

# Happy Are the Poor and Sad

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Good morning, everyone. Please open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5. For those of you who are new, who haven't met me, my name is Sean, and I'm one of the pastors of Trinity Cambridge Church, and it's my great joy and honor to preach God's Word to you, the beloved body of Christ, this morning. If you don't have a Bible, please raise your hands, and we'd love to bring you a copy of a Bible you could have and use.
- We're in chapter 5 of Matthew. We've been going through this since beginning of December, this book. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word.
- Heavenly Father, my words are inadequate, but your Word never returns empty.
- So, Lord, now may the preaching of your Word this morning accomplish its purposes. May it exalt your glory and your name.
- may it humble the pride of man. May it lead us to proper mourning and poverty of spirit in light of your holiness.
- [ 1 : 3 3 ]     So that we might experience the true joy of salvation. open our ears.
- Give us ears to hear and hearts to receive. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
- Amen. If you are able, please stand as I read God's Word. Let's honor God together by sending yet the reading of God's Word from Matthew 5, verses 1 to 12.
- I'm going to just preach the first four verses today, but I will read all 12 verses. Matthew 5, 1 to 12.
- Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- [ 2 : 4 0 ]     Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
- Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
- Blessed are the people of God. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who are before you. God's holy and authoritative word.
- You may be seated at this time. Herbert George Wells, H.G. Wells, might be best known for his science fiction writing, including War of the Worlds, but he was also a prolific writer of history.
- [ 3 : 5 2 ]     And in 1935, as a historian, he wrote a newspaper article entitled, Greatest in History. Somehow I was able to find the actual clipping of this online.

He shared this opinion, his opinion, about the greatest figures in the history of mankind. And even though he was an atheist, H.G. Wells argued that Jesus is the single individual who has, quote, left the most permanent impression on the world.

This is what he says. Jesus is, I think, a quite cardinal figure in human history, and it will be long before Western men decide, if ever they do decide, to abandon his life as the turning point in their reckoning of time.

We do not know as much about him as we would like to know, but the four Gospels agree in giving us a picture of a very definite personality. They carry a conviction of reality.

To assume that he never lived, that the accounts of his life are inventions, is more difficult and raises far more problems for the historian than to accept the essential elements of the Gospel stories as fact.

[ 5 : 02 ] Now, it is interesting and significant that a historian, without any theological bias, whatever, should find that he cannot portray the progress of humanity honestly without giving a foremost place to a penniless teacher from Nazareth.

Yet more than 1900 years later, a historian like myself, who does not even call himself a Christian, finds the picture centering irresistibly around the life and character of this most significant man.

It is one of the most revolutionary changes of outlook that has ever stirred and changed human thought. The world began to be a different world from the day that doctrine was preached.

In our passage today, Jesus opens his mouth to preach his first recorded sermon in all the Gospels.

This is that dynamite doctrine that changed the world and changed human thought forever. It says in verses 1 to 2, Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, To open one's mouth is an Old Testament idiom.

[ 6 : 21 ] It's a Hebrew idiom that precedes significant pronouncements. This is not just us chatting. This is the Messianic manifesto. And in the same way that Moses went up on a mountain to bring down the Ten Commandments which told the old covenant people of God how they ought to live, now Jesus here goes up on the mountain and then teaches us how the citizens of the kingdom of heaven ought to live, what they are really like.

So the mountain setting is not incidental. And the audience is focused. The crowds are in the background, as you can see in this passage. They're in the background eavesdropping, but the primary audience of Jesus' teaching is not the crowds.

It's his disciples to whom we were just introduced in the preceding chapter. It says in verse 1, When he sat down, his disciples came to him. That's interesting, some cultural background because in our context, when people want to teach, they stand up.

When preachers give their sermon, they stand up. When professors give their lectures, they stand up. But in this Jewish ancient context, when teachers are about to teach, they sit down.

And then all their disciples come around, gather around to listen. And that is what's going on. The Son of God, the incarnate Word of God, is now speaking.

[ 7 : 47 ] This is what it looks like to follow Jesus. This is what Christian discipleship looks like. This is what the kingdom of heaven is all about.

This is what it means to be an alternate society, a counterculture to the kingdoms of this world that Jesus just rejected when he was being tempted by the devil in Matthew 4.8.

This sermon is popularly known as the Sermon on the Mount, which is the first of five extended discourses of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew is actually structured around these five discourses.

