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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

Introduction

When someone has a true encounter with God—they are forever changed from within—because the light of God (which enables us to spiritually see in the darkness) reveals reality and truth.

- **When we encounter God** is when we can see ourselves clearly. Imagine for a moment attempting to look at yourself in a mirror in a room that has no light. This scenario defines the perception of those who are living in spiritual darkness. However, when one encounters God, His light not only illuminates what's around us, His light also illuminates sin that's embedded within our heart and soul—which results in sorrow, humility and repentance.
- **When we encounter God**, earthly “things” that once seemed important quickly lose their “luster.” Earthly things perceived as valuable and important will dramatically change as we realize its darkened influence; how it has misdirected us from truth; and its utter uselessness from an eternal perspective.
- **When we encounter God** is when we begin to perceive those around us (and the world) from a different perspective—including the spiritual death of those who are bound by the lies of sin.

This illuminative insight and spiritual changes within our heart and soul does not occur naturally within humans. It only occurs within a willing heart and by the workings of the Holy Spirit. These spiritual changes are indicated by our transformed thoughts and behavior as we become more like Jesus. This transformation is called sanctification: to be set apart for God's use, purpose, filled with His spirit and made holy. Jesus provided indicators of spiritual transformation and sanctification—including the associated blessings—during His Sermon on the Mount (which is referred to as The Beatitudes).

The Beatitudes

The word beatitude is defined as blessedness: being blessed with divine favor, spiritual prosperity and a deep joy of the soul. In Matthew 5:1-10, Jesus taught 8 different aspects of spirituality that result in blessedness. It's important to note the Beatitudes also define the essence of Jesus Christ—in that every aspect of His life was a demonstration of what He desires for each of us—including the blessings.

Indicators of Spiritual Transformation and Sanctification	Blessings
Jesus said “ Blessed are:	
The poor in spirit,	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Those who mourn,	for they will be comforted.
The meek,	for they will inherit the earth.
Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,	for they will be filled.
The merciful,	for they will be shown mercy.
The pure in heart,	for they will see God.
The peacemakers,	for they will be called children of God.
Those who are persecuted because of righteousness,	for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

In addition, when you think about it, each beatitude defines the antithesis (opposite) of Satan.

We will take a “deeper dive” into each Beatitude—because the world does not understand and misinterprets the spirituality and blessings of each one.

Poor in Spirit

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:3

Being poor in spirit has nothing to do with the lack of financial wealth or possessions—because none of these have eternal value (unless they are used for the glory of God). But rather, the word poor defines a state of spiritual poverty: an “emptiness” inside compounded by an inability to free ourselves from a sin-filled and dismal situation. This occurs when we realize one or more of the following:

- We hate our sin; we want to change and we know we can’t do it alone.
- We can no longer trust upon our personal abilities to cope with challenges in life.
- We have reached a point where the only option is to let go and trust God.
- Receiving God’s grace (via faith in the sacrificial death of His Son for our sins)—and asking Jesus to be Lord over our life—is the right answer to all of the wrongs in my life.

There are two sides to spiritual poverty. On one side it is emotionally painful as we face the truth of who we are, what we have done and the consequences of our actions. On the other side, it can be a transitional point into spiritual blessings if we obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Christians will also experience spiritual poverty for periods of time due to trials and tribulations. These are times when we are faced with situations that challenge the very foundations of our faith. As the turmoil subsides, we find ourselves spiritually stronger due to the experience. In addition, a little less of ourselves remain (which is a good thing).

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

“We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Romans 5:3

“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” James 1:2-4

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:6-7

In addition, fleshly pride and poor in spirit are mutually exclusive. In other words, we can have one or the other, but not both. As such, we are deeply mistaken if we have a perception that God is lucky to have us (given a list of our skills and accomplishments in life). In truth, each of these were a blessing from God—Who alone is worthy of recognition and praise. Besides, what can we offer God who created the heavens and the earth and has no need? However, because God gave each of us a free will, the most important thing you can offer Him is your heart (which you own and what He desires).

Scriptural Examples of Poor in Spirit

In each example below, identify the source that illuminates the spiritual poverty; reflect upon the corresponding response; and determine how you would respond if this happened to you.

