

Book of Matthew

Chapter 5:1-12

¹Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on **the mountain**; and after He sat down, His **disciples** came to Him. ²And **He opened His mouth and began to teach them**, saying,

J. Vernon McGee > It is likewise true that the modus operandi for Christian living is not really found in the Sermon on the Mount. It gives the ethic without supplying the dynamic. Living by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit is just not one of the truths taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul says: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4).

What you have in the Sermon on the Mount is a marvelous electric light bulb, but you do not have the generator that produces the power that will make the light. And it is the light, not the bulb, that is all important.

The mountain > Robertson > Not "a" mountain as the Authorized Version has it. The Greek article is poorly handled in most English versions. We do not know what mountain it was.

Mountain > Strong's > mountain, hill

(Luke 6 also records the choosing of the disciples [Matthew only records four of them prior to the Sermon on the Mount] and then the teaching of the Beatitudes. However, in that passage it states ... ¹⁷And then Jesus came down with them (the disciples) and stood on a level place;)

Utley > Luke's historical setting seems best. Jesus was praying on the mountain about His choice of the Twelve, but He came down onto the plain to receive the crowd and then moved back up the hillside a short distance so all could hear and see. The Greek term in Matthew can refer to the hill country and the term in Luke can refer to a level place in the hill country. So maybe the apparent contradiction is an English translation problem.

Utley > The term "Sermon on the Mount" was first used by Augustine (A.D. 354-430) in his Latin Commentary on Matthew.

Utley (quoting *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*) > The Sermon on the Mount is neither an impractical ideal nor a set of fixed legal regulations. It is, instead, a statement of the principles of life essential in a normal society.

Many of the sayings of the Sermon are metaphorical or proverbial statements and are not to be understood in a literal or legal sense. In them, Jesus was illustrating principles in concrete terms.

William Kelly > The sermon on the mount treats not of salvation, but of the character and conduct of those that belong to Christ—the true yet rejected king.

Precept Austin (quoting Lloyd-Jones) > None of these descriptions refers to what we may call a natural tendency. Each one of them is wholly a disposition which is produced by grace alone and the operation of the Holy Spirit upon us. I cannot emphasize this too strongly. These are not natural qualities; nobody by birth and by nature is like this...

There are some people who appear to be naturally 'poor in spirit'; that is not what is described here by our Lord.

There are people who appear to be naturally 'meek'; when we deal with that statement, I hope to be able to show you that the meekness which Christ talks about is not that which appears to be natural meekness in an ordinary unregenerate person. These are not natural qualities; nobody by birth and by nature is like this... The truth is that the Christian and the non-Christian belong to two entirely different realms. You will notice the first Beatitude and the last Beatitude promise the same reward, 'for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' What does this mean? Our Lord starts and ends with it because it is His way of saying that the first thing you have to realize about yourself is that you belong to a different kingdom. You are not only different in essence; you are living in two absolutely different worlds.

Disciples > Strong's > From *manthano*; a learner, i.e. pupil -- disciple.

Constable > The Gospels use the word "disciple" in a slightly different way than many Christians do today. We usually think of disciples of Jesus as people who have believed in Jesus and who are going on in their walk with Him. The Gospel evangelists used "disciple" to refer to people who were learning from Jesus, before they came to faith in Him, as well as after they did ... The Greek word translated "disciple" is *mathetes*, which means simply "learner" or "pupil."

Teach > Brodus > Taught is imperfect tense and describes the teaching as in progress

He opened His mouth and began to teach them > Constable > The phrase "opened His mouth He began to teach them" (v. 2) or "he began to teach them" (NIV) is a New Testament idiom (cf. 13:35; **Acts 8:35; 10:34; 18:14**). It has Old Testament roots (Job 3:1; 33:2; Dan. 10:16), and it introduces an important utterance wherever it occurs.

Acts 8:35 (to the Ethiopian eunuch) > ³⁵ *Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.*

Acts 10:34 (to Cornelius) > ³⁴ *Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,*

Acts 18:14 (before Gallio) > ¹⁴ *But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of some crime or vicious, unscrupulous act, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you;*

³ **"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

Wiersbe > I have always felt that **Matthew 5:20** was the key to this important sermon. The main theme is true righteousness.

Matthew 5:20 > ²⁰ *For I say to you that unless your righteousness far surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.*

J Vernon McGee > It is well to note that they are be-attitudes, not do-attitudes. They state what the subjects of the kingdom are—they are the type of person described in the Beatitudes.

Blessed > Swindoll > The Greek word usually translated "blessed" > *Makarios* > doesn't have a precise English equivalent and has thus been rendered by numerous roughly synonymous words: "fortunate," "contented," "blissful," "privileged," "peaceful," "serene," "joyful," "happy," and "blessed." We might define it as "an inward contentment or abiding joy unaffected by outer circumstances."

