

Introduction and The Beatitudes
Matthew 5:1-16

I. The Message of the Sermon

God is righteous (right,¹ holy²), man must represent³ Him and His desires perfectly (5--7) and this righteousness is found only in His King, who will impute it to the people.

The Sermon establishes the righteous character of God, revealed in the Law, so that the representative could imitate His desires (Sonship). Man, however, was evil and did not reflect those desires. The very demonstration of his evil character was that man changed the Law to reflect man's desires and to justify himself. Man is, by definition, void of the holiness of God, and must receive it from God.

A. The Righteous and Holy standard which God requires of His representatives was revealed in the Law, but not experienced under the Law.

The righteousness (representation) of God is not to be lowered from that of the Law and the Prophets which is that of perfection.

5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect (τέλειοι), as your heavenly Father is perfect (τέλειός).

Once one has established the perfect righteousness of God, which only God possesses, one needs to recognize that the possession of it is the minimum requirement for the relationship with God.⁴

¹ The use of the term "right" here is to display the meaning of righteousness in a more tangible way. Very simply the righteousness of God means that God is "right". His character, reasoning, all His attributes are "right". Now the focus of that righteousness is "love". Thus God's rightness is reflected in His love toward His creatures, a one-way love which is part of His character, not requiring a beneficial response from man (i.e., works).

² Holiness at its basis means "set apart". God is totally apart from man. Man is unlike God and the standard of holiness is God's alone, not man's.

³ The representation of God is from the "image" of God in Genesis 1:26. Man is to represent God as His purpose. The Pharisees will claim this, but in the Sermon, Jesus will show that they do not. Deut. 6:6 demonstrated that the words (means of comprehending the Sovereign) were to be on the heart.

⁴ It is impossible that God could coexist with sin. To do so would indicate an approval of sin within the character of God. Since God is perfectly just, He cannot allow sin to coexist with His person and must judge it (one's character is reflected by their justice). While man thinks that God is 'love' (i.e., can allow man to sin and still have a relationship), it is lowering God since coexistence implies a judgment that allows sin to be acceptable. As Paul says in Romans 3,

⁴ May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written, "That Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, And mightest prevail when Thou art judged."⁵ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)⁶ May it never be! For otherwise how will God judge the world?

B. The only One who reflects the righteousness anticipated under the Law, is the King, who is Jesus.

The Beatitudes reflected that the Old Testament saint was fortunate because he knew the righteousness of God from the Law, but did not see it exemplified in Israel. Thus he mourned and thirsted for righteousness. However, that longed for righteousness would now be seen in the King. And in the following days, the believer would be called on to point to the righteous King in the midst of persecution.

A Blessed are those who have been persecuted

B for the sake of righteousness.

C for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

A "Blessed are you when *men* cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely,

B on account of Me.

C Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great,

The parallelism between verses 10 and 11 of chapter 5 indicates clearly that Jesus is righteousness.

It is also absolutely clear that not only is Jesus the revealed, visible, righteousness of God on earth, but He, as the righteous standard, will be the ultimate Judge of that standard.

Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord . . .' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me . . .' (5:22-23)

As man was given the duty to represent God's righteousness on earth, he also was to represent God in the exercise of judgment based on God's standard. Thus, Jesus is the ultimate Judge having represented God fully.

C. Man is evil, not conforming to the Law, and must be given the righteousness of God by means of humble asking.

6:33 "But seek first (ζητεῖτε δὲ πρῶτον) His kingdom and **His** righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

The way this is obtained is by asking God for this righteousness. Note that in 7:10 the King assumes the asker understands that he is 'evil' and that God is perfect ('in heaven'). Note that the only thing that is mentioned within the sermon that one should seek is the righteousness of God.⁵ Note also that the Pharisees' God was a judgmental, condemning God⁶ who sought that men earn their way. One finds in the Sermon, and obviously in the whole Bible, that God is a merciful giving God.

⁵ The one who asks is asking for the perception of God's desires, within this knowledge is the fact of righteousness as given by God. Understanding is always at the core of Matthew's gospel.

⁶ A good example of this is the response of the third man who received one talent and hid it. His assessment of the Master is found in 25:24-25.