The prophet Isaiah saw the Lord on His throne, the train of His robe, and angels surrounding Him declaring His glory. Isaiah responded by saying **“Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.”** Isaiah’s encounter with God quickly changed from a glorious vision of the Heavens, to the realization of his sin and the sin of those whom he dwells with. (See Isaiah 6:1-5)

When Simon Peter saw one of the miracles of Jesus, he fell down before Jesus and said **“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”** Luke 5:8

Jacob declared **“I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant.”** Genesis 32:10

In the Parable of the Lost Son, Jesus provided us with an example of spiritual poverty via a comparison between God and man, and a father and his son. Jesus described how a man’s son asks for his inheritance, leaves the family and squanders all of it on prodigal (wasteful, reckless, extravagant) living. Now penniless and desperate to survive, he was forced to eat food intended for pigs. Eventually he realized his mistake, humbled himself, and determined he would say to his father **“I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me one of your hired servants.”** However, when he seen by his father walking toward him, the father (like God) had compassion, ran towards him, fell on his neck and kissed him. The son said **“Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.”** Because of his love for his son, the father forgave all. They celebrated because his son once was dead and is alive again, was lost and is now found. (See Luke 15: 11-32)

Jesus said **“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men— extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”** Luke 18:10-14

Blessedness of Poor in Spirit: The Kingdom of Heaven

The Kingdom of Heaven and The Kingdom of God are used interchangeably in the Bible (one and the same). The Kingdom of Heaven exists within the spiritual realm. It is where God reigns as king, and where His will is fulfilled in the hearts of those who are living, and for eternity.

From a perspective of those who are living, in Matthew chapter 13 Jesus described the Kingdom of Heaven as a valuable hidden treasure—something that when one discovers it, they will sell all that they have to possess it. From a perspective of eternity, Jesus said **“The righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”** Matthew 13:43

Mourning

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Matthew 5:4

God uniquely designed humans with the capacity to mourn, and is one of the varied emotions we experience. Mourning is commonly defined as a feeling or showing deep sorrow, grief and regret. However, there are 2 types of mourning: 1 occurs with physical death, the other with spiritual death.

1. We mourn when someone physically dies—which most people understand or have experienced.
2. When God illuminates that which is around us and in us, we will mourn when we see the spiritual death in the world, spiritual death of someone we know, and spiritual death of whom we love. We ache deep inside because we know the truth: lies have shackled them to their sin. This type of mourning is reflected by our heart-felt fervent prayers and weeping for the lost. We also mourn because of our own sin—which is also reflected by heart-felt fervent prayers, sorrow, regret and weeping as we confess our transgressions to our Lord.

Scriptural Examples of Spiritual Mourning

As Jesus was approaching Jerusalem (on Psalm Sunday)—He knew they were going to reject him and crucify Him. But yet He wept because of His love for those who failed to understand who He is and the purpose of His sacrificial death that was about to occur. **“Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, ‘If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! Luke 19:41-42**

Isaiah prophesied about Jesus Christ 700 years before He lived. What’s more, Jesus knew every word of Isaiah’s prophesy and what was set before Him: dying an excruciating death on the cross as a sacrifice for our transgressions so that we may be set free from sin and spiritual death. Isaiah also prophesied Jesus would make intercessory prayer for those who crucified him. While dying on the cross Jesus said, **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” Luke 23:34**

“He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Isaiah 53:3-12

Blessedness of Mourning: They Will Be Comforted

For those who are mourning, there is comfort in knowing God is still in control and He reigns; and our hope will be fulfilled by Him and with Him in glory.

Jesus said “Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.” John 16:20-22

Jesus said “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’” Revelation 21:1-5

Meekness

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Matthew 5:5

The world views meekness as an undesirable personality flaw. If you randomly asked a group of persons to define a meek person, you would likely hear the following words in their response:

- Quiet and unwilling to disagree or fight to support their personal ideas and opinions.
- Easily influenced and manipulated.
- Lacks spirit and courage.
- Submissive, timid, spineless, docile and weak.

However, from a spiritual perspective, Jesus Christ demonstrated a completely different form of meekness when you consider who He was and how He demonstrated His divine power (via miracles).

