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)*

1. Jesus appointed us to bear fruit that remains

*Roman numeral one: Let’s read the passage, then a little bit of review from the last few weeks. Jesus said, “I have called you friends,” in verse 15, “but you did not choose Me. I chose you. And more than that, I appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and fruit that remains”—the idea is that it would remain forever—“that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give to you. These things I command you, that you love one another.”*

*Now the problem with verse 17 and the phrase “that you love one another” is that it is so common. We have heard it so many times that we easily lose how rare this kind of love is, how important it is to God, and how significant it is that He is wanting to build this in our lives. We hear about love all of the time, but we often lose the marvel of this many-faceted diamond that is the jewel in God’s crown. He said this is the most important thing: “That you love Me and you love one another with all of your hearts. The first commandment is that you love Me and the second is like it, and these are the things that I will evaluate your life and the success of your life with.”*

* 1. 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)

*Paragraph A: Immediately after speaking on friendship with God in verse 15, Jesus immediately assures them that this indescribably glorious reality called friendship with God is actually God’s idea, not their idea. It is glorious, and Jesus said, in effect, “It began in My heart, not your heart. I am the One Who sought you for this, so you can be sure that I am going to be available to you. You can be sure because I have chosen you for this and that I am going to intervene in your life and even shut and open doors to help you understand the value of friendship with Me.” Sometimes that involves the discipline of the Lord to wake us up because He said, “I chose this and appointed your life to have this friendship with Me.”*

*Moments earlier still, in John 15, back in verse 1 to 8, literally just moments before He said that, He spoke on abiding in Him, and He said that the people who abide in Him will result in the miracle of them bearing fruit that lasts forever; that remains forever is the idea. I mean, this is a most remarkable thing that people like us, weak and broken people in our flesh, we can make choices, say words, and spend time and money in a way that makes our life relevant and so that things we do today are relevant forever. We can bear fruit that remains. It is never, ever outside of God’s perspective. He is talking about rewards here forever, not just you led someone to the Lord and ten years later they are still walking with the Lord. That is real too, but He is talking about something so dramatic that it makes our life so important. Even in the seasons of waiting for delayed promises, our lives are as equally relevant in those seasons as in the seasons of full power, promise and blessing, because it is the choice to bear fruit that is the only thing that God evaluates us on for the last day. God esteems our fruitfulness.*

*This is what defines success in life. This fruit is what defines what Jesus says God will call great in your life, and this fruit lasts forever. I mean this afternoon at two o’clock and tomorrow afternoon, the next afternoon, whatever. The routineness of life can be going on, you are waiting on delayed promises, and the Lord says “This day will matter, if you will engage with Me and bear fruit.”*

* 1. 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.

*Paragraph B: We bear fruit inwardly in godly character, and that is His main point here. It is not His only point, because we also bear fruit outwardly in ministry and service to other people. Fruitfulness is not just soul-winning. I remember in my early days in the Lord when we always thought fruitfulness was mostly soul-winning. And if you led someone to the Lord, you were fruitful, and if you did not, well, then your life was kind of stuck. Yet fruitfulness is much more than soul winning, although I certainly value that! Fruitfulness is about possessing love, humility, and purity. These things are all related, but not only possessing them, but also imparting them to others, inspiring it in others. You can have simple conversations where you are inspiring people in humility, and your life is fruitful, and that conversation makes that day relevant forever. You did not waste that day. Any movement you are making forward in purity or in humility—which are all just facets of love—generosity, gratitude, diligence. These are all some of the many facets of the diamond of love. Any progress you are making in any of those areas of your life, you are bearing fruit that day and, that fruit lasts forever.*

*Again, those are different facets of this glorious diamond called love. If you inspire it in somebody else or impart it to somebody else or you inspire them to move forward, then you bore fruit in that way as well. And so you can be years away from the fullness of the things that God has promised you, but your days are as relevant now as they will be in the day of the full manifestation of God’s power in your life.*

* 1. 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)

*Paragraph C: It is easy to miss this, so I am just drawing attention to be careful not to miss what is happening here. Jesus is connecting the Father’s promise to give whatever we ask for in prayer to the Holy Spirit empowering us to bear fruit which is best expressed through loving one another.*

*Let’s look at this again. So Jesus is saying, “You can bear fruit,” and then He seemingly changes the subject and says, “Whatever you ask the Father, He will give you!” However, He is actually tying our prayer life to praying for fruitfulness, and then, in verse 17, He says, “That fruitfulness is that glorious kingdom jewel called love that has many facets to it.” And so He is saying, “Because the Father will give you anything you ask in His name,” His more-than-a hint is, “I am urging you to ask for grace to bear more fruit. That is what I want your prayer life to be focused on.” And that fruit bearing is, again, that glorious kingdom diamond called love in its many facets.*

*Now this in John 15 is very similar to what happened in John 14 and, again, it is very easy to miss it. In John 14 He gives this big promise of answering prayer again, but the next phrase after He says, “anything you ask,” He says, “If you love Me.” What Jesus is really saying is: “Use your prayer life and your faith to grow in the grace of God to love Me. Make that the primary goal in your prayer life,” the thing that you talk to God most about.*

*And so it is in both of these times where He gives this blank check “anything you want you can have.” He gives you in the next statement what He wants you to make the priority request in your life. In chapter 14, He says it is “loving Me,” and in chapter 15, it is the grace to love others.*

*For a lot of folks, their prayer life rarely consists of talking to God about grace to grow in those two facets of love. Most people’s prayer life, I am thinking, is mostly related to problems being alleviated or doors opening or increase of favor or influence or many other good things, your health, and all of those are good requests. However, in the two times where Jesus says “anything,” He gives you in the very next sentence what He would that you would make the prayer you talk to Him most about.*

