

“Thy Kingdom Come”
Lesson 10 - The citizen of the kingdom
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Introduction: Citizenship has both privileges and responsibilities.

A. In the Roman Empire those who were citizens had rights that men respected.

(Acts 22:23-29)

1. Paul used his citizenship to appeal to Caesar and escape the Jews plans.

(Acts 25:11; 28:19)

2. The power of Rome was indeed behind its citizens.

3. What do we have as citizens and to what extent do we have the support of the King?

B. We must maintain a loyalty to the King. **(Lk 6:46)**

1. In this loyalty we become soldiers in God's battle against Satan. **(Eph 6:10-13)**

2. The battleground is in our hearts and we must not become overconfident.

(Rom 13:11-14)

C. What are the components of a loyal heart? **(Mt 5:1-12)**

1. These are not independent proverbs describing eight different people.

I. Attitudes of a citizen towards God.

A. What is the Christian's attitude toward himself in the presence of God? (Mt 5:3)

1. The word used here (ptochos), may be translated "abject poverty." It reflects one who is virtually destitute, or in "imminent danger of real starvation."

a. The word is used to describe the widow with the two mites.

(Mk 12:42-44)

b. It described Lazarus who had to beg. **(Lk 16:20-21)**

c. It described Jesus in his earthly state as compared to heaven! **(2 Cor 8:9)**

2. Here Jesus is describing poverty of *spirit*.

a. We must see our need of and dependence upon God. **(Jn 15:5)**

b. This is the first step in pleasing God! **(Psa 51:17; Isa 64:6)**

3. Consider the example of the Canaanite woman! **(Mt 15:21-28)**

B. The opportunity of grief - those that mourn. (Mt 5:4)

1. The beatitudes go against everything our society thinks!

"These are largely paradoxical statements. A more unlikely formula for success could hardly be imagined. They assaulted every maximum of conventional wisdom and left the hearer startled and perplexed." - Paul Earnhart

2. The word mourn (pentheo) means "to bewail, lament, mourn for."

3. This word described the tears of righteous. **(Lk 6:21)**

4. How do we become happy through mourning?

a. When we mourn over our sins. We know we have offended God!

(2 Cor 7:10; Psa 51:2-4,17; Joel 2:12-13)

b. When was the last time you grieved over your sins? Sadly pride has caused many to become hard hearted. **(Jas 4:8-10)**

C. Meekness shows the power of God in us. (Mt 5:5)

1. It is strength under control - submissiveness.
 2. "There is logical order to the beatitudes up to this point: awareness of dependence upon God ("poor in spirit") leads to a true view of what sin is in all its ugliness ("they that mourn"). This leads to submissiveness to God ("blessed are the meek"). "Meekness" is therefore that disposition in man that makes him esteem himself as small before God and men, taking a low estimate of himself."
 3. Moses is a great example of meekness. (**Num 12:3**)
(Numbers 12:3 KJV) "(Now the man Moses *was* very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth.)"
 - a. How do you respond to men who complain and murmur? (**Prov 16:32**)
 - b. A great test of meekness is your response to unfair and unreasonable people. Do you really trust God? (**Rom 12:21**)
- "Meekness means to submit to God's will in a mild and gentle spirit, even in circumstances of great difficulty." - Joe Corley
4. How do you react when it is hard to do right? How do you react when you have great power and advantages over others?

D. A Christian see his true needs and hungers and thirsts after righteousness (Mt 5:6)

1. The words here express strong craving: Gr. *peinontes (peinao)*, "to be hungry, suffer hunger, to be famished, to crave after" The same is true for "thirst,"
 - a. We do not know what this kind of hunger and thirst is like! This is the same word to describe Jesus' 40 day fast in the wilderness. (**Mt 4:2**)
 - b. Here it describes a hunger that does not come naturally but rather one that is learned. God wants it to become overpowering in our lives.
 - c. Hunger and thirst is a sign of life! What if one ceases being hungry?
2. We want to know more about God and draw as close as we can to Him.
(Psa 63:1; Psa 84:1-5)
3. When we know God, we will hunger and thirst! (**1 Pt 2:1-3**)
4. These will not run from Bible study and isolate themselves from God's people.
(Mal 3:16-17)
5. Rather than feeding our souls on lust and revenge and other things of the world, let us fill ourselves on the righteousness of God! This is a meal that will settle well in your heart.

