Matt 5 Beatitudes Feb 1 2026 - Jesse Blaine

Well, a couple weeks ago, we read a passage where Jesus asked a big question which said, "What are you seeking?" And we translated that to be Jesus turning to the disciples and saying, **"What is it that you most deeply deeply desire in this life**. And this evening, I sort of want to follow up on that a little bit. And in doing that, I want to lay my own cards out on the table in terms of what I most deeply desire in life, especially as it relates here to this church. Now, as a newer church, when I go to meetings with other pastors sometimes or get advice from people that are doing other church plants or working in other churches, I'm often asked the question, Jesse, what is it that you want for this church? What is it that you most deeply desire for the church that the Lord has given to you that you get to pastor with? To which I always respond with a great Christian answer, I say, "Well, I want whatever the Lord's will is for this church." Or, "I want to lean in together as a group of people that are brought into the covenant through Abraham, through the prophets, through Jesus to be a people that are built up to proclaim the goodness of God to the world." And they say, "Great answer. No, seriously. What do you really, really want for this church?

And when I'm pressed and we get down to brass tax, it's actually a great question, by the way. It's a great question to ask yourself. What do you want in this job? What do you want as a family? Because it forces you to crystallize the core motivation and desire in your heart for anything that you're doing. For me, it's a good exercise.

What is it that I really want for this church? And I was thinking about that and meditating on it and praying for it. this week. And of course, I want things like a home of our own, a building that we can own, or I want live living in thriving worship and a response here in church, deep fellowship, a deep sense of reverence for God and offer him biblical literacy throughout the whole church, us all growing in him, serving others. I want all these things. I definitely want all these things.

But what do I most deeply want for this church? **I want you to be blessed.** I want that we would all be blessed from our Sundays and turn our hearts and our minds to the Lord together to set apart this time for him that we would be blessed. That as we come to receive from the table that we would be blessed, that as we're shaped by his word that we would be blessed.

That our lives would become so tightly connected to God that we would be made alive in him and through that be blessed and be sent out to be a blessing to the world around us. That anybody that came, whether they've been here for five years, not we haven't, we're not even that old, four years, or they're a visitor for the first time, that they would leave here being blessed and not blessed by talents or gifts. We have those. Not blessed by our warm hospitality. We do have that. I do hope that we are blessed by that. But blessed most deeply by a connection and a reception of who Jesus Christ is in their lives that we would be deeply blessed. I want us to be blessed.

And that word in its truest form doesn't mean I'll bless your heart. Doesn't mean you know I hope you get good things. But that word in its truest form blessing macarios ashray biatus.

It means that you have this deep flourishing joy that can live and exist right next to suffering and pain. It means that you know the fullness of life that comes from Jesus. **It means that we are happy** but not happy in the sense that's fleeting but happy in the way that God wants us to be happy that we can truly say that we are happy that doesn't depend on anything else around us that we are fully blessed. I pray for that, and it was really crystallizing for me to answer that question because this is truly deeply what I pray for this church for you for myself for all of us that we would be blessed to be a blessing out into the world.

And today what we're going to look at is a passage that Stephen just read a few moments ago in Matthew and it's the beatitudes. It's a list of what Jesus says it looks like to be blessed. How to live a blessed life. What that means for us and how that plays out in all of our lives. So it's going to be a very simple message today. But sometimes it's these simple things we think I know the beatitudes. I've read over them a hundred times. But it's these simple things that sometimes we pass over. But it's actually the deep depth and the core of the gospel that he has to give us in these simple things.

So join me then as we turn to Matthew chapter 5. We'll start here in verse two. But before we do, let me say a quick prayer for us. "*Lord, we do thank you for your goodness. We thank you that you've given of yourself to us and continue to give of yourself to us that we would know blessing, the true, deep, real blessing that you want for us. We ask that you open up our eyes and our ears, soften our hearts to receive your word today that in all things we would never leave with just knowledge of you but we would leave knowing you better and through that may we be blessed by you. We pray in your great and holy name. Amen. Amen*."

So Matthew chapter 5, we're going to look at verses 2 through mostly 10 here and it's this famous part of the sermon on the mount called the beatitudes. St. Augustine way back when as a church father called the beatitudes the perfection of the Christian in life that if you wanted to know if you wanted to have a rubric for your life and how to live the beatitudes point you towards its perfection. Thomas Aquinas said not only is this the map of the character of Christ that he wants for us but it's actually the map for us to experience real true and deep happiness. So what we're going to be exploring together is how does Jesus, the author of life, the one who created our lives and our souls guide us and point to us the path and the way to embrace the kingdom and to live into the happiness that he has for us.