- 7:7 "Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek (ζητεῖτε), and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.
- 8 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks (ζητῶν) finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.
- 9 "Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone?
- 10 "Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?
- 11 "If you then, being *evil* (πονηροί), know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father **who is in heaven** give what is good to those who **ask Him!**

Having received the righteousness of God in mercy, the image is to reflect God's attributes (mercy, patience, righteousness) in the treatment of others. This is the Law and the Prophets; whatever one wants done for themselves is to be done for others⁷. Clearly the individual desires mercy (if he is perceptive) and is thus to grant that mercy to others.

It is very important to note at this point that the illustrative stories following the Sermon reflect exactly that.

8² And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

5 And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him . . . ⁸ But the centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ "For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does *it*."

Note the leper bows and requests something that only could come from God. No amount of good works, and not even the greatest of Old Testament prophets could grant cleanliness to one who was defiled. This only came directly by imputation from God through the temple services (washings, sacrifices).

The Centurion recognizes his own unworthiness as compared to the Lord's (righteousness) and then acknowledges Jesus authority from the Father to impart healing to his servant.

- D. Conclusion: Righteousness, revealed in the Law, but not seen in the Old Testament, is now seen in Christ the King and is available for imputation through humble request.**
- II. Introduction to the Sermon: The New Moses instructs the sons⁸ of the kingdom, identified by their longing for God's righteousness during the Period of the Law, that they will see that righteousness in Christ and will teach it to others (5:1-16).**

⁷ This is all too frequently taken in a general sense. However, it must be contextually bound. God is talking about man's desire to have forgiveness from God. If that is the case then he must be willing to forgive others (no self-righteousness).

⁸ "Sons of the kingdom" here means 'representatives of the righteousness that is in the kingdom.' It is not that they themselves are practically righteous, but that the desire that righteousness from God."

Like Moses, Jesus will instruct these disciples that their identity as sons of God is that they know the righteousness of God from the Law, yet do not see it practiced or present in Israel. However, they will see that righteousness in the appearance of Jesus (the King) and this will enable them to enter the coming age and confess what they have seen.

A. The Teacher of the Law (the New Moses) speaks to His disciples regarding the proper representation of God as reflected in the Covenant (5:1-2).

Introduction of setting: The teacher, imitating Moses⁹ at his instruction to speak for God in Exodus and the receiving of the Law on the mountain, begins to impart understanding to the disciples.¹⁰

5:1 And when He saw the multitudes, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

The phrase “went up on the mountain” refers back to Moses entry on the mountain.¹¹ Sitting down refers to the position of a teacher in Judaism.

5:2 And opening His mouth He *began* to teach them, saying

The mouth¹² and the teaching signify, when accompanied by the first verse, that this One is about to speak for God regarding the Law.

B. The representation of a holy God anticipated by the Law, but not seen in the Old Testament, is revealed in the King, then to be represented by the believers during a delay prior to the visible reward of the Kingdom (5:3-16).

The first section includes the beatitudes as well as instructions to the remnant to stand up for the true covenantal word of God (God’s righteousness) against the opposing contrasting forces (human righteousness). The attributes reflect a unity with God’s program. That is, perception of God’s attributes and desires on earth has not been realized, and thus attitudes that reflect that absence are appropriate.

The king is here pictured as the ultimate manifestation of the righteousness of God (note the parallel “for the sake of righteousness” (5:10) and “on account of Me” (5:11). When men stand up for that righteousness they will be persecuted,

⁹ The Greater Moses is prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.

¹⁰ Note that theology is never given without speaking to a problem (an antagonist). In the gospels it is the Pharisees. Thus the doctrine of Christ must always be seen in contrast contextually to the Pharisees.

¹¹ ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος (“went up on the mountain”) occurs in the form of Matt. 5:1 in the LXX only three times, all in reference to Moses ascending the mountain (Ex. 19:3, 24:18, 34:45). The phrase “on the mountain” also refers many times to the ascension of the mountain by Moses. However it should be noted the phrase occurs one other time in Matthew (14:23) and Luke (9:28) to speak of Jesus ascending a mountain to pray.

¹² The “opening His mouth” is possibly a reference to Moses in Exodus 4:12 and 4:15 when Moses protests that he cannot speak, and God appoints Aaron. ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα (“opening the mouth”) occurs in similar form in the Exodus’ verses (LXX). Both words “mouth” and “teach” are there. However it is God who opens Moses’ mouth and God who teaches Moses what to say (which is transferred to Aaron). Thus, if these are the verses referenced, then what God did through Moses to give him the Law, Jesus is now doing with the authority of God.

for the status quo religious systems will reject it as the Pharisees will in the gospels. Nevertheless, the purpose of these representatives of God is that they are lights¹³ in a dark world. Note that they are to do 'works' yet they do not glorify themselves but God (v. 16). The works here are primarily acts¹⁴ that accompany the teaching (confession of) the words of the King as can be seen by the use of "prophets" in 5:12. This would be primarily the works that glorify Christ.