I think I have an outline for you to see. Chapters 5 to 7 is the first one, a discourse on discipleship. Chapter 10 is the discourse on mission. Chapter 13 is the discourse on the kingdom.

Chapter 18 is the discourse on the church. And finally, 24 to 25 is the discourse on the end times. After the conclusion of each of these discourses, we find some variation of this phrase.

[ 8 : 46 ] When Jesus had finished these sayings, that's why we call them discourses, and that's how we know that this is an intentional structure that Matthew has placed, organized his Gospel around.

The first of these five, which we're starting today, is the longest. And we're at the beginning of that discourse, known famously as the Beatitudes. Which means blessedness, or happiness.

The first definition of the word blessed, you find, in the Merriam-Western Dictionary, is to be held in reverence, or to be honored in worship. So there is a Greek word that means exactly that, and it's usually used to describe God as one who is blessed, held in honor, honored in worship.

For example, Luke 1, 6, 8, blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people. And that means, let God be held in honor and worshiped. Blessed be the Lord God.

But that is not the Greek word that is used here. There's another word that's used here, and it has a different nuance. It is translated fortunate in Acts 26, verse 2, when Paul says, I consider myself fortunate that I, it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews.

[ 10 : 07 ] The same word is translated happy in 1 Corinthians 7, 39-40. A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

You're wondering, why is this related? And then it says, yet in my judgment, she is happier if she remains as she is. That's the same word that is used here in Matthew. Happy.

Fortunate. I don't believe in luck, but in modern parlance, it's similar to how people use the word luck when they say, how lucky are you? How lucky that you have that job?

How lucky that you are married to that woman? How lucky? That's similar to how the word blessed is used here. How happy? This is the person that is to be congratulated.

How happy is this person? How blessed and fortunate is this person? Do you know that God wants you to be happy? Christian author Randy Alcorn captures a common misconception when he says, being holy is something we can do in God's presence, but being happy is something we're more comfortable doing behind his back, which isn't possible.

[ 11 : 25 ] But truth be told, there is nothing wrong with pursuing happiness. Fourth century, Pastor Augustine wrote, every man, whatsoever his condition, desires to be happy.

The problem is not with the pursuit of happiness, but with the pursuit of happiness apart from God. The problem is not the pursuit of happiness itself.

Do you know whom the Bible describes in the foremost way as being happy or blessed? It's God himself. That same Greek word used here in Matthew is used to describe God in the cult worship we read in 1 Timothy 1-11, the glory of the blessed God, the glory of the happy God.

1 Timothy 6.15 says, God is the blessed and only sovereign, the king of kings and lord of lords. God is the happy and only sovereign, the king of kings and lord of lords.

Our God is supremely happy. He is sovereignly happy. He is eternally happy. And because God is the original happy God, the happy one, only those who through faith in Jesus Christ have become partakers in the divine nature as it says in 2 Peter 1-4 can be truly happy.

[ 12 : 52 ] It is a spiritual impossibility for any human to be happy apart from God. So it says in Psalm 89-15, happy are the people who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face.

C.S. Lewis puts it this way, God made us, invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol and it would not run properly on anything else.

Now God designed the human machine to run on himself. He himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn or the food our spirits were designed to feed on.

There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from himself because it is not there.

There is no such thing. In these eight beatitudes, Jesus tells us that what true happiness on earth looks like.

[ 14 : 05 ] This is what it looks like to find true happiness as you follow Jesus. If you are a stickler and you counted the word blessed in this passage already and you counted that it occurs nine times and not eight, I think that is because verse 11 and 12 are an expansion of beatitude number eight in verse 10 because it continues the theme of being persecuted and because verses 11 and 12 deviate from the standard third person form and it starts saying blessed are you instead of blessed are they.

so I think it's part of beatitude number eight so I think there's eight but that's really not that important. We can subdivide the eight beatitudes into two halves.

The first half ends with the mention of righteousness. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and then the reward is for theirs is the kingdom. Oh sorry, that's the reward is the same from the beginning and the end.

And likewise, the second half ends with the mention of righteousness. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake. And then the first half begins with the reward for theirs is the kingdom of heaven and the second half ends with the reward for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

So once you discern this pattern that there are two halves you can also see that those two halves have distinctive themes. The first four beatitudes, the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness all describe being empty or devoid of something.

[ 15 : 32 ] you lack wealth or you lack pride in spirit. You mourn the lack of loss of something. You lack action or initiative if you're meek.