And the image I want to give us is good for Epiphany. We're in the season of Epiphany. That's why I'm wearing green, which is epifanos, light upon. It's God's light being shown upon all things. And so, you can imagine the beatitudes being like this big painting of what the character of God looks like in our hearts as we walk into the kingdom. And this light is shining in different parts of that painting, highlighting different elements.

So, that's what we're doing today. We're going to go through these and as we go through them I want to invite us to keep in mind a central practice to our Christian lives and that is something I probably mention every third to fifth sermon I don't know but at the entrance of our sanctuary there's a bowl and in front of that bowl it says remember your baptism the goal of that is many things that you'd remember that you've been brought into life together with him but one of the things is that as you look at that maybe you touch it and interact with it you'd remember that our life in Christ is a living practice of continuously dying to ourselves that is putting off the things of our nature and nurture and being risen again together with Christ.

So as we go through these beatitudes I want to take that sort of motif and look through them. Think about the ways that our nature and nurture sort of form us and how the kingdom calls us to die to those things that are forming us and take on the kingdom as a means to form us into the way that God wants us to live. And as we do that the beatitudes of course give us a very clear anchoring for the way to do that where we can exchange the things that we naturally seek for happiness, liberty, justice and the pursuit of happiness.

The things that we think as we go through our normal lives, this will make me happy or that will make me happy. As we go through the beatitudes, I want us to trade those in and take on the things of the kingdom and take on the frame that he gives us here in the beatitudes. And one of the best ways to go through them is to think about them in **two categories**.

INWARD

One is how they shape us inwardly and the other is how that inward life is lived outside of ourselves in the world around us. So the first theme is this. It's humility and dependence. How we approach God and how he shapes us on the inside. Let me just read here from verse two. And he opened his mouth and taught them saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 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.

Think about the ways we are in our natural state, in the way that we sort of are born and the culture that we live in. Think about the ways that we sort of naturally seek happiness in our own lives. Self-sufficiency might be one thing. The ability to make decisions for ourselves and to self-determine our future. I'm my own person. I do what I want, when I want, how I want. I affirm all that is me. And when I do that, I will be blessed. And this idea of self-sufficiency will lead us to happiness. And by the way, none of these things are wrong in and of themselves. But I want to point out the ways that we might pursue happiness.

Second one I love. I thought this was quite clever. Toxic positivity. That's where we're so positive that we can't handle anything other than and being positive that everything has to be good and and positive and acceptable and when we come to hard things or real things we try to ignore them or hide under them in that seeking that positivity that we try to seek the happiness there another way we try to seek happiness is self assertion I must not only be strong but I must actively claim what is mine and if I don't someone else will claim it a zero- sum game this life

after all and so I have to be self assertive and I need to claim everything that is mine and if I claim all that is mine then I will be happy.

Consumption. I will be happy once I get this or experience that. I will be happy when I have enough money or get that perfect trip in or whatever it is. If I can just consume all that the world has then I will be happy. These are the ways I think all of us default to seeking happiness in our own lives. And it's easy to see here when we compare them to the beatitudes the change that Christ invites us into.

He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Those who are humble, those who know that they need God, those who come ready to receive, those that exchange, I've got this. I can control everything on my own for Lord, I need you in my life to guide me and to lead me into life. I need you above all things." We exchange our self-sufficiency for being poor in spirit. Recognizing that we can't earn God's favor. We have sin and we can't forgive our own sin, but we turn to Christ to forgive us our sins and to bring us into full life together with him and after that to live into the fullness of life that he has for us. Blessed are the poor in spirit, not the self-sufficient, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn. Those who mourn the reality of their own sin. The church has always interpreted it that way that blessed are those who mourn are those who mourn at the reality that they've fallen short of what God wants for them. that they're not living up to the best version of themselves of who they are in Christ. Blessed are those who look out at the world around them and read the news and mourn the effect of sin in the world and pain and sadness and suffering and injustice. They don't just brush by it, but they mourn the reality of life out there. They don't live in sort of a plastered brushed fake toxic positivity. Positivity is good, by the way. What I'm talking about is when we make everything positive no matter what. Blessed are those who mourn are those who can face the world with holy honesty. Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted because God will redeem all things.