* 1. 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)

*Paragraph D: The ultimate “anything” that we ask the Father for is to enter into that conversation where we ask for more grace to love God and to love people. Paul exhibits this in Philippians 1:9. We know this prayer well. We hear it here at IHOPKC all of the time. He prays that their love would abound. In 1 Thessalonians, he prays that they would increase and abound in love. This is the Spirit’s greatest work in our life, but I have this idea that it is not the subject we talk to God most about.*

*The Lord is saying in John 14, “Ask anything. Hey, let Me point you in the right direction. Ask for power and grace to love Me.” Then in chapter 15 He says, “Ask for anything, but here is what I want you to ask most about: bearing fruit that expresses itself in you loving one another.”*

* 1. 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)

*Paragraph E: The basic premise in Hebrews 4 is that, in our prayer life, we are coming to the throne of grace as born-again believers. As born-again believers, we are established in the grace of God, yet we come to the throne of grace to get a greater measure of grace operating in our lives. He says, “Come boldly,” and the reason he says boldly is because He is talking to human beings who are so aware of their failures, their deficiencies, their shortcomings that they want to come without boldness. So that is the reason He uses the word boldness, because it is common to the human frame to come to God and say, “Oh no! It is me again! Please,” begging.*

*But the Lord says, “No! Come boldly because it is in My heart to give you a multiplication of grace on your heart.” What that means is more Holy Spirit inspiration of your emotions and more Holy Spirit insight into your understanding. That is what grace looks like. He touches our mind with living understanding a little bit more, and He touches our heart. He inspires us with tenderness towards us and towards others. And He says, “Come and ask for more and you will get more of that!”* ***James 4:6*** *is a very familiar verse where James says, “There is a greater grace.” He is talking to believers. He says, “Yes, you were saved by grace, but there is a greater encounter and experience of grace in an ongoing way if you come to God in humility and ask Him for it.”*

*And so, I have taken these verses, and my number one prayer that I want to talk with God most about—which is not always true, but when it connects with me that it is not true, then I try to realign my heart again—I want to talk with Him most about grace, inspired understanding, and inspired emotions to love Him and love others more.*

*And the Lord would say, “If you will talk to Me more about that, I will teach you more. You will find more inspiration, you will find more understanding, you will find more tenderizing, if you will talk to Me more about that.”*

*And so one of my main points tonight is to see you use this glorious prayer, “Whatever you ask the Father in My name I will give you. Hint, hint: you can bear fruit that lasts forever! That is what you want to be talking to My Father more about! Not just about more of this and more of that,” which we do and which is valid to ask the Lord for more increase in ten other areas of our life.*

*However, the spiritual dimension is often the dimension that we do not talk to the Lord mostly about. I wrote a little booklet that I want to encourage you to get, I have it online and you can get it for free. It is a little booklet of maybe thirty or forty pages called “The Fellowship Prayer” where I take the word fellowship as a ten-letter acronym and each letter is a prayer for your emotions to engage God, in essence, for this prayer: to grow in love for God and for others. Like the letter “F” is for the fear of the Lord. “E” is for the Lord to energize us with strength. And so I use the acronym because if I have a target and I am really just praying for strength for my inner man in every one of these ways, then I have a target and some verses which gives me some direction and focus for my prayer life. I have used that acronym for many, many years. And they are all, in essence, strength for your inner man, but it really is in essence bearing fruit that remains and using your prayer life in that direction, not only in other ways.*

* 1. The very beauty that Jesus possesses is the beauty that He imparts to the redeemed (Isa. 61:3).   
     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.

1“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me…to heal the brokenhearted…3To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes,… (Isa. 61:1-3)

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)

*Paragraph F: The very beauty that Jesus possesses is the beauty that He imparts to us (Isa. 61:3). “He gives beauty for ashes.” Peter picked up on this theme of “imparted beauty.” He talks about the hidden person of the heart. He is talking about our character. He is talking about fruit bearing actually. He is talking about bearing fruit that remains. That is Jesus’ term. Peter calls it the hidden person of the heart. Look what he says in I Peter 3:4, “Let the hidden person of the heart”—which means your mind and your emotions. That is what it means kind of to the point—“Let the hidden person of your heart have that incorruptible beauty,” and he highlights two facets of that beauty which is incorruptible. The first term is “gentle,” but many translations use the word “meekness” or “humility.” The next characteristic is a quiet spirit. What he means in context is that a quiet spirit is not anxious or troubled spirit, but a spirit that is confident in God’s leadership.*

*So it is not talking about a timid and quiet personality. It is talking about the storm not being on the inside, roaring, and our spirit is quiet. There are a lot of verses that talk about “in quietness and trust we come before the Lord.” Isaiah 30:15 talks about that. Here is what Peter says, “If you grow in meekness”—and again that is just another way to say love. Meekness and love are identical. Meekness is a facet of love. If you have this trusted relationship, and you believe His promises, and when your heart is troubled you align your heart and mind back with the Word of God and His promises and do what Jesus says, “Let not your heart be troubled, do not let trouble dominate your heart!” Peter says—“If you do this, that inward person of the heart has incorruptible beauty from God’s point of view, and this beauty is very precious to the Lord.” I am using this example because Peter was at the Last Supper and he heard Jesus give this teaching when Jesus talked about “bearing fruit and that you can ask Me anything you want, and you can have fruit that lasts forever, but love one another, embrace that many-faceted diamond of love.” That is rare actually that growing mature in love would be standard conversation in the body of Christ, and it is actually quite rare for someone to grow deep and mature in love. It is the most valuable thing we can do in this life but it is a very, very costly thing for us to do.*