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:5-11

When Jesus was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, someone one who was with Jesus drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest. The response by Jesus revealed His divinely accessible power when He said **“Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?”** Matthew 26:52-53

Jesus, the most powerful person to ever walk on earth, had both the right and the ability to change the outcome. However, for the sake of all who believe—so that His body would become a perfect sacrifice for our sins—He willingly submitted to those who would convict and crucify Him for a crime He did not commit.

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” Isaiah 53:7

True spiritual meekness:

- Is a determination to not inflate our own self-estimation.
- Is being humble toward God.
- Expresses humility and respect toward others.
- Demonstrates power under control.
- Reflects Jesus Christ by willingly letting go of our rights for the benefit of others.
- Helps us more effectively share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

“Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” 1 Peter 3:15

Blessedness of Meekness: They Will Inherit the Earth

From a human standpoint, most of us desire to pass on our assets to our children when we die (because of our love for our children). Whatever is ours will become theirs (as a gift) to enjoy upon our death. As such, from a similar and spiritual perspective, Jesus Christ died on the cross so that we can:

- Be view by God as having the righteousness of Jesus because of our faith.
 - **“And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”** Philippians 3:9
 - **“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. Romans 4:5**
- Become heirs to all He owns.
 - **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.”** Romans 8:16-18
 - **“Who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”** 1 Peter 1:3-4

Note: I had difficulty in determining what Jesus meant by stating **“They will inherit the earth.”** During my research I found a variety of opinions of its meaning that seem relevant. However, I did not feel “comfortable” with what I found. Besides, given what’s going on in the earth and its present condition, why would anyone want to inherit it? It’s similar to inheriting a useless, rusted, broken down, and

completely trashed automobile. And yes, there is absolute beauty on earth, but this is overshadowed by darkness and sin caused by the workings of the ruler, prince, and god of this age: Satan.

So, after prayer and listening, I felt compelled to write the following explanation using a logical approach and scripture to support the logic. Please understand my interpretation is an opinion—which you may accept or reject. Besides, if anything, it causes us to think about God’s word and what will occur in the future—which is beneficial to all.

So, is the earth worth inheriting? My answer is absolutely yes. However, it first requires removal of the present “landlord” (Satan)—and the absolute control by Jesus—to achieve its full potential. Here are scriptural examples of Satan’s present role and influence in the world, plus his pending judgment.

After Jesus spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness fasting, Satan (in an attempt to cause Jesus to relinquish his God-given authority and power) tempted Him to sin in various ways. For each attempt Jesus responded with God’s word to overcome the influential lies of Satan. What’s revealing, Satan offered Jesus the world if He would worship him.

“Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’” Jesus responded “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’” [Matthew 4:8-10](#)

Paul revealed who’s responsible for the blinding of eyes from truth. “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.” [2 Corinthians 4:3-4](#)

Jesus provided insight into His divine judgmental authority; what will occur in the future to the ruler of the world; and how His death on the cross will draw people to Him. “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.” [John 12:31-32](#)

Prior to His arrest and death on the cross, Jesus said “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” [John 14:30](#)

Jesus said “But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.” [John 16:5-11](#)

Since the time Satan was cast to earth (because of the rebellion in Heaven), God has given Satan “restrictive privileges” to influence those who are living on earth. However, his ability to influence will become increasingly unrestrained during the last days; and will come to an abrupt end when Jesus returns, destroys the Beast’s (Satan’s) armies, and begins His millennial reign on earth. What’s more,

Satan will be cast into the Abyss (bottomless pit)—which will be the first time Satan will be unable to influence those upon earth.

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.” Revelation 20:1-3

When Jesus Christ begins His millennial reign is when God’s promise to Abraham and the Israelites will be fulfilled, and when the earth will become a desirable inheritance. Jesus Christ—the Messiah and Anointed King—will reign from His throne over the earth and all of its inhabitants.

It’s important to note that those who are living during this thousand-year period will have the same sinful nature we have. However, things will be much different when you consider the absolute rule of Jesus Christ, and the elimination of Satan and his lies.