10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when *men* cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.

12 "Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

1. The representative of God who has anticipated the appearance of righteousness in the King is (and will be) fortunate¹⁵ even though he has suffered due to the lack of righteousness, for he will receive the guarantee of the Kingdom in the appearance of the King and eventually will enjoy the visible kingdom (5:3-10).

Jesus preaches from the Old Testament to affirm attributes of those who are actually the sons of God (representatives of Him). These verses will be formed around an 'inclusio' ("... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven") in 5:3 and 5:10. In addition the 3rd person plural is used consistently throughout until verse 11 where it changes to the applicationally 2nd person plural "you".

¹³ "Light" here signifies that they are to reflect the revelation of God. It is not doing "good deeds" here, but items that glorify God. The "light" specifically in the Sermon is primarily teaching what the King says (cf. 5:19, 28:20).

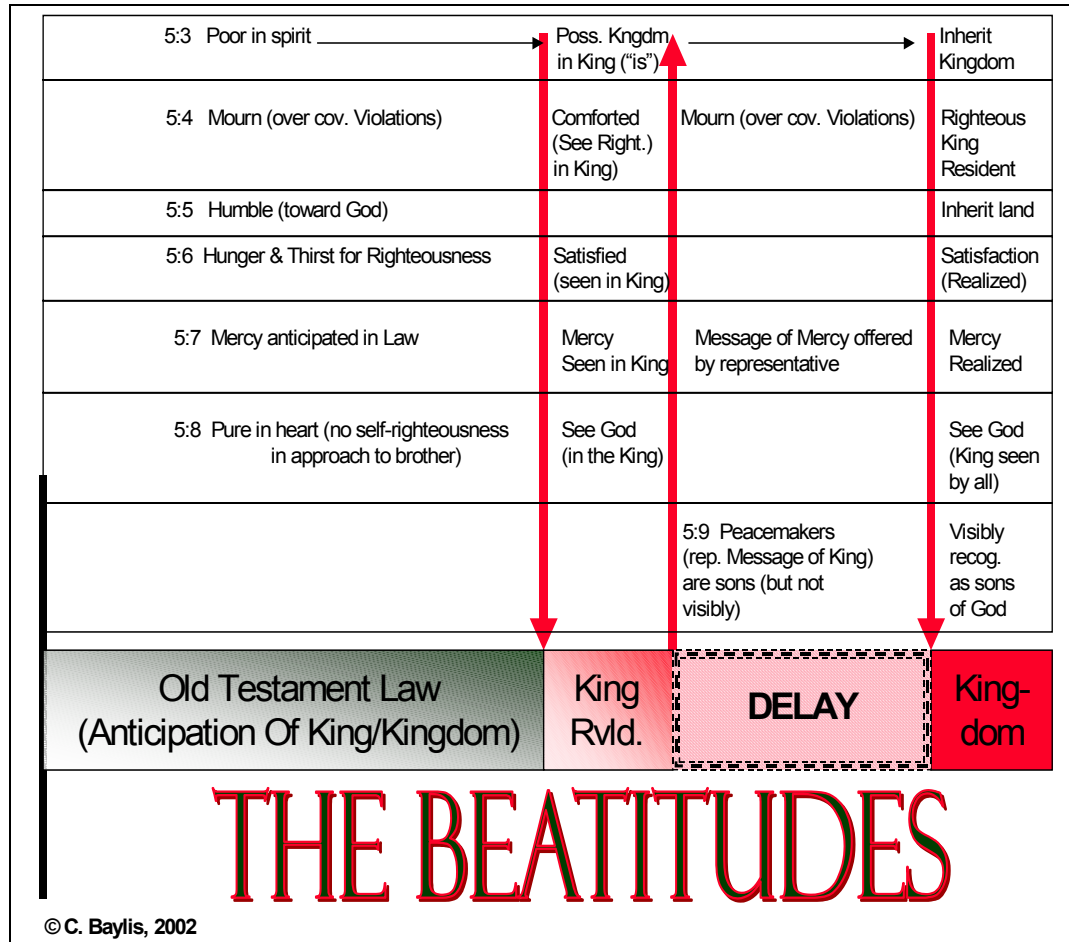
¹⁴ These "works" here are not necessarily what one would think of good works, but are deeds meant to bring glory to God (cf. 26:11). The Pharisees proclaimed "works" but were not good at accomplishing what they said (23:1-5). Thus, one's works would be in conformance to their testimony. This would mean that one who felt that imputed righteousness was the revelation would then 'believe' and would do 'deeds' that indicated that he believed in 'imputed righteousness' (i.e., glorify Christ). The Pharisees would do deeds that indicated their own belief in self-righteousness (i.e., good deeds in public that glorified themselves). Thus, the good works here might not be simply what one considers good deeds, but would be anything that shows and glorifies the God who gives imputed righteousness. Primarily the difference is motivation. While one might help a widow (although the Pharisees negated this command) the motivation is different. The Pharisee would do it to be seen, while the true son would do it in private for God, motivated by the fact that God had provided him the ability to glorify Him through this deed.

