

Blessed Are Those

by Michael Koulianos

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the importance of humility, mourning, and meekness in the Christian walk, highlighting how these attitudes lead to a deeper relationship with God and the blessings of His kingdom.

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Scripture: Matthew 5:3

Topics: "Blessing", "Beatitudes", "Humility"

Description

Michael Koulianos emphasizes the significance of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5, illustrating that true discipleship requires a heart that seeks Jesus above all else, even when it demands personal sacrifice. He highlights the importance of being 'poor in spirit,' 'mourning,' and 'meek,' as these qualities align us with the heart of God and open us to His kingdom. Koulianos warns against the dangers of self-justification and presumption, urging believers to embrace correction and humility as essential to spiritual growth. He reassures that those who mourn and are meek will find comfort and inherit the earth, reminding us that our ultimate goal is to reflect Christ's character. The sermon calls for a deeper, more intimate relationship with Jesus, where we come to Him daily, regardless of the challenges we face.

Transcript

Would you take your Bible to Matthew 5, we're going to look at verse 1, and I'll just begin reading. And seeing the multitudes, this is after he healed a great multitude, by the way, in Matthew 4. Therefore, healing in the power of God isn't necessarily enough to protect the heart and fill the heart. The display of power is needed, but it does not necessarily guarantee, in fact, it does not guarantee a life well-lived with Jesus.

And seeing the multitudes, he, that's Jesus, went up on a mountain. And when he was seated, his disciples came to him. Matthew here is pointing to Jesus as the King and comparing him, that's a weak word, he's using the mountaintop language to relate him to Moses delivering the law on Sinai.

And Matthew here is introducing Jesus as the divine lawgiver, the one better than Moses, the creator of Moses. And so the scriptures here are instituting the highest law, the law of the kingdom, the law of King Jesus. And we call these the Beatitudes.

Notice that disciples always come to Jesus. They are a bit different than the rest of the crowd. And we see this distinction between those that he healed and those that he set free in Matthew 4, verses 23 through

25, the demoniacs and the sick, we see a difference now.

The difference is that the disciples don't just remain in the crowd, they come to Jesus even if he scales a mountain. They come to him on his terms. I think this is something that we forget about in our Christian experience.

I don't know how it got here, but we're thinking that life in the Lord is just so easy. I think, as John Bevere mentioned, it's part of the reason that 40 million have left the faith. It's not a true introduction.

How can you count the cost if you're not presenting the gospel? So here the disciples come to Jesus, verse 2, then he opened his mouth and taught them. I love that. His voice is tied up in his person.

You have to come to him to hear him. The actual person. You've heard me say this many times.

Many times the church is looking for direction while the Lord is looking for affection. And the nature of the Lord, the tone of his voice, we know that, the way he calls to us as the gentle shepherd, is strategically intended to bring us close. That's why he's the whispering shepherd.

That is masterful lordship. Because he understands that he is not a mere Lord. He is the bridegroom as well, who draws us close.

And to draw someone close, he just dials down the volume. So here we see that his words flow from him. That sounds simple, but it's vital.

If you're wanting to hear from the Lord, come to the Lord. If you want to hear from him daily, come to the Lord daily. And that coming is meant to inconvenience us.

If Jesus is on the meadow, we go. If he's sitting down and it's more convenient, we go. But if he's climbing the mountain, we go because he's alive.

We don't have a plan B. And you've heard me mention this in the past, but have you ever wondered why Paul says that the dead in Christ will precede those who are alive when the Lord returns? It's because they died in faith. The Lord is honoring them. There's something holy about facing that moment that none of us have ever faced before in faith.

That crossing over when our eyes are about to close. Hopefully our family is standing around. That is worthy of great honor.

And the Lord honors his children who cross over in faith. And one of the ways he chooses to honor them is by the fact that they precede those who are alive. Imagine that moment for a second.

And imagine that moment. You've never been there before. What it's like to breathe your last.

