The Blessed Life

Scripture Sets on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

One scripture set for each beatitude, plus an overview • Shorthand: B0.1 – B8.9

Set	Beatitude	The promise	Old Testament roots
B0	Overview	—	Isaiah 61:1-3; Psalm 1
B1	Poor in Spirit	The Kingdom of Heaven is theirs	Isaiah 57:15; 66:2
B2	Those Who Mourn	They will be comforted	Isaiah 61:2-3
B3	The Meek (Humble)	They will inherit the earth	Psalm 37:11
B4	Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness	They will be filled	Psalm 42:1-2; Isaiah 55:1-3
B5	The Merciful	They will be shown mercy	Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:8
B6	The Pure in Heart	They will see God	Psalm 24:3-4
B7	The Peacemakers	They will be called children of God	Isaiah 52:7; 58:12
B8	Persecuted, and Rejoicing	The Kingdom of Heaven is theirs; a great reward awaits	Isaiah 51:7-8; 2 Chronicles 36:15-16

Level 1 (these tables) is the sets themselves. **Level 2** gives study helps for each beatitude. **Level 3** is a deep dive on what it means to live a blessed life. Many of these passages were first gathered by Kristen, a disciple maker inside, and refined for this set.

B0 The Blessed Life: Overview

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B0.1	The Sermon Begins: Who Jesus Was Talking To	Matthew 4:23-5:12
B0.2	Good News for the Poor: Jesus' Mission	Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21
B0.3	Blessings and Woes	Luke 6:17-26
B0.4	Two Roads: The Blessed Person	Psalm 1:1-6; Jeremiah 17:5-8

B1 Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit — *The Kingdom of Heaven is theirs*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B1.1	Two Men Praying: The Tax Collector	Luke 18:9-14
B1.2	“Woe Is Me”: Seeing God, Seeing Myself	Isaiah 6:1-7
B1.3	Peter: “Go Away from Me, I'm a Sinner”	Luke 5:1-11
B1.4	The Son Who Came Home with Nothing	Luke 15:11-24
B1.5	Gideon: The Least in the Weakest Clan	Judges 6:11-16
B1.6	God Lives with the Humble and Contrite	Isaiah 57:15; 66:1-2
B1.7	Zacchaeus: A Rich Man Becomes Poor in Spirit	Luke 19:1-10
B1.8	The Thief on the Cross: “Remember Me”	Luke 23:39-43
B1.9	“You Say, 'I Am Rich'”: The Opposite of Poor in Spirit	Revelation 3:14-22

B2 Blessed Are Those Who Mourn — *They will be comforted*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B2.1	David: Mourning My Own Sin	Psalm 51:1-17
B2.2	Ezra: Grieving for His People's Sin	Ezra 9:1-6
B2.3	Nehemiah: Weeping over Broken Walls	Nehemiah 1:1-11
B2.4	Daniel: Praying in Sackcloth for His People	Daniel 9:3-23

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B2.5	Jeremiah's Tears, and God's Greater Grief	Jeremiah 9:1; 45:1-5
B2.6	Jesus Wept	John 11:32-44
B2.7	Paul's Grief for the Lost; the Doctor for the Sick	Romans 9:1-3; Luke 5:31-32
B2.8	Mourning Turned to Joy	Nehemiah 8:9-12; Isaiah 61:1-3
B2.9	Every Tear Wiped Away	Revelation 21:1-5

B3 Blessed Are the Meek — *They will inherit the earth*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B3.1	The Meek Will Inherit the Land	Psalm 37:1-11
B3.2	Moses: The Humblest Man Takes Advice	Exodus 18:13-24
B3.3	God Defends the Meek	Numbers 12:1-15
B3.4	Mary: “I Am the Lord's Servant”	Luke 1:26-38
B3.5	Love Your Enemies	Luke 6:27-31
B3.6	Gentle and Humble in Heart: Our King on a Donkey	Matthew 11:28-30; 21:1-5
B3.7	The Mind of Christ	Philippians 2:1-11
B3.8	Silent Before His Accusers	Mark 15:1-5; Isaiah 53:7

