

Mourning, Meekness, and Spiritual Hunger (Mt. 5:4-6)

I. REVIEW: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

- A. The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' most comprehensive statement about a believer's role in cooperating with grace and is His way to measure our spiritual development and ministry impact. We need more faith teaching that is focused on experiencing grace to walk in the 8 Beatitudes.
- B. ***The 8 Beatitudes:*** Being poor in spirit, mourning, walking in meekness, hungering for God, showing mercy, embracing purity, being a peacemaker, and enduring persecution (Mt. 5:3-12).
 - 1. The first four beatitudes are attitudes that the world sees as ***negative qualities***. We are poor in spirit (v. 3) instead of being self-sufficient in our spiritual experience with God. We mourn for more (v. 4) instead of being self-satisfied in our relationship with God. We are meek (v. 5) instead of being self-willed, and hungry (v. 6) instead of being full of self.
 - 2. The second four beatitudes are attitudes that the world sees as ***positive qualities***. We seek to be merciful (v. 7) with the sins and weakness of others. We seek to be pure (v. 8), to make peace (v. 9), and to endure in persecution without complaining (v. 10-12).
- C. Jesus promised that all who walk in the beatitudes would be blessed. This includes having a vibrant heart because of experiencing the activity of the Spirit in the inner man. It also includes feeling God's presence, having grace to walk in the 8 beatitudes, operating in a spirit of revelation and a spirit of prayer, and ministering His presence and power to others.

II. BEING POOR IN SPIRIT (MT. 5:3)

- A. To be poor in spirit is to be aware that we are in great need of experiencing more of God's grace in our heart, ministry, church, and society. It includes seeing ourselves as spiritually poor in terms of our experience in light of all that God has freely made available to us. We see that we do not have the strength to establish godliness in our hearts or to inspire it in others without the Spirit's continual help. Thus, we look to Jesus to provide the solution to our deficiencies.
³Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:3)
- B. We are gripped by the reality that there is so much more for us to experience in the grace of God in our spiritual life, our ministry, and for the nations, and that we do not have power in ourselves to correct the problem without continually seeking for the Spirit's help. Our natural abilities are not strong enough to change our heart or to empower us to change others. We can grow in this beatitude by seeing what the Word says about how much God wants to do in and through us.
- C. ***Theirs is the kingdom:*** This speaks of experiencing more of the kingdom in a personal way. Theirs "is" the kingdom, not "shall be." Jesus promised that any who live poor in spirit would experience the kingdom realities, such as having a vibrant spirit and being used by the Lord.

III. SPIRITUAL MOURNING (MT. 5:4)

- A. Being poor in spirit speaks of how we see ourselves; spiritual mourning refers to how we feel about what we see. When we see differently, then we feel differently. The result of seeing our great need is that we feel pain as we mourn for more experience of God's presence in our life. It does not mean mourning over difficult circumstances, but for a spiritual breakthrough.

⁴***Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (Mt. 5:3-4)***

- B. Godly sorrow or mourning are a supernatural work of the Spirit that will lead you to salvation or deliverance from a dull spirit and a powerless ministry. This mourning is God's gift to us. Your desire for God is His gift to you. This gift of mourning is rare, precious, and powerful and it cannot be bought with gold. Therefore, we must refuse to be comforted by anything except the breakthrough of the fullness that the Lord promises us in His Word.

¹⁰***Godly sorrow produces repentance [wholeheartedness] leading to salvation [breakthrough]...***

¹¹***What diligence it produced in you... what indignation [against compromise], what fear [fear of God], what vehement desire [for Jesus], what zeal, what vindication! (2 Cor. 7:9-11)***

- C. We mourn because we see how much God longs to give to our life, ministry, church, and in the nations. It refers to the pain we feel in seeing the gap between what God has for us and what we are experiencing. Isaiah was undone because he saw the spiritual state of his life and nation.

⁵***So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King..." (Isa. 6:5)***

- D. We mourn over our double-mindedness, failures, and lack of follow-through in spiritual things.

⁸***Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands...and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*** ⁹***Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.*** ¹⁰***Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord...*** (Jas. 4:8-10)

- E. We must continually be aware of who we are in Christ and what we are experiencing in God while at the same time growing in our awareness of how much more there is to experience. We experience a measure of joy with gratitude for what He has given us while yet mourning to experience so much more. Mourning does not negate our confidence that God enjoys us and values our small efforts and ministry impact (Mt. 25:21). ***We are grateful for all that we experience in God's grace, but we are never content without pressing in for His fullness.*** We must never despise the measure of blessing that we experience, but must seek a greater measure.

- F. Feeling the pain of this godly desperation and holy discontent causes us to be extreme in rearranging our life to spend our strength, time, and money to seek God for all that He will give. Our cry for more cannot be answered by a human solution. Our culture so values comfort that our tendency is to seek and give the wrong comfort. Refuse to be comforted by anything less than God's highest. Refuse false comforts that are rooted in human sentiment. Don't let a well-meaning believer give you false comfort that steals your vision to experience all that Jesus has provided for you. Believers who have never been pained by their spiritual lack will miss out on much of what God desires for them. They are stuck in barrenness without being aware of it.

