

Session 10 Bearing Fruit That God Calls Beautiful (Jn. 15:16-17)

“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

I. JESUS APPOINTED US TO BEAR FRUIT THAT REMAINS

- A. Immediately after speaking on friendship with God, Jesus assured them that it was not their idea but a glorious privilege that began in God’s heart. Earlier, in 15:1-8, Jesus spoke on abiding in Him that would result in the miracle of bearing fruit that “remains”—or that He esteems and rewards forever. God esteeming our fruitfulness is what defines our true success and/or being great in His sight.

¹⁵“I have called you friends...¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, that you love one another.” (Jn. 15:15-17)

- B. We bear fruit inwardly in godly character and outwardly in our ministry and service to others. Fruitfulness is about *possessing* love (humility, purity, generosity, etc.) and *inspiring* it in others.

- C. Jesus connected the Father’s promise to give us “*whatever we ask*” for in prayer (15:16) to the Spirit empowering us to bear spiritual fruit that is best expressed as we love one another (15:17). Immediately after speaking about the Father answering prayer, He focused them on praying to grow in grace to love one another (15:17). This is similar to what He said earlier, when He connected His promise to answer their prayer (14:14) to the Spirit empowering them to love Him more (14:15-16).

¹⁴“If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. ¹⁵If you love Me, keep My commandments...¹⁶the Father...will give you another Helper...” (Jn. 14:14-16)

- D. The ultimate “anything” that we ask God for is to receive more grace to love God and one another (Mt. 22:37-40). This the Spirit’s greatest work in us. Having mature love for weak people that we are familiar with is the rarest yet greatest attainment in life. Mature love is like a rare multifaceted diamond—it is the ultimate crown jewel in God’s kingdom. What do you talk to God about most? See my free booklet “*10 Prayers to Strengthen Your Inner Man: F-E-L-L-O-W-S-H-I-P prayer list*.”

⁹...I pray that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge [of God]... (Phil. 1:9)

- E. There is always a “greater measure of grace” to experience as ask the Lord for it (Jas. 4:6).

¹⁶Let us come boldly [prayer] to the throne of grace, that we may...find grace to help. (Heb. 4:16)

- F. Peter referred to our inner life (our mind and emotions) as “the hidden person of the heart.” When we chose to love people with meekness (gentle spirit) and with confidence in God (quiet spirit; Isa. 30:15), God sees beauty in our heart that is incorruptible (lasts forever) and is very precious to Him.

⁴...let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle [humility] and quiet spirit [from trusting Him], which is very precious in the sight of God. (1 Pet. 3:4)

- G. The beauty of our life is “hidden” in Christ even from us—it will be fully manifested at His return.

³...your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear [the hidden glory of God in you will be seen] with Him in glory [beauty]. (Col. 3:3-4)

II. THE 8 BEATITUDES: JESUS' CLEARER DEFINITION OF LOVE AND BEAUTY

- A. The 8 beatitudes are like seeds of flowers in the “garden of our heart,” that God wants to blossom. They are Jesus’ clearer definition of love, godliness, spiritual maturity, and a successful life. These 8 beatitudes are the necessary foundation from which mature love progressively grows in us.
³“*Blessed are the poor in spirit...*”⁴*Blessed are those who mourn...*”⁵*Blessed are the meek...*
⁶*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...*”⁷*Blessed are the merciful...*
⁸*Blessed are the pure in heart...*”⁹*Blessed are the peacemakers...*”¹⁰*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” (Mt. 5:3-10)*
- B. **Blessed:** This blessedness includes having a vibrant heart, feeling God’s presence (Jn. 14:21, 23), having a sense of His approval over our life with grace to grow in our love for God and others.

III. BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT (MT. 5:3)

- A. Being poor in spirit is being aware of our spiritual powerlessness without connecting to Jesus and seeing our need to experience more of God’s presence in our heart, family, ministry, city, nation, etc. We see that we do not have the spiritual strength *without the Spirit’s continual help* to bear the fruit of mature love for God and people with ability to also inspire it in others (Jn. 15:4-8). We see “the gap” between what God has made available to us in Christ and how much we experience it.
³“*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Mt. 5:3)*
- B. We must not be content with increase in finances, impact, or favor with people, etc. Jesus addressed this as a problem in the “successful” church of Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-21). God told Howard Pittman that the condition of the Church in the West was like the Laodiceans—see his book, *Placebo*.
¹⁶“*You are lukewarm...*”¹⁷*Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you [your spiritual life] are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked...*”¹⁹*As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten...be zealous and repent.” (Rev. 3:16-19)*
- C. **Theirs is the kingdom:** They will experience more kingdom benefits and activity in a spiritual way.

IV. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN (MT. 5:4)

- A. This is not mourning over a physical tragedy but it is mourning over our spiritual condition and for a spiritual breakthrough in our life, family, church, city or nation. This mourning refers to the pain that we feel when we see “the gap” between what God has made available to us and what we are experiencing and the pain we feel over our lack of follow through in seeking Jesus with diligence.
⁴“*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Mt. 5:4)*
- B. Being poor in spirit speaks of how we *see ourselves in great need*; spiritual mourning refers to how we *feel about what we see*. When we *see* differently, then we *feel* differently, then *live* differently. A sick person can see the truth about having a serious illness and the need to change their life style. That bad news is only helpful to them if they “mourn” or feel alarmed enough to make changes.