B4 Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness — *They will be filled*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B4.1	As the Deer Longs for Water	Psalm 42:1-5; 63:1-8
B4.2	Come, Eat and Drink Without Money	Isaiah 55:1-3; John 6:35
B4.3	The Woman at the Well	John 4:7-30
B4.4	Anna: A Lifetime of Longing	Luke 2:36-38
B4.5	Wisdom Satisfies the Soul	Proverbs 8:8-21
B4.6	The Lord Is My Shepherd: I Have All I Need	Psalm 23:1-6
B4.7	Habakkuk: Hungry for God to Act	Habakkuk 3:1-19
B4.8	Seek First His Kingdom and His Righteousness	Matthew 6:25-34
B4.9	Seeing and Meeting the Need	Matthew 25:31-40

B5 Blessed Are the Merciful — *They will be shown mercy*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B5.1	“I Want Mercy, Not Sacrifices”	Hosea 6:4-6; Matthew 9:9-13
B5.2	Show Mercy and Kindness to the Vulnerable	Zechariah 7:8-10; Micah 6:8
B5.3	Unfailing Love and Faithfulness	Proverbs 16:6; 3:3-4
B5.4	Jonah: Angry at God's Mercy	Jonah 3:5-4:11
B5.5	Woe to the Merciless Religious	Matthew 23:13-15, 23-24
B5.6	Be Merciful as Your Father Is Merciful	Luke 6:32-36
B5.7	He Welcomes Sinners and Eats with Them	Luke 15:1-10
B5.8	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25-37
B5.9	The Servant Who Forgot the Mercy He Received	Matthew 18:21-35

B6 Blessed Are the Pure in Heart — *They will see God*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B6.1	Clean Hands and a Pure Heart	Psalm 24:1-6

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B6.2	To the Pure You Show Yourself Pure	2 Samuel 22:21-28
B6.3	“God Is Good to the Pure in Heart”: Asaph's Struggle	Psalm 73:1-3, 13-28
B6.4	God Does the Purifying	Titus 2:11-14
B6.5	Love That Comes from a Pure Heart	1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 1:22-23
B6.6	Love in Action Is Pure	1 John 3:16-23
B6.7	We Will See Him as He Is	1 John 3:1-3; Hebrews 12:14
B6.8	An Undivided Heart	Psalm 86:11; James 4:7-8
B6.9	In Your Light We See Light	Psalm 36:5-10

B7 Blessed Are the Peacemakers — *They will be called children of God*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B7.1	Isaac Digs New Wells Instead of Fighting	Genesis 26:12-33
B7.2	Jacob and Laban: A Covenant of Peace	Genesis 31:43-55
B7.3	Jacob and Esau: Gifts and Reconciliation	Genesis 32:3-21; 33:1-11
B7.4	Esther: Risking Herself for Her People	Esther 4:1-17
B7.5	When Your Ways Please the Lord	Proverbs 16:7; Romans 12:17-21
B7.6	Repairer of Broken Walls	Isaiah 58:6-12
B7.7	Hosea: Peace Looks Like Restoration	Hosea 3:1-5
B7.8	Christ Made Peace Through the Cross	Colossians 1:19-22; Ephesians 2:14-18
B7.9	Ambassadors of Reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Matthew 5:23-24

B8 Blessed Are Those Persecuted for Righteousness — *The Kingdom of Heaven is theirs; a great reward awaits*

ID	Topic	Scripture Passage
B8.1	Don't Fear Those Who Kill the Body	Luke 12:4-12
B8.2	Your Opportunity to Tell About Me	Luke 21:12-19
B8.3	Take Up Your Cross	Mark 8:34-38
B8.4	Stephen: Forgiving While Being Stoned	Acts 7:54-8:4
B8.5	Peter Rescued from Prison	Acts 12:1-17
B8.6	Paul Stoned, Then Strengthening Others	Acts 14:19-23
B8.7	Singing in Prison: The Jailer Saved	Acts 16:22-34
B8.8	Finishing the Race with Joy	Acts 20:19-24; Philippians 2:17-18
B8.9	Rejoice When You Suffer for Christ, Not for Wrongdoing	1 Peter 4:12-19; Acts 5:40-42

Level 2: Study Helps

Use one set at a time. Each session: **Look Back:** How are you? Did you obey and share last time? **Look Up:** Read the passage aloud, have someone retell it, and use the questions for that beatitude. **Look Forward:** What will I obey? Who will I share this with? Pray for each other by name.

