS is the manner in which we are to live as His followers and disciples! The believer SHOULD take note!

Q. Do YOU desire a life characterized by an abiding spiritual happiness?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that is favored by the Lord (both now & forevermore)?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that the Lord Jesus establishes as both esteemed/enviable?

KEY – THEN take note of the hallmarks of the RELIGION espoused by the Lord Jesus Christ!

SETTING THE STAGE PT. 3

LAST SUNDAY we deeply considered the opening TWO Beatitudes. i.e., Matthew 5:3–4...

Matthew 5:3–4 (Emphasis Mine)

- 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.

NOTE – If you MISSED this teaching feel free to check it out on the previous livestream or at NewLifeBarre.org.

KEY – TODAY I would like to cover the NEXT THREE Beatitudes commended by Christ – LET’S DELVE IN...

MEEK PT. 1

Matthew 5:5 (Emphasis Mine)

- 5 Blessed are the **meek**,
for they will inherit the earth.

- An ABIDING HAPPINESS belongs to the meek
- FAVORED (i.e., for time and eternity) are the meek
- To be ‘ENVIED and ESTEEMED’ are those who are meek

Q. What does it MEAN to be meek? What PRECISELY is meekness?

A. Meekness—like poverty of spirit and mourning before—is a NUANCED term...

MEEK PT. 2

NOTE – (FIRSTLY) Meekness refers to HUMILITY before GOD [VERTICAL ASPECT].

Those who are genuinely POOR IN SPIRIT (aware of their spiritual bankruptcy) and MOURNFUL (sorrowful over their spiritual condition) have only ONE posture before God: HUMILITY. Humility is the OUTFLOW of these conditions of the mind/heart. AGAIN, consider the EXAMPLE of the tax collector (cf. Luke 18)...

Luke 18:13

13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”

FYI – SUCH meekness is CHARACTERIZED by a sense of SUBMISSION/YIELDEDNESS to God.

The word MEEK was used by the ancient Greeks to describe a HORSE that had been BROKEN for its master’s use. The one who owns a horse DESIRES an animal that is QUICK to obey/listen (i.e., broken). THIS is what the LORD desires of those who call Him Lord and Father.

Q. To what degree are you LIVING in submission?

Q. Are you QUICK to obey (i.e., meek) OR resistant?

MEEK PT. 3

NOTE – (SECONDLY) Meekness ALSO refers to a HUMILITY amongst MEN [**HORIZONTAL ASPECT**].

Biblical MEEKNESS is characterized by a SELFLESSNESS. i.e., It is the willingness to DENY oneself in PREFERENCE to others. The person who is meek does NOT seek to ASSERT himself or DEMAND his way, because they know that it is NOT all about them!

FYI – THIS is what the apostle Paul CALLS each of us to. Consider...

Philippians 2:3–4

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others [THIS is MEEKNESS].

APP – When I WILLINGLY watch the romantic comedy of Misty’s choosing—when I would prefer to watch anything else—THAT is meekness. When Misty HAPPILY follows me around Guitar Center—when she would prefer to be anywhere else—THAT is meekness.

KEY – Show me ANY human relationship where MEEKNESS ABOUND—i.e., wherein people are selfless and practicing mutual preference—and I will show you ABUNDANCE and VITALITY! However, show me a human relationship where each party is SELF-CONSUMED, and there you will find all manner of BROKENNESS.

MEEK PT. 4

FYI – Such meekness is ALSO connected to the idea of RESTRAINT under PROVOCATION.

APP – When a person is attacked, spurned, spoken ill of, etc., it is EASY for their sense of SELF to FLARE UP (demanding PAYBACK). But one who is SELFLESS has NO need to defend their sense of SELF. Rather, they are free to practice RESTRAINT in the place of retaliation (TRUSTING God to intervene). THIS is meekness!

Q. Would you like an EXAMPLE?

Numbers 12:1–5

Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 2 “Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” And the Lord heard this.

