

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 26 February 2023. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Beatitude Attitudes (Part 2)

Matthew 5:4-5

About 6,000 years ago, an epic battle began in the heavenly realm; and soon, this battle spilled over into our world. It all began when one of God's angels—a beautiful and powerful cherub named Lucifer—went from being perfect and holy to being evil and malignant. As he beheld his Creator, Jehovah God, sitting upon His throne, Lucifer suddenly had a proud thought: he wanted to be like God, and to sit upon His throne. His heart, which had once been holy, humble, and submissive to God, was now lifted up in pride; and he said, ***“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”*** Lucifer corrupted 1/3 of the angels of Heaven with his pride, and convinced them to join him in overthrowing God; but they failed, and were cast down from Heaven.

Not long after this, Lucifer succeeded in corrupting our parents, Adam and Eve, with the same pride that had corrupted his own heart. Speaking through a beautiful serpent, he promised them that if they would eat that fruit that God had forbidden them to eat, they would be like gods. The moment they decided, in their hearts, to kick God off the throne of their lives, and to eat the fruit that God had forbidden them to eat, they, too, became filled with pride. Tragically, you and I have inherited that prideful nature of our father Adam, because we have inherited his sin nature. The Bible says, ***“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”***

Fast-forward 6,000 years from Adam's sin, and where do we find ourselves? We find ourselves at a point, in our society, where people are so hardened against God, that they do not even view pride as an evil thing. Instead, pride is celebrated. One of the first things that comes to mind when we hear the word “pride” is the “LGBTQ” movement, with its annual “pride” month, “pride” parades, and other “pride” events. Far from being ashamed of their sin, many people today are pridefully flaunting their wickedness—just as the people of Judah did. In **Jeremiah 6:15**, God said of the children of Judah, ***“Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.”*** Just as Satan was cast down from Heaven, so Judah was violently cast down when God allowed a cruel foreign enemy to destroy their nation: and you may be sure that one day, *this* nation will meet a similar fate, on account of its pride and arrogance.

Pride is a wicked thing; and it is spiritually deadly. Pride separated our race from God; and to this day, pride keeps people from coming to Christ for salvation. However, **pride also keeps saved people from living for God.** You see, it's easy for us, as believers, to say, “Amen, pastor! Preach it! Preach against those pride parades!”; yet, we often forget that the prideful nature that moves sinners to rejoice in their sin is the same prideful nature that moves *believers* to rejoice in their own *righteousness*, and to try to serve God in their own strength! Pride always comes from the same source—our fallen, sinful nature. Whether you are proud of your sin, or proud of your “righteousness,” you are still proud; and God says that He ***“resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”*** That is why Jesus began His Sermon on the Mount with the words, ***“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*** In order to enter the glorious Kingdom that Christ will establish one day, you must humble yourself before God, become *broken* over your sin, and ask Christ to save you. Likewise, in order to live a ***“blessed”*** life *after* you have become a citizen of God's Kingdom, you must continually humble yourself before God.

In last week's message, we learned about the first, and foundational, beatitude: "***Blessed are the poor in spirit.***" This morning, we will examine the second and third beatitudes; and we will see how these beatitudes are extensions of the first. We will also see how God's people can find the power to exercise these spiritual qualities in their lives. The title of this message is "***The Beatitude Attitudes (Part 2).***"

Read Matthew 5:1-5.

I. Beatitude Attitude #2: Mourning

In His first beatitude, Jesus said, "***Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***" Now, in His second beatitude, Jesus says: "***Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.***" What does Jesus mean when He says, "***Blessed are they that mourn***"? Is He talking about mourning over tragedies that have befallen you? No. Anyone can mourn over bad things that have happened in his life; but mourning over tragedies and trials doesn't make you a citizen of the Kingdom of heaven. What kind of "mourning" is Jesus talking about, then? He is talking about mourning over your *sin*. He is talking about having true sorrow over the fact that you have offended a holy God.

To mourn for your sin does not mean merely to have *regret* for your sin. A person may have "regrets" over the *consequences* of his sinful decisions; but "regrets" are not the same as true remorse for sin. A person may have "regrets" without truly repenting (turning from sin, and surrendering his heart and life to God). To mourn means to have a true abhorrence of your sin, and the resolve to turn from it. True "mourning" is a genuine sorrow for sin, which leads you to *repentance*.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, and 2 Corinthians 2:4-8 / 7:8-10.

