

09 – The Eighth Day of Christmas
Matthew 5: 3-12

Objective: To introduce our students to the Beatitudes.

Step 1: Link – Milk

We have been learning a Christmas song about the – how many? – days of Christmas. (Hopefully they can fill in the number for you.) In the song, someone is giving gifts every day. Who is that someone? (wait. My true love. God.) God, my true love, is giving gifts every day.

What did my true love give in last week's verse? (wait. Seven swans a' swimming.) Seven swans, the seven gifts of God. How many gifts will my true love give in today's verse? (wait. Eight.)

Today my true love will give eight gifts. The eight gifts are eight maids a'milking. (have them repeat) Maids are young girls, and I always think that they are beautiful young girls. What can you tell me about milk? (wait. Baby's first food. Very nourishing, basic, delicious, useful in cooking, etc.)

Milk is very important to us all our lives.

Step 2: Background

There is a very special sermon in the Bible. It is called 'The Sermon on the Mount.' It is special because the preacher was Jesus! The sermon is the longest talk given by Jesus that is in the New Testament. It covers 3 chapters.

Where do you think Jesus was when he gave 'the Sermon on the Mount'? (wait. On a mountain.)

The Sermon teaches us how God wants us to live. It teaches us how pure God wants us to be. A pure person is blessed by God. Jesus starts out His sermon by teaching about blessing. These eight teachings are called 'The Beatitudes.' In our song, these teachings are pictured as beautiful young girls bringing delicious, nourishing milk.

Step 3: Motivation.

As we read these eight teachings, called the 'Beatitudes' please choose one favorite one and later tell us why it is your favorite. (teachers, also be prepared to share a favorite.)

Step 4: Read Matthew 5: 3-12

Step 5: Have each student share about their favorites. You may have to give more time after the passage is read for them to organize their thoughts.

Step 6: Questions and comments. / Step 7: Sing the song

Open House Bible Times
Teachers Notes
09 – The Eighth Day of Christmas
The Beatitudes

For your edification and preparation to answer questions, not necessarily to share during Bible time.

‘beatitude’ comes from the Latin word ‘ ‘ that means blessing.

From Matthew Henry: “Christ preached this sermon, which was a exposition of the law, on a mountain, because on *a mountain* the law was given. But observe the difference: when *the law was given*, the Lord *came down* on the *mountain*; now the Lord *went up*; then, he spoke *in thunder and lightning*; now, *in a still small voice*; then the people were ordered to keep their distance; now they are invited to draw near; a blessed change!” (italics in the original)

From Matthew Henry:

Poor in Spirit

There is a poor-spiritedness that is so far from making men blessed that it is a sin and a snare – cowardice and common fear. To be poor in spirit is 1. To be contentedly poor, willing to be empty of worldly wealth, if God orders that to be our lot...It is not, in pride or pretence, to make ourselves poor, by throwing away what God has given us. If we are rich in the world we must be poor in spirit, that is, we must be gracious toward the poor and sympathize with them... 2. To be humble and lowly in our own eyes... to have humble thoughts of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do...it is to be willing to make ourselves cheap, and humble, and little, to do good; to become all things to all men. It is to acknowledge that God is great, and we are small; that he is holy and we are sinful; that he is all and we are nothing. 3. To shun all confidence in our own righteousness and strength, and we may depend only on the merit of Christ...That broken and contrite spirit with which the tax collector cried for mercy as a poor sinner, is this poverty of spirit. We must call ourselves poor, because always in need of God’s grace, always begging at God’s door, always hanging on in his house.

Theirs is the Kingdom of heaven

The same happiness is promised to those who are contentedly poor as to those who are usefully rich. If I am not able to spend cheerfully for his sake, if I can but lack cheerfully for his sake, even that shall be recompensed.

Those who mourn

There is a sinful mourning, which is an enemy to blessedness – the sorrow of the world. There is a natural mourning, which may prove a friend to blessedness, by the grace of God working with it. But there is a gracious mourning, which qualifies for blessedness. 1. A mourning of repentance for our own sins; this is godly sorrow... Those are God’s mourners who live a life of repentance, who, out of regard for God’s honour, mourn also for the sins of others. 2. A sympathising mourning for the afflictions of others; the mourning of those who weep with those who weep...

Now these gracious mourners, 1. Are blessed. As in vain and sinful laughter the heart is sorrowful, so in gracious mourning the heart has a serious joy, a secret satisfaction,

which no one else can share. 2. They will be comforted... The happiness of heaven consists in being perfectly and eternally comforted...