*Now this word, “incorruptible,” is remarkable because our natural beauty as humans fades, but there is a beauty that will last for billions of years and will never, ever fade ever. If you genuinely grow in love for God or for people, that will last forever. It will always be remembered in God’s sight, and, again, this is something that we put our attention on and pray about even while we are waiting for great breakthroughs of power and revival. This is the most important thing before revival, during revival, and after revival: to engage with God so we come boldly to the throne of grace and so we talk with Him more to get grace that will inspire our understanding, inspires our emotions so we grow in love for God and we grow in love for people. And if we do that, Peter says that it is incorruptible. It is eternal. It will never fade, and it is so precious to the Lord. We can grow in this. Though our life context be where people around you may not appreciate or understand you, your life might be hard, you may have financial struggles, health struggles, relational struggles and all kinds of struggles but if you will grow in this the Lord says, “That is very precious to Me that you are growing and I will never forget it! It will be incorruptible beauty!”*

*Now the challenge is to see incorruptible beauty grow in us now as we grow in meekness (which again is love), and we are to have a “a quiet spirit” which means confidence in God’s leadership. Nobody by nature grows in those two things—meekness and confidence in God—which is the essence of a quiet spirit in contrast to feeling a storm of anxious, fearful, and angry emotions along with an offended heart and filled with confusion.*

*We only grow in meekness and a quiet spirit with real intentionality and real signing up over and over and over again to grow in those things and get them into our conversations with the Lord, because just the longing to grow in them is not enough. Again, Jesus put both of these issues of loving Him and loving one another next to the verse where He said, “Ask Me anything and you can have it!” And again, the divine hint is: “That is what I want you to ask Me about.”*

*And so I ask you— obviously do not answer—how much do you talk to God about this subject of growing in love for Him and growing in love for other people and this incorruptible beauty? You might say, “Well, not as much as I need to.” Good, tonight is a night well spent then for you to say, “Okay!” again.*

*I determined this a long time ago, but I still find myself drifting away from it. However, I have asked the Lord as it is one of my Fellowship acronyms, the “O.” I say in that ten letter acronym fellowship that I call the Fellowship Prayer. The “O” I say, “Lord, make me a man of one thing.” Make me a man who is locked into You to grow in love for you and for others. And when this is no longer what I talk with you most, about remind me and I will sign back up.” And it happens all of the time, “I did it again! I got off course again!” Because I am only doing it in the way the Lord wants, so I will talk to Him more about that than other subjects. And there is a plethora of things to say on that subject. Again the Fellowship Prayer will give you a bunch of language and verses to pursue that conversation.*

* 1. 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)

*Paragraph G: The problem with this incorruptible beauty that is in the hidden person of the heart, which is our mind and emotions in essence. It is that we cannot see it; we cannot measure it with our five senses. You cannot take a bottle full of incorruptible beauty and say, “Oh, there was three ounces, and now there are four ounces! Oh good, I am growing in incorruptible beauty.” You can’t see it, and you don’t know how to measure it. We only know that it exists because God says it exists, though with my five senses I cannot get a handful of it. So I said, “Well, I can feel a little more tender than I used to feel. Is that it?” and the Lord says, “A little bit, a little bit, but it is more than that.”*

*However, Paul tells us here in* ***Colossians 3****, “Your life is hidden with Christ in God.” What is remarkable is your inward life of growth is actually hidden from you so you can’t even measure it! You can’t even see the progress, and when we just use our own natural thinking, we think, “Aw, life is hard, nobody cares, and nothing is happening!”*

*The Lord would say, “Nothing could be further than the truth! Not if you are talking to Me about these subjects.”*

*It is hidden from us and it is even hidden from the people around you. Now, some people around you can see your growth in the Lord over the months and years, like, “Hey you are growing in the Lord! That is cool, and it is obvious!” However, nobody can be precise about this.*

*Then it says in Colossians 3:4 that “When Jesus who is our life appears in the sky at the second coming, then it will appear to you: the glory of the beauty of your life.” You will not see it till then because it is hidden from you. And so I determined years ago that I was not going to try to measure it. I was just going to sign back up for it day after day and talk to God about it as much as I can. And trust Him that if I am talking to Him and coming to the throne of grace, then I am getting help. Hebrews 4:16, He says,“You will find grace if you talk to Me about grace. You will get it.”*

1. the 8 beatitudes: Jesus’ clearest definition of love and beauty
   1. The 8 beatitudes are like seeds of flowers in the “garden of our heart,” that God wants to blossom.   
      They are Jesus’ clearest 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…4Blessed are those who mourn…5Blessed are the meek… 6Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness…7Blessed are the merciful… 8Blessed are the pure in heart…9Blessed are the peacemakers…10Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.” (Mt. 5:3-10)

*Let’s look at the eight beatitudes. Again, we are talking about Jesus, and it is unmistakable that loving God and loving one another are the two great commandments; everything is summed up in those two things. It says in Matthew 22:37-40, “Love God,” first commandment, “love one another is like the first one. If you do those two things, your life is successful and valuable if you are growing those things. However, again the word, “love,” it is so easy to say, “Well, love, I think I am growing in love. I do not know if I love that well, probably not. I get irritated a lot, I do not know if I do or do not for sure!”*

*And so, Jesus, the beautiful God, gives us the clearest definition of beauty in the eight beatitudes. The point I am wanting you to grasp is that these eight beatitudes are not just the clearest definition of love and beauty, these eight attitudes are the necessary spiritual foundation to mature in love. A lot of folks say, “I want to love more!”—and then they take a shot at it, but they are not sure—“be less selfish, be more generous, okay.” That it good. However, what Jesus is doing here in Matthew 5 in the eight beatitudes is saying, “These are the eight attitudes that are necessary if you are going to have long, protracted growth in mature love.*

*Focus on these eight, and love will be the fruit. If you focus on love in its abstract, then you are not sure for sure what it looks like exactly, even though we know 1 Corinthians 13 speaks about it with some definition. These are the eight foundational attitudes, and if we will lock into these eight attitudes and grow in them a little bit just over the months and the years, love will mature. This is the necessary foundation for them to grow in love.*

* 1. ***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.

