

Expository Tracts, No. 2.

WHO ARE BLESSED?

BEING
THOUGHTS ON MATT. V. 1-12.

BY THE RIGHT REV.
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WHO ARE BLESSED?

MATTHEW V. 1–12.

- 1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
- 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
- 3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- 5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
- 6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness • for they shall be filled.
- 7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- 8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
- 9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- 10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
- 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

READER,

The verses before your eyes tell us what kind of people the Lord Jesus Christ calls “blessed.” Are you one of them?

The question is deeply important. Would you know what a true Christian ought to be? Would you know the character at which Christians ought to aim? Would you know the outward conduct and inward habit of mind which become a follower of Jesus?—Then come this day and consider the passage of Scripture before you. Ponder each sentence well, and prove your own heart by it. It is the voice of the Chief Shepherd: it is the Master speaking; it is the word of Him who will judge us at the last day. Those whom Christ blesses then, will be blessed indeed; those whom He pronounces “cursed,” will depart into “everlasting fire.” (Matt. xxv. 41.)

1. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who are “*poor in spirit.*” He means the humble, the lowly-minded, and the self-abased; He means those who are deeply convinced of their own sinfulness in God’s sight.—These are they who are not “wise in their own eyes and holy in their own sight;” they are not “rich and increased with goods;” they do not fancy they “need nothing;” they regard themselves as “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Blessed are all such! Humility is the very first letter in the alphabet of Christianity. Reader, you must begin low, if you would build high. (Isaiah v. 21; Rev. iii. 17.)

2. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who “*mourn*” He means those who sorrow for sin, and grieve daily over their own short-comings. These are they who trouble themselves more about sin than about anything on earth: the remembrance of it is grievous to them; the burden of it is intolerable. Blessed are all such! “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.” One day they shall weep no more. “They shall be comforted.” (Psalm li. 17.)

3. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who are “*meek*.” He means those who are of a patient and contented spirit. They are willing to put up with little honour here below; they can bear injuries without resentment; they are not ready to take offence. Like Lazarus in the parable, they are content to wait for their good things. Blessed are all such! They are never losers in the long run. One day they shall “reign on the earth.” (Rev. v. 10.)

4. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” He means those who desire above all things to be entirely conformed to the mind of God. They long not so much to be rich, or wealthy, or learned, as to be holy. Blessed are all such! They shall have enough one day. They shall “awake up after God’s likeness, and be satisfied.” (Psalm xvii. 15.)

5. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who are “*merciful*.” He means those who are full of compassion towards others. They pity all who are suffering either from sin or sorrow, and are tenderly desirous to make their sufferings less; they are “full of good works” and endeavours to do good. Blessed are all such! Both in this life and in the life to come they shall reap a rich reward.

6. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who are “*pure in heart*” He means those who do not aim merely at outward correctness, but at inward holiness. They are not satisfied with a mere external show of religion; they strive to keep a heart and “conscience void of offence,” and to serve God with the spirit and the inner man. Blessed are all such! The heart is the man. “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) He that is most spiritual-minded will have most communion with God.

7. The Lord Jesus calls those blessed who are “*peacemakers*.” He means those who labour to promote peace and charity on earth, in private and in public, at home and abroad. He means those who strive to make all

men love one another. Blessed are all such! They are doing the work which the Son of God began when He came to earth the first time, and which He will finish when He returns the second time.

8. Lastly, the Lord Jesus calls those blessed who are “*persecuted for righteousness’ sake.*” He means those who are laughed at, mocked, despised, and ill-used, because they endeavour to live as true Christians. Blessed are all such! They drink of the same cup which their Master drank. They are now confessing Him before men, and He will confess them before His Father and the angels at the last day. “Great is their reward.”

And now, reader, look at your own heart. The eight sentences you have heard explained are eight pictures of a true Christian’s character. Eight great testing truths are placed before you. Mark well each one of them, and learn wisdom.

Learn, for one thing, how entirely contrary are the principles of Christ to the principles of the world. It is vain to deny it: they are entirely opposed. The very characters which the Lord Jesus praises, the world despises! The very pride, and thoughtlessness, and high tempers, and worldliness, and selfishness, and formality, and unlovingness, which abound everywhere, the Lord Jesus condemns!

Learn, for another thing, how unhappily different is the teaching of Christ from the practice of many professing Christians. Where shall we find men and women, among those who go to churches and chapels, who are striving to live up to the pattern you have read of today? Alas, there is much reason to fear that many baptized persons are utterly ignorant of what the New Testament contains!

Learn, for another thing, how holy and spiritual-minded all true Christians ought to be. They should never aim at any standard lower than that which Christ sets up. Christianity is eminently a practical religion. Sound doctrine is its root and foundation, but holy living should always be its fruit. Reader, if you would know what holy living is, often think who they are that Jesus calls “blessed.”

Learn, finally, to search your own heart, and find out what is your own religion. Is it really Christian? Does it make you strive after that character which Christ recommends? Oh, reader, if your own heart condemns you, repent this very day! Make haste, and delay not to become a true Christian. Rest not, rest not, till you are one of those whom Christ calls “blessed.” Seek Christ at once, as a humble sinner: ask Him to give you the Holy Spirit, and to create in you a new heart. Then, and then only, you will be **SAFE AT THE LAST DAY.**