Jesus Christ will:

Bring unity to all things in Heaven and on earth under Himself.	Ephesians 1:10
Reign on David’s throne.	Jer 23:5-6; Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33
Rule with a rod of iron.	Psalm 2:9; Rev 2:26-27, 12:5, 19:15
Execute justice and righteousness over the twelve tribes of Israel.	Jer 23:5-6; Mat 19:28; Daniel 7:13-14, 27; Isaiah 9:6-7, 24:23; Zech 14:9; Micah 4:3

Jesus Christ will employ a hierarchical structure of power and control.

Those who follow Jesus will sit on thrones.	Mat 19:28; Luke 22:29-30; Rev 3:21, 5:10
Those who had been beheaded because of their faith and testimony of Jesus will live and reign with Jesus Christ for the thousand years.	Rev 20:4

Global peace will occur.

War and instruments of war (and associated fear) will no longer exist.	Zech 9:9-10; Isaiah 2:4; 9:7; Micah 4:3-4
Carnivorous animals will no longer hunt for meat. Animals will no longer hunt, hurt, nor destroy, and will eat vegetation.	Isaiah 65:25, 11:6-9

Worship

Persons will be required to go to Jerusalem celebrate and participate in the Festival of Tabernacles. If persons do not comply, they will be punished by no rain.	Zech 14:16 Zech 14:17-19, 14:8; Isaiah 44:3
People will recognize all earthly possessions are from God (His provided provisions), and are holy unto God.	Zechariah 14:20-21
People will travel to Jerusalem to learn of God's ways and to walk in His paths.	Isaiah 2:3

Daily life

People will raise families, build their own homes, plant their own food and enjoy the work of their hands. People will not create work for other's use or consumption.	Isaiah 65:21-23
Life expectancy will greatly increase. A person that dies at 100 years of age will be considered a youth.	Isaiah 65:20

"He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." Isaiah 2:4

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:6-9

The above scripture depicts no war; harmony between man and animals; Jesus Christ as Lord over all; and a type of life we envision as perfect. However, God's plan for our inheritance is more, much more: a new heaven and a new earth. For the earth that we presently live upon will pass away.

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.' Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. Revelation 21:1-7

Jesus said the meek shall inherit the earth. Did Jesus mean the earth during His millennial Reign, or the new heaven and new earth, or both? Those who overcome will inherit all things and will know the answer.

Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” Matthew 5:6

Jesus did not speak about our need for food or drink. But rather, Jesus correlated our physical hunger and thirst with our spiritual cravings for righteousness and voids within our heart and soul that only He can fill. Jesus proclaimed:

- “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.” John 6:35
- “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:37-38

God designed us with a free will—because He wants each of us to make a self-determination to seek Him. We all have the choice to fulfill the lusts of our flesh, or seek the righteousness of God. Those who choose to fulfill their lusts will experience the darkened consequences of the lies.

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19-21

However, there are those who realize the continual emptiness of trying to fill and refill the voids within our heart and soul with lies, develop a hatred for their sin, and become tired of its control and consequences. In lieu of desiring to fulfill the flesh, they begin to desire (hunger and thirst for) righteousness, and they begin to seek truth. Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

There are two aspects of righteousness. The first is imputed to us by our faith in Jesus Christ. The second is transformational righteousness as the grace of God changes us from within.

When someone places their faith in what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, and accepts Him as Savior and Lord—they will be viewed by God as having imputed righteousness (attributed, credited, assigned)—as having the same righteousness of Jesus.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:8-9

No one by their “works” and perceived self-righteousness is acceptable to God.

- “But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6
- “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Romans 3:10

Consider the pride and boasting in Heaven if entrance was based upon works. “Yep, here I am. Look at all that I did. Now, where’s my rewards!” As opposed to a humble heart; thanking and praising Jesus who died for the sins we committed—for we were unworthy of God’s grace and mercy—as we lay at His feet any accomplishments we may have achieved in our life.

Our righteousness is imputed to us based upon our faith in God and His grace extended to us by His Son, Jesus Christ. There are no works, process, list of behaviors one must achieve, and so forth that is acceptable to God. Faith in His Son is the key to be viewed by God as being righteous.

“Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Galatians 3:6

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Romans 3:21-26

Blessedness of Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness: Sanctification

The second aspect of righteousness is the transformation that occurs within our heart and soul by the power of God’s grace. Over time we become more like Jesus and less like ourselves as we mirror the image of our Savior. This process is referred to as sanctification.