*And so Jesus says, “Blessed are,” the first one, poor in spirit… Blessed are those who mourn…Blessed are the meek…Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness…Blessed are the merciful…Blessed are the pure in heart…Blessed are the peacemakers, and those that are persecuted for righteousness sake and do not quit.” If we grow in those eight attitudes, we have the firm foundation to mature in love. If we do not focus on these eight attitudes, I mean, I still think we can grow in love, but we are a little bit more kind of reaching out there hoping that it is working. However, we are not really sure. These are real anchor points that the beautiful God taught us about what beauty looks like in that diamond, that many-faceted diamond, called love.*

*Well, he says eight times, “blessed,” and this “blessed,” what does that mean? It does not mean that your life will be easy. It does not mean that you are going to be super anointed in terms of your ministry. It does not mean that you are going to have a lot of friends and a lot of money, though you might have a little bit of that. However, that is not what He is talking about. He is talking about having a vibrant heart whatever the season of your spiritual life that you are in.*

*We are so often in a season of delay or a season of surprise we were not expecting or a season that feels like a setback, and Jesus is saying, in effect, “You can have a vibrant heart in all of those seasons.” I don’t mean every minute of every day is just a joy ride, but you can have a vibrant heart and a joy that prevails over the difficulties, even over these problems. Another way of talking about “blessed” is feeling God’s presence in your heart, the conscious presence of God, not every minute all day every day. However, the Lord, in John 14:21-23, said, in essence, “I will manifest Myself to you if you are all in! You will feel My conscious, manifest presence. You will consciously feel My manifest presence on your heart more than not.” Again, not every minute of every day but you will have it as a standard part of your life. That is what He spoke about quite a few times in John 14 and 15.*

*Another thing you will have is the sense of His approval over your life, and I cannot imagine anything more important in all of our lives than waking up in the morning and having the sense that God is smiling over your life choices. Not that you are making a great impact or making huge strides forward, but there is an intentionality that you are seeking to walk in these eight beatitudes when no one else is looking. And that sense is that God is approving and saying “Hey! Yes, yes, you are getting there, and I see that reach of your heart. It is real! It is not just a religious façade; it is real!” And that sense of approval makes life powerful with that sense of divine approval in our lives.*

*Then, having the grace to actually walk out love, to actually love God and love people, to help people. Having grace and understanding how to sustain that, without offense taking over or boredom or depression or rejection or the spirit of lethargy and all of the negative things that touch the human heart.*

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit (mt. 5:3)
   1. 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)

*Roman numeral three, A: Well, let’s look at the first one: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” This is the first of the eight, and I am just going to give you a minute or two or three on each one because I want you to see these many facets, these eight attitudes of the love of God, that are foundational to mature love. Because, if you will lock into these to grow in, you will look back some years down the road, not that it takes years, and you will see that love has grown. Even though you might not be able to measure it exactly right or be able to perfectly measure it. However, you can have confidence that if you are growing in these eight things you are on the right track of having incorruptible beauty that is precious to God in the hidden person of your heart.*

*And that is what Jesus is saying in essence, “Hey, ask My Father for anything that you want, but you can bear fruit forever! That is yours if you want it, but you have to talk to Me about it.” The fruit that lasts forever really comes down in chapter 15 to loving people, and in chapter 14 it was loving God. Those, again, are the two great commandments that you cannot even separate.*

*Well, poverty of spirit: I am going to give a kind of rapid fire on these because they are the sort of things that if they are new to you, you will not be able to catch it in one night. And if it is something important to you, it is something that you will search out for the rest of your life. I still study these eight beatitudes through other teachers and commentaries. I pray and ask God for insight. I want to know what other teachers, men and women who have been anointed to teach, I want to see what insight that they have. I always want more insight on these eight attitudes because my future rests on growing in them. I mean my future of having a successful life before God. And that does not have anything to do with what happens externally in circumstances, because when I meet the Lord, He is going to talk to me about these eight attitudes which is love in essence. If we get locked into that and not get distracted by other stuff, and when we do get distracted by other stuff and we will, we sign back up and realign to these eight things.*

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Being poor in spirit—again, these are such introductory little sentences which are in no way comprehensive—it is the foundational beatitude from which all of the other seven flow from. We never ever outgrow one of these beatitudes, and we never leave one beatitude to pursue another. We are always growing in a beatitude in our pursuit to the ones that we are already wrestling with and talking to God about. Again, we are asking for grace. Grace to inspire our thinking and to inspire our emotions, new understanding and new tenderized feelings because it takes God to love God. It takes new thinking and new feelings, and I cannot make those things happen. Only God can give them to me. He gives them to me much more if I talk to Him about them, and so He is saying, “Hey, I have given you the promises. They are right out there! Come after it! Here I am. Have as much of Me as you want!”*

*Being poor in Spirit is being aware—now I am talking about being poor in spirit as a believer. Because if I was talking to an unbeliever about being poor in spirit as they know they need God for salvation I would add quite a few more things to this description. However—as born-again believers who are trying to be on fire for God, I mean that is our heart—being poor in spirt is that we are aware of our spiritual need. We need to experience more of God’s presence. And being poor in spirit, I need it for my heart. I need it for my family. I need it for my ministry. I need it for my city. I need it for our nation. I see that there is much more that I do not have. There is spiritual bankruptcy unless I am connecting with Him. I do not have the power to bail myself out or to answer these things. And so the poor in spirit means we see the gap between what God has made available to us and what we are walking in now. And He is saying, “I will tenderize your heart and give you living understanding in your mind. I will help you!” but there is the gap between what He has made available and what we experience.*