Blessed are the meek, those who are strong but not overbearing. Those who are kind and gentle in heart, those who trade self assertion, saying I have to grab everything. I have to control everything. I have to make my mark. They trade this self assertion. for a confidence that God has already claimed everything for them. They have a God confidence that makes them meek and at peace. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land. They don't have to go take the land themselves. God has already taken it for them.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Those who trade endless consumption, hunger and thirst for all the things in the world. They trade a hunger and thirst for all those things, for a desire to be right with God. and to live the way that he wants us to live. They give up hungering and thirsting for novelty, for a virtue of character formed in us by Christ. Blessed are those who hunger for this, for they shall be satisfied. Now, the world's portrait, and this, by the way, when I say the world, I say the world that we live in, the culture that we live in, this the water that we swim in, the world's portrait of happiness and being blessed is essentially a person on a treadmill, always asserting, always consuming, always exhausted. Well, we see

the picture that emerges here is of someone that is humble and dependent and meek and satisfied. I love how St. Augustine put it more eloquently than me. He said this, "The blessed soul, the happy soul, the one at peace is at rest because his place is provided for God." This is the peaceful life of the saints. Let the hotty, therefore, quarrel and contend for the earthly and temporal things, but blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit this land. This is the land from which they can never be expelled. Blessed are the meek. St. Augustine makes it sound so poetic, resting in God's grace and his goodness provides that he gives to us while the hotty fight over these temporal things.

Honestly, for me, most days I feel like I'm on that treadmill running, seeking, grabbing, trying to find my own happiness. And then sometimes when I'm aware, I'm like those guy. Have you ever seen those videos of people that turn the treadmill up too fast and they sort of run out of steam and they fall and the treadmill just throws them off? I watch too much YouTube. Sorry. I most of the time feel like that if I'm being honest, I feel like I'm on that treadmill seeking, consuming, trying to grab happiness for myself.

The kingdom of course is different. This is the path to happiness. Let these words soak over your soul. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. They shall be blessed. They shall know true happiness. Enter into this rest. Let us be blessed. So this is the internal character that God is forming within us. The second theme is we see how a blessed person treat It's a broken world. That is how does what is the outward shape of this inward posture in our lives.

OUTWARD

And this is where we get the second half of these beatitudes. Verse seven, 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 God.

Now again, here we see the sharp contrast between what these blesseds look like in our own natural state in our cultural moment in the water that we swim in. There are many things that form us. And let me just point out a few other things.

The idea of reciprocity, that is that we keep score. That in order for us to win, somebody else has to lose or if somebody hurts me, I must hurt them or at least I must withdraw from them or I must go crush them. If you look at a lot of the dialogues that are going on in the culture now, there's a lot of reciprocity and scorekeeping going on. on there's not a lot of paths to forgiveness and reconciliation and grace. And when we're around that all the time, when that's what's being preached at us, when that's what we hear and see and observe, that begins to shape us if we're not aware of it. This idea of reciprocity that we keep score.

Another thing that shapes us is this idea of fragmentation or having a fractured soul. That is the water that we swim in. If you think about your own life or the life of your neighbors, for most of us, our hearts and our minds and our souls are pulled in a thousand different directions.

Whether it's distraction or novelty or chasing or this cause or that movement, we piece together our lives and our happiness from a thousand different places and we sort of shackle it together and then stop and pause and ask, why do we not feel like an integrated whole person at the end of the day? Why do we not feel whole or fit? It's because we live in a world that is filled with fragmentation and it pulls us apart in our own lives and our own souls. We live in a culture that's filled with contention. I call it outrage as a hobby where you sort of check the news, you go, "Oh, did you see this one? Can you believe this happened?" And so there's outrage as a hobby where every day, all the time, we're exposed to the news of everything that's going on in the world at all the time, right at our fingertips. And it's very easy to sort of have a dopamine habit of checking the latest outrage that we can get mad about or contend about or enter into strife about or conflict and it creates of course within us a high anxiety a feeling like we always have to contend again here Jesus invites us into a completely different life to exchange these elements of our culture and of our nature and exchange him for the kingdom instead of reciprocity and keeping score blessed are those who are merciful that word is misericordia that means misericordia that means our heart is miserable with others Our heart hurts for others.

