

## Who Thrives in the Kingdom? (Part 2)

**Introduction:** We are in the midst of a sermon series on discipleship. We are trying to better understand what it means to be apprenticed to Jesus. In Matthew 28, Jesus said that making disciples involves "teaching them everything" that He commanded." When you look through the Gospel of Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount is one of the large blocks of teachings that contains commands that we are to obey. It teaches how Jesus' disciples are supposed to live. This week we will consider the last four beatitudes (Matthew 5:7-12)

**Opening Discussion:** Steve mentioned that even though the beatitudes are blessings (and not commands), Jesus is implicitly inviting us to "audition for these parts." Jesus is inviting us to become merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, etc. Have you ever auditioned for a part in a play? What was your experience?

### Read Matthew 5:1-12

1. Has your understanding of the beatitudes changed in light of the past two messages? If so, how?

#### ***"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." (Mt. 5:7)***

**Steve said:** *Mercy is basically "compassion for people in need" (Stott, Sermon on the Mount, p. 47). Those who are merciful are drawn toward people in need, even people in distress. Their hearts go out to people who are in all sorts of desperate situations. Whereas some people keep their distance from needy, distressed people, the merciful move in closer. The merciful actually believe that God wants to show His mercy to people through them.*

2. Can you give an example of a time when you've received mercy? Was it difficult to receive? What was the impact in your life?
3. Can you think of an occasion when you've shown mercy to others?
4. Why do you think that those who give mercy receive mercy?

#### ***"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Mt. 5:8)***

**Steve said:** *"... the pure in heart is someone whose heart is single-mindedly oriented toward God. ... S/he is oriented only toward God. ... The pure in heart are those who live out Deut. 6:5 – they love the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, and might.*

5. Do you think that a person can be pure in heart in this life? Why or why not?
6. Are you discouraged by this beatitude (seeing how impure in heart you are)? Or are you motivated by the prospect of becoming more pure in heart?
7. What does it mean to “see God”? Have you ever seen God?

***“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Mt. 5:9)***

**Steve said:** *The peacemaker is the person who enters into a situation that has the potential for division and disunity asking the question, “What can I do that might bring about peace?” The peacemaker is passionate about lessening tensions and pursuing unity.*

8. What things commonly keep people from being peacemakers and actually entering into divisive situations?
9. Can you share an example of someone being a peacemaker (either in the church or in a family/work environment)? What was the effect of his/her efforts?

***“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.” (Mt. 10:10-12)***

**Steve said:** *If you are persecuted, others pursue you or coming toward you with hostility. Persecution could be verbal abuse or martyrdom. . Here in the US, persecution normally involves being mocked or made fun of and being excluded from friendships.*

10. Have you ever been persecuted for the sake of righteousness? How did you respond?
11. How can Jesus say, “Rejoice and be glad” when you are insulted/persecuted?
12. As you have considered the beatitudes, is God drawing you to cultivate any of the qualities mentioned so that you might experience the blessings Jesus pronounced?