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B0 The Blessed Life: Overview

What's happening

Jesus climbs a mountain and sits down to teach, like a new Moses giving God's people their way of life. The crowd is full of the sick, the possessed, the paralyzed, and the poor (Matthew 4:23-25). His first words are not rules. They are blessings, announcing God's favor on exactly the people the world overlooks. They echo Isaiah 61, the passage Jesus read as His mission statement: good news to the poor, comfort for those who mourn.

Blessed (Greek *makarios*; Hebrew *ashrei*): not a passing happy feeling, but the deep flourishing of someone God favors. Psalm 1 opens with *ashrei*: "Oh, how flourishing is the one who…" The NLT says "God blesses those who," which makes clear the blessing comes from Him.

- **It is** a description of what God's people look like when His Kingdom takes hold of them.
- **It is not** a list of rules to earn God's favor, or a promise that life will be easy.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. Who was in the crowd when Jesus said these words? Why does that matter?
2. In Isaiah 61 and Luke 4, who is the good news for?
3. What is the difference between Jesus' blessings and woes in Luke 6?
4. What does Psalm 1 say makes a person blessed?

Practice this week

Read Matthew 5:3-12 out loud every day this week. Circle the one beatitude that you most need God to grow in you.

B1 Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

> *"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."*
> **Matthew 5:3 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

This is the doorway to every other beatitude. The poor in spirit know they have nothing to bring God: no record, no strength, no bargaining chip. They come empty-handed, and God fills them with His Kingdom. Every person in this set met God at the bottom: a tax collector, a frightened prophet, a failed fisherman, a broke son, a thief on a cross.

Poor (*ptōchos*): not the working poor (*penēs*) but the destitute beggar who has to ask for everything. In the Old Testament, the *anawim* were the humble poor who had only God to rely on.

- **It is** honest dependence: "I need You, God."
- **It is not** low self-esteem, self-hatred, or pretending to be worse than you are.

> Notice the promise is present tense: the Kingdom **is** theirs, now. The thief on the cross had nothing to offer and received paradise the same day.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. What did this person have to admit about themselves?
2. What did God (or Jesus) give them when they came empty-handed?
3. What do I lean on instead of God: my reputation, my toughness, my past, my plans?
4. What would it look like to come to God with nothing in my hands today?

Practice this week

Pray the tax collector's prayer every morning: “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Then ask, “What do I need You for today?”

B2 Blessed Are Those Who Mourn

> *“God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”*
> **Matthew 5:4 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

Jesus blesses those who grieve: over their own sin, over the sins of their people, over the brokenness of the world, and over loss. This set shows mourning that moves people toward God: David over his sin, Ezra and Daniel over their people, Nehemiah over a broken city, Jesus at His friend's tomb, Paul over the lost. God meets that grief with comfort, and one day He will wipe every tear away.

Mourn (*pentheō*): the strongest Greek word for grief, used for mourning the dead. **Comforted** (*parakaleō*): to be called alongside and strengthened. It is related to *Paraklētos*, Jesus' name for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (John 14:16).

- **It is** honest grief brought to God, which leads to repentance, prayer, and compassion.
- **It is not** despair, self-pity, or sorrow that pulls away from God (2 Corinthians 7:10).

> Kristen's insight on Jeremiah 45: God's mourning is greater than ours, because He has lost more. When we grieve over sin and loss, we are sharing in God's own heart.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. What was this person grieving over?
2. Where did they take their grief?
3. How did God respond to their mourning?
4. What am I grieving that I've never brought to God?

Practice this week

Set aside time this week to grieve honestly before God over one thing: your sin, a loss, or the brokenness around you. Then ask the Holy Spirit to comfort you.

B3 Blessed Are the Meek

> *“God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.”*
> **Matthew 5:5 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

Jesus is quoting Psalm 37:11. The meek are not weak. They are strong people who have put their strength under God's control. They don't need to grab, push, or defend their reputation, because they trust God to give them what's theirs. Moses, the most humble man on earth, took advice from his father-in-law and let God defend him. Jesus, the King, rode a donkey and stayed silent before His accusers.