You hunger and thirst because you lack something and you need more of it. But the last four beatitudes, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake, they all describe being full or overflowing with something.

You are full of mercy so you show mercy to others. Your heart is full of purity, it's undivided. So you're pure in heart, you're full of the peace of Christ and so you make peace with others.

You no longer just hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are full of righteousness and so you are persecuted on account of it. So there is a logical flow to these beatitudes from the first half to the second half.

Each of these beatitudes is so revolutionary and countercultural that we have decided as a leadership team to slow down and take one or two beatitudes per week in similar to how we did the 10 commandments when we were in Exodus 20.

[ 16 : 42 ] And today I'm going to go over just beatitudes one and two because they're very closely related in verse three and four. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. And I think the main point that God's driving home with this, these two beatitudes is that only the spiritually poor and sad possess the kingdom of heaven.

It's a counterintuitive and paradoxical statement. How in the world is it blessed or happy to be poor in spirit and to mourn?

If I were to compose the beatitudes according to the moral values and the cultural norms of our world, I think it would look quite different. So I tried writing it down and this is what I came up with.

I think blessed are the wealthy in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of earth. Blessed are those who laugh for they shall forget their troubles. Blessed are the assertive for they shall inherit the earth.

[ 17 : 55 ] Blessed are those who are full of righteousness and signal their virtue for they shall be affirmed. Blessed are the justice warriors for they shall execute justice. Blessed are the double-hearted for they shall see men in high places.

Blessed are the war makers for they shall be called gods. Blessed are those who are praised for their worldliness for theirs is the kingdom of earth. I think if we're honest with ourselves we'd agree that we have assimilated many of these worldly attitudes into our own morality and our own outlook on life.

But Jesus' beatitudes turn all these things upside down on their heads. sure maybe the rich and powerful possess the kingdom of earth now to a certain degree but it's the poor in spirit who possess the kingdom of heaven.

All of the beatitudes command the exact attitude and behavior that the world views with contempt. These are the people, the beatitudes in Matthew 5 are the people that the world would view as the losers of the world.

the scums of the world. No wonder Jesus often refers to his disciples throughout the gospel of Matthew as little ones. To be a Christian is to be a little one.

[ 19 : 27 ] A small one. Poor in spirit. The word poor here is a key word throughout the Bible and occurs many times in the Old Testament and it often refers to people who are literally poor but also often refers to the people of God.

People of God are consistently described as those who are poor. Psalm 9 12 says for the needy shall not always be forgotten and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever. Often the people of God were financially poor, physically poor, but because of that it comes to represent not just those who are literally physically poor but those who are poor in spirit, those who are meek, those who are not haughty, those who are humble, those who are afflicted.

For example, it's translated the same word that's translated poor in other parts of the Old Testament is translated as meek in Isaiah 29 19. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord and the poor among mankind shall exalt in the Holy One of Israel.

It is translated afflicted in Psalm 10. 12. Arise, O Lord, O God, lift up your hand, forget not the afflicted. It's calling all God's people as the afflicted ones. It's translated humble in Zephaniah 2.

3. Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land who do his just commands. Psalm 149. For the Lord takes pleasure in his people, he adorns the humble with salvation.

[ 20 : 56 ] So who are these poor people? Who are these humble, afflicted, meek people? They are the people of God. The poor in spirit are those who humbly acknowledge their need for God.

They are needy people, not in a general sense, but specifically needy for God. In the New Testament, the poor gets lumped in together with some people like this.

the crippled, the lame, the blind. In Luke 14, 12-14, Jesus says that when you throw a party that you should invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.

Because then God will bless us for inviting those who cannot repay us. And God will repay us. In his sermon on this passage, John Piper, a pastor, mentioned a story of when he was speaking at a small conference before I was born.

And he, after his message, a student came up, a college student, and asked him a very commonly asked question. Isn't Christianity a crutch for people who cannot make it on their own?

[ 22 : 14 ] And John Piper thought for a few seconds, and then he said he just responded simply, yes. Full stop. Yes, Christianity is for the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind.

But why is being a crutch a bad thing? If you have a broken leg, isn't it a blessing to have a crutch so that you can walk around? Why is calling Christianity a crutch an insult?

To the people of this world, being a crutch, having a crutch is an insult because they don't want to admit that they are cripples.