¹⁵ The word here for "blessed" is μακαριος which indicates being fortunate. The typical word for "blessed" as in the case of "bless the Lord" is ευλογεω (cf. James 3:9). He uses this word to contrast the Pharisees who determined that they were the fortunate ones and the believers were the outcasts from God. In the larger context they are blessed due to their anticipation, and now appearance of, the fullness of righteousness in Christ. Donald A. Hagner (Word Biblical Commentary, "Matthew 1—13", Volume A, Word Books, Dallas; "5:3, Comment") states, "Rather than happiness in its mundane sense, it refers to the deep inner joy of those who have long awaited the salvation promised by God and who now begin to experience its fulfillment. The μακάριοι are the deeply or supremely happy."

The beatitudes here point out a clarification to the King's followers, that those who are lacking due to a perception of the unrealized promise are not, as the antagonists would teach, spiritually rejected. These who are like that simply have perceived the promise but have not received the attendant circumstances. Thus, the King is assuring them that the promise is still valid (as they have perceived) but delayed in implementation. The King has now appeared, who will be the down payment of the promises, and thus while their circumstances will not change, their confidence based on the validity of the King will.¹⁶

It is very important to notice several things here. First of all, there is the dispensational time frame from Old Testament anticipation of righteousness in the promise to the appearance of God's righteousness, now in a Man, Jesus Christ. He appears to reveal that the righteousness is in Him, then delays the judgment so that men may prepare for the judgment. Ultimately He will return and reward those who have His righteousness (imputed) by life in the Kingdom (of God in Israel on earth).

¹⁶ The underlying theology here of the antagonists is that present physical benefits indicate spirituality and reward. However, Jesus confronts this, saying that if one is perceptive to the Word, then he will see that the physical reward is *not* being implemented presently and there is a delay. Thus, the present benefit for those who have endured thus far is seeing the King as a fulfillment of the promises. They are now guaranteed by God of the fulfillment of the kingdom following a delay. They recognize that now they have a full relationship with the real King.



The second thing to notice is the national emphasis. Jews in Judah in Israel during the first century under the Gentile (Times of the Gentiles) rule where the kingdom seemed far off (although the Pharisees thought they were enjoying it (since they were in the land) to a degree due to their own personal righteousness.

- a. **Those who are unhappy¹⁷ due to the present dire state of the kingdom are actually possessors of the true kingdom even though it seems unobservable (5:3).**

5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The "spirit" here appears not to be used in the sense of Holy Spirit, but in the sense of the person's own spirit.¹⁸ The word

¹⁷ The word "spirit" is used in Matthew most often to refer to beings apart from the human realm (i.e., Holy Spirit, or demonic spirit). It is used only several times of the human spirit, but that seems to be the case here. (But see James use of "Spirit" as Holy Spirit in James 4:5).

¹⁸ The beatitudes here are an indication of the representative of God. Thus it appears that "poor in spirit" is here reflecting God in the same sense that God's Spirit strived with man and He was grieved in Genesis 6 over the sad state of the people in respect to the promise of wrath/escape. Thus the person in

“poor” here is just that. The Pharisees would consider themselves rich and so Jesus uses the contrast here.¹⁹ This may be referring to Isaiah 61:3 where the believers have become “apathetic” in spirit.²⁰

Isa.61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;
2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,
3 To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.