IV. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK (MT. 5:5)

- A. Poverty of spirit and meekness are related yet have important distinctions. Poverty of spirit starts with the awareness our spiritual lack before God and our great need for His resources. Meekness involves the awareness of our lack before people and our indebtedness to God for the resources that He gave us and His ownership of them. This changes how we use what He gives us.

⁵*Blessed are the meeek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Mt. 5:5)*

- B. Our natural mindset is to see our resources (gifting, money, position of authority, etc.) as mostly belonging to us and being the fruit of our dedication and hard work.
- C. Walking in meekness or humility is not the same as the personality temperament of timidity that is rooted in the fear of man and low self-esteem. Meekness is to have power over our selfishness. We naturally think that we deserve better treatment from God and people in our circumstances.
- D. The essence of meekness is rooted in who we are preoccupied with. The meek are preoccupied with Jesus as their source and owner of everything they possess. Therefore, they are grateful for it and they use it with a servant spirit and with generosity. By nature, we are preoccupied with ourselves and with the sense that we deserve more honor, money, and favor than we receive. This results in a sense of entitlement that complains and demands more privileges and honor because of how we esteem our gifting, accomplishments, dedication, or position.
- E. If we see that everything we have received is a gift of grace, then we will not view it with a boastful or proud attitude. We display pride when we complain about how small the measure of blessing is or by using our gifting, position of authority, or money as if it was mostly ours instead of being a gracious stewardship from God that we use with a servant spirit. Those who boast may think, “How dare someone overlook or resist one as gifted, dedicated, and deserving as I am.”

⁷*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Cor. 4:7)*

- F. With a wrong view of our gifting or lack of gifting, position or lack of position, wealth or lack of wealth, we lack gratitude and thus can easily become offended when we are overlooked or resisted. The meek know that they deserve God’s discipline much more than any measure of (small or large) blessing that He has given them before people. The meek embrace important tasks or menial tasks with gratitude, knowing they are getting more than they deserve from God. The meek refuse to manipulate or exert pressure on people to promote them.

⁷*Which of you, having a servant plowing...will say to him, “Come at once and sit down to eat?” ⁸But will he not rather say to him, “Prepare something for my supper...?” ⁹Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.’” (Lk. 17:7-10)*

- G. The promise of inheriting the earth speaks of having influence and impact. It is partially fulfilled in this life and completely fulfilled in the age to come (Mt. 19:28; Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6).

V. HUNGERING AND THIRSTING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (MT. 5:6)

- A. Jesus taught on the necessity, glory, and liberty of hungering for more in the grace of God. Jesus called us to press into God for the release of righteousness in our personal lives, for others, and in society. To hunger for righteousness is to press into God to experience more with Him. We refuse to be denied in our pursuit of the fullness of His promises. Some define grace as the absence of pressing into God, but this is a distorted message of grace, which is common today.
⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mt. 5:6)
- B. Seeing our great need (v. 3) causes us to mourn (v. 4) for a breakthrough. We are so desperate that we use all our resources or strengths to seek God and serve His purpose (v. 5). Our hunger increases by the grace of sustained zeal that seeks Him long-term, not just for a season (v. 6).
- C. Paul pressed in hard for the prize of walking in the fullness of His destiny in the grace of God.
¹²Not that I have already attained...I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me [fullness of Paul's destiny]...¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call [fullness of Paul's destiny] of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 3:12-14)
- D. As we hunger and thirst, we will embrace whatever it takes to experience more of God. Part of hungering and thirsting for more includes the grace of fasting. We are pursuing a Person who releases righteousness in us and through us. Jesus is worthy of our efforts to press into God.
- E. We seek God for a breakthrough of righteousness in our heart, in the lives of others, and in the nations. We long to experience more grace to follow through in our commitment to God.
- F. We care about righteousness in the small issues of our heart and speech. Immediately after this, Jesus spoke of righteousness in 6 areas—resisting anger, immorality, disloyalty in relationships, swearing falsely, retaliating, and passivity that does not walk in love (Mt. 5:21-48).
- G. Hunger is one of the most important signs of life. When there is no hunger for a sustained period, then there is no life. Many live in a “spiritual intensive care unit” without any hunger for prayer or the Word. This is abnormal Christianity. Hungerless and passionless Christianity is not normal from God's point of view. Lack of hunger is a serious sign of sickness in the spirit.
- H. Gaining new ground in the grace of God—growing in our hunger and pursuit of God—is the only way to keep the ground we have today. There is no static position. Our heart is either growing colder or hotter. It is not staying the same. The Spirit is willing to make anyone spiritually hungry, if they will begin to seek Him for it.
- I. We press in with the confidence that He enjoys us and that He esteems our weak efforts and small works. We do not despise the smallness of our work, but neither are we content with it.
- J. ***We will be filled:*** We will progressively experience more grace for righteousness in our lives.