In explaining why he ministered to tax collectors and sinners in Matthew 9, 12, Jesus said, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

That's why Jesus came. Yes, we are blind. Left to our own devices, we are blind, but Jesus has opened up our eyes so that we once were blind, but now we see.

[ 23 : 30 ] Yes, left to our own devices, we are lame and crippled, but now because of Jesus, we leap like deers. Yes, left to our own devices, we are poor, we are destitute, we are bankrupt, corrupt.

But isn't that why he says in 2 Corinthians 8, 9, though Jesus was rich, yet for our sake he became poor, so that we by his poverty might become rich.

As a proof of his messianic ministry, Jesus says this in Matthew 11, 5, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised, and the poor have good news, preached to them.

Yes, Jesus is my crutch, and I'm not ashamed of it. In fact, Jesus is more than my crutch, because as if I can do part of the walking on my own, no, Jesus is my wheelchair, no, he's more than that, Jesus is my everything.

God does not help those who help themselves, that is deism, that is not the gospel. God helps those who cannot help themselves, those who are poor in spirit, those who recognize their own spiritual bankruptcy, those who recognize their own moral destitution, their own insurmountable debt of sin before the holy God, they are those whom God helps.

[ 25 : 11 ] It is critical that we admit this. Objectively speaking, we are all cripples. We are poor in spirit because we are impoverished in our spirit, but not everyone admits this.

So this must become a subjective reality to us. And God tells us that is exactly what he is looking for and the people that he is searching for. Isaiah 66, verse 2 says this, says the Lord.

He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word. That's what it means to be poor in spirit, to be humble and contrite in spirit, and to tremble at God's word.

And the Bible gives us some vivid pictures of what this looks like in flesh. In Luke chapter 5, verse 8, when Peter realizes who Jesus really is, the usually boastful Peter, the usually kind of put your hand, put your foot in your mouth Peter, the usually the Peter who has all the braggadocio you could want, when he realizes who Jesus really is, he falls down at Jesus' knees and he says, depart from me.

depart from me. For I'm a sinful man, oh Lord. In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18, while the Pharisee is looking up to heaven and boasting of his self-righteousness and raising his arms to heaven, and God, thank you that I'm not like this tax collector, I do everything I need to do, I do all the righteous deeds, and then the tax collector says he's far away, he can't even get himself to draw near the temple because that's how unworthy he feels, he's far off and while he's far off, he does not dare to look up to heaven, he's looking down and he beats his chest and says, have mercy on me, a sinner.

[ 27 : 25 ] God, he's not there. And Jesus, in his kindness, says it's that tax collector that goes home justified by God and not that self-righteous Pharisee.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. Job, when he hears the voice of God, this man who was a righteous man, and because of the trials that he went through was accusing God and questioning God, even though he still held on to his faith and integrity, when he hears the voice of God out of the whirlwind, he says in Job 42, 5-6, I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you.

Therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. Just one more example, Isaiah 6, verse 5.

After seeing a vision of the Lord, a vision of the glory and the majesty of our Lord God, prophet Isaiah laments, woe is me, cursed is me, woe is me, for I am lost, for 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, the Lord of hosts.

If we have never felt as Christians, in light of the face of the glory of God, to just crumble to the floor, and confess, woe is me, depart from me, I am a sinner, then we have not yet fully appreciated the glory and the holiness of God.

[ 29 : 14 ] God. Do you know, brothers and sisters, that sinful men are just worms?

Does that sound too extreme to you? Because that's not my vocabulary, that's God's vocabulary. Isaiah 41, verse 4, what God says to his people, fear not, you worm, Jacob, you men of Israel.

I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord. Your redeemer is the holy one of Israel. What is God saying to us? You are but a worm, but don't lose heart because I am your redeemer.

Yes, we are creating the image of God, that is true. But morally, spiritually, because of our fallen nature, because of our sin, we are but worms and it is wondrous, breathtaking grace and mercy of God that God takes mere worms and declares them to be sons and daughters of God, heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

the presidential inauguration is tomorrow. Some people think that President Trump is unfit for his high office.

[ 30 : 50 ] Some other people think that President Biden was unfit for their high office. I'm not too concerned about either of those.

What's more shocking to me and what's more amazing and unbelievable to me than both of those things is that you and I are counted heirs, princes and princesses of the kingdom of heaven.

How can it be? For that's what God gives us. Look at verse 3.

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The Beatitudes begins and ends with this assurance. Verse 3 and verse 10. By bookending the Beatitudes with this blessing and this promise, Jesus teaches us that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these as described in the Beatitudes.