The nature of the statement (Isaiah 61:1-3) is a present tense possession (based on the King²¹) and will be realized in the future.²²

The statement that “theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven” means that it is their possession as opposed to those who claim it wrongly (e.g., the Pharisees), since it cannot be physically identified. The “Kingdom of Heaven” is the reign of God (who is in heaven) over the earth when righteousness (His Character) is present throughout. Note that in Isaiah 61, the whole context of Isaiah 40—66 is the return from exile into the Kingdom on earth, centered at Jerusalem.

the beatitude is “poor in spirit” as God is “poor in spirit” or not pleased over the state of men. The whole scenario of Noah and the Ark is present here in Matthew (cf. Matt. 24:37-39). There is the state of mankind, the announcement of wrath (in the flood) and the announcement of escape (in the ark) and a delay before judgment. The same is present here in Matthew. The announcement of judgment (in the Second Coming of Christ), the announcement of escape (in the atonement and physically at the Second Coming) and the delay in the interim.

In addition the sermon appears to be based on the statement in Deut. 14:1, “You are sons to YHWH Elohim (cf. 5:45). The parallel statement to that is in Genesis 6:1 referencing “the sons of Elohim”.

¹⁹ James uses a similar reasoning as he states, “But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position . . .” (1:9).

²⁰ Also note that Isaiah 61:1 uses the word “poor” (Gr.: πτωχος) as well in referring to “bring good news to the πτωχος, (translated “afflicted”, NASB) to indicate likely a poor in spirit as opposed to poor in finances. Note that the ‘poor’ are not having money given to them, but “the good news.”

²¹ The theology here is that all the promises of the Old Covenant are now resident in the King. It is He alone who qualifies to represent God, and minister to the people. Thus He alone is the possession of the people. If they have Him, then they have the Kingdom (not the actual fulness of the kingdom, but the possession of it, as an inheritance waiting for them to die, cf. 1 Peter 1:1-4).

²² James appears to refer to this verse (using the same words for “poor” and “kingdom”) in James 2:5 “Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”

As God was grieved in the dealings with man in Noah's day, so also will God's image be poor in spirit at the things he sees. Yet he can be assured that the Kingdom is his possession.

- b. Those who mourn over the covenant violations reflect God's mourning and will have their mourning removed at the sight of the King and the assurance of the future kingdom (5:4).**

5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Jesus is referring to Isaiah 61:2²³ where it speaks of Jesus as the one who brings comfort to the outcast (theologically) in His message of mercy.²⁴ Isaiah 66:10 compliments this where those who mourn over Jerusalem are told to be glad. There is another reference to mourning over covenant violations in Ezekiel 9, when those who mourn over the temple violations are marked out and all others are executed in God's judgment.

The tense of the verb (Matt. 5:4) indicates that the comfort will be future. The word "comfort" is not that of a physical rest, as in the kingdom, but in the speaking of a word as encouragement. The speaking of the word is the word of the King and it is guaranteed in His death and resurrection. Thus the comfort (encouragement) that the King is bringing is that of His words of authority and the accompanying works. It is these that will accompany them through the time of delay. It is these that guarantee His Second Coming and the mourners' place in the Kingdom.

The "mourning" reference in Matthew 9:15 is a statement by Jesus that mourning takes place when the King is absent. Thus it was not appropriate for the disciples to mourn while He was there, but they would mourn once more (as in the O.T. absence) after He had left.²⁵

²³ Isaiah 61:1-3: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners; 2 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 To grant those who mourn *in Zion*, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. "

²⁴ In addition Isaiah 61:3 mentions that the mourning will be turned into gladness.

²⁵ James 1:2 reflects this change in dispensation as James urges the believers to joy during these tests. While the Old Testament asked for faith during times of testing, nevertheless there was a hope that the testing would be over in their lifetime (or their children's) and that their faithfulness would be rewarded. Here and in James it is a dispensational joy. In the Old Testament the Kingdom (the rule of God was never accomplished as the believer never saw the fullness of God ruling (David and Solomon came the closest) and thus the O.T. believer was required to mourn at the covenant violations and injustices that were taking place. Now, the believer is assured of seeing the ultimate justice of God in the King, Jesus, and thus can meet the trials with joy since he realizes his own personal guarantee as an identified participant with the revealed King and Kingdom.