II. Attitudes of a Citizen towards men.

A. The sign of God's Character in us --- Mercifulness. (Mt 5:7)

1. Merciful is from Gr. "*eleemon, eleos*," meaning "mercy, pity, especially on account of misery" (Berry). "...good will towards the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them" (Thayer).
 - a. Mercy denotes **both** an attitude and an action.
 - b. It is not enough just to feel for another. (**Jas 2:15-18**)
2. Consider some Bible examples of mercy.
 - a. The Good Samaritan showed mercy. (**Lk 10:30-37**)
 - b. The publican wanted mercy. (**Lk 18:13**)

- c. The ten lepers received mercy from Jesus. (**Lk 17:13**)
- 3. Mercy will go a long way in keeping the tongue from falsely attacking brethren! (**Mt 12:7**)
- d. God pleads with us to have mercy. (**Col 3:12; Hos 6:6, 12:6**)
- 4. Remember Jesus warning to the Pharisees. (**Mt 9:13; 23:23**)

B. The Christian's unwavering focus -- those who are pure in heart. (Mt 5:8)

- 1. The word "Pure" is from the Greek word *katharos*, used twenty-eight times In the New Testament. It is translated by such terms as "pure," "clean" and "clear."
- 2. We must have a single focus in this life. When we have this everything will come from pure motives! (**Mt 6:22-24; 2 Cor 11:2**)
- 3. The fruits of an impure heart.
 - a. You will depend upon your own guile and "wisdom" rather than trust God. (**2 Cor 4:2**)
 - b. You will lack the resolve and courage that comes by faith. (**Jas 1:7-8, 4:8**)

"The true vision of God will not be granted to the shrewd and calculating who play dishonest games; or to the doubleminded who can never quite put both feet in the kingdom (**James 1:7-8**), but to those who are absolutely honest and single of heart toward God." - Paul Earnhart

C. The work of God within us --- Peacemakers (Mt 5:9)

- 1. Peace is from Gr. *eirene* 1) a state of national tranquillity 1a) exemption from the rage and havoc of war 2) peace between individuals, i.e. harmony, concord 3) security, safety, prosperity, felicity, (because peace and harmony make and keep things safe and prosperous)
 - a. The primary peace is being right with God. (**Jn 14:27; Rom 5:1**)
 - b. We also must "make peace" which involves bringing God's will to others.
- 2. Consider some Bible examples of "peacemakers."
 - a. Jesus is called the "prince of peace," but how did He accomplish it? (**Isa 9:6; Jn 16:31-33**)
 - b. The children of the kingdom are to follow after peace (**Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:13; 2 Tim. 2:22**).
- 3. How far should we seek this peace?
 - a. It is to be pursued (**1 Pet. 3:11**).
 - b. We are to be zealous for it (**2 Pet. 3:14**).

"The three words, "seek," "pursue," and "zealous" in the above Scriptures are important to our study: "Seek" (*Zetein*) means to make peace the object of our endeavour. "Pursue" (*Diokein*) means to hunt down as a hunter stalks a quarry. "Zealous" (*Spoudazein*) means to seek a thing with burning enthusiasm. Peace in relationships does not come easily or automatically. We must desire it with our whole heart, seek it with our whole mind, and strain every faculty to find it and maintain it. THEN GOD OPENS HIS HAND AND ABUNDANTLY GIVES!" - Jimmy Tuten

- c. There are some who do not want peace! Your actions to bring peace will be hated! It threatens what they really want! (Ex. Some do not want

Christian mates)

***III. The Christian's reception from the world -- persecuted for righteousness sake.
(Mt 5:10)***

A. What is persecution?

1. dioko - 1) to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away 2b) to pursue (in a hostile manner) 3) in any way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one 3a) to persecute 3b) to be mistreated, suffer persecution on account of something"
2. If you are a Christian there will be many things that will happen to you that are unfair! **(1 Thess 3:2-3; 2 Tim 3:12)**
3. How will you respond to your God given appointment? Jesus wants you to know about it ahead of time so you can think about it and be prepared. **(Jn 15:18-21)**

B. Why are Christians persecuted?

1. Because we follow the Head, Jesus Christ, and not the world.
 - a. Why does persecution come from the family? Because you act upon principle and not that of "family rules." (Ex. "Tell them I am not home!")
 - b. Why does persecution come within the church? Because we refuse to use the carnal weapons of some and will not join them in their carnal goals! **(Gal 5:10-12; 6:12)**
2. The world will demand that you limit your associates! **(Gal 4:17)**
 - a. When bitterness comes within some they will demand that you pull away from their enemies. Here is where slander becomes a tool! **(Eph 4:31)**
 - b. When you submit to the Lord you will have peace with Him and persecution from the worldly. If you submit to the demands of men you will have temporary "peace" with your earthly master and alienation from God. Which do you choose?

B. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5:10)

1. Are you "fit for the kingdom?" **(Lk 9:62)**
2. Let suffering mold your heart to be closer to God and His people. **(2 Cor 1:3-7)**
 - a. It is in suffering that we have the best opportunity for growth!
 - b. It is in suffering that we have the greatest influence for Christ!

Conclusion: Do you have the happiness described in these verses?

Questions for Lesson 10
The fellowship of the kingdom

1. What are the advantages of citizenship in a worldly kingdom? In the kingdom of God?
2. How is our loyalty shown to our King?