- C. This mourning is God’s gift to us; it is essential to our growth. Feeling the pain of godly desperation leads us to reorder our life to spend our strength, time, and money to obey and seek God.

¹⁰***Godly sorrow produces repentance*** [renewed commitment to obey] leading to salvation [breakthrough]...¹¹***What diligence it produced in you...what indignation*** [against personal compromise], ***what fear*** [of God], ***what vehement desire*** [for God], ***what zeal***. (2 Cor. 7:10-11)

- D. ***Mourning and joy***: We hold these two truths in tension. We rejoice in who we are in Christ and what we are experiencing in God, while we are aware of how much more there is to experience. We are grateful for all that we experience, but continually seek the Lord for a greater measure.

- E. ***They shall be comforted***: They will progressively experience spiritual breakthrough in their lives.

V. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK (HUMBLE) (MT. 5:5)

- A. Meekness is not weakness or timidity but meekness is strength under control. The meek have a teachable spirit and seek to be fully submitted to God. In the ancient world, when the strength of a horse brought under the control of its master, it was said to be “meek.”

⁵***Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.*** (Mt. 5:5)

- B. We are meek when we see our strengths or resources from God’s point of view. Jesus owns all that we possess (1 Cor. 6:19-20). Our natural mindset is to see our resources (gifting, money, position, favor, etc.) as belonging to us instead of to the Lord, and so we use them mostly to increase our personal comfort and honor instead of using them to help others or to advance the kingdom.

¹⁹***...you are not your own?*** ²⁰***For you were bought at a price...glorify God...*** (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

- C. Meekness includes our sense of indebtedness to God for all that He has graciously given us spiritually, financially, physically, relationally, etc. The meek are filled with gratitude for God’s leadership in their life, understanding that they are being treated by God better than they deserve.

- D. ***They shall inherit the earth***: This promise includes influence on the earth. It is partially fulfilled in this life and in fullness in the millennial kingdom (Ps. 37:9, 11; Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6). It is wise to think of eternal rewards because we live with a resurrected body far longer than a natural body.

VI. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (MT. 5:6)

- A. Jesus affirmed the value of seeking Him for a greater release of righteousness in our hearts, for others, and in society. Lack of hunger is a sign of spiritual sickness.

⁶***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*** (Mt. 5:6)

- B. As the premier teacher on grace, Paul exhorted many to press into God for the “prize of fulness.”

¹²***...I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ...laid hold of me*** [the fullness of my destiny]...¹⁴***I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God...*** (Phil. 3:12-14)

- C. ***They shall be filled***: We will progressively experience more grace for righteousness in our lives.

VII. BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL (MT. 5:7)

- A. We are to be merciful or generous to people who are suffering by helping them (Lk. 10:30-37), especially those in great need caused by poverty, sickness, oppression, persecution, etc. Helping others often requires denying our own comfort. We are also to be merciful towards those who stumble in sin as well as to those who mistreat or complain against us.

⁷*“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” (Mt. 5:7)*

- B. *They shall obtain mercy*: This is reciprocal—we receive the measure that we give (Lk. 6:36-38).

VIII. BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART (MT. 5:8)

- A. We approach this beatitude with a deep sense of wonder and awe. Purity includes godliness in our morals, motives, methods, speech, etc. Purity is essential for any who want to experience God more.

⁸*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” (Mt. 5:8)*

- B. *They shall see God*: Intimacy with God and enjoying His presence is our greatest privilege (Jn. 14:21, 23). The pure have an increased spiritual capacity to see more of God's heart and mind.

¹⁴*Pursue peace...and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord... (Heb 12:14)*

IX. BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS (MT. 5:9)

- A. Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. This includes working to reconcile and repair relationships, individually or in society, and not creating strife in relationships by promoting ourselves. The peacemaker sees the value of investing time and energy to bring peace between individuals, families, races, and ministries, in social, civic, and marketplace issues, and even in the nations. God's peace is not sought at the expense of truth and righteousness; it is not a “peace at any price.”

⁹*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Mt. 5:9)*

- B. *They shall be called sons of God*: They will be recognized as representatives of God (Mt. 5:44-45).

X. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO ARE PERSECUTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (MT. 5:10-12)

- A. God's servants are to expect persecution (resistance) for being faithful witnesses of the truth. This includes being attacked physically, financially, or verbally (slandered, ostracized, etc.).

¹⁰*“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom...*

¹²*Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...” (Mt. 5:10-12)*

- B. *Theirs is the kingdom*: They will experience more kingdom benefits and activity in a spiritual way such as a greater measure of grace and the spirit of glory (1 Pet. 4:14) and eternal rewards.

- C. Jesus invites all to make choices that God calls great by seeking to embrace these 8 beatitudes.

¹⁹*“Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments...shall be called least in the kingdom...whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom.” (Mt. 5:19)*