- c. **Those who are not prideful with respect to God are those who will inherit the land as opposed to the wicked (prideful before God) who appear to be prospering (blessed) (5:5).**

5:5 Blessed are the humble for they shall inherit the land.

Jesus is referring to Psalm 37:11²⁶ where the Psalmist is exhorting the people to have patience while the wicked prosper for they are promised the inheritance that is the land.²⁷ Here Jesus is exhorting the same thing. The wicked (the Pharisees) are prospering, yet the promise of the land is now a possession of the King.

The exhortation to be humble (gentle) is also found in Matthew 11:29 and 21:5 where Jesus is said to be humble. In 11:29 the exhortation is to learn from Him, that is, to be humble.

- d. **Those who seek to see God's true holiness on earth in themselves, Israel, and in the world, yet are unable due to their own depravity (as well as others) will receive God's righteousness as a gift (5:6).**

5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

The Lord here refers to Isaiah 55:1 where those who are thirsty are exhorted to come to the Lord and eat and drink without cost. This will be repeated in 6:33 and 7:7, 11, where righteousness is given without cost. Isaiah 49:10 also refers to the kingdom eating and being satisfied in a physical sense.

However, in the King, righteousness shall be given.

Isaiah 55:1 "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.

- e. **Those who seek to represent God's mercifulness (in granting righteousness to the depraved) by teaching the same shall be the ones who receive it (5:7).**

5:7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Jesus is likely referring to Hosea 6:6 here since He quotes both in Matt. 9:13 and 12:7, indicating that the reflection of God's lovingkindness (hesed is used in the Hebrew) both toward Him and in a reflection of Him is what is required. Thus mercy, which He has generated toward them, is to be expressed to others.

²⁶ Psalm 37:11 (LXX): "μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν."

²⁷ In fact the whole Psalm deals with this issue, even mentioning several of the same phrases occurring in the Beatitudes, like 'poor'.

The gospel links the reception of mercy to the teaching of mercy. The representative must comprehend His master in order to receive what the master is giving and to give it to others. To teach works righteousness is to demonstrate a lack of understanding (and representation) of God and thus one is not a representative but an opposer. In other words, the unmerciful with regard to the teaching of righteousness show that they do not comprehend God's giving of righteousness.²⁸

However, in the King, righteousness shall be given mercifully.

A note here regarding one's sanctification is appropriate since this beatitude is easily recognized in that area.

- *Sin is not reflecting God's character.*
- *God's character is merciful to those who are His enemies.*
- *If one does not forgive his enemies, then one is not reflecting God's character, and thus is sinning.*
- *Since one has sin and it is unconfessed (he does not acknowledge that withholding mercy is sin since he feels it is justified) then he is unforgiven (in a sanctificational, e.g., fellowship, sense).*

f. Those who seek to represent God's as having purity of motive in actions toward brothers shall recognize God's King (5:8).

5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"

The reference here is to Psalm 24:4-9.

- 4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood, And has not sworn deceitfully.
- 5 He shall receive a blessing from the LORD And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 6 This is the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Thy face-- *even* Jacob. Selah.
- 7 Lift up your heads, O gates, And be lifted up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in!

²⁸ Matt. 18:23-35 demonstrates the totality of this explanation. The Pharisee (the slave) implored his master to delay so that he could repay (Note that the slave could have never paid the amount due). But the master *forgave* the debt. But the fact that the Pharisee did not teach this to others is clearly seen in the non-forgiveness that the slave had for his fellow slave. The money which the slave required of the fellow slave previously belonged to the master when the debt was unforgiven. Since the master forgave him his debt, the slave should have forgiven his fellow slave, since the money previously belonged to the master.

God has forgiven the Pharisee in Jesus Christ, but the Pharisee never teaches it since he has not comprehended it for himself. In short, he cannot perceive of giving mercy (sins forgiven graciously) if he has not perceived his need of mercy (*his* sins forgiven graciously). In Matthew the two go together, and the representative of God is proven as he perceives the heart of God as revealed in the King. The Pharisee's non-perception of forgiveness of God is revealed in his teachings and God judges him in the eschaton and does not show mercy, Thus if one does not give mercy (present age), he shall not be given mercy (future age). James 2:13 confirms this understanding.

- 8 Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift *them* up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in!