Meek (*praus*): gentle, humble, teachable. The word was used of a strong animal that had been trained: power under control. The NLT translates it “humble.” Jesus used the same word to describe Himself (Matthew 11:29).

- **It is** strength surrendered to God: teachable, gentle, and trusting.
- **It is not** weakness, being a doormat, or having no backbone.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. How did this person show strength under control?
2. What did they trust God to do instead of doing it themselves?
3. Where do I push, grab, or defend myself instead of trusting God?
4. Who is God using to teach me right now? Am I listening?

Practice this week

This week, let God defend you. When you're criticized or wronged, don't defend yourself right away. Pray first, and listen for anything true in it.

B4 Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

> *“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.”*
> **Matthew 5:6 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

Jesus blesses people who are starving for what's right: to be right with God, to live right, and to see things made right in the world. This hunger is not satisfied by anything less than God Himself. The woman at the well, Anna in the temple, David in the desert, and Habakkuk waiting for justice all longed for God, and He filled them.

Righteousness (*dikaiosynē*): being right with God, living rightly, and justice in the world, all at once. The NLT translates it “justice.” **Filled** (*chortazō*): fed until full and satisfied. The same word is used when Jesus fed the 5,000 and they all ate until they were full (Matthew 14:20).

- **It is** a deep, ongoing desire for God and for what is right.
- **It is not** a craving for revenge, or a one-time religious feeling.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. What was this person hungry or thirsty for?
2. How did God satisfy them?
3. What am I really hungry for right now? What have I been trying to fill it with?
4. Where do I long to see things made right? How can I pray and act on that?

Practice this week

Every time you eat a meal this week, pray: “Lord, make me as hungry for You and for what is right as I am for this food.”

B5 Blessed Are the Merciful

> *“God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”*
> **Matthew 5:7 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

The merciful give others the same mercy God has given them. Jesus quoted Hosea twice: “I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.” Mercy is love in action toward people who are hurting or who don't deserve it: the

beaten man on the road, the sinners at the table, the city Jonah wanted destroyed. The servant who forgot the mercy he'd received shows what happens when mercy stops flowing.

Merciful (*eleēmōn*): compassionate, ready to help and forgive. In Hebrew, *hesed* is God's loyal, unfailing love (the KJV often says “mercy”), and *rachamim* is a deep, tender compassion (from *rechem*, womb).

- **It is** forgiving, helping, and treating people better than they deserve.
- **It is not** ignoring sin, pretending harm didn't happen, or trusting someone who is still dangerous.

> Kristen's insight: we are **stewards of God's mercy**. We don't own the mercy we receive; we manage it and pass it on.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. Who needed mercy in this passage? Who gave it, and who refused it?
2. Why do religious people sometimes struggle most to show mercy (Jonah, the Pharisees)?
3. How much mercy has God shown me?
4. Who do I need to show mercy to this week?

Practice this week

Do one act of mercy this week for someone who can't pay you back, and forgive one person you've been holding something against.

B6 Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

> *“God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.”*
> **Matthew 5:8 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

Jesus is echoing Psalm 24: only those with clean hands and a pure heart can go up to God's holy place. A pure heart is an undivided heart that wants God above everything, with no hidden agenda and no double life. We can't make ourselves pure. God does the purifying (Titus 2:14), and as He does, we start to see Him more clearly now and will see Him face to face one day.

Pure (*katharos*): clean, unmixed, without impurities, like refined gold or clean water. It is the root of the English word “catharsis.” In Hebrew thought, the heart (*lev*) is the center of the person: thoughts, will, and desires, not just feelings.

- **It is** an undivided heart that wants God first, inside and out.
- **It is not** perfection, never being tempted, or keeping outward rules while hiding sin.

> Kristen's insights: **love is pure** (1 John 3), and **God does the purifying** (Titus 2). Purity grows as we let God love through us.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. What does this passage say a pure heart looks like?
2. Who does the purifying, and what is our part?
3. Where is my heart divided between God and something else?
4. How have I “seen” God more clearly when my heart was more surrendered?

Practice this week

Each morning, pray Psalm 86:11, asking God for an undivided heart. Each evening, ask God to show you one thing competing for your heart.

