

# Matthew 5:1-16 Character in Action: Christ in us

## MATT 5:1-2 INTRODUCTION

The context is Jesus preaching the gospel: Jesus says "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" **Mt 4:17**, cp. **3:2**. He then heals the sick: **Mt 4:23-25**. At another time of healing, Jesus said "the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" **Lk 10:9**. He also proclaimed that "the Kingdom of God is among you" **Lk 17:21**. He was a living example of all that the Kingdom of God will be. He is an embodiment of the principles of the Kingdom. He is the king by which righteousness will come to the world: **Psa 72:1-4**. The Kingdom of God is a place of healing: **Lk 4:17-19,43; 9:11; Rev 22:1-5**. Christ's discourse on the mount was an expression of the character of those who are citizens of this Kingdom: **Phil 3:20**.

**v1 Seeing the multitudes:** Jesus had just healed many of serious incurable illnesses: **Mt 4:23-25**. He would have been physically and mentally drained, desiring rest. **He went up into a mountain:** We are not told which one. There are many mountains in Scripture. Jesus was the greater than Moses at Mt Sinai. Jesus came to confirm a new law, a new covenant. He is greater than Joshua, who stood at Mt Ebal and Mt Gerazim, representing blessings and cursings. In this discourse however there are only blessings. A careful reading of **Psalm 24** reveals so much background to his discourse: "Who shall ascend into the hill of Yahweh?" **24:3**; "clean hands and a pure heart" **24:4**; "he shall receive a blessing from Yahweh" **24:5** etc. **His disciples came unto him:** Jesus deliberately went into the mountain rather than preach to the greatest number of people. He wanted people to follow him who really desired to hear. Only those who humble themselves to climb the mountain are counted as true disciples. They are willing to receive challenging words: **Isa 8:20; Heb 4:12**. They are willing to search diligently: **Prov 25:2; Mt 13:9-17**.

**v2 He opened his mouth:** Christ's words "are spirit and they are life": **Jn 6:63**, cp. **Deut 18:18-19**. Jesus learnt by waking each morning to his Father's words, thus gaining "the tongue of the learned". This gave him the ability to "speak a word in season to him that is weary" **Isa 50:4-7; Ex 21:2-6; Psa 40:6-8**.

## MATT 5:3-12 THE BEATITUDES

**v3 Blessed:** Literally to be happy or joyful. There is a reason for this: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" **Rom 4:6-8**, citing David's forgiveness in **Psa 32:1-2**. The promises to Abraham involve forgiveness of sins: **Acts 3:25-26**. See also **Rev 1:3; 14:14; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14**.

The latin term "beatitude" means a state of blessedness. This is an inward joy, paradoxically gained through trials: **Jas 1:2** cp. **Deut 28:47-48**. Trials remind us what is really important in life: **Rom 8:18-19; 2 Cor 4:17-18; 1 Pet 1:6-7**. Joy was lived in the life of Christ: **Heb 5:7-8; 12:2**. Think about the context of Jesus' words about joy: **Jn 15:7-13; 16:20-24; 17:13**. **Key verses:** **1 Jn 1:4; 2 Jn 1:12; 3 Jn 1:4; Phil 1:4,18,25; 2:8-9,16-18; 3:1; 4:4**. Our hope inspires joy in us: **Mt 13:20,44; 25:21; Heb 12:2; Isa 12:3; 35:2,10; 51:3,11; 55:12; 65:18-19**.

**The poor in spirit:** Literally to crouch like a beggar. One who is absolutely dependent on God, empty handed. Consider that this is the first attribute Jesus draws to our attention to. The opposite of pride. From right attitude springs right actions. This is cited from **Psa 34:18; 51:17; Isa 57:15; 66:1-2**. This is one who is "contrite" and who "trembles at God's Word". They humbly accept its teaching. An example of "contrite" is Mephibosheth, whose disability represents our moral disabilities: **2 Sam 4:4; 9:1-13**.

**Theirs is the kingdom of heaven:** Also in **Mt 5:10**. These statements are like brackets around the Beatitudes. The rest (**5:4-9**) are characteristics of the kingdom age. This phrase is unique to Matthew's gospel and is used to contrast the kingdom of men: "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom": **Dan 2:44**. This kingdom is given to those who lay up treasures in heaven: **Mt 6:20**. It is reserved in heaven, to be revealed: **1 Pet 1:4-5**.

**v4 They that mourn:** Citation from **Isa 66:10**. Believers mourn for Zion, weeping for better things. Paul in Ephesus wept day and night because wolves were about to enter the ecclesia: **Acts 20:31**. **They shall be comforted:** Cited from **Isa 61:1-3**. The context of that Scripture is the year of Jubilee where people would mourn for their sins but be comforted in that they have been forgiven: **Lev 25:9-10; 16:29-34**. Similarly Peter: **Mt 26:75; 1 Pet 2:21-25**; also Paul: **Rom 7:24-25**; and James: **Jas 4:8-10**.