*You can say, “Lord, You have promised all of these things. How come I don’t feel very inspired? There is a gap between what You have promised and what I walk in.” That which Jesus’ work on the cross freely worked for us is that which the Spirit progressively works in us if we will talk with Him about it. Again, I am speaking to believers right now. We see ourselves as spiritually poor, meaning we do not have the ability in ourselves to make our hearts tenderized and to inspire love in our heart. We cannot grit our teeth and inspire love. We cannot think really hard and get living understanding. It takes divine help. So we understand our spiritual bankruptcy in terms of our human abilities without grace, without talking to Him about it. We need the Spirit’s help to experience what has already been made available to us. We see that we do not have the strength to establish godliness in our own hearts and minds. We cannot inspire it in others. Fruitfulness is not just having it; it is inspiring it in others, and that is part of fruitfulness.*

*I say, “Lord, I want to be able to move people forward in these things, but I cannot. I cannot have just clever speaking, and good stories and illustrations, and a good presentation.” If there is not a spark of the Spirit’s activity when people hear, it does not happen. And I do not just mean preaching, but in one-on-one conversations, when I am talking to my grandchildren, when I am talking to the neighbors, talking to friends, talking in leadership meetings. I want to inspire humility and purity and godliness by the little phrases and words which I say, and I say, “Lord, I cannot do that without Your help!” and He says, “Good, you got it! You see it!”*

*We are not poor in spirit unless what we see moves us to action. It is kind of common for someone to think, “Man, I am poor in spirit. I am a wreck!” But it has not really taken root if you see it but nothing ever happens from it. If it does not actually change what we do and how we carry our time and spend our money and our words, it actually is not poor in spirit yet as you are still not fully convinced that you have no ability to do this without interacting with the Lord.*

* 1. 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…17Because 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…19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten…be zealous and repent.” (Rev. 3:16-19)

*Paragraph B: The root problem of the church at Laodicea was that they were not poor in spirit as believers. And you know the passage well, they thought, verse 17, as Jesus said, “You thought you were spiritually rich,” meaning your spiritual life is really doing well, “you think you are wealthy spiritually,” meaning you are operating in the grace and the power of God and you do not need a supernatural intervention. He said, in effect, “You do not know that you are actually spiritually wretched. Your spiritual condition is wretched. You are not a wretched human before Me. I value you, but in your spiritual condition you have a terminal illness in your spiritual life, and you do not even know it! You are spiritually miserable! The condition of your spiritual life: you are spiritually blind and poor and naked. I do not want you to stay that way, but you will until you come to Me and talk to Me about this, and you will not do this until you know you have a great need!”*

*Well, their church was growing, and they were successful. The numbers were increasing. The people were applauding, but Jesus said, “That is not the grid! That is not the grid! I want you to be zealous about this!” He tells them, “I am only rebuking you because I care about you! And I want you zealous! I do not want you thinking, ‘Oh, that is cool. That is a good word!’ No! I want zeal! I want you to follow through on this!”*

*We must not be content spiritually even if God is blessing our finances, blessing our impact, giving us favor with friends; that is not enough! I want my heart moved, and I want to move hearts! That is what we are really locked into here. I have at the end of this paragraph here the story of Howard Pitman. Some of you do not know this name. Howard Pitman was a man who had a death encounter. He was on the operating table, and he died or had a near death experience, and his spirit went before God. It was in 1979, many, many years ago. The Lord sent him back, rebuking him and telling him that he was like a Laodicean Christian, and it shocked him. And the Lord said the Church across the Western world is struggling in this Laodicean attitude. They do not have spiritual poverty, and they do not see their great need for an intervention from God. They are pretty content to keep on doing what they are doing, and they do not see their spiritual poverty, their state of spiritual poverty in their own resources. They are not reaching out to God and zealously coming to Him because they are content with how things are.*

* 1. ***Theirs is the kingdom***: They will experience more kingdom benefits and activity in a spiritual way.

*Paragraph C: Jesus said this promise, “Theirs is the kingdom,” which means that if they will start with poverty of spirit and see their great need, they will experience more kingdom activity and more kingdom benefits spiritually. They will experience more of the activity of the Spirit in their life if they really come to grips with the fact that what they are doing is not going to deliver them from the spiritual mess that they are in. They have to do it His way, and they have to understand that they are in great need, not sort of. They are in desperate need.*

1. Blessed are those who Mourn (Mt. 5:4)
   1. 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)

*Roman numeral four: The second beatitude, “Blessed are those who mourn.” This is spiritual mourning. He is not talking about physical mourning here. He is talking about spiritual mourning. He is not saying that if you are sick or you have a horrible accident, and you are really mourning over it, then you are blessed. That is not what He is talking about. He is talking about the pain we feel when we see the gap between what God has made available and what we are actually experiencing.*

*This is similar to being poor in spirit, this “blessed are they who mourn.” We mourn by seeing how little we are actually walking in compared to what is available to us. I mean, we look at the Word, and we look at God’s offer to the human race through Christ, and we think, “You know what? I am not okay with where I am at anymore! This is not okay! I might be more on fire than the guy standing next to me, but I am not okay with this, I am in pain over this!” This mourning includes the pain we feel over our failure to follow through in obeying Jesus. This is awareness of our spiritual bankruptcy and awareness of our powerlessness unless we connect with the Lord.*

* 1. 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.

