

JESUS' TEACHING - THE BEATITUDES – Matthew 5:1-12
Basic principles of Christian maturity

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In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples, (*verse 1*), profound truths of godly Christian behaviour.

In this passage Jesus outlines the **seven pillars of godly wisdom** for those who follow Him. *Matthew 5:3-9, Proverbs 9:1, James 3:17*

Pillar 1 – Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the **poor in spirit** for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven”.

(Matthew Henry’s Commentary is an excellent resource.)

The “poor in spirit” that Jesus is speaking about are those who are emptied of self, to be filled with Christ.

They are humble and servant-hearted towards God and man. *Luke 18:9-14, Matthew 20:20-28*

They are those believers in Christ who are dependent upon God in all things. *2Corinthians 3:5,6, John 15:5, John 5:19,30*

They depend only upon the merit of Christ for their justification or right standing before God, and the Spirit and grace of Christ for their sanctification and holiness. *Hebrews 10:14, Titus 3:5-7, Ephesians 2:8,9*

Pillar 2 – Matthew 5:4

“Blessed are **they that mourn** for they shall be comforted.”

Jesus was a person of sorrows and grief as He foresaw the terrible destruction coming upon Jerusalem.

Luke 19:41-44 He wept over the city.

Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus over the despair and grief of the people gathered around. They did not know Him as the Resurrection and the Life. They seemed to be without hope and were full of despair. *John 11:35,25,40*

God expects us to be sorrowful over our sins, *2Corinthians 7:10*

God requires us to mourn over the wickedness of society around us, *Ezekiel 9:4*

He expects us to weep over the sufferings of others. *Romans 12:15*

We are to be sorrowful for the lostness of the unsaved and to go out to them with the Gospel.

Psalms 126:5,6. We are to sow in tears, and to reap in joy.

Pillar 3 – Matthew 5:5

“Blessed are **the meek**, for they shall inherit the earth.” *Psalms 37:11KJV*

The word “meek” has lost its original New Testament meaning. Today it has the sense of being weak and ineffective, but in the New Testament the meaning of “meek” is very different.

Jesus said, “I am **meek** and lowly in heart....” *Matthew 11:29KJV*

Of Jesus it says, “Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, **meek**” *Matthew 21:5,KJV*

The Greek words in these references are *praos*, 1x, *praus*, 2x.

Vine’s “Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words” says of the Greek words translated “meek” and “meekness” in the KJV, *praos*, *praus*, *praotes*, *prautes*, as in *Matthew 5:5, Matthew 11:29, 21:5*, and in *Galatians 5:23, 6:1, Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:12, James 3:13, 2Corinthians 10:1*, “**It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commanded to the believer is the fruit of power.**” “The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was “meek” because He had the infinite resources of God at His command.” This implies that “meekness” is being Spirit empowered and Spirit led.

Modern translations of the Bible tend to translate these four Greek words given above, as “gentle” or “humble”, but there are other Greek words, for these character qualities.

Meekness is the way we react to others and to situations.

It is the God-given ability to react in the Spirit and not in the flesh, when attacked, criticised or taught.

Meekness is controlled strength, in the way we react.

For a full coverage of the Hebrew and Greek words translated “meek” or “meekness” in the KJV, use a “Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible.”

Meekness is a “fruit of power”, as Vine’s says. It is controlled power.

When Jesus had the infinite resources of God at hand to prevent His arrest, *Matthew 26:53*, He chose rather to fulfil the Father’s will. Therefore the “meekness” of the “meek”, which enables them to inherit the earth, is that God given grace and ability, to work through situations by the leading of the Holy Spirit and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pillar 4 – Matthew 5:6

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

“Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words” is a very great help, along with “Matthew Henry’s Commentary of the Bible.”

