

Jesus' House Rules – Lesson 1

“Welcome to the Kingdom: Kingdom Character”

Summary

The Beatitudes reveal the blessed life according to Jesus, showing that God's kingdom reverses worldly values by honoring the humble, the meek, and the overlooked. Jesus begins not with rules but with identity, forming people whose character is shaped from the inside out.

Scripture

Matthew 5:1–12

1. Introduction

Opening Thought

Jesus starts His greatest sermon not with rules, but with blessings. Before He tells us how to live, He tells us who we are in His kingdom. The Beatitudes are Jesus' invitation into a new kind of life—a life shaped by God's values, not the world's.

Key Words Defined

- **Blessed:** Living in God's approval and flourishing under His rule, regardless of circumstances; favored by God.
- **God's Kingdom:** God's rule and reign breaking into the world—bringing His authority, His values, and His way of life to earth through Jesus and His people; God's active reign, His dynamic rule, His will being done.

The Setting: A New Moses on a New Mountain

- Jesus goes *up the mountain*—a deliberate echo of Moses receiving the Law.
- But instead of stone tablets, Jesus gives a kingdom identity.
- He is forming a new people shaped by grace, not legalism.

The Beatitudes as a Kingdom Portrait

These are not commands; they are descriptions of the kind of people who flourish under God's reign. Jesus blesses the unlikely:

- the spiritually empty
- the grieving
- the gentle
- the hungry-for-righteousness
- the merciful
- the pure-hearted
- the peacemakers
- the persecuted

Each blessing flips the world’s values upside down. This is the **great reversal**—God values what the world overlooks.

The World Says	Jesus Says	What God Does
Assert yourself	Be meek and trust God	Lifts the lowly
Hide your pain	Bring your mourning to Me	Comforts the grieving
Seek comfort	Hunger for righteousness	Satisfies the soul
Get even	Show mercy	Strengthens the gentle
Follow your heart	Purify your heart	Transforms the heart
Win at all costs	Make peace	Honors the humble
Avoid suffering	Endure persecution for righteousness	Vindicates the persecuted

2. What These Beatitudes Look Like Today

Principle	Application
Poor in spirit	Admitting you need God instead of pretending you have it all together. Starting your day with dependence, not self-reliance.
Those who mourn	Bringing your grief to God instead of numbing it. Sitting with someone in their pain without trying to fix it.
The meek	Responding with gentleness when you could assert dominance. Using influence to serve, not control.
Hunger and thirst for righteousness	Wanting God’s will more than your comfort. Pursuing justice, holiness, and integrity.
The merciful	Forgiving someone who doesn’t “deserve” it. Showing compassion to someone struggling.
Pure in heart	Checking your motives before your actions. Choosing honesty when dishonesty would be easier.
Peacemakers	Initiating reconciliation instead of waiting for the other person. Refusing gossip or division.
Persecuted for righteousness	Staying faithful even when misunderstood. Choosing obedience over popularity.

3. Biblical Examples of the Beatitudes in Practice

“Blessed are the poor in spirit” — Humble Dependence on God

The Tax Collector (Luke 18:9–14)

- He beats his chest and says, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”
- Jesus says he went home justified — not the proud Pharisee.

Kingdom picture: God lifts those who know they need Him.

“Blessed are the merciful” — Compassion in Action

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)

- He shows mercy when others walk by.
- Jesus says the Samaritan is the man’s neighbor as opposed to religious leaders.

Kingdom picture: Mercy reflects the heart of the Father.

4. Discussion Questions

- What does it mean to be “blessed” in God’s eyes, and how is that different from cultural ideas of blessing?
- Which Beatitude resonates with you most right now?
- Which Beatitude challenges you the most—and why?
- Where have you seen someone embody a Beatitude in a way that inspired you?
- Which Beatitude will you commit to practicing this week?

5. Reference Scriptures

Kingdom Identity & Character

- Galatians 5:22–23 – Fruit of the Spirit (kingdom character).
- Colossians 3:12–15 – Compassion, humility, gentleness, patience.
- Romans 12:1–2 – A transformed mind aligned with God’s values.

Blessing Defined by God, Not Circumstances

- Psalm 1:1–3 – The blessed person delights in God’s law.
- Jeremiah 17:7–8 – Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.
- James 1:12 – Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial.

6. Closing Thoughts

Jesus begins His kingdom manifesto with blessings because the kingdom starts with grace, not performance. The Beatitudes are not a ladder to climb—they are a gift to receive. They describe the kind of person God is forming in us through His Spirit. When we embrace kingdom character, we don’t just follow Jesus—we reflect Him. And when the world sees kingdom character, it sees the King.

Challenge for the Week

Choose one Beatitude to intentionally practice this week. Write it down and pray over it daily.