And note well that this blessing is in the present tense. Theirs is, not theirs shall be, theirs is the kingdom of heaven. This is a repetition of what Jesus started preaching earlier in Matthew 4, 17.

[ 32 : 08 ] Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of heaven does not lie in the distant future, Jesus was saying. It is now. The reign of God, the God of heaven here on earth is breaking in now.

If we are poor in spirit, then we are blessed because already we are in possession of the kingdom of heaven. Not fully, as we'll see later, but in a real way.

So my poor brothers and sisters in Christ, hear this assurance of our Lord Jesus. Are you aware this morning of your own spiritual poverty? Are you aware now of your moral bankruptcy?

Are you aware of the insurmountable debt of sin that you could never hope to repay to God? Take heart because you have pledged allegiance to Christ the King.

Yours is the kingdom of heaven. Beatitude number two flows naturally from Beatitude number one.

[ 33 : 20 ] It says in verse four, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. Those who are aware of their spiritual bankruptcy and poverty cannot help but mourn.

There are two specific and one general sense in which Christians ought to mourn according to the New Testament. First, the word is used to refer to mourning our own sins.

James 4, 8-10 says this, cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you. Mourning our own sins, humbling ourselves before the Lord. Secondly, we not only mourn our own sins, we also mourn the sins of others, especially that of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In 2 Corinthians 12, 21, Paul writes, I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

[ 34 : 29 ] We see how sin wreaks havoc on the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ and so we mourn. we mourn and cry out to God in prayer.

I think we can readily agree that mourning doesn't really characterize many churches in our day and age. There is little solemnity, let alone mourning, in so many church services.

Everything is instead bright and peppy. 20th century Welsh pastor D. Martin Lloyd-Jones also observed the same phenomenon in his day and he attributed this partly to this, the idea which has gained currency that if we as Christians are to attract those who are not Christians, we must deliberately affect an appearance of brightness and joviality.

Thus many try to assume a kind of joy and happiness which is not something that rises from within but is something which is put on. Now probably that is the main explanation of the absence of this characteristic of mourning in the life of the church today.

It is this superficiality, this glibness or joviality, thanks John, it is this endeavor to appear to be something and to cut a certain figure instead of a life arising from within which controls and determines the whole of our appearance and behavior.



[ 35 : 59 ] mourning. By the way, I highly recommend this book if you're going to follow through this Sermon on the Mount studies in the Sermon on the Mount by D. Martin Lowe Jones. The shallow understanding of sin combined with a shallow notion of joy produce people who do not mourn.

You might be thinking to yourself, well, mourning doesn't seem all that blessed or happy to me. I'd rather forget my guilt than enjoy my life, thank you very much.

It is true that sin brings a certain kind of pleasure. Hebrews 11.25 speaks of the fleeting pleasures of sin, but that is exactly the problem.

sin never leads to lasting joy. Its pleasures are fleeting. It's like ingesting fentanyl, which gives you a brief sense of euphoria, but then leads to destruction and death.

It is mourning and our confessing our sins that we find true happiness. as 19th century English pastor Charles Spurgeon once preached, quote, it does not spoil your happiness to confess your sin.

[ 37 : 28 ] The unhappiness is in not making the confession. Any true Christian can attest to the truth of that statement. So months ago, didn't we learn this from Ecclesiastes chapter 7 verses 2 to 4?

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by sadness of face the heart is made glad.

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. When we come face to face with our own sinfulness and this world's profound brokenness, there are only two ways we can try to fight off despair.

The first way, as I mentioned in the Ecclesiastes series, is to party like there's no tomorrow. Drink the night away and dance the night away. Divert yourself with endless comedy shows.

Forget all your troubles, but that route doesn't ultimately work. The true path to the peak of joy always goes through the valley of mourning.

[ 38 : 39 ] If we mourn, we cultivate humility and submission before God, which then produces profound and lasting gratitude and joy.

That is, brothers and sisters, the secret to Christian joy. That is the secret to Christian joy. Only those who are poor in spirit can be filled with the spirit.

only those who repent can be forgiven. Only those who have a real sense of sin can have a true sense of joy, of salvation.

Only those who have died to self can have resurrection life in Jesus Christ. Humility comes before exaltation. That's how it always works in God's economy.