- “My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11-12
- “Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.” Job 5:17
- Jesus said “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.” Revelation 3:19
- “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Galatians 5:24

Each time we sin it causes guilt and shame in our hearts and souls as we individually think *“How could I behave in such a way that disobeys God’s desire for me? I know the sin is based upon a lie; I’ve been there before; and the short-lived experience does not outweigh how I feel afterwards.”* This horrible feeling is God’s spiritual chastisement. Once we humble ourselves, pray and ask for forgiveness, we begin to feel the weight of the oppressive feeling beginning to lift as we realize we are forgiven. *“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”* Psalm 103:12

It is God’s grace, love and forgiveness—enabled by the death and blood shed by Jesus on the cross—that changes us from within. But what’s more, each time we fail, recover by His grace and continue to walk towards Him, it creates within us a life that is closer to the righteousness that has been imputed to us.

This transformational evidence of being filled with the righteousness of Jesus is evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit and by the crucifixion of our flesh.

- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:22-24
- "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5

Merciful

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7

Merciful is defined as:

- Treating people with kindness and forgiveness.
- Not being cruel or harsh.
- Withholding punishment (for those who deserve it).

"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:29-32

In truth and reality, it is difficult at times to not become frustrated and angry at others for their behavior. There are times when we can reach a point where we want to vent the internal pressure by speaking caustic words and reacting in ways that we know are against God's will, and will only make things worse. However, this is where the "rubber meets the road." This is when we must take control over our pride; hold onto our faith; focus upon our spiritual desire to reach someone who is lost and in darkness; and not allow our sinful nature, emotions and flesh to control the situation.

It is helpful to think about God's grace and mercy towards us when we are in this type of situation.

- Grace is a gift from God that we will never deserve.
- Mercy is not receiving the punishment we do deserve.
- Both grace and mercy are blessings associated with being forgiven because of our faith in His Son.

Jesus said "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14-15

How can we receive forgiveness from God when we will not express forgiveness towards others? For those who have received and experienced the grace and mercy of God know of its transforming power. As such, we need to reciprocate by mirroring His grace and mercy (in the form of forgiveness) toward others. Holding onto unforgiveness can become an overwhelming "weight" and emotional burden upon our heart and soul; and it will separate us from an intimate relationship with God.

Being merciful is supported by the beatitudes of being poor in spirit, mourning for their sin and darkness, being meek by withholding retribution, and a deep desire to reflect the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Blessedness of Mercy: We Will be Shown Mercy

Being merciful towards someone—who does not deserve our mercy—opens the blessings of receiving mercies from God. This is when we are able to:

- Release ourselves from the negative consequences of unforgiveness.
- Not struggle with the difficulties and challenges of anger management (as we bite our tongue, beat our head against a wall, and regurgitate the scenario over and over again in our mind).
- Experience the indescribable peace and joy of God deep within our soul.
- Recover from the pain and emotional scars.

If you are harboring unforgiveness, please read the “Power of Forgiveness” on the website. When we truly forgive someone for who they are and/or what they have done, it frees us from the debilitating shackles and bonds of unforgiveness.



Pure in Heart

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8

The heart Jesus refers to is our spiritual heart and not our physical heart. What’s more, our heart is a critical component of who we are and what we do, and is more important that we realize.

Words that may be used to describe a pure heart include:

- Uncontaminated and cleansed by the blood of Jesus.
- Lacks stained consequences and internal scars caused by sin.
- Void of pride, anger, hypocrisy, guile, caustic words, and self-centered motives.
- Indicators, such as transparency and a compelling desire to please God.

However, if you were asked to identify anyone you know that meets all of the above words to describe their pure heart...there is a good chance you would have difficulty finding one person—especially ourselves!

Jesus said “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.” Mark 7:20-23

Jesus said “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Luke 6:45

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” Jeremiah 17:9

Cleansing of our heart begins:

1. When we realize it’s filled with unrighteous impurities.
2. We turn to God and:
 - a. Confess our sins.
 - b. Pray “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” Psalms 51:10

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:7-9

Cleansing of our heart is critical for sanctification. Jesus described this process by comparing how a vinedresser will remove branches that do not produce fruit—and will prune productive branches to grow more fruit.