3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

4 At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you.” So the three of them went out. 5 Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam [cf. the LORD intervenes and disciplines].

KEY – Consider the Moses did NOT pull rank to defend himself OR angrily respond to their criticism. RATHER, he practiced HUMILITY and RESTRAINT under provocation (i.e., MEEKNESS). In the end, note that the Lord rose up to DEFEND him far more than he could have EVER defended himself! We can LEARN from this!

MEEK PT. 5

KEY – Those who are willing to HUMBLE themselves before God and operate SELFLESSLY among men—i.e., those who are MEEK—will be supremely REWARDED. Consider the PROMISE of Christ associated with those who are meek...

Matthew 5:5 (Emphasis Mine)

5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

Those who are HUMBLE before GOD and amongst MEN will one day rule/reign with Him in and over the earth!

Q. Do YOU desire a life characterized by an abiding spiritual happiness?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that is favored by the Lord (both now & forevermore)?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that the Lord Jesus establishes as both esteemed/enviable?

KEY – THEN take note of THIS hallmark of the religion espoused by Christ and PURSUE MEEKNESS!

HUNGER PT. 1

Matthew 5:6 (Emphasis Mine)

6 Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**,
for they will be filled.

-An ABIDING HAPPINESS belongs to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

-FAVORED (i.e., for time and eternity) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

-To be 'ENVIED and ESTEEMED' are those who hunger and thirst for genuine righteousness

HUNGER PT. 2

FYI – One thing I LOVE about this text is that Christ utilizes IMAGERY that we can ALL relate to and understand.

NOTE 1 – As humans we know what it means to hunger and thirst in a NATURAL sense. We HUNGER and THIRST when our bodies REQUIRE nutrients, water, etc. There is a good chance you are a bit hungry/thirsty right NOW (as LUNCH draws near). WAIT too long to fulfill that longing and the LONGING only GROWS!

NOTE 2 – As humans we also know what it means to hunger and thirst in a FIGURATIVE sense. We DESIRE, LONG FOR and CRAVE security, attention and affection, money and success, power and authority, prestige, etc. In fact, it is amazing what people will DO and SACRIFICE to FULFILL such longings and more!

KEY – Such elements may be ESSENTIAL (i.e., food and water) and even GOOD in their place (e.g., money, authority, etc.), yet Jesus DIRECTS us to that thing that we should/must CRAVE, LONG FOR, and DESIRE the MOST: i.e., righteousness (i.e., RIGHTNESS w/ God).

Q. Why? Because rightness with God is ABSOLUTELY our DEEPEST need (above ALL others). CONSIDER...

Q. What GOOD is earthly fame, fortune, accolade and physical health IF we are NOT RIGHT with Him?

HUNGER PT. 3

KEY – Please recognize that THIS Beatitude FLOWS naturally out of those that came BEFORE...

i.e., The person who recognizes that they are broken before God (POOR OF SPIRIT) and grieves over their condition (MOURNS) is likely to HUNGER AND THIRST for their condition to be REMEDIED! They will long to be RIGHT with God (i.e., RIGHTEOUS).

Q. And WHAT does Christ PROMISE to such a one?

Matthew 5:6 (Emphasis Mine)

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled [i.e., those who desire rightness w/ God will be made right].

HUNGER PT. 4

1) This is Something the Believer Experiences at CONVERSION

The moment we trust in Him, the Lord forgives our past crimes and DECLARES us righteous (JUSTIFICATION).

2 Corinthians 5:21 (Emphasis Mine)

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the **righteousness** of God.

2) This is Something the Believer Experiences ONGOINGLY in Christ

God's work does NOT end with JUSTIFICATION. Rather, it continues with a LIFELONG work called SANCTIFICATION. i.e., DAILY God works to empower His people to LIVE righteously before Him. Moment by moment He renews and transforms us—that we might live RIGHTLY before Him...

