

“Grand Reversals” (Matthew 5:1–12)

I have always been amused by oxymorons. An oxymoron is a combination of contradictory words that shouldn't be linked together. Let me offer a few examples: airline food, brotherly love, Hell's Angels, jumbo shrimp, pretty ugly, rap music, sensitive guy, and short sermon. Oxymorons are common in everyday speech and in the Scriptures. This is especially true when Jesus is speaking. Initially, we may be perplexed by Jesus' oxymorons, but rather quickly we will see that His words are life. In Matt 5:1-12, we kick off our series “Counter-Cultural Christianity.” This series walks through the Sermon on the Mount—the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who has ever lived.

But before we consider Jesus' words, we need to pay careful attention to Matthew's introduction in 5:1–2. **“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth¹ and began to teach them.”** These verses make it clear that Jesus intentionally distanced Himself from the crowds that had been following Him.² He escaped by climbing up on a mountainside and sitting down.³ The disciples then came up the mountainside to listen to Jesus and He taught “*them*.”⁴ Jesus is preparing His disciples for leadership in His future kingdom.⁵

Before we launch into Jesus' sermon, several initial observations are necessary. (1) These verses are popularly known as “the beatitudes.” This English word “beatitude” implies that these verses are attitudes; however, the word “beatitude” is derived from the Latin term *beatus* that means “blessed.” It is only a coincidence of the English language that the idea of “be-attitudes” or “attitudes of being” is suggested by the Latin word for blessing.⁶ (2) Each of these eight⁷ beatitudes begins with a timeless promise of reward. This is indicated by the word “blessed” (*makarios*).⁸ In this context, the primary sense of the word “blessed” is approval.⁹ To be blessed is to experience the joy of being approved by God. It is the applause of heaven! (3) All of these beatitudes are despised by our present age. (4) All of these beatitudes disclose a future reversal in the making. Those who exhibit the characteristics in 5:3–12 may not be honored on earth, but their eternal reward will be great. Furthermore, there will be a sense of joy and satisfaction that will permeate their lives even here on earth. (5) These beatitudes are intended to characterize every disciple, not just the “spiritual elite.” We can't pick and choose which ones we want to fulfill—these beatitudes are a packaged deal.¹⁰ These are not eight separate groups of disciples, some who are meek and others who hunger for God. It's easy to make the mistake of saying, “I'm just not merciful” or “I'm just not a peacemaker.” We can't pick the easy ones and ignore the difficult ones, like being pure and being prepared for persecution.¹¹

Okay, now we are finally ready to study the eight beatitudes.¹² The first set of four beatitudes focus on our vertical relationship to God;¹³ the second set of four on our horizontal relationship to people. Each of the eight builds upon the other so that there is an amazingly beautiful and compelling progression.

Beatitude #1: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:3).¹⁴ The word that is translated “poor” (*ptochos*) refers to a person who doesn't have sufficient food, clothing, or shelter. This is not a person who is forced to draw upon savings for one month; this person has nothing!¹⁵ To be “poor in spirit”¹⁶ refers to being a “spiritual beggar.”¹⁷ It means being completely destitute in the realm of the spirit, being totally dependent¹⁸ on the goodness of God.¹⁹ This is the type of person that God esteems (Isa 57:15; 66:2b). Martin Luther (1438–1546), once said, “God created out of nothing. Therefore until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him.”²⁰ One of the most freeing experiences of my life is acknowledging my wretched state. I freely tell others that I am spiritually bankrupt²¹ apart from God.²² It has been derogatorily said that, “Christianity is a crutch!” Unlike many Christians, I never become offended or defensive when I hear this statement. I agree with it! Christianity is my crutch; it is also my walker and my wheelchair. Apart from Christ and the teachings of Christianity, I would be incapable of living my life in a way that pleases God.

We must learn to stop comparing ourselves to other people. Instead, we are to compare ourselves with the perfect Lord Jesus. He is our standard and we all fail to measure up. Imagine that two people each owe ten million dollars. For repayment, one may have one thousand dollars and another, one dollar. One is a thousand times better off than the other; but if they owe ten million dollars, they are both bankrupt.²³ Disciples who are “poor in spirit” recognize their spiritual bankruptcy before God. Consequently, they are vulnerable, transparent, and authentic about their own failures and sins. We talk disparagingly about “needy” people. But every disciple ought to be “needy” for Jesus Christ. We are to be utterly dependent upon Him in every area of our lives. We ought to say, “Jesus, I can’t stay married apart from You. I can’t raise my children apart from You. I can’t work my job apart from You. I can’t stay pure apart from You. Jesus, I need You! Without You I am absolutely nothing!”