B7 Blessed Are the Peacemakers

> *"God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God."*
> **Matthew 5:9 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

Peacemakers don't just avoid conflict. They actively make peace, sometimes at personal cost. Isaac moved on and dug new wells instead of fighting for the old ones. Jacob sent gifts ahead to the brother he'd wronged. Esther risked her life for her people. Hosea bought back his unfaithful wife. And God Himself made peace with us through the cross. That's why peacemakers are called His children: they look like their Father.

Peacemakers (*eirēnopoioi*): this word appears only here in the New Testament. It reflects the Hebrew *shalom*: not just the absence of fighting, but wholeness, restoration, and everything being made right.

- **It is** working for reconciliation and restoration, wisely and at cost.
- **It is not** keeping the peace by ignoring sin, avoiding truth, or staying where you're in danger.

> Kristen's insight on Hosea 3: **peace looks like restoration and redemption**, not just a truce.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. What conflict was in this passage? How was peace made?
2. What did peace cost the peacemaker?
3. Where do I need to make peace, with God, with someone else, or in my unit?
4. How is peacemaking a family resemblance to our Father?

Practice this week

Take one step toward peace this week: an apology, a gift, a kind word, or a prayer for someone you're in conflict with. Do it wisely and safely.

B8 Blessed Are Those Persecuted for Righteousness

> *"God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." … "Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven."*
> **Matthew 5:10, 12 (NLT)**

What Jesus means

The final beatitude comes back to where the first began: the Kingdom is theirs. Jesus says that following Him will bring opposition, and that people who suffer for doing right are blessed, even joyful. Kristen's list from Acts shows it: Stephen forgiving, Peter rescued, Paul stoned and then strengthening others, Paul and Silas singing in prison until the jailer was saved.

Persecuted (*diōkō*): to chase, hunt down, or pursue. The same word is used elsewhere for pursuing good things, like pursuing peace (Romans 14:19; Hebrews 12:14). **For righteousness' sake:** for doing what's right and for belonging to Jesus.

- **It is** suffering because you follow Jesus and do what's right.
- **It is not** suffering for wrongdoing (1 Peter 4:15). Even then, God meets the humble, but that is not this beatitude.

> Kristen's insight on Luke 21: persecution is **your opportunity to bear witness**. Paul and Silas's chains became a jailer's salvation.

Discover (use with any passage in this set)

1. What did this person suffer, and why?
2. How did they respond: with fear, revenge, or joy and witness?
3. What did God do through their suffering?
4. Where am I being opposed for doing right? How can I respond like Jesus?

Practice this week

When you're mocked or opposed for following Jesus this week, thank God, pray for the person, and look for your opportunity to bear witness.

Level 3: Deep Dive — Living the Blessed Life

For leaders and coaches, and for anyone who wants to go deeper. Kept short on purpose: everything here is meant to help you hear, obey, share, and be changed.

Who Jesus Was Talking To

Just before the Sermon on the Mount, crowds came to Jesus from everywhere, bringing the sick, the demon-possessed, the epileptic, and the paralyzed (Matthew 4:23-25). Jesus went up a mountain and sat down, the posture of a teacher, and His disciples gathered close. Matthew presents Him as a new and greater Moses giving God's people their way of life from a mountain. But His first words were not commands. They were blessings, spoken over people a lot like those in a jail or prison: poor, grieving, powerless, hungry for justice, and mistreated.

What “Blessed” Means

Blessed translates the Greek *makarios* and the Hebrew *ashrei* (Psalm 1:1). It doesn't mean a happy mood or good circumstances. It is an announcement of God's favor: “Oh, the flourishing of the person who…” Jesus isn't saying “try to feel blessed.” He is declaring that God's favor rests on these people, now and forever. In Luke's version, He also pronounces “woe” on the rich, the full, the laughing, and the admired (Luke 6:24-26), people who already have their comfort and don't think they need God.

People sometimes call the Beatitudes “the blessed attitudes.” That's a helpful way to remember them, as long as we remember they are more than attitudes. They describe a whole person, inside and out, shaped by God's Kingdom.