3. How does a Christian view himself in the presence of God? How does this attitude help him?
4. How does a Christian react to his sins? How does this attitude help him?
5. What is meekness and how do we find it?
6. What is the Christians attitude towards righteousness? How do you know if you have it?
7. What is mercy and how do we display this attitude?
8. How can we be “pure in heart?”
9. Where does true peace with God come from?
10. How will the world react to us?

Beatitudes: A Gospel for Losers
Paul Earnhart

We become forgetful," writes Malcolm Muggeridge, "that Jesus is the prophet of the losers', not the victors' camp, the one who proclaims that the first will be last, that the weak are the strong and the fools are the wise" (*The End of Christendom*, p. 56). Nowhere is this fact more evident than in the beatitudes. As we have already noted in our preceding study, emptiness, not fullness, is the key to happiness.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" (5:6). The word "hunger" in this beatitude is the same as that used by Matthew in the preceding chapter (4:2) when speaking of Jesus' 40-day fast in the wilderness. Since such desperate hunger is largely foreign to our experience, much in this metaphor may be lost on us. It speaks of profound spiritual starvation which is leading to death. But the parallel is not absolute. There is a fundamental difference between being stomach-hungry and heart-hungry. Even the most insensitive people are moved by the hunger of the body, yet there seem to be few who recognize the hunger of the spirit and the void that sin produces. Spiritually speaking, men resemble the half-dead corpses of Dachau and Belsen, but they stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the haunting meaninglessness of

life without God. Not all those in the "far country" have the sanity to confess, like the prodigal, that they "perish here with hunger" (**Luke 15:17**)! Such individuals continue to search mindlessly for some better "husk" to fill the emptiness. Those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" have chosen to face their desperate need for what it is, and to seek the food that answers to it.

The "righteousness" these displaced and sin-burdened souls seek is first of all the righteousness of a right relationship with God through forgiveness and **justification (Romans 5:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21)**, and, secondly, the concrete righteousness of a transformed life (**Romans 6:8; 8:29**). They not only want to feel right but to do right. Both these ideas of righteousness are present in the **sermon (5:7 and 5:10,20-48; 6: 1)**. God is determined not only to forgive us but to change us, to make us partakers of the divine nature (**2 Peter 1:4**). And he has assured us that we are going to be like **Him (Matthew 5:48)**. What a wonderful hope!

There is in every human being a built-in and inescapable need for God. This God-hunger is movingly expressed by David while a fugitive from Saul: "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, In a dry and weary land, where no water is" (**Psalms 63:1**). Sin has put in every man a God-shaped emptiness. Characteristically, we try to ease our pain by pouring in all kinds of unbelievable trash. But we had as well try to pour Niagara Falls into a tea cup as to seek to satisfy our God-akin spirits with mere "things" and carnal thrills. Unable to meet our fundamental need, money and pleasure and even worldly wisdom become the basis for an insatiable appetite that leaves us empty, unfulfilled and burnt-out (**Ecclesiastes 5:10-11**). We will never be able to have enough, feel enough, or know enough, to find contentment without God. What we need is righteousness and, as Jesus says, those that long for it are destined to know a transcendent satisfaction and peace --they shall be filled" (**Matthew 5:6**).

There is in this beatitude a call for a change of priorities. For many of us a right relationship with God is seen as an important part of "the good life" which every well-rounded individual should address, but it is certainly not the whole of things. Jesus says that it must be more than a vital interest - it must become the reigning passion of our existence. All that truly hungry people can think of is food.

"Blessed are the pure in heart" (5:8). J. B. Phillips translates this phrase, "Blessed are the utterly sincere," and this would appear to reflect the true meaning of our Lord's words. The purity in this beatitude certainly does not refer to perfect righteousness of life, and given the fact that attitudinal qualities (things we must do as opposed to what God does) dominate this part of the sermon, it is unlikely that it refers principally to the purity of a forgiven heart. It is far more probable that it speaks of the purity of a single-minded devotion (**Matthew 6:22-24; 2 Corinthians 11:2**), an attitude which is possible even for sinners (**Luke 8:15**). James makes this use of purity when he urges: "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts ye double-minded" (**James 4:8**). The true vision of God will not be granted to the shrewd and calculating who play dishonest games; or to the doubleminded who can never quite put both feet in the kingdom (**James 1:7-8**), but to those who are absolutely honest and single of heart toward God. They will see God (**5:8**), not as the Jews at Sinai, but in the full understanding of an intimate relationship with Him (**John 3:3-5; 14:7-9**). It is an old question with an old answer. "Who," says David, "shall ascend into the hill of the Lord and stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart" (**Psalms 24:3-4**). If

you want to see God with your whole heart, you will. People like that don't let *anything* stand in their way.