Paul's message is clear: there is a vast difference between "***the sorrow of the world***" and "***godly sorrow.***" Judas Iscariot (a man who never truly knew the Lord) had "sorrow" for his horrendous sin of betraying the Lord. He was so sorrowful, that he threw his blood-money down on the floor of the temple, and said, "***I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.***" However, Judas did not have true, godly sorrow. His sorrow did *not* lead him to true repentance. Rather than surrender his heart to Jesus, and resolve to *live* for Him, he instead took his own life. His was the "***sorrow of the world,***" and not "***godly sorrow.***" The members of the church of Corinth, on the other hand, had *true* sorrow for their sin, because they were true believers. *Because* they were true citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, they dealt with the sin problem in their midst. In their self-sufficiency and pride, they had become desensitized to sin, to the point that they allowed one of their members to live in an incestuous relationship with his step-mother. However, after Paul rebuked them, they repented, and removed that man from their church. The good news is that the man who was disciplined felt the sting of guilt for his wrongdoing; and as the result, he mourned over his sin, abandoned that sinful relationship, and was restored to the church body! The Corinthians' repentance and mourning over their sin demonstrated that they were, in fact, true citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Those who wish to take part in the glorious, 1,000-year Kingdom of Jesus Christ here on earth, and to be with God in the beautiful city of New Jerusalem in the eternal ages to follow, must first mourn over their sin. There must be a *brokenness* over your sin—a sorrowful acknowledgement that "I have offended a holy God!" It is only when you become broken over your sin that you are in a spiritual position to turn to God for salvation. God isn't

interested in fake, phony, empty, outward displays of “repentance”: He wants true sorrow over sin, and repentance. In **Joel 2:12-13** the LORD said to the people of Israel, **“Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”**

Those who are **“poor in spirit”** (those who acknowledge their spiritual bankruptcy before God) will also *mourn* over their sin. I would ask you: has there ever been a time in your life when you were truly broken over your sin, and asked Christ to forgive you of all your sins, and to save you? If not, you can do so today! The Bible says, **“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”** (in other words, when the Kingdom is established)!

If you have already repented of your sin and asked Christ to save you, then you belong to God for time and eternity. Jesus has promised never to **“cast out”** those who come to Him. Nothing can revoke your citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven. However, in order to have close daily fellowship with your Saviour, you must go to the Lord every day for cleansing. You must get real with God, and stop trying to blame others for your sin. You must confess and forsake your sin. When you do this, the Lord will immediately cleanse you; and joy will return again.

Read 1 John 1:5-9.

II. Beatitude Attitude #3: Meekness

(Read Matthew 5:5 again.) As we have already seen, there is a direct link between the first two beatitudes. If you are **“poor in spirit,”** then you will also **“mourn”** over your sin. Well, guess what? This third beatitude is *also* directly linked to the first two. If you are **“poor in spirit,”** then you will **“mourn”** over your sin; *and*, you will also be **“meek.”** To be “meek” means to humble yourself before God, so that God may impart His sanctifying power to you. In other words, meekness is “power under control.”

Read James 4:9-10.

It is only when we humble ourselves before God that we are able to stand spiritually. When you humble yourself before God, you are *yielding* yourself to Him, and allowing Him to give you His power to be righteous. Peter *thought* that he could stand firm on the night of Jesus’ arrest. He boldly said, **“Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.”** Little did he know that he was as weak as water. He was standing in self-confidence, instead of in meekness; and when that moment of fear came, he fell horribly. It was only when he humbled himself in the sight of the Lord, and truly began to live a lifestyle of humility, that he found the strength, through the Holy Spirit, to do great things for the Lord.

Christians who are walking in meekness have the power of God upon them. However, this is *not* how the *world* views “meekness.” Worldly people think of “meekness” as a sort of grovelling, wimpy cowardice, or ineptitude; and they despise it. The world sees any hint of a tender conscience before God as a sign of weakness. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Meekness is an acknowledgment that “I need *God’s* strength”; and those who ask God for *His* strength will receive it. When you are armed with *God’s* strength, you are able to

stand fast, even when the world, the devil, and all his demons, are convening against you. The Bible says that “**God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.**” Christian, when you were still lost and separated from God, the first step toward salvation was to *humble* yourself before God, and to admit that your own righteousness was worthless to save you. Likewise, the first step toward victory in your Christian life is to humble yourself before God, and to say, “Lord, I am weak. I have no power in myself to overcome this sin, or to do anything that is profitable to you. I yield myself to *you*, and rest in *you*. I surrender fully to you. Give me your sanctifying power!”

As citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, we have the ability, through Christ, to be meek, so that God can give us His strength. However, we still have the old sin nature; and we must always be on guard against it. Pride is insidious and destructive. The moment pride enters, we cease to be meek; we cease to be “**filled with the Spirit**”; and we cease to have God’s power upon us. God cannot work His righteousness in a Christian who is proud. “**A proud look**” is the first of the seven abominations that God hates.

Read Proverbs 6:16-19.

“Men of the world” are self-confident and proud; and the world applauds them. However, God *hates* their pride; and He *will* cast them down. Christian, don’t expect any less in *your* life. God hates *your* pride just as much as He hates the pride of lost people. The “**pride of life**” is one of the three worldly qualities which Christians are commanded to “**love not.**” A Christian who is filled with pride is defying God; and God *will* rebuke and chasten him. However, a Christian who humbles himself before God is living a *surrendered* life; and his life will be “**blessed.**”

Brethren, you and I *must* humble ourselves continually! By God’s grace, you *must* be meek in spirit: otherwise, you will be controlled by your fleshly lusts. Why? Because the only alternative to meekness is *pride*. If you are not meek in spirit, then you are *proud* in spirit; and pride is the “root” of all other sins. Just name the sin, and pride is at the base of it. Take anger, for example (as well as anger’s close cousins “scorn,” “bitterness,” “resentment,” and “rage”). Tragically, these are sins that control *many* believers. *Many* believers’ lives and homes are being destroyed by anger. What *is* the root cause of anger? Well, first, I will first say what it is *not*. **What is happening outside you** is *not* the cause of your anger: rather, **what is happening inside you** is the cause. The people in your life who have done you wrong are *not* the problem! Anger is a spiritual problem, which *you* have allowed in your heart: and the root of this problem is **pride**.

Read Proverbs 21:24.

Did you catch what Solomon said about “**wrath**”? He called it “**proud wrath.**” Wrath, by its very nature, is proud. Think of the first egotist in history. Lucifer, who was once holy, became filled with pride; and in his pride, he tried to seize God’s throne. Satan lost that war; but in his wounded pride, he “got back” at God by enticing man to sin. His wounded pride led him to *anger*. The same is true of us. Anger is nothing but wounded pride; and when we are proud, we are imitating the Devil himself. Let’s see what God says about Satan’s pride.

Read Job 41:1-34.

What are we reading about here? We are reading a description of an enormous, scaled, fire-breathing, aquatic *dinosaur*. All those legends about dragons from ancient cultures are not the product of people's imaginations. All over the world, there are ancient records and drawings of dinosaurs. Dinosaurs were created on the sixth day of creation; they lived at the same time as man; and in the centuries after the Flood, they gradually died out.

So, what was God's point in reminding Job about this enormous creature called Leviathan? For one thing, God was reminding Job of His own power in creation. If Job couldn't stand before Leviathan, how could he stand before *God*? However, that is not God's only point. God also speaks of Leviathan as a symbol of the Devil. Let's read **verses 33 and 34 again. (Read verses 33 and 34.)** God says that Leviathan is "***king over all the children of pride.***" At this point, God isn't talking about the *animal* Leviathan anymore; He is speaking of Leviathan as a type of Satan! In **Isaiah 27:1**, Satan is referred to as "***leviathan the piercing serpent,***" and as "***the dragon...in the sea.***" In **Revelation 12** Satan is called "***the great dragon...that old serpent...the Devil.***" Satan truly is like a fire-breathing dragon. Why? Because just as the dragons of old destroyed whatever was in their way, so Satan, in his fury, destroys men. But notice the link between anger and pride. This same Satan, who breaths out anger like fire, is also the "***king over all the children of pride.***"

Now, we who are saved are no longer in Satan's kingdom; but we still have the old sinful nature. When we allow pride into our hearts, we are imitating the nature of our old master; and, just as a fire-breathing dragon could wreak great destruction, so *we* can wreak great destruction on those around us, as we allow wounded pride to cause us to breathe out *anger*.