Jesus said “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” John 15:1-8

Blessedness of Pure in Heart: They Shall See God

The promise of Jesus refers to a time in the future when God will dwell amongst those He loves.

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Revelation 21:3-4

Meanwhile, while we are still living in our physical bodies on earth:

- “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Psalm 37:4
- “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.” Proverbs 3:5

For more information on the importance of our heart, read “Body, Soul, Heart and Spirit,” and “God’s Grace and the Hardened Heart.” Both are available on UniqueBibleStudies.com.



Peacemakers

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” James 3:17-18

A peacemaker is one who influences harmony and peace within individuals and between persons. Although a peacemaker is not one of the 5 ministry gifts listed in Ephesians 4:11 (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher), all Christians may encounter an opportunity to be a peacemaker. This becomes more evident when you consider:

- The amount of uncertainty, chaos, turmoil, and conflict that exists throughout the world.
- There has been a continued decline in peaceful coexistence between people.
- There has been an increase of stressful tension, anxiety and fear experienced by many.
- Every war, every battle, every skirmish, every murder, every argument, every caustic word spoken, and every sin—began as a lie and culminated in spiritual death (separation from God) and/or physical death.

Satan’s lies are designed to eliminate peace via sin, and by intensifying the consequences of sin: division, destruction, devastation, darkness, desolation, death, and eternal damnation. Whereas, a peacemaker has the opportunity to share the only true source of peace: a complete and absolute forgiveness of sins. For there is hope for those who:

- Are unaware they are controlled by sin, and are separated from a relationship with God.
- Forgot what it was like to live without internal consequences of sin (i.e. anxiety, fear, anger).
- Desire improved harmony and a peaceful existence within themselves and with others.
- Realize there must be something better—because what they’re doing is not working.

Jesus said “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

This indescribable peace occurs as a result of someone hearing, receiving and believing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ

Gospel means “good news.” So the gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that He provided a means for the forgiveness of sins for all who believe. Jesus Christ—who lived a sinless life—died on the cross and shed His blood as the one and only, worthy and perfect sacrifice to God as an atonement for our sins.

For we are all sinners in desperate need of forgiveness, and a restoration of our relationship with God.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

Jesus said “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Romans 10:9

Jesus said “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” John 11:25-26

Jesus said “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” John 14:6

Those who place their hope, belief, faith, and trust in Jesus Christ—in what He did for us on the cross—are forgiven for their sins and are justified: blameless, vindicated and acceptable to God.

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Romans 3:24-26

Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Telling others about Jesus Christ should not be a mandatory obligation or compulsory requirement of being a Christian. But rather, sharing should be based upon a compelling influence from the Holy-Spirit, and a love and compassion for someone who is lost. When this occurs there is an indescribable feeling that overwhelms and blesses you as you speak life and truth into one who is spiritually dead because of lies. In addition, when led by the Holy Spirit, words seem to flow from your innermost being. For Jesus said “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38

When sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ it is important to remember what we were like before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord. For example:

- We were driven by our self-centered sinful nature and fleshly desires.
- We justified our sin by repositioning or deflecting the truth.
- We were unwilling to honestly evaluate our sin and all of the consequences.
- We could not see nor understand that we were held in darkness by lies.
- We were unaware that we needed help to overcome and change who we were.

However, as the light of God began to illuminate what was hidden in the darkness, we began to see the truth and we began to change from within. This is when we first developed a disdain for our sin as we developed a curiosity and interest in seeking God. This is also the point in time when our healing began.

It is a wonderful experience when you can assist someone into their salvation. However, do not become discouraged if you fall short of your desired outcome—nor condemn or attempt to force someone into belief. Spiritual enlightenment and salvation are the responsibility of the Holy Spirit—for we do not (and cannot) save a person. Besides, one person may plant the seed, others may water, and another may participate in the harvest—for all are an equally important part in the salvation of a soul.