This Psalm is regarding the ascension to the holy hill of God to see the King of Glory. Yet only those who have "clean hands and a pure heart" may ascend. This regards the representation of God to one's brother, that is, he has had no guile in his actions.

This is very important throughout the Sermon as Jesus will emphasize the very foundation of pleasing God through the keeping of the Law, and that was the motivation of the heart.

In reference to the Psalm, one will literally see God. This will come to pass in the God's Messiah. Yet those who do not have the clean hands and hearts in motive are the Pharisees and will not recognize the Messiah. Thus the future tense is fulfilled in its fullest as the King demonstrates His obedience to the cross.

g. Those who seek to represent God as bringing a message of peace (to escape the wrath of God) shall represent God's desires (5:9).

- 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."

The reference here is to Isaiah 52:7-10.

- 7 How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up *their* voices, They shout joyfully together; For they will see with their own eyes When the LORD restores Zion.
9 Break forth, shout joyfully together, You waste places of Jerusalem; For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.
10 The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations, That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God.

This is quoted in Romans 10:15²⁹ and is applicable to the bearers of the New Covenant, the fullness of times to Israel. Of course, this specifically refers to Jesus as He confronts Israel with good news, yet they reject Him and the message of peace is carried to the nations by the end of Matthew through apostles.

²⁹ Note that James uses this word in 3:18 (divides it into two words): "And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."

The summation of this beatitude is that there is an evangelistic message to Israel under a curse. They are under wrath, yet Jesus is here to free them and give them peace with God (reconciliation). Thus, the "sons of God" (Deut. 14:1) refers to those who act on behalf of God in this aspect. God is a peacemaker.

This aspect is for particular application to disciples during the delay, that they will be the ones who minister the mercy.

There is some question normally here as to whether the 'peace' would apply between people as opposed to between man and God. The answer is an unqualified 'yes!' However, it is not a unification of man simply based on settling an argument or working out a difference. It is integrally connected to the 'peace' with God. Men are unified together because God has granted them both peace with Him. Since all men are wretched and their quarrels are a result of their wretchedness, only walking in the righteousness of God (which gives peace with God) gives them the desire to reconcile with other men (as God does) based only on the forgiveness and sacrificial humility that comes from God.³⁰

- h. Those who seek to represent God by suffering for the message of the holiness of God (God's holiness, man's depravity and need for imputed righteousness) have as their possession the inheritance of the kingdom (5:10).**

5:10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

On the other end of the 'bookend' (cf. 5:3 for reference to the "kingdom of heaven" and the beginning of the use of 3rd person plural. This is a summary. Those who stand up for the word of God (now the word of the King) will not be accepted by the status quo religious order. Yet they are the actual possessors of the kingdom of God. The persecution does not validate them as sinners (as the Pharisees advocate) but is part of their testimony in an antagonistic world.

- 2. The King (the Greater Prophet than Moses) affirms those present are spiritual representatives of God as they represent the King at the cost of great suffering. (5:11-14).**

In these five verses the addressed changes to the second person plural "you". Thus, having pointed out the general principles of the Old Testament (5:3-10), Jesus applies it to them in light of His appearance as the anointed One of God. They will, like the principles preceding,

³⁰ An example of this is Philippians where Paul calls for unity in the body. However, it is not a general unity ("why can't we all just get along") but a unity that strives to please God through the gospel and thus unifies men together. In Philippians, that unity is toward Paul in the gospel.

suffer for the cause of the King. They will not be recognized by the status-quo religion.

- a. Those who seek to represent the King by suffering for His message of the holiness of God (God's holiness, man's depravity and need for imputed righteousness) will have a great reward which is kept in heaven (5:10-11).**

5:11 "Blessed are you when *men* cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me."

5:12 Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This verse is a parallel to 5:10. It substitutes the "on account of Me" for the "sake of righteousness" and changes the 3rd person plural to 2nd person plural. Thus the persecution is for righteousness is now seen in the defense of the King³¹. The "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" is changed to "your reward is great in heaven." The reward is waiting for them in heaven.³²

- b. Those who follow the King must be teachers³³ of the King's word in spite of persecution or they will become worthless as representatives and the word will not be spread so hearers may benefit (5:13-16).**

- 1) The followers of the King's words are like salt. They are beneficial only as they contain the word. If they do not represent the King, then they are useless, and the King is rejected on their account. (5:13).**

5:13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty *again*? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men."