“Righteousness” is a New Testament word with two main meanings. (Refer to No 195, www.pastornotes.com)

Firstly, it is the character or quality of being right or just and acting in ways that are consistent with this. It is used of God in *Romans 3:5,25,26*, of the Lord Jesus Christ in *1John 2:1, 2Pet 1:1*, and of believers who act in ways consistent with the righteousness of God. *Matthew 9:13, 1John 3:7, Ephesians 5:9, 1Timothy 6:11, 2Timothy 2:22, James 1:20, Romans 6:13,16,18,19*. We must remember that we do not achieve righteousness by the things we do. We receive righteousness as a gift from God when we repent and believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Having received the righteousness of God as a gift through faith in Jesus we need to act in ways that are consistent with the gift.

Secondly, “righteousness” and those who are “righteous” in their standing before God, is used of the gracious gift of God to men whereby **all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ** are brought into a right relationship with God. The moment a person repents and puts their faith in Christ, the 100% righteousness of Jesus Christ, is imputed to them. They are “justified” and declared to be righteous before God, **“just as if they had never sinned.”** This righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man’s own, it is obtained only by faith in Christ. *Romans 3:21-24, Romans 4:1-5, Titus 3:5,6, Ephesians 2:8,9, 2Corinthians 5:21*

Pillar 5 – Matthew 5:7

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”

God’s love and goodness are expressed through His mercy. *Psalm 107:1,2, 1Peter 3:18, Revelation 1:5*
Christ died on the Cross for our sins, so that we could be forgiven for our sins, and be justified before God.

Because of God’s great mercy to us through the extreme cost of the death of His Son, Jesus, He expects and requires of us that we forgive others. *Mk 11:25,26*. If we forgive others, God forgives us. But if we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us either. *Luke 11:4, Matthew 6:12,14,15*

To further extend mercy to others, Jesus has commanded us to release others from condemning judgment, *Matthew 7:1,2*, and to pray blessing on those who hurt us. *Luke 6:27,28*

As we extend mercy to others, God extends mercy to us.

To make this very clear, Jesus gave to us the parable of the unforgiving servant. *Matthew 18:21-35*. The consequences of not forgiving others are very severe. *Matthew 18:34,35*

Pillar 6 – Matthew 5:8

“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

God looks into our heart and sees our thoughts, attitudes, values, desires, and motives. We see the outward appearance of words and actions, but God sees the heart and the real values and motives for what we do. *1Samuel 16:7*

A hypocrite acts in a certain way outwardly, to gain the approval and praise of man, when his heart is deceitful and really wanting to act very differently. His motives are hidden. He has a hidden agenda.

Jesus describes the hypocrite in *Matthew 23:3-5,13-15, 23-28*

To be able to come into God’s presence and stand in His holy place, we need clean hands and a pure heart. That is both our outward actions and our motives need to be right before God. *Psalm 24:3,4*

Pillar 7 – Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God.”

Peacemakers help others to find peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. They have on their feet the shoes of the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. God is the God of Peace and Jesus is the Prince of Peace. The Gospel is a message of peace between God and man, through Jesus Christ. *Romans 5:1, Ephesians 6:15, Hebrews 13:20, Isaiah 9:6, Isaiah 52:7*

Peacemakers help believers and others to find peace in their relationships with one another, through forgiveness, releasing others from condemning judgment, by praying blessing on each other, through apologies and sorting through issues in a godly way. *Mark 11: 25,26, Matthew 7:1,2, Luke 6:27,28, Matthew 5:23,24, Matthew 18:15*

Persecution - Matthew 5:10-12

Where these seven pillars of righteousness are established and evident in a believer’s life, there comes opposition and persecution from time to time for the sake of righteousness, *verse 10*, and for Christ’s sake, *verse 11*

The enemies of righteousness are the enemies of Christ.

Sometimes suffering comes to those who will not sin against their conscience.

Those who are persecuted for righteousness sake are blessed of God. *Daniel 3:21, Daniel 6:16, John 19:7, Acts 7, Luke 4:27-29, John 10:31,32*