The Meek

The meek are those who quietly submit themselves to God...who can bear provocation without being inflamed by it; are either silent, or return a soft answer; who can be cool when others are hot; and in their patience keep possession of their own souls, when they can scarcely keep possession of anything else. They are the meek, who would rather forgive twenty injuries than revenge one... They are blessed, for they are like the blessed Jesus. They are blessed, for they have the most comfortable, undisturbed enjoyment of themselves, their friends, their God; they are fit to live, and fit to die... They will inherit the earth. Not that they shall always have much of the earth, much less that they shall be put off with that only; but this branch of godliness has, in a special manner, the promise of that life that now is. Meekness, however ridiculed and run down, has a real tendency to promote our health, wealth, comfort, and safety, even in this world.

Hunger and thirst for righteousness

Some understand this as a further instance of outward poverty, and a low condition in this world. Yet, blessed are they, if they suffer these hardships for and with a good conscience; let them hope in God. Those who contentedly bear oppression, and quietly refer themselves to God to plead their cause, shall in due time be satisfied, abundantly satisfied, in the wisdom and kindness, which shall be manifested in his appearances for them. 1. Righteousness is here put for all spiritual blessings. They are purchased for us by the righteousness of Christ... Hunger and thirst are appetites that return frequently, and call for fresh satisfactions. The stirred soul calls for constant meals of righteousness, grace to do the work of every day...

The merciful

This, like the rest, is a paradox; for the merciful are not taken to be the wisest, not are likely to be the richest; yet Christ pronounces them blessed. A man may be truly merciful who has not the means to be bountiful or liberal...We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but we must, by Christian sympathy, partake of the afflictions of our brothers...pity the ignorant and instruct them; the careless, and warn them; those who are in a state of sin, and snatch them as brands out of the burning. Indeed a good man is merciful to his beast. They are blessed... In this they resemble God, whose goodness is his glory. One of the purest and most refined delights in this world, is that of doing good...They will be shown mercy... especially mercy with God, for with the merciful he will show himself merciful, Ps 18:25. The most merciful and charitable cannot pretend to merit, but must fly to mercy.

The pure in heart

This is the most comprehensive of all the beatitudes. 1. Here is the most comprehensive character of the blessed: they are the pure in heart. True Christianity lies in the heart, in the purity of the heart; the washing of that from evil... we must lift up to God not only clean hands, but a pure heart... 2. Here is the most comprehensive comfort of the blessed; They shall see God... The happiness of seeing God is promised to those, and those only who are pure in heart. None but the pure are capable of seeing God. What pleasure could an unsanctified soul take in the vision of a holy God?...

(1. in Basic English: God does not just want good actions, He also wants a pure heart. The sermon was given for Christians, but anyone who reads it will understand that their own heart is not pure. They will also understand how pure Jesus is, because the Bible teaches that Jesus was perfect! That is how he can be our substitute. He took the punishment for all of our impurity. He exchanged His perfection for our impurity. A person receives Jesus' perfection when they believe in Jesus. (LEK))

Peacemakers

The peacemakers are those who have, 1. A peaceful disposition... 2. A peaceful conduct; industriously, as far as we can, to preserve the peace that it be not broken, and to recover it when it is broken. The making of peace is sometimes a thankless task, and it is the lot of him who parts a fray, to have blows on both sides; yet it is a good task, and we must be eager for it.

Those who are persecuted because of righteousness

This is the greatest paradox of all, and unique to Christianity. This beatitude, like Pharaoh's dream, is doubled, because hardly credited, and yet the thing is certain... 2. They are insulted, and have all kinds of evil said against them falsely. Nicknames, and names of reproach, are fastened on them, sometimes to make them formidable, that they may be powerfully assailed. Those who have had no power in their hands to do them any other harm, could yet do this; and those who have had power to persecute, have found it necessary to do this too, to justify themselves in their barbarous treatment of them. Insulting the saints is persecuting them, and will be found so shortly when harsh words must be accounted for (Jude 15)... They will say all kinds of evil against you falsely. There is no evil so black and horrid, which, at one time or other, has not been said falsely, against Christ's disciples and followers. 3. All this is because of righteousness... This precludes those from this blessedness who suffer justly, and are evil spoken of truly for their real crimes; it is not the suffering but the cause, that makes the martyr. Those suffer because of righteousness, who suffer for doing that which is good.