³¹ James 1:2 refers to a similar rejoicing.

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

Πάσαν χαρὰν ἠγάπησατε, ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις

³² This, on the face of it, might seem somewhat amillennial, that is, that heaven is the ultimate place for the believer, not the physical kingdom. Yet, the reader must be aware of what the alternative is. Jesus is establishing that the reward is a present realization and possession in Him. It is clear that the reward does not reside presently on this earth (as the Pharisee claims). His reward (present possession) resides in heaven where God is, and where it is not visible presently (as the Pharisees, cf. 6:1-6). This possession is awaiting them, far above all principalities and powers (Eph. 1:21, 1 Pet. 3:22), to be given them and to be enjoyed on earth when Christ brings it with Him (cf. Revelation 22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and **My reward** is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.")

³³ Refer to Deut. 6:5ff. where the emphasis is to have the perception in the reader first (through the word) and then to teach it to others (there children).

The King now moves from their status as present tense believers to their public exercise of their inner position. Their perception must become public, particularly in the teaching.

The warning is that they have value as salt, yet if salt loses its value³⁴ needs to be removed from its special use back to the ground, unable to be returned to its true value and benefit. The "trampled under foot by men"³⁵ indicates that of being subjected to men as opposed to God's elevation. It has no value.

2) The followers of the King's words are like light (teachers). They are the revelation of God to a lost world³⁶ of deliverance in the King. (5:14-16).

- 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.³⁷
- 5:15 Nor do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure,³⁸ but on the lampstand; and it gives light to all who are in the house.
- 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works,³⁹ and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

³⁴ The difficulty with the salt illustration is its historical usage. The normal usage of salt during this period of time is thought to be that of a preservative more than that of a taste addition to food (cf. Carson, p. 30, *The Sermon on the Mount, An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5--7*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978.) Carson points out that salt does not lose its own characteristic, that of being salty, but may become polluted by other elements, and must be thrown out as useless. While Toussaint agrees with this historical usage, he points out the usage in Luke 14:34-35 may indicate another benefit, that of soil, etc. The point is here that once salt has lost its value as salt (in its influence regarding preservative, taste, or other) in its influence on the world, it is useless. Note also that salt was used as a seasoning in the grain offering (Leviticus 2:13).

³⁵ This warning of the Sermon on the Mount is so that they would not be influenced by the false prophets (7:13ff.). Like "casting your pearls before swine" (where the swine do not value the pearls and treat them as common mud), the "trampling underfoot by men" indicates that the "salt", here the believer" is now treated as having no value, as common. For while the Sermon explains salvation through the King it is also concerned with their sanctification through the King's words. The Sermon is the basis for entering in (7:13), but is concerned with continuity ("leads to life", 7:14). This is the teaching of 2 Peter regarding "the way of righteousness" (2 Peter 1:5-7, 2:20-22). If they have been salty ("known the way of righteousness") and then have turned from it (as source), then what will bring them back again, since they have valued it and then have left for human wisdom. Matthew repeats this warning to the disciples (not to the Pharisees) in 10:24-39).

³⁶ The "light of the nations" occurs in Isaiah 42:6 where Israel was to carry the word of the King. However, that Word would be taken by the Servant of YHWH (Isaiah 49:6) in lieu of Israel in their apostasy. In fact, the whole of Isaiah 40-66 contains a large use of the figure of speech, light for the Good News of deliverance through the Servant.

³⁷ This may remind the reader of Ezekiel 40:2 where the Millennial City of Jerusalem is envisioned by Ezekiel. It sits on a mountain (hill). Apparently the major purpose of Jerusalem's elevation is so that it might be seen from everywhere. Also, the Psalms of Ascent are sung as the worshipper goes *up* to the city and the Temple.

³⁸ Like the man with one talent (Matt. 25:24ff.).

The light is the revelation of God, which is placed in the human vehicle, the lamp. The light, particularly, is the word of the King, the righteousness of God in the King.⁴⁰

³⁹ This is a contrast to 6:1 where the works (Greek: "the righteousness") of the Pharisees are practiced before men to be noticed by them. Thus their works glorify themselves. The works of the believer are to glorify God in heaven. The works here are clearly done in coordination with the teachings of the King. It is for them that they will be persecuted. It is the teachings that are the light.

⁴⁰ Refer to the story of the virgins in Matt. 25 for a use of lamps and light.