



Beatitudes – Poor in Spirit

Date: Sunday 26th April

Speaker: Jeff Stamps

Key Verses: Matthew 5:3-10

Talk Summary:

1. What are the beatitudes:

Beatitude means – blessed attitude. But (Makarios) doesn't just mean blessed in the normal sense of receiving God's special favour, the closest English word is congratulations.

They were meant to be shocking, surprising and counter cultural. They are the introduction to Jesus sermon on the Mount and they were designed to hook the listeners and draw them in.

So the beatitudes are descriptions of the type of people who are ready to accept the good news of Jesus rule (what Matthew calls the kingdom of heaven).

They are also descriptions of a state of being which we receive as a free gift by faith.

2. So why are we doing them now:

Well, Jesus sermon on the mount acted as a kind of cultural corrective, this list contains a kind of attitude adjustment. In this challenging time our attitude is often the only thing we have control over. The perspective we have to approach situations can radically change how we feel about them and react to them. We want to have a kingdom perspective; we want to think God's way so we can live God's way.

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

The word "poor" here is not just about finance. It is about honour. This beatitude is a kind of contradiction. It says in essence, "How honourable are those who suffer a loss of honour."

Today, our culture is quite different. But we still have a background belief that "blessed are those who present well". We spend a lot of energy trying to hide our struggles from others and trying to fix our problems alone.

It's easy to feel the same way about God, that before we come to him we need to clean ourselves up, fix our own problems. We need to have something to offer him.

This beatitude acts as a reminder that it is precisely when we come to the end of ourselves, when we realise we have nothing to offer God that we can come to him knowing he will not reject us.

Instead of a curse, could it be that this time is a blessing, that the more that is stripped away from us the easier it is to know God and his rule in our life?

Whatever your circumstances, God is always at work for our good and his glory. What is God making available to you in this season?

Group discussion

Worship

- Why not start your time together with a centring prayer exercise, or some musical worship?
 - More ideas at bvc.so/sgworship or bvc.so/sgprayer

Word

1. What do you think a blessed life looks like? How do the beatitudes challenge that?
2. Do you find it easy to ask others for help? Do you find it easy to be honest about your struggle? Why?
3. In the beatitudes we see God's incredible grace. Do you find it easy to believe that you are welcome and loved by God unconditionally? Why/why not?

Witness

- How did you reach out last week and how did it go?
- Jesus welcomed the outcasts, how could you step out this week and bless someone outside of your normal circle of friends?