*Paragraph B: How I connect this: being poor in spirit, which is the first beatitude, is how we see ourselves. Spiritual mourning is how we feel about what we see. And when we see differently, we feel differently. The result is that, because of that pain, that desperate pain, we actually change our actions. The pain of spiritual mourning actually makes us spend our time and our money and our conversations differently because the pain of staying where we are is intolerable, “I cannot stay here!”*

*Many people will start on the process, and they will see that they are spiritually bankrupt. They will see that they are poor in spirit, like, “I am a mess without connecting with God,” but they do not actually do anything about it. They just stay there and admit it, “Yes, I admit I am a mess!”*

*The Lord says “And? Now what is next? How do you feel about that?”*

*“Uh, I don’t feel very good about it!”*

*“Well, that is not enough!” When it really touches us to where we feel it—*

*You know it is like the patient who goes to the doctor, and the doctor says, “I really hate to tell you the bad news. You have a terminal disease. You have terminal cancer and it can only be helped if you do this, and you have to do it aggressively right now.”*

*And the guy says, “Oh, that is horrible! That is terrible news!” but he will not do anything that the doctor says. He says, “Well, I am just going to…well, I guess I should stop getting drunk every night, and I probably should get off of this and that, and I probably should….” you know, whatever. Many doctors will tell you that they can tell the diagnosis to the patient, and the patient is awestruck, but they will not actually change their lifestyle. It does not actually affect them emotionally to where they make a change.*

*Well, that is what Jesus is talking about here, the breakthrough. We are desperate for the breakthrough. Now this mourning could be for your spiritual life, and that is what I am talking about right now. Or we are mourning for a breakthrough in our nation. Breakthrough for the Church in our city, a breakthrough of whatever promises of God we have, so there are individual, national, and citywide promises, and we are longing for breakthrough.*

* 1. 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.

10Godly sorrow produces repentance [renewed commitment to obey] leading to salvation [breakthrough]…11What 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)

*Paragraph C: This mourning and this pain is actually God’s gift. Not only is it essential to our spiritual growth, I do not think people move forward consistently until they mourn over this. They say, “I cannot stay here! No! No! I was sad a month ago! No! I cannot stay in this condition, and I have no way out except for wholeheartedness. Wholeheartedness and interacting with Him are the only way out of this, and I have had it up to here! I am not going to wait two more years, two more years, and I am not waiting for “the revival.” I have to get a breakthrough in my heart right now!”*

*Paul talks about this in 2 Corinthians 7. He talked about the pain of godly desperation, and it caused the Corinthians to reorder their lives, the way they spent time and money, the things they did with their time and their strength. Paul said here in chapter 7:10 that he was really grateful. He said “This godly sorrow I saw it in you when I pointed out some of your errors? That godly sorrow produced repentance in you. A renewed commitment to obey God, you got back on track, and it led you to salvation.” Salvation for a believer means a breakthrough, because they are already saved. They are going to go to heaven when they die. That is not what he meant. He said, “It led you to a breakthrough!” Verse 11, he said “What diligence that sorrow produced in you! What indignation!” meaning they had personal anger against their compromise. They had indignation about the way they lived. What fear of God has arisen in your heart! What vehement desire, what zeal that this godly sorrow produced. Pain is a great gift. It is not fun to have it, but it is something that we never ever want to be done with.*

*I mean, I look at my spiritual life, and I am further than where I was ten years ago and twenty years ago and thirty years ago, but this is not good enough. This is not good enough. I need to spend my strength seeking the Lord in wholeheartedness. That does not mean that people all quit their secular jobs and just sit in a prayer room. That is not what I am talking about. I realize that I am speaking to the IHOPKC people here, but I am talking about interacting with God with wholeheartedness in whatever our life assignment is.*

* 1. ***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.

*Paragraph D: Which is it? “Blessed are they that mourn” or what Jesus said in John 15:11, “My joy will be in you and it will become full!” Well, is it mourning or is it joy? And we hold these two truths in tension, these two realities. We have joy in who we are in Christ. We have joy in what we are experiencing I am not experiencing enough, but I am experiencing more than I used to and I am grateful for what I have experienced in God, but I am not content with it. And so though we are grateful, we are continually seeking a greater breakthrough.*

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

*Paragraph E: That is what it is talking about here in Paragraph E. Jesus said, “If you do that, in time you will be comforted,” meaning a breakthrough will come to you progressively, meaning to your mind and heart.*

1. Blessed are the meek (humble) (Mt. 5:5)
   1. 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)

*Roman numeral five: Then He goes to the next beatitude, “Blessed are the meek,” or some translations say, “the humble.” What is meekness? Meekness is not weakness. I have heard it preached like that many times over the years, but meekness actually strength under control. That is what meekness is. When they would train horses in the ancient world, and they would break the horse, and the horse would bend its will to its master, then they would say the horse is meek. The horse did not lose its strength, but it was submissive to the master.*

*The Lord is saying meekness is not timidity, it is not passivity, and it is not weakness. It is having whatever strengths God has given you under His control. That is what meekness is. In one sentence it is using your strengths to be a blessing to others and to do the will of God instead of using your strengths just to build your own profile, reputation, and your own comfort and finances. We use what God has given us, and the Lord says, “Bring it under My control. Use the money I give you, the insight I give you, use it to make other people fruitful. Use it to fulfill My purposes.”*

* 1. 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? 20For you were bought at a price…glorify God… (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

*Have a teachable spirit, even when you are talking to people who have less knowledge and less experience. Have an open, teachable spirit, and use your resources not in a way that just establishes your name and your comfort and your will. Use your strength in a way that is a blessing to others. That is what meekness is.*

*In* ***1 Corinthians 6:19-20*** *which I do not have on the notes here, Paul said, “You are not your own! You are not your own, you have been bought with a price! So glorify God with your body and glorify God with your spirit because they belong to God!” When it dawns on us really that He owns us, He owns our resources, He owns our strengths, He owns our gifts, He owns our reputation, it is His, then when somebody even attacks it, it is actually His, so that is not even my problem right now. It is the Lord’s problem because I have been bought with a price. I am His!*

*Paul said, “Because you are bought with a price, you are not your own anymore. You cannot do with your body what you want to. You cannot even do with your spirit what you want to. Pursue some grandiose life goals and plans that are not in the will of God? You cannot do that! You are bought! You are owned by Someone else!” Now, glorify God in your body, what you do with your body, what you put in your body. What you do with it, glorify God with your spirit meaning the imagination and the plans of your heart and the pursuits that you have that is connected to glorifying God with your spirit. Bring it under control before the Lord.*

* 1. 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.