Blessed are the merciful and the compassionate, for they will be shown mercy. We've been shown more mercy than we can ever show anyone. We've offended far less than we've been offended far less than we've ever offended God. The blessed person puts down the scorecard and lives into mercy. As we live into mercy, the Lord promises that we will know happiness, that we will know what it means to be blessed. So if you think about that person in your life that deserves justice or that person that deserves retribution or that person that has a negative score on your scorecard, consider what mercy might look like for them.

Jesus invites us to trade the fragmentation of the world for a purity of heart. The original language for that purity of heart is singularity of soul. Blessed is the person that is undivided. Blessed is a person, as Kierkar would say, that has a heart that is willing one thing. This is what purity of heart looks like. That we stop chasing those shiny objects. That we stop being scattered in a thousand different directions and we're drawn into the life that God wants for us. Blessed is the pure in heart, for they will see the face of God himself. Lastly, Jesus invites us to trade all contention that we absorb around us for peacemaking.

Blessed are the peacemakers. A peacemaker is someone that walks into a world that's filled with reactionary chaos and brings peace. And oftentimes for us, it's walking in with a non-anxious presence, knowing that God is with us. He is for us. He is blessing us so we can bring the be the one to bring peace into the world.

As we look at the world around us, there's a lot of chaos, there's a lot of retribution, there's a lot of reciprocity, there's a lot of distraction, there's a lot of self assertion, there's a lot of consumption. Are people happy? Jesus, the author of life, says, "This is the painting of a deep life filled with his happiness." This is what it means to be blessed. Macarios ashray Biatus. This is what it means to be blessed.

Now, if you're anything like me, I like to think of myself as someone with a lot of agency. I like to make things happen. I don't let the world happen to me. I make the world I don't know. I didn't That was something. It worked out differently in my mind. I make the world happen. I don't let the world happen to me. Whatever I meant there, but I'm somebody that has agency. I want to make life happen. And when I read these things, poor in spirit, mourning, peacemaker, merciful, not being somebody that self asserts, it can feel a little disconcerting and a little dis-empowering even. But Jesus promises us that we will know blessedness if we walk into this path together with him because it is us who puts our trust in him. He is with us to give us this blessed life.

Now, two weeks ago, I got to go skiing with my family. It was a great gift, although there wasn't great coverage and so my skis got a free uh stone grind there and uh it was sort of a crazy day skiing and I got the joy of skiing with my uh third child, my youngest daughter, who's a very sort of more timid child as especially as it comes to skiing. But I remember just watching her one time uh she was just skiing down, humming and singing and and just enjoying skiing like look, I'm going to do this turn now and I'm going to do this turn now. But what she didn't really register was that day was a day that was icy everywhere. There was people sort of flailing all around her. Uh there was a huge accident that day sadly. And I started to recognize that around here there was all sorts of hazards, but she couldn't have been any the wiser. She was just her living her happy self. And at the beginning of the day, I skied about 200 yards behind her and it was fine. But as it got more crowded and more icy, I skied 10 feet behind her. But her attitude at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day was the same thing. She just got to focus on the ski trail, ski down with great joy. She was completely oblivious to all the hazards around her. And the reason was because her father was behind her just 10 feet. with a giant green jacket looking around holding his elbows out getting ready to elbow anybody that's about to take my daughter out and I was quite stressed actually got high she got down wasn't that so fun smiling I'm like yeah that was great you want to go in now can we do another run okay let's do another run so I was I was stressed out that day I got to be honest but my daughter had the time of her life she enjoyed that day because she was blessed. She was protected. She didn't have to assert her own safety. She didn't have to make her own safety happen. She was just free to live and to be.

This is the life that God wants for us. And this is the life that he promises for us. The Beatitudes life is a life where God blesses us and we don't have to make ourselves happy, but we can lean into the blessing that he offers us most deeply through his son, our savior Jesus. Christ, let us be blessed. Let us be a blessing to the world.

Prayer
Let me pray for us. Oh God, you know that we are set in the midst of many grave dangers and because of the frailty of our nature, we cannot always stand upright. Grant that your strength and protection may support us in all dangers and carry us through every temptation. That your spirit would come and bless our souls and our hearts that we would put down our striving and the treadmill that we're running on that we would turn to you as the author and perfector of all good things in our lives. Show us the things that we can lay down to exchange for the blessed life of the kingdom. We pray this in your great and holy name. Amen.