Those disciples who are “poor in spirit” are promised “the kingdom of heaven.”²⁴ Notice the present tense: “for theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven.” “The kingdom of heaven” in Matthew is synonymous with “the kingdom of God” (19:23–24) and often refers to the reign of God, not heaven. Those who are “poor in spirit” will participate in a greater degree of rulership in the kingdom of heaven, both now and in the future.²⁵

Beatitude #2: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (5:4).²⁶ The word “mourn” in this context refers to mourning over sin.²⁷ We should mourn the lack of righteousness in ourselves, our churches, and our society (in that order). We should also long for God to eradicate sin and usher in His perfect justice. To mourn, then, is to lament that the kingdom has not come and God’s will is not yet done.²⁸ True Christianity manifests itself in what we cry over and what we laugh about. So often, we laugh at the things that we should weep over and weep over the things we should laugh at. In our heart of hearts, what do we weep about? What do we laugh about?²⁹ If we are characterized by mourning, we shall be comforted by God now and in the eternal state.

Beatitude #3: “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth” (5:5).³⁰ Jesus didn’t mean “blessed are the weak and deficient in courage.” “Gentle” or “meek” originally meant to bridle wild horses, to put strength and power under control. The word means “the ability to submit to God’s will.” The strongest man is not the one who forces his will upon others but the man who has power and willingly surrenders it. Moses was called “the meekest man on the face of the earth” (Num 12:3). Even though he murdered a man and was a strong leader, he learned to be gentle and meek before God and man. When attacked or criticized he would do nothing but fall on his face and pray.³¹ Our Lord Jesus also referred to Himself as gentle (Matt 11:29; cf. 21:5).³² Paul also listed gentleness in Gal 5:22–23 as one of the products of the Holy Spirit. Those who are gentle and humble toward God shall inherit the earth. This speaks of coming reward during Christ’s earthly kingdom reign. Is the Lord your refuge? Do you trust in Him implicitly? If so, you’ll experience fulfillment in this life and reward in the next.

Beatitude #4: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied (5:6).”³³ This beatitude is particularly interesting. Jesus does not say that He is looking for people who *possess* righteousness, but for people who want it desperately but don’t yet have it. Matthew most commonly uses the word “righteousness” to describe right-living before God.³⁴ To “hunger and thirst for righteousness” is to desire to be Christ-like above all else.³⁵ Think about the last time you were really hungry or thirsty. You were distracted from whatever else you were attempting to do, right? A person who is hungry or thirsty tends to push other things aside. They are desperate and their top priority is satisfying their hunger or thirst. Similarly, “those who hunger and thirst for righteousness” put becoming like Jesus Christ first. The result is they will be satisfied by God in this life and the next.³⁶ Will you ask God to cultivate the hunger and thirst that He has placed within you?

[The first four beatitudes show that God’s approval is found when we are humbled by God and respond appropriately to Him.]

Beatitude #5: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (5:7).³⁷ Mercy is the willingness to not impose a penalty or a loss that is fully deserved.³⁸ Do you have any enemies? Is there someone in your life who drives you crazy? Grant them mercy. When others hurt you, will you pray God’s blessing over that person? If God wants to discipline him or her, He will, but you and I can pray blessing. You won’t be merciful to others unless in the core of your being you appreciate the mercy that God has shown you. You will want your rights. You won’t fully understand that you deserve nothing. James 2:13 states “judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy.”³⁹ I want God’s mercy! I am sure you do too. If so, show others the type of mercy you’d like to receive.

