

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Arrival: A Study of Matthew 1–7 STUDY ELEVEN

Checklist for Lasting Joy

Matthew 5:1–12

It's good to remember that the Beatitudes are pronouncements. They're not commands. They're celebrations! The Beatitudes represent a new way of life based on a new way of thinking that Christ enables.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

JESUS began the Sermon on the Mount with a series of blessings we call the *Beatitudes*, a title based on the Latin word for “blessings.” The Beatitudes challenge our notions about who is truly blessed—not those who appear well off by external standards but those whose inner life reflects the values of God’s kingdom. Taken as a whole, the Beatitudes paint a portrait of true followers of Jesus, “a kind of mosaic of the Christian character.”¹

The Beatitudes aren’t laws like the Ten Commandments; rather, they are statements of celebration, like the exuberant declarations we find in the Psalms:

Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked. (Psalm 1:1)

Oh, the joys of those who trust the LORD. (40:4)

Oh, the joys of those who are kind to the poor! (41:1)

Joining His voice with the psalmists’, Jesus declared, “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him” (Matthew 5:3). Put another way, “*Oh, the joys of those who are poor and desperately need God.*” Why do these “poor” have joy? Jesus explained: “for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” (5:3).



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Each beatitude showers blessings on ordinary people who follow the way of Christ, not the religious elite or rich aristocracy who think they are the blessed ones. Jesus opened God's blessings for everyone.

Do you seek joy? Not just feelings of happiness that ebb and flow, but true and lasting joy marked by contentment and peace? Let the Beatitudes light the way to a new way of living, a truly blessed life in the kingdom of God.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is like a pathway that *guides us* past the pitfalls of the world and *guards us* from the religious hypocrisy like that of the Pharisees. His Beatitudes speak directly to our hearts, so prepare your heart to receive His words, using the psalmist's prayer to prompt your own prayer:

*Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23–24)*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Read *Matthew 5:1–12* in the New Living Translation, New American Standard Bible, and the Amplified Bible. You can see how the versions reflect different translation styles. The New American Standard Bible is more a word-for-word translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, while the Amplified Bible fleshes out the concepts with modern-day language to add insight. In his personal study, Pastor Chuck Swindoll often reads multiple Bible versions to get a range of meaning and enhance his understanding.



Observation: Examining the Beatitudes

In the observation phase of *Searching the Scriptures*, we ask, "What do I notice in the passage? What words are repeated or contrasted? Is there cause-and-effect? How do the ideas progress? How are the thoughts organized?" Keep these questions in mind as you walk through the passage.²



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Jesus addressed “His disciples” (Matthew 5:1)—a group that included all the people who were following Him, not just His inner circle of twelve. If we consider *Matthew 5:11–12* an extension of the final beatitude and a summary, how many beatitudes are there? Do you see a thematic grouping of the first half and the second half? If so, what do you observe?

What pattern do you notice in the Beatitudes?

The first line of each beatitude explains *who* is blessed, for example, those who are “poor in spirit” (5:3 NASB). The second line of each beatitude explains *what* the blessing is—which is the reason for joy—“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:3 NASB). We might phrase the formula like this:

- Oh, the lasting joy of those who . . .
- Because they experience the blessing of . . .



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How are the first beatitude (*Matthew 5:3*) and the final beatitude (*5:10*) similar? What is the significance of this similarity?

The line, “for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” (5:3, 10), bookends the Beatitudes and holds them together within the overall theme of life in God’s kingdom. If the kingdom of God is a future reign of Christ, how do the Beatitudes relate to us in the present? Let’s take a look.