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” 1 Corinthians 3:5-8

Jesus said “Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.” John 4:35-38

In addition, God’s spoken word always has an eternal and purposeful result (even though it may not be initially apparent). “So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:11

What’s very sad but true, if the Gospel of Jesus Christ is rejected by someone, each word spoken to them will be revealed during their judgment. For they will have no excuse for not knowing the truth; and a constant reminder of why they are being eternally tormented day and night in the lake of fire.

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:12-15

Jesus said “And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” John 3:19-21

Blessedness of Peacemaking: They Shall Be Called Sons of God

There is an indescribable feeling and joy on the inside when we are used by the Holy Spirit to bless others—especially when we witness someone who is bound by sin discover the power of God’s grace and love, and are radically changed. For He alone is worthy of praise for who we are and what we do!

Jesus said “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16

Persecuted

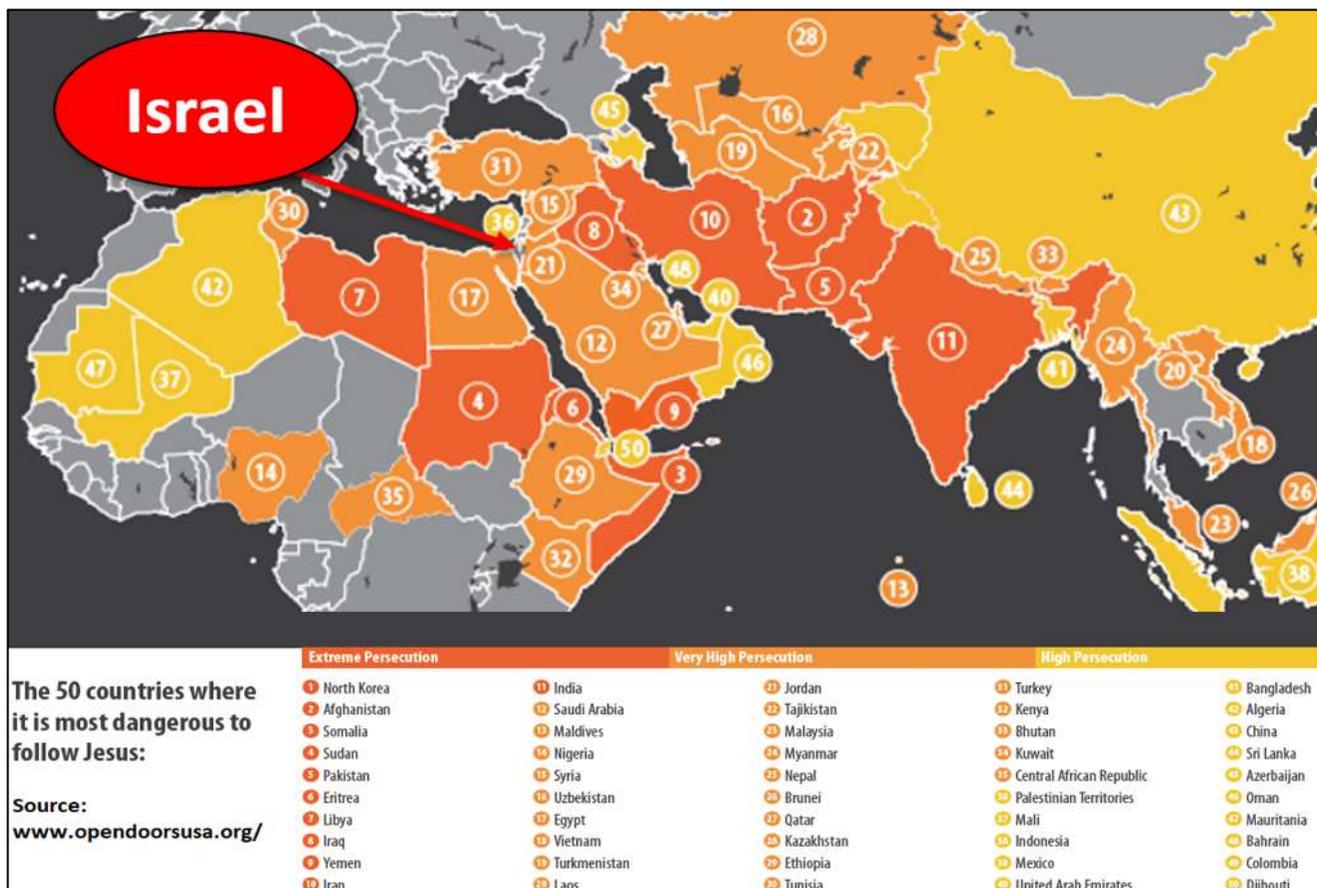
“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
Matthew 5:10

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” John 15:18-20

“Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.” Luke 6:22-23

Satan will do everything possible to keep people in darkness, and diminish the light of Jesus. As such, Christians have been persecuted for almost 2,000 years—and is becoming more prevalent as we enter into the last days.