Beatitude #6: “Blessed are the pure⁴⁰ in heart, for they shall see God” (5:8).⁴¹ Jesus’ words are very significant. He refers to the “pure in heart.” In the Scriptures, the heart describes the inner person—who a man or woman really is. This is where purity begins. If one has internal integrity, it will manifest itself in external integrity.⁴² Jesus took the Pharisees to task on many points (see Matt 23), all of which centered on the inconsistency between the external and internal parts of their lives. The outside parts of their lives were exceptionally clean, but on the inside their hearts were unclean. They wanted the world to see their clean hands while trying to hide their unclean hearts. It’s easier to avoid unclean hands (murder, stealing, and gluttony) than an unclean heart (envy, pride, bitterness). But in time, the hand manifests the heart. So ultimately, the way to have pure hands is to have a pure heart. And pure hearts are only possible by the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. If you desire a clean life, start with a pure heart. Where the heart leads, the hands will follow.⁴³ Today, will you begin to meditate on Ps 139:23–24? Ask the Lord to search your heart on a daily basis. Spend time in His presence and ask Him to help you identify impure thoughts and motives. As you learn to make purity a heart matter, you will see God in your experience in this life. You will also have greater intimacy with Him in the eternal state.

Beatitude #7: “Blessed are the peacemakers,⁴⁴ for they shall be called sons of God” (5:9).⁴⁵ Jesus blesses “peacemakers,”⁴⁶ not peace-keepers.⁴⁷ This means we are not appeasers of men. We do not seek peace at any price, but we seek to pursue the path of peace (Rom 12:18). This is in keeping with God the Father who is called the “God of peace” six different times in the New Testament.⁴⁸ Sons and daughters of God are to exude peace. Jesus says that His disciples can become “sons of God.” This is not a reference to salvation. Rather, Jesus is referring to the reward of His disciples becoming “sons indeed.” If we function as peacemakers, we are “called” sons by God (cf. Rev 21:7). The phrase “sons of God” deals with character rather than relationship.⁴⁹ Barnabas was called the “son of encouragement;” Judas, “the son of perdition.” Barnabas was encouraging; Judas was doomed. So if someone is called a “son of God” or a “daughter of God,” he or she is displaying God’s character.⁵⁰

Those disciples who exhibit the above beatitudes should be applauded, not booed. Yet, in this world that is not how it works.⁵¹ The world is threatened by a Christian lifestyle. It convicts them of sin, and it condemns their way of life. The natural response to a threat is retaliation. I seem to remember someone telling me that doing the right thing has its own reward. But sometimes, doing the right thing will bring you trouble. That’s the message behind this next beatitude.

Beatitude # 8: “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:10). The word rendered “persecuted” in 5:10 bears the root idea of “pursue” or “chase.” A good translation is “harass”—“Blessed are the harassed.” The physical persecution of Christians is prevalent all over the world. Yet, social and verbal persecution or harassment can be just as difficult. You may be passed over for a promotion because of your Christian faith. You may lose your job if you refuse to compromise your ethical convictions. You may lose your spouse if you choose to walk with Christ. You may be rejected at school because you don’t party with the rest of your peers. You may be rejected by your neighbors because you do not delight in their gossip. These scenarios of indifference and condescension can sometimes be harder to take than physical violence.

Let's be honest, Jesus messes up this life. Follow Him and you're in for some flack. If you're looking for something that will make your daily life easier, look elsewhere. I'm afraid the way of Jesus isn't going to do it for you. I know this is lousy marketing. Apparently, Jesus had no training in sales. No political coaching. No speechwriters. Surely they would have told Jesus not to mention the persecution, the mistreatment, the hurt that can come from following Him. "Accentuate the positive," they'd say. "Downplay the persecution." But Jesus doesn't downplay the persecution; He features it. And not only does He feature it, He goes further. He says that when we're persecuted as a direct result of following Him, we are "blessed"—when we are thrown under the bus for Jesus. In other words, it's good to get creamed for Christ. That's right. Good. Jesus says we're better off persecuted.⁵²

Verses 11 and 12 repeat, amplify, and personalize the persecution beatitude by a shift from third-person ("they") to second-person ("you") address.⁵³ In 5:11 Jesus declares, "**Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.**" There are two key qualifications in 5:11: "falsely" and "because of Me." The word "falsely" is important. In other words, you haven't been persecuted until people tell lies about you. If they say that you are a nasty person and you are, you haven't been persecuted; you have just been accurately evaluated. You are persecuted when the lies start, and when the lies are connected with your faith in Christ.