Now, there is another close *auxiliary* to pride, which also causes anger: and that is **guilt**. When there is sin in your life (such as lust, unforgiveness, or refusal to do something that you know God wants you to do)—yet you, in pride, refuse to acknowledge your sin and confess it—the tension of that guilt causes you to be angry toward others. Those around you who are doing *right* are irritating to you, because their obedience to God exposes your own *disobedience* to God; and it makes you angry. However, it's not merely those who are doing *right* who irritate you: those who are doing *wrong* irritate you, as well. Why? Because you are looking for a way to justify your own sin. As you magnify the sins of others in your own mind, your own sin doesn't seem so bad: and in self-righteousness, you lash out at them. Are you getting the picture, Christian? As long as you allow the monster of pride in your life, you will be a slave to anger; and your anger will hurt everyone around you.

Perhaps you are realising that there is anger, or scorn, or bitterness in your heart; and you are beginning to see just how destructive your anger really is. What is the solution? How do you pull up the root of anger from your heart? Well, remember: **What is the root cause of anger?** The root cause of anger is *pride*. Thus, the antidote to anger is *humility*. You must humble yourself before God, and acknowledge your anger for what it is. Stop denying it (or minimising the seriousness of it). Stop saying, "I'm not the one with the problem: it's that other person." Acknowledge that your anger is wicked in God's sight, and cry out to Him for forgiveness and cleansing. Ask Him to help you to become meek and lowly in heart, like His Son Jesus. Don't just ask for help first thing in the morning, as you are beginning your day: ask God for help *throughout the day*. Go to him at the instant when you feel anger beginning to spring up in you, and say, "Lord, I know that the anger I'm feeling is wicked. I humble

myself before you, and ask you for your power to put this sin to death *right now!*” If you must talk with God for several minutes, or for fifteen minutes, or for half an hour, do it; but do not allow sin to have dominion over you. Yield it to His control!

It doesn't matter what the sin is: pride is at the root of it. Take **covetousness**, for example. Pride is the root of this sin. How so? Because when covetousness is in control, “It's all about *me*. It's all about *me* having these possessions. It's all about *my* status, or *my* achievements.” The same is true of **the love of pleasure**. “It's all about *me*. God will just have to take second place to my pleasure today. Reading His Word, or spending time with God in prayer, or being in His House, will have to come at another time, because right now, it's ‘me time.’” Not surprisingly, pride is also behind the sins of **adultery** and **fornication**. How so? Because, once again, “It's all about *my* pleasure. It doesn't matter if someone else gets hurt by my sin; *I* will have my way.” The same is true for the sin of pornography, as well. It doesn't matter that someone's daughter, or sister, or mother, or wife, is being shamefully exploited in those pornographic pictures: “*I* will get my pleasure from looking at their shame. I know that God doesn't like what I'm doing; but how can what I'm doing really hurt Him? After all, He's God! He can handle it.”

Brethren, are you seeing how ugly pride is, and where it leads? There is no limit to the dominion that sin can have in your life when you are not putting on the garment of meekness. Pride is the root of all sin; but meekness (humility) is the root of all holiness. You see, holiness isn't something that you “do”; it is something that you *are*—as long as you are yielded to the Spirit of God. Let's see what Jesus said about holiness in another part of the Sermon on the Mount.

Read Matthew 5:48.

You'll notice that Jesus didn't command us to “do” holiness; He commanded us to “be” holy. Holiness isn't “doing”: it's *being*. “Holy” is *what you are*, as long as the Holy Spirit is controlling your thoughts and actions. When *He* is in control, the flesh is put to death, and righteousness has free course. You can *train* yourself to “do” holy things by your own self-discipline and will-power (such as reading your Bible, going to church, or teaching a Sunday School class). Even a *lost* person can teach himself to *do* “righteous” things, out of pure habit and will-power. However, “holiness” that is done out of self-will is not true holiness, because it is done in the power of your flesh; and your flesh can *never* please God. When you are “doing” holy things in your own strength, you are trying to “act” like Christ; and that's exactly what it is—*an act!* Brethren, we are not to “act” holy: we are to “**be**” holy. The holiness that comes from your life must come from the Holy Spirit of God, who is working in and through you, because you are simply *yielding* yourself to His control.