Precept Austin on the Greek usage of the word "Blessed"

- The Greeks used *makarios* to refer to their **gods** and thus "the blessed ones" were the gods. (and then goes on to describe why the gods were considered "blessed")
- The Greeks also used *makarios* in reference to **the dead** who were "the blessed ones", (and then explains "why" they were considered "blessed")
- Finally, the Greeks used *makarios* to refer to the **socioeconomic elite**, the wealthy (and, again, explains the reasoning there)
- The Greeks felt that one had to be either a god, dead or filthy rich to be blessed!

Carson > As for "happy", it will not do for the beatitudes, having been devalued in modern usage.

Poor > HELPS > *ptōxós* (from *ptōssō*, "to crouch or cower like a beggar") – properly, bent over; (figuratively) *deeply destitute*, completely lacking resources (earthly wealth)

Utley > Two terms in Greek were used to describe poverty; the one used here was the more severe of the two.

It was often used of a beggar who was dependent on a provider. Matthew makes it clear that this does not refer to physical poverty, but to spiritual inadequacy.

Constable > The poor in spirit are those who recognize their natural unworthiness to stand in God's presence, and who depend utterly on Him for His mercy and grace

Carson > To be poor in spirit is not to lack courage but to acknowledge spiritual bankruptcy. It confesses one's unworthiness before God and utter dependence on him.

Theirs > Brodus > *Theirs* has in the original an emphatic position; it is *theirs*, they are precisely the persons who possess and enjoy the riches, dignities, privileges of Messiah's reign. These privileges already belong to them, and shall henceforth be enjoyed by them—notice the future tense in the following sentences.

Wuest Translation > *Spiritually prosperous are the destitute and helpless in the realm of the spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴“*Blessed are those who **mourn**, for they will be **comforted**.*”

Mourn > Strong's > to mourn, lament

HELPS > grieve over a *death*; (figuratively) to grieve over a personal hope (relationship) that *dies*

Utley > This referred to "loud wailing," which was the strongest term for mourning in the Greek language.

Constable > Those who mourn do so because they sense their spiritual bankruptcy... True repentance produces contrite tears— more than jubilant rejoicing—because the kingdom is near.

Robertson > This verb "is most frequent in the LXX for mourning for the dead, and for the sorrows and sins of others"

MacArthur > Of the nine terms used for sorrow, the one used here (*penthe*, mourn) is the strongest, the most severe. It represents the deepest, most heart-felt grief, and was generally reserved for grieving over the death of a loved one.

Stephen Olford > "Despite his anti-religious prejudices, Sigmund Freud, the Austrian scientist and psychologist (1856–1939), confirms this biblical evidence. He wrote that 'original sin is a fact, since psychoanalysis has revealed a whole world of rottenness, villany and sin, which had not ... been suspected by psychologists—even though its presence was clearly enough attested by the New Testament'".

Comforted > Strong's > to call to or for, to exhort, to encourage

HELPS > *parakalēō* (from *pará*, "from close-beside" and *kalēō*, "to call") – properly, "make a call" from being "close-up and personal."

Precept Austin > The *passive voice* speaks of the subject receiving comfort from a source outside himself or herself. God Himself is the Comforter. The Lord will call the mourner to Himself, and speak the words of pardon, peace, and life eternal, to their hearts

MacArthur quotes **Isaiah 57:15** > ¹⁵ *For this is what the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy, says: "I dwell in a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.*

Wuest Translation > *Spiritually prosperous are those who are mourning, because they themselves shall be encouraged and strengthened by consolation.*

⁵ **"Blessed are the *gentle*, for *they will inherit the earth.*"**

MacArthur > This beatitude is almost a direct quotation of **Psalm 37:11**, ¹¹ *But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity*

Gentle > Swindoll > The biblical term used here, *praus*, means "not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance, gentle, humble, considerate."

Praus is used 4 times in the NT in the NASB (Matt 5:5; 11:29; 21:5; 1 Pet 3:4) and is always translated "**gentle**" but could be translated as "meek" or "tender."

Wiersbe > Meekness is not weakness, for both Moses and Jesus were meek men (Num. 12:3; Matt. 11:29). This word translated "meek" was used by the Greeks to describe a horse that had been broken. It refers to power under control.

Numbers 12:3 > ³ *(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any person who was on the face of the earth.)*

Zechariah 9:9 > ⁹ *Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is righteous and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey,*

Barnes > Meekness produces peace. It is proof of true greatness of soul. It comes from a heart too great to be moved by little insults. It looks upon those who offer them with pity. He that is constantly ruffled; that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard and to raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him.