In 5:12 Jesus hammers his persecution theme home: "**Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**" Of all the beatitudes, this one is the capstone because it is the one that the Lord Jesus says we should take the greatest delight in. Jesus commands us to "rejoice" and "be glad"⁵⁴ in the midst of persecution. Yet, He is not asking us to rejoice in suffering itself; we are rather to rejoice for two specific reasons. First, rejoice and be glad "for your reward⁵⁵ in heaven is great."⁵⁶ Whatever persecution you endure on earth, God will make up to you in eternity. Second, rejoice and be glad "for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Jesus says that we are following in the footsteps of the Old Testament prophets. These men were the godliest men of their day and they were the most powerfully used by God. They stood by God's Word and preached it no matter what opposition came to them. We can rejoice because we're in great company. Don't get depressed or resentful or bitter if you are persecuted for Jesus' sake. Don't weep or say, "How can this be happening to me? Why is God allowing this?" God is watching you. He is putting your tears in a bottle. He is storing them all up and will one day bless you and reward you in a way that will make up for every distress. You are in the noble succession of the great men and women of God down the ages.⁵⁷

In New York City, there are millions of cats and dogs. However, New York City is basically just concrete and steel, so when you have a pet in New York City and it dies, you can't just go out in the back yard and bury it. The city authorities decided that for \$50 they would dispose of your deceased pet for you. One lady was enterprising. She thought, "I can render a service to people in the city and save them money." She placed an ad in the newspaper that said, "When your pet dies, I will come and take care of the carcass for you for \$25." This lady would go to the local Salvation Army and buy an old suitcase for two dollars. Then when someone would call about his or her pet, she would go to the home and put the deceased pet in the suitcase. She would then take a ride on the subway, where there are thieves. She would set the suitcase down, and she would act like she wasn't watching. A thief would come by and steal her suitcase. She'd look up and say, "Wait! Stop! Thief!" My guess is the people who stole those suitcases got a real surprise when they got home. A lot of us are like those New York thieves. We're chasing after happiness, and we grab what we think will give us happiness; however, when we get it, it doesn't quite deliver.⁵⁸

You've heard it said, "Nice guys finish last?" Well, the truth is *Godly guys (and gals) finish first*. Maybe not from earth's perspective but from heaven's perspective, there is great reward when God approves of your life. *Godly guys (and gals) finish first*.

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Scripture References

Matthew 5:1–12

Matthew 11:28–30

Isaiah 61:1–3

Isaiah 1:10–17

Psalm 24:3–4; 51:6, 10

Philippians 3:7–11

John 15:18–25

Study Questions

1. Most Christians prefer to apply the Scriptures, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, to someone else. Why is it so difficult to apply God's Word directly to me (5:1–2)? Read James 1:19–27. How can I focus my time and energy on becoming the disciple that Jesus wants *ME* to become? What could my spiritual life be like if I was more concerned about my own sin and spiritual growth than the sins and shortcomings of others? Read Matthew 7:1–6.
2. How do I view my own Christian growth and spirituality (5:3)? Do I truly see myself as “spiritually bankrupt” (5:3)? Am I absolutely dependent upon Christ in every area of my life? When is the last time I have mourned over my sin or the sin of others (5:4)? In the past week, how have I demonstrated gentleness with my family members, fellow church members, and coworkers (5:5)?
3. Do I hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:6)? If so, to what degree? If not, what is keeping me from the only pursuit that can satisfy me? How have I exhibited mercy this past week with someone in my life (5:7)? Am I a man or woman characterized by purity (5:8)? If so, how have I grown in this area of my life? Would those who know me define me as a peacemaker (5:9)? Why or why not?
4. Have I been persecuted for the sake of righteousness (5:10–12)? How has this occurred in my life? Am I really living for Christ in my school, workplace, and neighborhood? As a disciple of Christ, should I expect persecution? Read John 15:18–20; Acts 14:22; 1 Thessalonians 3:3–4; and 2 Timothy 3:12. How can I faithfully endure the persecution that will come my way?
5. When and how have I experienced “blessing” and “reward” from obeying Christ? Do I truly believe that obedience pays rich dividends? Am I convinced that a lack of obedience brings about great loss? Am I motivated by a desire to please Christ and experience His approval? Why or why not?