For some people, it's a very confusing time. They never thought maybe they'd get sick or suffer with disease. For some, couldn't even justify it in their theology, yet they trust it.

They trust it in the Lord's mystery. That's worthy of honor. So we follow the Lord, whether it's easy or convenient.

Amen? Verse 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The poor in spirit are not know-it-alls. The poor in spirit reject the opportunity to judge.

It's what they do. They are more aware of their own weakness than others. And the poor in spirit don't feel like they've arrived.

When God uses the poor in spirit, they are as shocked as the rest. They... With every year that passes by, they become more blown away that God said, I'd like to use you. When we start off, we have a long list as to why God made the right choice on us.

And in His patience, He bears with us. But the longer you walk with the Lord, you realize He did it for one reason and one reason alone. He is gracious and loving.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit. Both in the age to come, and now. When we talk about the kingdom, it functions in three phases.

Phases is a weak term, but it was, is, and is to come. The Lord has no beginning. He was.

He is currently ruling and reigning. He is, and He is to come. So is the kingdom of God, and that belongs to the poor in spirit.

That means while we're here, we can experience Him. It means that for those who are poor in spirit, their past is washed away, and He is the Lord of their past as well. Amen.

And for those who are poor in spirit, they can experience the presence of the King for eternity. Being poor in spirit is holy. I remember Bill used to say, if I don't meet Him when I read, it just equips me to argue.

It equips me to be right. When you're no longer poor in spirit, you begin to judge and presume what somebody else's heart is burning for. It's really dangerous.

David called it the great sin of presumption. This is judgment in the highest way. In the most dangerous way.

To presume, to know what is beating in the heart. I want to get to something, hopefully in a little bit, regarding how we know whether the person to our right and left is really walking with God. Today, we would gauge it on the depth of the revelation.

Or the next catchy thing they may have said or preached. But John, and I'm going to get to this in a bit, John the Beloved is writing the church so that they'll know who the person is to their right and to their left. Because the nature of God is, according to Jesus, that wheat and tares, they won't be revealed until the end of the age.

As far as, I shouldn't say revealed, they won't be dealt with in totality until the end of the age. The thing about wheat and tares is that they look the same. One is useful, one becomes useless.

Does that make sense? Being poor in spirit is vital. Being soft, being hungry, coming to the Lord. I honestly feel like I know less than I've ever known.

My heart is full, but I am still learning the Lord's ways. And I'd hate to assume that I've arrived. I think that'd be a dangerous perspective.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. I want to speak to everyone here who has experienced or is experiencing pain. That's legal.

And you bring that pain to the table. We don't just mourn for others. It's okay to bring pain to the Lord's table.

When you bring the pain, I wrote about this in my book on the Holy Spirit, you sign up to be comforted. Blessed are those who mourn. If you don't have anything to mourn over, just start mourning over unreached people groups.

Like, if everything's great right now, just keep walking with Jesus. He'll have something to mourn for. Give it a month.

But that's part of the divine mystery. It's part of what sends perplexity through the hearts of the unbelievers. How do they have joy in the midst of difficulty? Amen? So mourning is okay.

This was actually the example I used in my book. When you're mourning, let's say you'd be on the hospital bed. That'd be like mourning.

And when you mourn in a holy way, and there's a difference. When you mourn in a holy way, in other words, you don't find your identity in your pain. You don't determine to stay in your pain.

You determine to stay in the pain as long as the Lord wants you to be in pain. Right? Yeah, and He does want us to experience pain. Because you can't know the men of sorrows outside of sorrow.

When you do that properly, in other words, you surrender to the work of the Lord, there you are on the hospital bed, the divine doctor comes, the Holy Spirit, and begins to comfort you and touch you in places that only He can. Blessed are those who mourn. They shall be comforted.

Don't keep your mourning to yourself. Give it to the Lord and to those you trust. I said give it to the Lord and those you trust.

Amen. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. That's a good promise.

The word meekness means soft and supple, tender and pliable. When we do not give our hearts to the Lord daily, we lose our tenderness. And we're given over to our own ways and perspectives.