The graphic below depicts countries where Christian persecution exists today. These are strongholds of Satan and his minions—where it is acceptable to murder, imprison, torture, confiscate assets, revile, falsely accuse, and declare Christians are unacceptable within their culture.



Country	Type of Persecution
North Korea	Imprisonment & torture who do not worship the nation's leader.
Afghanistan	Christians are rejected by family or killed.
Somalia	Islamist group al-Shabab will kill a suspected Christian.
Sudan	Converting from Islam to Christianity is punishable by death.
Pakistan	Christian women and children are targets of abuse.
Eritrea	Many Christians have been attacked, tortured, and imprisoned.
Libya	Islamic converts risk being killed. Evangelism and Bibles are illegal.
Iraq	Public executions of Christians by Isis have occurred.
Yemen	Tribal leaders & al-Qaida kidnapped and killed Yemeni Christians.
Iran	Christians are treated as second-class citizens.
India	Christians who convert from Hinduism are attacked; homes destroyed.

The following websites provide up-to-date information on Christian persecution.

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/world-watch-list/>

<http://www.persecution.org/>

We are witnessing an increase in Christian persecution as we move towards the Tribulation. This is evidenced today by the cultural acceptance of abortions and homosexuality. For abortionists believe they have the right to decide what happens to their body; but Christians are socially condemned and ostracized because they do not have the right to declare abortion is murder. Homosexuals call us homophobic. But in truth, we are fearful of God and not man. However, the present-day degree of persecution will exponentially increase when the Beast is revealed. For this is when Christians will declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ unlike any time in history; and they will warn the world about the Beast, who he is, what he will do, and who dwells within him.

“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.” Matthew 24:9

“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Revelation 2:10

God allowed John to see and document what will happen during the last days.

“When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’ Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed.” Revelation 6:9-11

The delusional darkness and deception that will occur during the last days will cause those who are persecuting Christians to believe their actions are for the glory of God. But in truth, it is for the glory of their god: Satan.

“They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.” John 16:2-4

Blessedness of Persecution: The Kingdom of Heaven

The blessedness of persecution is the same as for those who are poor in spirit—for withstanding persecution requires a complete disengagement from self-preservation, and an absolute dependence upon God, His word, and His promises.

However, the eternal rewards will quickly melt away the pain and suffering caused by persecution; for “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9

Summary

Jesus said “Blessed are:
The poor in spirit , for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Those who mourn , for they will be comforted.
The meek , for they will inherit the earth.
Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness , for they will be filled.
The merciful , for they will be shown mercy.
The pure in heart , for they will see God.
The peacemakers , for they will be called children of God.
Those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

When you compare and contrast the Beatitudes, you will find they are separate spiritual attributes, but they are also interdependent and synergistic. For example, interdependence is revealed when you consider it is difficult for one who is not poor in spirit (i.e. prideful) to express meekness and mercy. Plus, it is difficult for one who does not hunger and thirst for righteousness to experience the other Beatitudes. As such, each Beatitude is dependent upon the other Beatitudes. They are also synergistic (total is greater than the sum of the individual parts) in that each Beatitude supports and enhances the expression of the other Beatitudes. For example, the effectiveness of a peacemaker is enhanced by their purity of heart, the degree they mourn for those who are lost, and their mercy.

I am always amazed at the wisdom of God as I meditate upon His word—for the Beatitudes speak absolute truth to my heart and soul.

I pray this lesson has provided you with greater insight into your spiritual transformation and enhanced knowledge of your promised blessings in Jesus Christ.

All for His Glory,
Harold D. Thomas

If you know of someone who may benefit from this lesson...pass it on!