Notes

¹ This phrase may sound strange and obvious to an English reader; however, this is a Semitic expression used of one who is about to begin a public address. See David A. Black, “The Translation of Matthew 5:2,” *Bible Translator* 38 (1987) 241-43.

² Prior to the sermon, the crowds are flocking to Jesus from every region (Matt 4:25). At the conclusion of the sermon, the crowds follow Him once again (8:1).

³ This may not seem very important, but in the world of the first century, the teacher’s position was important. Jewish rabbis might teach while strolling through the market or standing up; but if they wanted to teach *authoritatively* (cf. 7:28–29), they sat down (see Matt 13:2; 24:3; 26:55). R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*. New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 158; Thomas Long, *Matthew*. Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997), 45-46.

⁴ Wilkins writes, “The term ‘disciple’ (*mathetes*) occurs here for the first time in Matthew; almost certainly they are the four brothers who have just been called to follow Jesus (4:18–22), along with any others who have made a commitment to him by this time. The designation ‘disciple’ was a general term used to represent a follower of a variety of different kinds of masters within Judaism, but Jesus fashioned its use throughout his ministry in a unique way to describe his own followers.” Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*. NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 192. Blomberg goes even further and suggests: “‘His disciples’ seems to presume that he [Jesus] has already called more than the four described in 4:18–22. Matthew does not give the names of all twelve until 10:2–4, but 10:1 makes it clear they already had been called.” Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*. New American Commentary series (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 97.

⁵ At the conclusion of the sermon (Matt 7:28–8:1), Matthew records that the crowd was “eavesdropping” while Jesus spoke to His disciples. There are times in Matthew when Jesus deliberately moves away from the crowds in order to be with His disciples (8:18; 13:36; 14:22). France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 156. See also John R.W. Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978), 29. *Contra* D.A. Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5–7* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 15. Morris points out that there is no command to “repent” and the content of the Sermon is designed for those committed to Christ. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*. Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 94.

⁶ The basic OT texts for the Beatitudes are Isa 11:3b–5 and 61:1–4. Matt 5:3–6 corresponds closely to Luke’s beatitudes (Luke 6:20–22). But whereas in Luke, Jesus then gives for woes (6:24–26), in Matthew, Jesus provides four additional beatitudes. The first four are generally passive; the second four are generally more active.

⁷ Although there are nine beatitudes, the ninth (5:11–12) is really an expansion of the eighth. See David L. Turner, *Matthew*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 146; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 161.

⁸ BDAG s.v. *makarios* 2 “pertaining to being especially favored, blessed, fortunate, happy, privileged.” The Hebrew equivalent is *berakah*, which occurs 415 times in the OT. To bless in the OT means “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” The idea is of conferring or imparting something. Often this is done through the laying on of hands or the lifting of hands. Jesus blesses the little children, His disciples, and His Father in heaven.

⁹ Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 16; Haddon W. Robinson, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living* (Grand Rapids: RBC, 1991), 28.

¹⁰ The beatitudes are comparable to the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23. All nine fruit are to be fulfilled by walking in the Spirit (Gal 5:17).

¹¹ Stott writes: “The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best-known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly the least obeyed.” Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 15.

¹² These eight beatitudes are in stark contrast to the eight curses found near the conclusion of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Matt 23).

¹³ The subjects of the first four beatitudes begin with the Greek letter *p* (*ptochos*, *pentheo*, *praus*, and *peinao*).

¹⁴ Isaiah said that the Messiah would be anointed “to preach good tidings to the poor” (Isa 61:1–3).

¹⁵ God has chosen many poor people for the gospel is designed for those who are poor (Jas 2:5).

¹⁶ The dative Greek phrase *to pneumatī* (“in spirit”) should be understood to be practically equivalent to an adverb, indicating the “spiritually poor.” Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 155.

¹⁷ Long, *Matthew*, 48.