Galatians 5:22–24

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

HUNGER PT. 5

Q. What are YOU hungry and thirsty for? What one thing do you desire MORE than anything else?

If your **A** to this **Q** is ANYTHING but rightness w/ God, I call you to RECONSIDER and REPENT. It's time that you EVALUATE your life/living through the prism of truth—NOT from the prism of your own understanding! IF you hunger and thirst for righteousness, THEN receive it by faith and revel in the One who purposed to provide!

Q. Do YOU desire a life characterized by an abiding spiritual happiness?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that is favored by the Lord (both now & forevermore)?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that the Lord Jesus establishes as both esteemed/enviable?

KEY – THEN take note of THIS hallmark of the religion espoused by Christ and SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS!

MERCIFUL PT. 1

Matthew 5:7 (Emphasis Mine)

7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

- An ABIDING HAPPINESS belongs to the merciful
- FAVORED (i.e., for time and eternity) are the merciful
- To be ENVIED and ESTEEMED are those who show mercy

MERCIFUL PT. 2

- Q.** What is EXPECTED of the person who has been SHOWN mercy by God?
A. God expects that such an individual SHOWS mercy to others (forgiveness).

FYI – There is NO shortage of passages that evidence this statement! CONSIDER...

Ephesians 4:32

32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Colossians 3:13

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

MERCIFUL PT. 3

KEY – Of course, my FAVORITE text on this topic is offered by Christ Himself (cf. Matthew 18)...

Matthew 18:21

21 . . . Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

NOTE – Peter questions Christ concerning his RESPONSIBILITY to show pardon and mercy. What’s FUNNY is that Peter asks, “Up to SEVEN times?” He was trying to SCORE POINTS with Jesus herein, for ancient rabbis of Peter’s day said you only had to forgive up to THREE times! Of course, Jesus’ standard is SO MUCH MORE...

Matthew 18:22

22 Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times [OR seventy times seven].

KEY – i.e., Those who follow Christ MUST be willing to EXERCISE mercy WELL BEYOND what the world says is either natural, normal or expected. In fact, we are to offer mercy to an INCALCULABLE or UNLIMITED degree. This is quite an obligation and one of the more CHALLENGING aspects of the faith!

BUT THE STORY—PER SE—DOESN’T END HERE...

MERCIFUL PT. 4

What is INTERESTING is that Christ follows up this statement with a PARABLE—to REINFORCE the point!

Matthew 18:23–35

23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags [i.e., talents] of gold was brought to him [1 talent was equal to 20 years wages. Thus, 10,000 talents are equal to 200,000 years wages]. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ 27 The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins [1 silver coin was equal to one day’s wages. Thus, 100 silver coins are equal to 100 days wages]. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ 34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

MERCIFUL PT. 5

Q. What is the spiritual TRUTH presented within this PARABLE?

- A. Those who have been shown great mercy by GOD are to show mercy to OTHERS.
- A. (cf. Matthew 5:7) – Those who show forth mercy will REMAIN within the mercy of God.

Matthew 5:7 (Emphasis Mine)

7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be **shown mercy**.

Q. Do YOU desire a life characterized by an abiding spiritual happiness?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that is favored by the Lord (both now & forevermore)?

Q. Do YOU desire a life that the Lord Jesus establishes as both esteemed/enviable?

KEY – THEN take note of THIS hallmark of the religion espoused by Christ and BE MERCIFUL!

CONCLUSION PT. 1

In recent weeks you have heard the teaching of Christ on being **a) POOR** in SPIRIT; **b) MOURNFUL** over sin; **c) MEEK** before God and men; and **d) MERCIFUL** unto others. I challenge you to put into PRACTICE what you have learned. REMEMBER that we are called to be DOERS of the Word and NOT HEARERS only!

FYI – We will continue next Sunday with the REMAINING Beatitudes (cf. Matthew 5:8–11).

CONCLUSION PT. 2

Thank you for joining us today. If you would be willing – **ONLINE GIVING & PRAYER.**