The Shape of the Beatitudes

- **Bookends:** the first and eighth beatitudes share the same promise, “the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs”, in the present tense. The promises in between are future: will be comforted, will inherit, will be filled. The Kingdom is ours now, and its fullness is still coming.
- **Two halves:** the first four describe our emptiness before God (poverty, grief, meekness, hunger). The last four describe what flows out to others (mercy, purity, peace, faithfulness under pressure).
- **A ladder:** early church teachers saw the Beatitudes as steps, each leading to the next. It starts with humility and climbs toward seeing God and becoming like Him.
- **Rooted in the Old Testament:** they echo Isaiah 61 (good news to the poor, comfort for mourners), Psalm 37:11 (the meek inherit the land), and Psalm 24:3-4 (clean hands and a pure heart).
- **Nine blessings:** verse 11 turns personal (“God blesses **you**”) and ends with joy: “Be happy about it! Be very glad!” (Matthew 5:12, NLT).
- **About the NLT wording:** the NLT says “humble” for meek, “justice” for righteousness, and “those who work for peace” for peacemakers. Each is a fair way to translate the Greek, and comparing them helps you see the full meaning.

Jesus Is the Portrait

The Beatitudes are first of all a picture of Jesus. He doesn't only teach them; He lives every one.

Beatitude	How Jesus lived it
Poor in spirit	Emptied Himself and became a servant (Philippians 2:7); had nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20)
Those who mourn	Wept at Lazarus's tomb and over Jerusalem (John 11:35; Luke 19:41)
The meek	Gentle and humble (Matthew 11:29); silent before His accusers (Mark 15:5)
Hunger and thirst for righteousness	His food was to do the Father's will (John 4:34)

Beatitude	How Jesus lived it
The merciful	Touched lepers, welcomed sinners, forgave from the cross (Luke 23:34)
The pure in heart	No deceit was ever in His mouth (1 Peter 2:22); always saw what the Father was doing (John 5:19)
The peacemakers	Made peace through His blood on the cross (Colossians 1:20)
The persecuted	Insulted, beaten, crucified, and prayed for those who did it (Luke 23:34; 1 Peter 2:23)

Key Words

Word	Meaning
***makarios* / *ashrei* (blessed)**	Flourishing under God's favor; not a mood or a circumstance.
***ptōchos* (poor)**	Destitute, a beggar who must ask for everything. The *anawim* of the Old Testament were the humble poor who relied only on God.
***pentheō* (mourn)**	The strongest word for grief, used for mourning the dead.
***parakaleō* (comfort)**	To come alongside and strengthen; related to *Paraklētos*, the Holy Spirit as Comforter.
***praus* (meek, humble)**	Gentle strength; power under control; teachable.
***dikaiosynē* (righteousness, justice)**	Right with God, living rightly, and things made right in the world.
***chortazō* (filled, satisfied)**	Fed until full, as when the 5,000 ate (Matthew 14:20).
***eleēmōn* / *hesed* (merciful)**	Compassion in action; God's loyal, unfailing love.
***katharos* (pure)**	Clean and unmixed; an undivided heart.
***eirēnopoios* / *shalom* (peacemaker)**	One who makes wholeness and restoration happen; the Greek word appears only here in the New Testament.
***diōkō* (persecute)**	To chase or hunt down; the same verb is used for pursuing peace and good.

What the World Says vs. What Jesus Says

The world (and the yard) says blessed are…	Jesus says blessed are…
The strong and self-made, who need no one	The poor in spirit, who know they need God
The ones who never let it show	Those who mourn
The ones who take what's theirs	The meek, who trust God to give it
The ones who get what they want	Those who hunger for what is right
The ones who get even	The merciful
The ones who look good on the outside	The pure in heart
The ones who win the fight	The peacemakers
The popular and the safe	Those persecuted for doing right

Where the Traditions Agree

- **The Beatitudes are a portrait of Christ** before they are a description of us. The Catholic Catechism says they depict the face of Jesus Christ (§1717). Orthodox worship sings them at the Divine Liturgy. Protestant teachers like Bonhoeffer describe them as the life of those who follow Jesus.
- **They are gift before demand.** They describe what grace produces, not a test to earn God's favor. The Kingdom is given first to the poor in spirit.
- **They are for every disciple**, not a spiritual elite.