*Paragraph C: The people who are meek have a sense of indebtedness to God because they believe God bought them and owns them and that He has been very gracious to us. God has been gracious to every one of us in this room spiritually, physically, financially, and relationally. You may think, “Well, not compared to that other guy,” but compared to the human race for six thousand years. I am assuming that everybody in this room has a whole lot more from God than the majority of the human race has had. And we have been treated, all of us, far better than we deserve.*

*You know when we get into kind of a negative, “Oh man, it is not worth it! I cannot take it anymore!” I have had those attitudes over the years, and then it just dawns on me, and the Lord could say it this way, “I am treating you far better than you deserve, so be grateful to Me! Have a sense of gratitude before Me, and bring your strengths and resources under My leadership!” And that is called meekness.*

* 1. ***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.

*Paragraph D: If you do that, you will inherit the earth! That means that you will have influence and impact in the earthly arena. Now, mostly this will be fulfilled in the age to come, but a little bit now as there are times where the meek man or woman has brought their strengths and their body and resources under the Lord’s control, so the Lord opens more doors, and they have more impact now. However, really what Jesus is doing is quoting Psalm 37 where David talked about “the meek will inherit the earth.” That is where that verse originally is. It gives quite an in-depth explanation, and it is talking about ruling with Christ in the millennial kingdom. So you might not have or you might not inherit the earth, meaning a sphere of influence and impact in the earthly realm, and you might not see a big increase in this life, but I assure you in the age to come Jesus said “Those that were faithful in very little will be made rulers over much in the age to come” in Matthew 21:25, and Jesus said, “The guy who was over very little would be over ten cities in the age to come.”*

*And so the Lord says, as it were, “Trust Me, you are going to get the shock of your life when you see what I am going to do for you in the age to come.” You know, it is really interesting and wise to think of our eternal rewards more because we are going to live with a resurrected body a whole lot longer than we lived in our natural body. You live with your natural body seventy or eighty years, maybe more, but we are going to live in our resurrected body for billions of years! And yet we serve our natural body and neglect things that will impact our spiritual status in the age to come. Jesus is saying, in effect, “Really, you want to inherit the earth. Trust Me and what I am saying to you, but you are not going to get it by using force over people. You are going to get it by meekness through using your resource and strength under My control.”*

1. Blessed are those who Hunger and thirst for righteousness (Mt. 5:6)
   1. 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)

*Roman numeral six: The next beatitude is hungering and thirsting for righteousness. He says, “You are blessed if you hunger for righteousness, if you are desperate.” Not just curious, not just open to grow. You are desperate to grow in righteousness. And again, this righteousness is a breakthrough of our heart, but it is also a breakthrough in our city and our nation, and it is righteousness on the outside through impact of the body of Christ contending for justice and righteousness. However, there is also the breakthrough of righteousness in our own lives. And I mention this a bit, but today if you talk about pressing into God, and I have talked about this over the years, I constantly get people appealing to the grace of God so they can just kind of like live the “chill” Christian life, and they say, “No, grace, rest, easy, come on!”*

* 1. 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]…14I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God… (Phil. 3:12-14)

*Paragraph B: Paul was the greatest premier teacher on grace, and here he is at the end of his life in Philippians 3. He is in a prison at the end of his life, and he does not know for how long, but he has another year or two to go or maybe a little bit more, and he says, “I am pressing on to lay hold of the thing that God laid hold of me for!”*

*And the idea is, “I want the prize! I want to walk in the fullness of what God ordained for my life. I am in prison and at the end, and I do not know, but I am not taking my foot off the gas pedal. I am pressing to have the fullness of everything that God has promised me.”*

*Now, I do not know what that looks like in my life, but I want to be at the very end, if I am not here when the Lord comes, if I go to meet Him before that, on my deathbed I want to be asking the Lord for a double anointing, a double portion! I want to ask for more literally to the very last breath, and I want to press in to walk in the fullness of what I have.*

*To a lot of folks, that is kind of weird. It is kind of like, “Well, come on, man! We have to live real life.”*

*My response, “No! This is real life. It actually is real life. It is the wisdom of God, and Jesus affirmed this.”*

*You know I am sure a bunch of you have been on various lengths of fasts, and I have been on a few long fasts, and we really get hungry, but worse than hunger is thirst. And if you have not had water for an extended period of time—I do not mean for a day I mean more than that—a parched thirst is desperate. People will take water over gold if they are parched. And Jesus says, in effect, “If you get that connected to what I want to give you in the breakthrough of righteousness, you are not going to be dissatisfied.”*

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

*Paragraph C: You are going to be filled. You are going to have a progressive breakthrough in your heart.*

1. Blessed are the merciful (Mt. 5:7)
   1. 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)

*Roman numeral seven: Blessed are the merciful. Now we are merciful in a number of different ways. We are merciful with empathy to people that are suffering. We are merciful to people who are failing. We are being kind and generous in their failure. Then, the most difficult of all, we are merciful to people who are mistreating us. We are showing them mercy, and we are blessing our enemies. And if we are merciful, the Lord says, “You are going to obtain more mercy.”*