Read Romans 6:11-13.

What does it mean to “**yield**” yourself to God? What does it *really* mean? It means to stop *striving* to be holy (in your own strength), and simply to rest, by faith, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and to let Him have complete control. To explain this truth on a human level, I can't think of a better illustration than that of **Jean Francois Gravelet** (better known as “Blondin”). Blondin was a Frenchman who did hundreds of tight-rope walks across Niagara Falls between 1859 and 1896. This man was amazing! He didn't merely *walk* across the Falls

on the tightrope; he ran, skipped, and strutted across, did somersaults and backflips across, dangled across, and carried heavy loads across. He sometimes carried a small stove with him, and kitchen utensils; and in the middle of the tightrope, between the American and Canadian side of the Falls, he would sit down, light a fire, cook an omelette, and eat it! However, that's not all that he did: he also *carried people across* the Falls on his back, or pushed them across in a wheelbarrow! Believe it or not, there *were* some brave souls who trusted him enough to let him carry them across the Niagara Falls! However, Blondin always instructed those whom he carried across that they must *mentally* identify themselves with *him*. He told them, "Listen, my friend: you are no longer yourself. *You are Blondin*. Until I clear this place, be a part of *me*, mind, body, and soul. If I sway, sway with me. *Do not* attempt to do any balancing yourself." And guess what? He got them safely across *every time*.

Now, what if those people had tried to walk across the falls by themselves? They would have fallen to their deaths for sure! Well, so it is with salvation, my friends. To be saved, you must stop striving to *earn* your salvation, and simply trust your soul completely to Jesus Christ. Otherwise, you will you *not* make it to the Kingdom of Heaven. However, *living a victorious Christian life* is very much like Blondin's tightrope walk, as well. Christian, if you want to overcome your flesh, and serve the Lord fruitfully, effectively, and joyfully, then you must stop *striving* to be holy, and instead *rest* in Jesus' faithfulness. *He will never fail*; thus, you must rest in *Him!* After years of struggling in his own spiritual life, the missionary **J. Hudson Taylor** finally discovered this truth: "But how to get faith strengthened? Not by **striving** after faith, but by **resting** in the Faithful One." Rest in the power of the only sinless Man who ever lived, the Lord Jesus Christ; and rest in the power of the Holy Spirit! "Step into the wheelbarrow," so to speak, and let Him have complete control of your heart and mind.

Now, before we close this morning, I would like to point out one more thing about meekness: and that is **its reward**. Let's take one last look at **Matthew 5:5**. (**Read Matthew 5:5 again.**)

What is the reward for those who are meek? Jesus said that they will "***inherit the earth.***" This is a promise that Christ will fulfil in the future Kingdom age! Right now, it doesn't appear as though the meek are inheriting the earth. Why does it not appear this way? Because they are *not* inheriting the earth (not *yet*, that is)! Right now, humble people appear to be the losers. The world says, "Nice guys finish last." Christians who live by God's Word, and who abase themselves before God, and who "turn the other cheek," and who love their enemies, and who pour out their lives in service to God and others, are considered "losers." Right now, it seems that the *proud* in spirit are the ones who are inheriting the earth! However, all this will change. One day, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to this earth at the Battle of Armageddon, and destroys the kingdoms of this world, and establishes His glorious 1,000-year Kingdom, the tables will be turned! The "***meek***"—those who, in this present age, were despised by the world—will literally rule and reign with Christ. King David foretold of this future day in **Psalms 37** when he said, "***For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.***"

Conclusion: How's your attitude today? Do you have the Beatitude Attitude of mourning over sin, and meekness? If you are not saved, you have never experienced these things. If you would see the Kingdom of Heaven one day, you *must* see your sin for what it is. You *must* become poor in spirit, and sorrowful over your sin; and you must humble yourself before God, and ask Him to give you His gift of salvation

through Jesus Christ. If you are saved, I would ask: “Is mourning and meekness a consistent spiritual quality in your life? Or is pride in control much of the time?” If you need to humble yourself before God today, and submit yourself to Him completely, please do so during this time of invitation.