

# Jesus Describes His True Followers Matthew 5:1-16

by David Servant

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*Jesus describes His true followers as those who are eternally blessed, characterized by humility, mercy, purity of heart, peacemaking, and being persecuted because of living for God.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:3

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Discipleship"

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## Description

David Servant preaches on Jesus' teachings about true blessings, emphasizing that true blessedness comes from being eternally blessed by God through repentance, humility, mercy, purity of heart, and obedience to Jesus. He explains that future blessings await those who mourn, are gentle, seek righteousness, show mercy, have pure hearts, make peace, and endure persecution for God's sake. Jesus describes His true followers as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, called to preserve goodness and shine God's truth in a dark world, ultimately leading others to eternal blessings.

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## Transcript

Many people came to Jesus seeking to be blessed, wanting to see a miracle or receive healing or deliverance. But Jesus didn't come to earth simply to attract large crowds of curiosity seekers or provide temporary blessings. He came to "call sinners to turn from their sins" (Luke 5:32), so people would be eternally blessed. Although it's certainly a blessing to see a miracle or be healed of a sickness, people who are blessed by God only to that degree will still spend eternity in hell when they die. Truly blessed people are those who are eternally blessed.

One day as the curious and blessing seekers were gathering, Jesus took the opportunity to explain what kind of people are eternally blessed of God. In short, they are people who have repented of their sins and have been born again. They are those who have made Jesus their Lord and are destined to spend eternity in God's kingdom. They can be recognized by how they live their lives, and Jesus described them in the first portion of His sermon on the mountainside. These are the people who are eternally blessed. Let's consider how Jesus described them.

First, Jesus said that the person who is eternally blessed of God is one who realizes his spiritual poverty apart from God (see Matthew 5:3). Before anyone can be saved, he must see his need for salvation and the impossibility of saving himself.

Second, Jesus said the person who is eternally blessed of God is one who mourns. What did He mean? Possibly Jesus was referring to the mourning a person experiences during the first stages of his repentance, when he realizes how he has offended God. Jesus taught that unless a person is sorrowful for his sins and repents, he would not get into heaven.

Perhaps Jesus was speaking of the sadness that all true Christians feel when they view the world around them, a world that is in rebellion against God and is so far from His original plan. One day those of us who mourn will be comforted, when God creates a new heaven and earth, a place where everyone will do God's will.

Third, people who are truly and eternally blessed by God are those who are gentle and lowly. One version of the Bible uses the word humble to describe these blessed people. In order to be saved, a person has to humble himself, admitting his helplessness to save himself and depending solely on God's mercy for salvation. True followers of Jesus continue on the path of humility throughout their lives, recognizing their own inadequacy and complete dependence upon God for everything. As Jesus said, one day "the whole earth will belong to them" (Matthew 5:5). Those humble followers of Jesus will one day be the only people who live on the earth, eternally blessed, because God will have condemned everyone who is proud.

Fourth, truly blessed people are those who long for everyone to be obedient to Jesus. True followers of Jesus hate all the disobedience that exists in the world, but they can look forward to the time, according to Jesus' promise, when worldwide righteousness will be a reality. That will happen when Jesus rules the world.

Fifth, truly blessed people are merciful. Born-again people can't help but show mercy to others, because they realize how much mercy God has shown them. They will one day experience the fullness of God's mercy when they enter into God's heavenly kingdom, knowing how unworthy they are of such blessings.

Sixth, truly blessed people have pure hearts. Jesus promised that they would one day see God! All true Christians will experience that indescribable blessing, so Jesus must have been describing another characteristic of all His true followers. They have repented in their hearts of wickedness and evil, and now their hearts' desire is to obey their Lord. People who aren't born again have impure hearts and are motivated by selfishness.

Seventh, people who are truly blessed of God are "peacemakers." Jesus must have been describing another characteristic of all true believers, because He promised that the peacemakers would be called children of God, something that all true believers are. True Christians love people with the love God has deposited within them, and thus they hate discord and strife. They work to maintain harmony in their relationships. People who are full of hatred and are always involved in strife are not really saved. Paul wrote that people whose lifestyles are characterized by hostilities, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, divisions and envy will definitely not inherit the Kingdom of God (see Galatians 5:20-21).

Eighth, the truly blessed person is one who is persecuted because he lives for God. Once again, it's clear Jesus must have been describing another characteristic of all His true followers, because He promised them that the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Anyone who truly believes in Jesus will be persecuted. That doesn't mean he will be put in jail or tortured, but it at least means that he will be hated and talked about by others. Jesus once said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you" (Luke 6:26, NASB). When we are persecuted, Jesus said we should be happy about it, because it indicates we're among the blessed group of people who are going to heaven. Peter wrote, "If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are

blessed , because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you" (1 Peter 4:14, NASB, emphasis added).

Finally, Jesus described His true followers as being the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." In Jesus' time, salt was used primarily as a preservative---to keep foods from going rotten. If it weren't for the followers of Jesus, the world would surely become completely rotten and everything about it would be evil. However, our job is not only to keep the world from going completely rotten, but to work to improve the world by letting our lights shine. We should bring the light of God's truth to people who are living in the lies of darkness so that they can join us and be eternally blessed as well!

Q. Did you notice that most, if not all, of the blessings Jesus promised in today's list are future blessings? And that those who will enjoy those future blessings might suffer some in this life? What does that tell you about God's perspective of our present lives?

A. It tells us that this life is not as important as our future lives. Our present lives are temporary and will end someday, but our future lives will be eternal. Therefore, it is very wise to make temporary sacrifices in this life to enjoy eternal blessings in the next life. A well-known missionary once wrote, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Q. As you read through Jesus' description of a truly blessed person, did you think about your own life? Was Jesus describing you?

Application: Although people who are not saved might think we're foolish for following Christ, and even though we might suffer temporarily because of it, we know we're truly blessed by God, because we will be citizens of God's kingdom forever.

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