We truly enter into kingdom living. Even though we live on this earth, we experience the blessing of living like kingdom people. We give up our own kingdom to live in the realm of God’s kingdom. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Meaning of the Beatitudes

In his commentary, Pastor Chuck Swindoll connects the Beatitudes with Christ’s future kingdom and explains how we can live by Christ’s kingdom values now.³

The ethical underpinnings of the Beatitudes are essentially those of the future kingdom of Christ—but lived out in the present interim of the church by His people. When we live out the values and virtues of the coming kingdom prior to Christ’s return, the world will be stunned by the contrast and will be insatiably curious. It will blow their minds!⁴

In His eight statements, Jesus explained how we “live out the values and virtues of the coming kingdom.” The following chart lists each beatitude’s characteristic along with its corresponding blessing. Fill in your understanding of each point by consulting your resources, including the various Bible versions of *Matthew 5:1–12* you read earlier, pages 88–91 of Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*, or *Constable’s Notes* at netbible.org.



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Characteristic	Blessing
“those who are poor and realize their need for [God]” (5:3)	“the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” (5:3)
“those who mourn” (5:4)	“they will be comforted” (5:4)
“those who are humble” (5:5)	“they will inherit the whole earth” (5:5)
“those who hunger and thirst for justice” (5:6)	“they will be satisfied” (5:6)



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“those who are merciful” (5:7)	“they will be shown mercy” (5:7)
“those whose hearts are pure” (5:8)	“they will see God” (5:8)
“those who work for peace” (5:9)	“they will be called the children of God” (5:9)
“those who are persecuted for doing right” (5:10)	“the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs” (5:10)

Jesus' Beatitudes begin with our relationship with God—acknowledging our spiritual bankruptcy, grieving sin, humbling ourselves before God, and hungering for His truth and righteous way. They work their way into our relationships with people as we show mercy, live purely, make peace, and even suffer patiently at the hands of enemies.

The longer I spend studying the Beatitudes, the more I realize how different this teaching is from anything the world can offer. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: The Model of Jesus

There is no greater model of the tenets expressed in Matthew 5:3–12 than Christ Himself. Referencing the following verses, write down the ways that Jesus lived the Beatitudes and how He can be your example.

Jesus mourning over sin and sorrow—*Luke 13:34; John 11:33–36*

Jesus showing mercy—*John 8:1–11*

Jesus exhibiting humility and gentleness—*Matthew 11:28–30*



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Can you think of other examples of Jesus modeling the values and virtues of the kingdom of God? What verses do you find?

The pure in heart get glimpses of the Lord, the living God. They bear the very image of Christ. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Being the Beatitudes

Why would we settle for the baubles of this world when the riches of God are ours to enjoy? A share in His kingdom, an inheritance in His creation, comfort in our sorrow, satisfaction in our longing, mercy from God's hand, seeing Him face to face, the security of being His child.

Do you hunger and thirst for His kingdom and all its blessings? Like the psalmist, do you desire God “more than anything on earth” (Psalm 73:25)? In the space below, express your longing for the Lord, His kingdom, and His blessings.



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Which of the characteristics of the Beatitudes describes you currently? Are you like those who are “poor and realize their need for him” (Matthew 5:3)? Are you mourning? Have you tried to show mercy or make peace? Are enemies persecuting you? What is your current situation and which blessing do you seek?

Which of the Beatitudes would you like to make more part of your life?

In whatever situation you find yourself, open your hands to the Father in the name of Christ. Ask for His power to “be” the Beatitudes in your world and receive His blessings that come to those who live a kingdom life now.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, thank You for offering me a better world than this earthly existence. In this ethically upside-down world, You turn things right-side up with the Beatitudes, showing me the way to live as Christ lived and experience a kind of contentment and peace I find nowhere else but with You. I praise You for Your blessings and the hope of Your kingdom to come, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 61.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
3. God promised David, "your throne will be secure forever" (2 Samuel 7:16). David's future heir, the Messiah, would rule the earth on a "throne [that] will be as endless as the days of heaven" (Psalm 89:29). Jesus is David's messianic heir, and when Jesus returns, He will rule as king over the millennial kingdom in fulfillment of God's covenant with David (Revelation 20:1–6).
4. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15*, vol. 1A (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 87.

