

Faith in 5 – Adults The Beatitudes



1. While The Ten Commandments can be viewed as essential to living a faithful Christian life, Jesus calls us to go a step further. Jesus tells us that a simple obedience to the Commandments is not enough for his followers. He expects us to reflect on our actions and motivations; to look deeper within ourselves.

The Beatitudes are blessings that God assures to those who choose to become His disciples. They may be explained as 'be this way – attitude' of Christ that comes with a special blessing. However, the Beatitudes are not something we do on our own – it is grace given to us as we grow in Christ to become His heart and hands. These charitable character traits, given to the faithful through faith in Christ, lead to blessings that are virtuous, holy and good.

2. Jesus shared with us teachings and blessings in the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of **St. Matthew 5:3–12**. It is fitting to include the Beatitudes as moral catechesis, not only because they were Christ's teachings handed down by the apostles, but because these virtues flowing from faith in Christ are accentuated by charity, which is the principal work of the Holy Spirit. It is the perfection of the Old Law with the work of the Holy Spirit (CCC, 1965).

The New Law (or Law of the Gospel) – **also known as the law of love**– is the grace of the Holy Spirit given to us. It uses the Sermon on the Mount to teach us what must be done and makes use of the sacraments to give us the grace to do it. The Catechism of the Catholic Church 1984 states that The Law of the Gospel "fulfills," refines, surpasses, and leads the Old Law to its perfection. In the Beatitudes, the New Law fulfills the divine promises by elevating and orienting them toward the "kingdom of heaven".

3. The word "beatitude" comes from the Latin *beatitudo/beatus* meaning "blessedness". The phrase "blessed are" in each beatitude implies a current state of happiness or well-being. This expression held a powerful meaning of "divine joy and perfect happiness" to the people of Christ's day ([Source](#)).
4. Through the Beatitudes, Jesus shows us what it means to be happy and how we ought to live if we desire true happiness. This supreme happiness is a union with God, the happiness, the beatitude, which we were created for. It is a supernatural grace, not a worldly happiness. We are all called to a life of holiness, which leads to "living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes" (CCC 2015).

Jesus tells us true happiness comes from loving and serving others, particularly the "least among us" (Matthew 25:40). In so doing, we are loving and serving Christ.

5. **The Beatitudes:** Most versions of the beatitudes present eight blessings, some like this have nine. The last two listed are quite similar, which many believe are one in the same.

Living the Beatitudes	
Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12)	Modern Meaning
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Be humble; do not be attached to material possessions; trust in God to provide all that you need.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.	Be aware and supportive to other people's hardships and losses; do not ignore someone who is suffering.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.	Respect other people's freedom, and be gentle in your relationships; do not be pushy or manipulative.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.	Treat other people with respect, and work for justice for all people and the Earth itself; do not participate in unjust systems and structures.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.	Forgive yourself and others, even those who have hurt you the most; do not hold on to grudges.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.	Practice charity (loving kindness), chastity (sexual purity), and love of truth (orthodoxy); do not expose yourself to the things—especially the addictive things—that will harm your heart, body, and faith.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.	Be a peacemaker and a bridge-builder by listening to those with different ideas and opinions and seeking truth wherever it might be found; never let anger alone guide your actions.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.	Do what is right and speak the truth, even if it means some people, including your family and friends, will disagree with you or get upset.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you (falsely) because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.	If you do all these things, you will not be popular with everyone, but you will find true peace and true happiness, both in this life and in the next!

Table from [Source](#)

6. While St. Matthew's Sermon on the Mount gave us eight blessings, St. Luke's Sermon on the Plain directs four blessings (to the poor, the hungry, those who weep; those who are hated, excluded, reviled) and four woes, in Luke 6:24–26:

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.
Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.
Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets".

Jesus explained to his disciples, these warnings are for those who find comfort in the things of this world. He later states, "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?" (Matthew 16:26).

7. **The Sermon on the Mount** (Matthew, Chapters 5-7) where Jesus shared the Beatitudes, was Jesus' longest and most detailed teaching. He gave us important lessons for living a genuine Christian life.

Jesus taught us the importance of being set apart from the world - to be salt of the earth and a light to the world. He spoke about the spiritual application of the Ten Commandments (the letter and spirit of the law) and to love our enemies. Jesus taught us how to pray in the Our Father and how to live in this world as faithful believers (fasting, laying up treasures for heaven, being full of light, serving God and not to worry). He asks us to seek first the Kingdom of God. Jesus in Matthew 7:12 gave us the Golden Rule when He commanded us, "Do to others as you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." He warned us to know people by their fruit, and to make proper choices to stay on the right path (the narrow gate). He concludes by telling us to obey His instructions, to be doers and not just hearers of His Word.

8. The Beatitudes is a path to holiness and a way we can grow in our union with God. To be truly good, one need only to look at how Jesus encouraged us to act through the Beatitudes. We can build up the Church by living as Jesus lived, with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

For further study: Matthew 5, 6, 7

"The Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, and the apostolic catechesis describe for us the paths that lead to the Kingdom of heaven. Sustained by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we tread them, step by step, by everyday acts. By the working of the Word of Christ, we slowly bear fruit in the Church to the glory of God" (CCC, 1724).

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