- **They begin with humility** and climb, step by step, toward seeing God and becoming like Him.
- **God made us for this blessedness.** The Catechism says the Beatitudes respond to the desire for happiness God placed in every human heart (§1718). Augustine and Wesley said the same in their own ways.
- **Blessing is found in hard places**: in poverty, grief, injustice, and persecution, not only after them.

> **VOICES FROM THE WHOLE CHURCH**
>
> **The early church:** within a century of Jesus, Christians were already quoting the Beatitudes. Clement of Rome echoed Jesus' call to show mercy so that we receive mercy (1 Clement 13), and Polycarp quoted the blessings on the poor and the persecuted in his letter to the Philippians (chapter 2).
>
> **St. Gregory of Nyssa** (4th century) preached eight sermons on the Beatitudes and pictured them as a ladder, each step lifting us higher toward God.
>
> **St. Augustine** (4th–5th century) called the Sermon on the Mount a perfect pattern for the Christian life and linked the Beatitudes to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11:2-3.
>
> **St. John Chrysostom** (4th century) taught that “poor in spirit” means the humble and contrite, and that each beatitude prepares the way for the next.
>
> **The Orthodox Divine Liturgy** sings the Beatitudes in worship, often joined to the thief's prayer from the cross: “In Your Kingdom remember us, O Lord.”
>
> **Martin Luther, John Wesley, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and John Stott** (Protestant) all wrote on the Sermon on the Mount. Stott called it a Christian counter-culture: a way of life that turns the world's values upside down.

The Beatitudes Inside

Jesus spoke these blessings to people like those inside: poor, grieving, powerless, hungry for justice, and mistreated. A jail or prison can be one of the clearest places to discover them. One honest note: the eighth beatitude is about suffering **for doing right** and for following Jesus. Suffering the consequences of our own wrongs is different (1 Peter 4:15). But the first beatitude is wide open to everyone. The thief on the cross was guilty, poor in spirit, and received paradise the same day.

Living the Blessed Life: How to Reorient

1. Start at the bottom

Every beatitude grows out of the first. You don't climb by trying harder; you start by admitting your need. Begin each day empty-handed: “Lord, I need You.”

2. Walk it out with S.W.A.P.

S.W.A.P.	Beatitudes it grows
S — Surrender: sign the blank contract	Poor in spirit; meek
W — Wait in prayer: long time with God and His Word	Those who mourn; those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
A — Avoid even a hint of sin	Pure in heart
P — Prompting: say yes to the Spirit	Merciful; peacemakers; faithful under persecution

3. The Beatitude Examen (evening, 5–10 minutes)

Ask the Holy Spirit to search you (Psalm 139:23-24), then walk through the day:

1. Where did I rely on myself instead of God?
2. What did I grieve today, and did I bring it to God?
3. Did I push, grab, or defend myself, or did I trust God?

4. What was I hungry for today?
5. Who did I show mercy to, or hold mercy back from?
6. Was my heart divided? What competed with God?
7. Did I make peace or stir up conflict?
8. Was I opposed for doing right? How did I respond?

Then thank God, confess, and receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

4. Pray the Beatitudes the old way

Like the Orthodox Liturgy, pray each beatitude and follow it with the thief's prayer: “In Your Kingdom remember me, O Lord.” It is a simple way to keep both your need and His promise in front of you.

5. Take a nine-week path

Take one set per week, B0 through B8. Memorize that week's beatitude, do one DBS from the set with your group, and practice it daily. At the end of nine weeks, share stories of how God has blessed you in the places you least expected.

Sources

- Holy Bible, New Living Translation (Matthew 5:3-12 quoted from the NLT).
- Passages first gathered by Kristen, a disciple maker inside, and refined and expanded for this set.
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§1716–1719.
- St. Gregory of Nyssa, *Homilies on the Beatitudes*.
- St. Augustine, *Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount*.
- St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* (Homily 15).
- *1 Clement* 13; Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians* 2.
- The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (the Beatitudes).
- Martin Luther, *The Sermon on the Mount*; John Wesley, *Sermons on the Sermon on the Mount*; Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*; John Stott, *Christian Counter-Culture*.
- No Place Left Academy, *4 Fields Level 1 Training Manual* (v5), Lesson 2: S.W.A.P.