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- ¹⁸ The NEB translates this “know their need of God.”
- ¹⁹ Perhaps the best illustration of Jesus’ meaning is His own parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10–13).
- ²⁰ Dwight Edwards, *Releasing the Rivers Within* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2003), 96.
- ²¹ Carson, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 17.
- ²² Eaton may be correct when he writes, “I believe the most important phrase in the Sermon on the Mount is this one. If we understand what it means to be ‘poor in spirit’ we shall understand the whole Sermon on the Mount.” Michael Eaton, *The Way that Leads to Life* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1999), 18–19.
- ²³ Robinson, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living*, 42.
- ²⁴ Wilkins notes, “The first and the eighth beatitudes (5:3, 10) form a sort of bookends, another example of the common Hebrew literary device called an inclusio, because the causal clause of the first beatitude is repeated in the last beatitude— ‘for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’ (cf. 5:3, 10).” Wilkins, *Matthew*, 205.
- ²⁵ Turner, *Matthew*, 150. *Contra* Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 96 who sees this as a reference to entering heaven.
- ²⁶ Isaiah said the Messiah would bind up the brokenhearted and proclaim the hour when the mourners would be comforted, when their ashes would be replaced by a crown of joy, and their mourning would be replaced with the oil of gladness (Isa 61:1–3).
- ²⁷ See Ps 119:136; Ezek 9:4; Matt 23:37–38; and Rev 6:10.
- ²⁸ Mourning as a way of life is forbidden in Matt 9:15.
- ²⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*. Preaching the Word Series (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), Electronic ed.
- ³⁰ This beatitude is much like the promise in Ps 37:11, “The meek shall possess the land.” This is a Messianic psalm that refers to God’s people inheriting the Promised Land. See also Zeph 3:12–13.
- ³¹ Eaton, *The Way that Leads to Life*, 20.
- ³² Jesus demonstrated His humility and gentleness by taking on the form of a servant in Phil 2:5–8.
- ³³ The Psalmist uses the image of hunger and thirst to depict his desire for God (Ps 42:3; 63:1; 107:5, 9).
- ³⁴ See Matt 1:19; 3:15; 5:10, 20, 45, 6:1, and 33. This practical righteousness is different than Paul’s doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ.
- ³⁵ Jesus said to His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work” (John 4:43).
- ³⁶ The future passive that is used in 5:4, 6, 7, and 9 implies divine agency. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 437–38.
- ³⁷ Turner, *Matthew*, 152 suggests that an allusion to the language of Prov 14:21 and/or Prov 17:5 LXX is likely.
- ³⁸ The best example of this is Jesus’ parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:23–35).
- ³⁹ See also Matt 18:33; 9:13; 12:7; 15:22; 17:15; and 20:30–31. Charles H. Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount: Character Formation and Ethical Decision Making in Matthew 5-7* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 52.
- ⁴⁰ The Greek word for “pure” is *katharos*, from which we get the English word “cathartic.” Both mean to cleanse, purge, or purify.
- ⁴¹ Jesus likely has Ps 23:3–4 in mind (cf. Ps 51:10; 73:1).
- ⁴² See also Turner, *Matthew*, 152.
- ⁴³ David Jeremiah, “Clean Hands,” *Today’s Turning Point*, 9/6-7/08.
- ⁴⁴ The NLT nails Jesus’ meaning: “God blesses those who work for peace.”
- ⁴⁵ The expressed goal of the Messiah—the “Prince of the Peace”—is to bring peace to the entire world (Isa 9:6–7).
- ⁴⁶ The word “peacemakers” () is only found here in the NT.
- ⁴⁷ Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 101.
- ⁴⁸ See Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; 2 Thess 3:16 [“Lord”]; and Heb 13:20.
- ⁴⁹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 169, notes the following descriptions used in Matthew: “sons of the kingdom” (8:12); “sons of the wedding hall” (9:12); “sons of the evil one” (13:38); and “sons of those who killed the prophets” (23:31).
- ⁵⁰ Robinson, *What Jesus Said About Successful Living*, 82.
- ⁵¹ Postmillennialism is not based on Scripture or experience.
- ⁵² Bob Kerrey, “Building Character: On Being Persecuted” (Matt 5:10–12).
- ⁵³ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 101.
- ⁵⁴ The verb *agalliao* (“be glad”) is only found here in Matthew. It is a very strong word.

⁵⁵ The noun *misthos* (“reward”) is used ten times by Matthew, the most in any NT book (5:12, 46; 6:1, 2, 5, 16; 10:41 [2x], 42; 20:8).

⁵⁶ *Contra* Blomberg, *Matthew*, 101 who insists that the “reward” is heaven.

⁵⁷ Eaton, *The Way that Leads to Life*, 36.

⁵⁸ Preaching Today citation: Scott Wenig, Preaching Today #182.