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

2“For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Mt. 7:2)

36“…be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful. 37“Judge not, and you shall not be judged …38Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down…and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”   
(Lk. 6:36-38)

*Paragraph B: It is reciprocal. As a matter of fact, in Matthew 7:2, He says “Whatever you measure out, that is the measure you are getting.” I believe this so firmly that I want to be merciful to people who do not deserve mercy because I know I can get more mercy from God. If I sow mercy, I will reap mercy. And whether it is that you are merciful by being helpful to people in need—that is a true merciful—or merciful to people who are failing, and particularly with the people who mistreat, then you are setting yourself up to get great mercy from the Lord. I am not saying failing: “Oh, boys will be boys. I do not care if you repent.” No, no, you have to repent, and if you repent, we will stand with you all the way. We will help you get back in step with God again. We will be merciful, and we will help you have a future and not just judge you with your past and your failures.*

1. Blessed are the pure in heart (Mt. 5:8)
   1. 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)

“Blessed are the pure in heart,” and this beatitude we approach with a deep sense of wonder and awe. To see God! Are you kidding?

* 1. ***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.

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

*Paragraph B: That is the ultimate experience: intimacy with God. To see God not necessarily in an open vision in this age. I mean, you might have open visions, a few of them, you never know, and we are approaching that time in history where the Holy Spirit is going to come on all sons and daughters and all flesh will be having dreams and visions. We do not know what we are going to see, but the highest privilege that we have forever is the ability to see God. Our purity of heart does not earn us a vision of God , but it puts us in position for our spiritual capacity to increase. And that fog in our mind, that lethargy, that fog that gets in our mind begins to lift when we have purity of heart.*

*However, some folks pray for revelation, yet they live in compromise. Jesus says here, “Be sure of this, you have to have purity of heart to see God in the greater ways that He wants to show Himself to His people.” In Hebrews 12:14, it says, “Nobody will see the Lord who does not have a sanctified or pure life.”*

1. Blessed are the peacemakers (Mt. 5:9)n
   1. 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)

*Roman numeral nine: “Blessed are the peacemakers.” The energy that we put into reconciliation. I mean, not everybody does it, and as a matter of fact not that many people do it, but for those people who do invest time and energy to reconcile and repair relationships, whether in individuals or in society, if they are a reconciler, they are a peacemaker. They are investing time and energy to bring peace between individuals, between families, between races, between ministries, and in the civic areas, in the marketplace.*

*I have invested a certain amount of my time and strength trying to bring peace between people, and it is labor-some many times. Also, it is not very rewarding actually, because people that are stuck in their own way—I mean you could talk with them for hours, and they budge maybe a foot, and a week later, they go back to the wrong attitude. It is like “Augh!” and the Lord says, “No, stay with it!” There is a time to let it go, but my point is the effort and the cost that people pour into people to help them get reconciled. There are many, many expressions of it.*

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

*Paragraph B: The Lord says, “They are the sons of God!” People will recognize that you are a representative for God. Even unbelievers will say, “Man, you are helping! Why are you doing that? It is taking your time, energy and your money!”*

*“Well, I want them to love each other! I mean, do you know God?”*

*Jesus said, “You will be recognized as representing God by believers and unbelievers alike.” However, that is a very challenging beatitude. This is one of the most intense facets of love to do this.*

1. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness (Mt. 5:10-12)
   1. 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… 12Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven…” (Mt. 5:10-12)

*Roman numeral ten: He says, “Blessed are you that are persecuted. You take a stand for righteousness, and you will not quit. When you run into hostility, you will not quit!” When believers come against you, you will not quit. When unbelievers come against you, you will not quit. When you are standing for the truth, whether speaking the truth to a friend, or whether you are proclaiming the truth socially, the way you are taking a stand for kingdom values and kingdom truths. Jesus lets you know that you are going to be attacked on occasion, physically sometimes, financially you will lose opportunities, verbally you will be slandered. There will be a stigma, but do not quit! He says. “Don’t quit! You will inherit the kingdom! For theirs is the kingdom.”*

* 1. ***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.
  2. 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)

*Paragraph C: A few verses after Jesus taught the 8 beatitudes (5:3-12), He said ,“If you do and teach what I have just taught you, God will call your life choices great!” (5:19). You know, I started teaching this some time ago, and I thought the doing of it was the most challenging until I started teaching it, and the teaching of it has so much kickback! If you go public with some of these ideas, you will find friends and family members will say, “Bah-humbug!” and they will not be so happy. And I thought, “Oh, I thought the hard part was doing it! I think now that the challenging part is standing for it in the public arena.”*

*All of these issues with details in them, and the Lord says, “If you do that, then God will call your life choices great on that day when you stand before Him.” Well, these eight beatitudes are eight foundational attitudes of this multi-faceted diamond called love. Jesus said, as it were, “If you will ask Me, you can bear fruit in this arena called love. It is rare for it to be mature and deep, but it is doable if you make it a priority in your seeking of God and in your conversation with the Lord.”*

*Amen and amen! Let’s stand before the Lord.*

*That was my rapid-fire eight beatitudes. And for those of you for whom this is new to you. I have a 12 or a 15-part series on my website, I do not even remember. I have taught this a number of times over the years. You know, like a full session on each one of them, and I’ve done that a number of times so if you want, you can check that out. Plus there are plenty on the internet, too, teachers and resources. You really want these eight things in your life. You really do. You want to be in pursuit of them.*

*Jesus, here we are. We want to bear fruit that will last forever. We want to possess these things, and we want to impart them to others.*