**v5 Meek:** Also cited from **Isa 61:1**, meaning "that temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting" (Vine). It is to be teachable, to be God controlled.

James exhorts us to "receive with meekness the engrafted word" **Jas 1:21**. Meekness is a fruit of the spirit: **Gal 5:23**. It is contrasted with pride in **Prov 9:7-9**. Moses was the meekest of all men: **Num 12:3**. Possession of the land depended on the people's willingness to listen to Moses. See also **Mt 23:12; Lk 14:11; 18:14; Phil 4:12; Jas 4:10**. **Inherit the earth:** Based on **Deut 4:1; Psa 25:8-9,12-13; 37:11; 76:9**.

**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.**

**13** ¶ **Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.**

**14** **Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.**

**15** **Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.**

**16** **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.**



**v6 Hunger, thirst after righteousness:** Jesus equates himself with righteousness in **5:10**, he is called "the righteous" in **1 Jn 2:1**, "the just one" in **Acts 7:52**, he is "the bread of life" and "water of life" in **Jn 4:14; 7:37-38; 6:35,51**. These people seek it as one of life's necessities: **Psa 42:1; 1 Pet 2:2; Heb 5:13-14**. Abraham was "counted righteous" because of his faith: **Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:6; Jas 2:23**. Righteousness will be granted in the fullest sense in the Kingdom: **Psa 72:1-3; Isa 33:5; Gal 5:5; Phil 1:10-11; Rev 19:8; 22:1,14,17**. **v7 Merciful:** Based on 3 Scriptures: David's deliverance from Saul in **Psa 18:25-26**; David receiving mercy from God in **Psa 51:1,11-13** and Joab's refusal to show mercy in **1 Kgs 2:28-34**. Key verse: **Micah 6:8**. **Shall obtain mercy:** Re-emphasised in **Mt 6:12,14-15; 7:1-2**.

**v8 Pure in heart:** Hearts are made pure by faith: **Acts 15:8-9**. Hearts are washed by God's Word, **Eph 5:26-27**, and forgiveness of sins: **Psa 51:9-10**. A pure heart brings forth good fruit: **Lk 6:45**. Key verses: **Psa 24:3-5; 119:9-11,58; Heb 12:12-14; Jas 4:8**. John Carter comments: "The mind is insensibly affected by the stream of thoughts passing through it, and it is desirable to have the stream as pure as possible". It is foolish to fill our minds with evil: **Mt 5:28-30; Phil 4:8**. **They shall see God:** We cannot see God unless our heart, is changed: **Gen 32:30; 1 Jn 3:1-3**. **v9 Peacemakers:** Melchizedek as a type of Christ was King of Peace: **Heb 7:1-2**. The Kingdom is fashioned on this principle: **Isa 9:6; 32:17; Psa 72:7; 85:10**. **Children of God:** Constant reference to God as our Father: **5:16,45,48; 6:1,2,6,8,9,14,15,18,18,26,32; 7:11,21**. His children are those who reflect His likeness: **1 Jn 3:1-2**.

**v10-11 Persecuted:** The 8th beatitude has a specific relevance to his disciples: **Lk 21:12-24; Acts 5:41; 13:50; 14:22; 16:22-23; 1 Pet 2:21; 4:13-14**. **Theirs is the kingdom:** Also **5:3**.

## MATT 5:13-16 CONSISTENT AND SHINING EXAMPLE

**v13 Salt of the earth:** Salt has unique healing qualities. It is also used to enrich flavour. Believers bring the gospel to life by their living example: **Isa 52:7; Psa 119:103; Col 4:5-6; 1 Pet 2:2-3**. **v14 Light of the world.** Jesus Christ: **Jn 1:9; 8:12; 9:4-5; 12:35**. Light guides our walk and produces right conduct: **Psa 119: 104-105,130**. Also **2 Cor 4:6; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 Tim 6:16**. **City on a hill:** Mt Zion: **Psa 48:2; 50:2; Isa 2:2-5; 60:1,19; Zech 8:3; Ezek 43:2-5**. **v15-16 Let your light shine:** Key verses: **Prov 4:18; Mt 25:6-7; Mk 4:21-22; Phil 2:15; 1 Thess 5:5**.

Colour code: Blue (God and Jesus Christ); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words & phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for 2015 New Zealand Youth Conference. Acknowledgments: NZYC15 notes, Matt 5-7 notes by Jim Luke, talks by Carl Parry and Jona Lawson. For a pdf file email [acdangerfield@webshield.net.au](mailto:acdangerfield@webshield.net.au).