So we mourn our own sins and we mourn the sins of others. There's still yet one more thing that we mourn in general. Later in Matthew 9, 15, some people will ask Jesus, why don't your disciples fast like these other devout Jews?

[ 39 : 47 ] And this is Jesus' answer. Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast.

What Jesus is saying is this, as long as the bridegroom of the church, Jesus, is with us in the flesh, it would be inappropriate for his followers to mourn.

You don't go to a wedding to mourn. But when Jesus is taken away, after his death and resurrection and ascension and he's no longer physically with them anymore, Jesus assures them, yeah, then they will fast.

Then they will mourn. We live in this intervening age between Christ's first coming and then his second coming and that intervening age is characterized by mourning.

Because even though Christ has already inaugurated the kingdom of heaven, he has not yet consummated the kingdom of heaven. We are already in possession of the kingdom of heaven, but we are not yet in full possession of the kingdom of heaven.

[ 40 : 56 ] Apart from the first and the last beatitudes, all the promises are in the future tense. Look at verse 4. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted, for they shall inherit the earth, for they shall be satisfied, for they shall receive mercy, for they shall see God, for they shall be called sons of God.

We do all already have this in some measure. We know that because even though verse 9 says, blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. we are already called sons of God because throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus will refer to God as God your Father who is in heaven, which means we are his sons and his children.

Paul teaches this very clearly, this tension in Romans 8. Even though we have already received the spirit of adoption by whom we cry out Abba, Father, it says, that's Romans 8.15, but then it also says we still groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Until the final redemption and resurrection of our bodies, we cannot fully realize our spiritual sonship via our union with Christ, the Son of God. So even though we are already sons of God, we are not yet fully sons of God.

Both of those things are true. Same goes down the list of all of the Beatitudes. We are already comforted in significant measure, but ultimate comfort lies in the future.

[ 42 : 29 ] We already inherit the earth in some measure, but then we shall fully inherit the earth. We are already satisfied in Christ, but then we shall fully be satisfied. In this intervening age, we groan along with the rest of creation because we have been subjected to futility.

And we can see how sin wreaks havoc upon our world and upon our bodies. We look around us and we read the news and we see the heartbreak news after news of wars and of fires and destroyed homes and diseases and deaths.

So we mourn. In this sinful world, we are poor in spirit while the haughty gloat over us. In this sinful world, we mourn while sinners laugh at us.

In this world, we are meek while sinners step all over us. In this world, we are persecuted for righteousness' sake. But Jesus assures us, do not lose heart for yours is the kingdom of heaven.

You already have the first fruits, the down payment of the Holy Spirit and the rest of it is definitely coming. Your full inheritance as heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

[ 43 : 44 ] You will be comforted on that day and there will be no more tears. And God himself will wipe the tears away from your face. But why do we deserve such a wonderful blessing?

we who are just poor in spirit, impoverished, we who mourn our brokenness and sin, who are we to deserve all these blessings and happinesses?

The happiness that God promises us here comes at a high cost, a heavy cost. Jesus, who is without sin, Jesus, who is the perfect son of God, who knew eternal happiness, he should have never known sorrow.

He should have never known any grief. He should not have been poor in spirit. He should not have had to mourn. And yet, Isaiah 53, verse 3 prophesied, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

grief. Why did the eternal son of God, who according to Proverbs 8, 30, 31, was daily in eternity past, daily the delight of his father, who was in eternity past, rejoicing before him always, before the father, rejoicing always, why did he come down to earth to become a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, because he came to bear our sorrows, because he came to bear our griefs, because he came to die on the cross so that we who should know only sorrow and only grief can be happy, can be happy.

[ 45 : 54 ] And know true happiness, true blessedness, true joy. It's because Jesus was laid low that we are now lifted up.

It's because he was the man of sorrows that we are now a happy people. We sang these lines from the song earlier, Good and Gracious King, and it perfectly captures these two Beatitudes.

I approach the throne of glory. Nothing in my hands I bring, but the promise of acceptance from a good and gracious king.

So let's approach God with empty hands and rejoice before his face. Let's pray together. Father, we want to be a truly joyful and happy people.

We don't want anything to do with this forced, affected happiness, masks, and pretensions of happiness.

[ 47 : 15 ] Lord, we want the real thing. We want real happiness and real joy. And so for that end, to that end, Lord God, won't you please grant us true poverty of spirit, the true spirit of mourning.

so that we might be, though ever afflicted, yet always rejoicing.

In the name of your precious son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.