Utley > Its origin implies domesticated strength, like a trained mule, camel, or horse.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones says "A man can never be meek unless he is poor in spirit. A man can never be meek unless he has seen himself as a vile sinner. These other things must come first.

They will inherit the earth > Dillow > A major theme in the Sermon on the Mount is the believing disciple's rewards (cf. v. 12; 6:2, 4-6, 18).

Brodus > Observe (Tholuck) that the three first classes, *poor, mourning, meek*, are all in the prediction of ***Isaiah 61:1-3***, to which our Lord repeatedly referred as fulfilled in his ministry. (Matthew 11:5, Luke 4:17-21)

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD anointed me to bring good news to the humble; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to captives and freedom to prisoners; ²To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, ³To grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the cloak of praise instead of a disheartened spirit. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

⁶ ***"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.***

Hunger > Precept Austin > In classic Greek *peinao* means to hunger and by extension it means to long for something which is necessary for sustenance of life and can range from simple desire for a meal to starvation brought on by poverty or disaster. Figuratively, it could even refer to an intense desire for something other than food, for something that was deemed necessary for one's well-being.

Hunger ... Thirst > Precept Austin > Note that both *hunger* and *thirst* are in the present tense which calls for these pursuits to be our lifestyle (this reason alone indicating that Jesus refers not to justification but to sanctification).

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness > Carson > These people hunger and thirst, not only that they may be righteous (i.e., that they may wholly do God's will from the heart), but that justice may be done everywhere. All unrighteousness grieves them and makes them homesick for the new heaven and new earth—the home of righteousness (2Pe 3:13).

⁷ ***"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.***

Utley > A change occurs here in the beatitudes. The two previous ones have focused on the Kingdom person's sense of spiritual need; the following ones, however, focus on the attitudes that motivate one's actions. This was what was missing in Pharisaism then and legalism now.

Mercy > Precept Austin > is the outward manifestation of pity and assumes **need** on the part of those who are recipients of the mercy and sufficient **resources** to meet the need on the part of those who show it.

Vincent > God's kindness and goodwill toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them

Larry Richards > Originally (eleos) expressed only the emotion that was aroused by contact with a person who was suffering. By NT times, however, the concept incorporated compassionate response. A person who felt for and with a sufferer would be moved to help.

Ray Pritchard explains that mercy includes three elements...

1. "I see the need" that's recognition.
2. "I am moved by the need" that's motivation.
3. "I move to meet the need" that's action.

Wuest's translation > *Spiritually prosperous are those who are merciful, because they themselves shall be the objects of mercy*

⁸ *"Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they will see God.*

Pure > Strong's > *katharos* > clean (adjective) > **Usage:** *clean, pure, unstained*, either literally or ceremonially or spiritually; *guiltless*,

Precept Austin > means literally physically clean or pure and has the idea of unsoiled (free from dirt), unalloyed, without blemish, spotless, free from impure admixture or free from adulteration.

⁹ *"Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they will be **called** sons of God.*

Peacemakers > Strong's > *eirénopoios* > *peacemaker* > from *eiréné* and *poieó*
Eiréné > *one, peace, quietness, rest* and *Poieó* > *to make, do*

Precept Austin > *Eirene* signifies a harmonious relationship and is not merely the absence of war or uneasy truce. *Eirene* signifies parties holding differences of opinion who are willing to turn toward each other and embrace one another, in spite of their differences. In classical Greek a "peacemaker" was an ambassador sent to entreat for peace and was sometimes used to describe strong rulers who establishes peace by force.

Called > Strong's > *kaleo* > to call > Usage > call, summon, invite

Wuest > *Kaleo's* distinctive use in the New Testament is to *call a person for a definite purpose*. Hence, it is synonymous with to *select* or *choose*. It refers to the act of calling someone so that he may hear, come, and do that which is incumbent upon him. It thus is a word that becomes a technical term for special relationships. In secular Greek it was used of a summons in the law courts.

¹⁰ *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Those who have been persecuted > Utley > This is a (Greek grammar). It speaks to those who have been and continue to be persecuted by an outside agent

I Peter 3:17 > ¹⁷ *For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.*

For the sake of righteousness > Vance Havner quipped that "One of our biggest problems today is that most of our church people have never really made up their minds to follow Jesus Christ. They are like Mr. Looking-both-ways in Pilgrim's Progress, or like Lot's wife looking back toward Sodom. They are like the man in the Civil War who wore a blue coat and gray trousers, and was shot at from both sides.

II Timothy 3:12 > ¹² *Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Acts 5:40-41 > ⁴⁰ *They followed his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. ⁴¹ So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.*