We start to believe that we're the Lord, without saying it. So we come up with the terms of our service, you know. The terms of how we'll serve the Lord.

And we think that we'll tell the Lord what and how long we'll do something. As though we can barter with the king of the ages. I'll never forget being actually in Nashville and at a conference there.

Heidi was there a couple years back. And I said out loud because I had been on a flight connecting from Redding to... Well, Redding only connects like in two spots, so it couldn't have been Redding. This was Denver.

I think I was flying from L.A. to Denver. And the plane wouldn't land because of weather. And we circled for like two hours over the airport.

And finally, you know I was getting a little nervous because I'm looking down out the window and I'm seeing lightning in a cloud. And I know the airport's under it. And I'm like, gosh, we're going through that.

So Jess would have just grabbed the parachute and ejected. She hates that stuff. So finally the pilot or the co-pilot goes, ladies and gentlemen, we are running low on fuel.

And we're going to try one more time to land the plane. This is like our last shot. So that dude came out into the hallway and I go, hey, come here.

You go through that cloud. Because if you don't, we know we're toast. That's just common sense.

I'm like, wait, is there even a plan B? We're running low on fuel. Go through the cloud. Let's go.

Land the plane. So they decide not to and they're like, we have enough fuel to get to Colorado Springs. So they reroute midair.

And no, no, no, sorry. Yeah, they did. That's what they did.

They reroute midair, take us to Colorado Springs. And the airport was like closed or something. So we sit there for another two hours.

So I called them over again. I said, I want off the plane. Get me off the plane.

I want to walk to the terminal and I will get an Uber to Denver. Or I'll sleep anywhere. But I'm not, I need to get back.

And I don't want to go through that storm. We just went through it to land. I don't want to take off in it.

They're like, no, sorry, the plane is closed. You can't get off. Sure enough, they don't let us off the plane.

Refuel and decide to fly us back to Denver. It was a nightmare. Anybody love turbulence here? All right.

It was the worst you could ever imagine. So finally, I get back to Denver, sleep at the airport, tired, freaked out, exhausted, get to Nashville and, or get to fly here, drive to Nashville. And Heidi's there and I'm preaching.

And I said in my sermon, I am pretty much done traveling. I just had the worst experience. And everybody was laughing.

They loved it. You know, they thought it was funny. And then Heidi came to me in the back and she goes, um, can I talk to you? I go, oh no.

Oh no. We all want fathers and mothers until they correct us. It's really true.

And that's where the test is. The test isn't in, hey, you can do it. Everybody wants to hear that.

Wow, you were anointed. But the test is, hey, you dropped the ball there and you need to repent. Heidi looks at me in the eye.

She goes, I didn't know dead people made requests or demands to the Lord. And I go, I don't know what you're talking about. And then she said, I thought he's the Lord.

And I didn't know you get to tell him where you'll go and when you'll fly and when you'll not. I almost hit my knees and did my cross. I was so convicted.

And she goes, but don't worry, I've done it too. But don't ever do that again. She said it in love, but I needed it.

She was under the glory of God. And you know, how many of you would like to be corrected by Heidi when she's gone? It wasn't the most pleasant going down, but I needed it. Meekness receives that.

And the only reason we would not receive it is because we lose sight of the goal. Does that make sense? If the goal is to build a career, oh, that can be taken. Yeah.

If the goal is to build a big ministry, oh, that can be taken too. And if the goal is to build a huge ministry or a huge following, then correction can feel like hatred. But if the goal is for Jesus to marry like kind, then you welcome what most of the church rebukes.

We lose sight of the goal almost daily, I think, in our natural mind. We don't understand what God is up to. Does that make sense? God's not even after increasing your friend circle.

I mean, if he does, great. But my point is, the ultimate goal is not that. I can't tell you how many times I've traveled in a... I don't even know what they're called.

Steph would probably know better. Like music managers or agents. I don't know what they are.

Sometimes they're nice. Sometimes they smell like Judas, to be honest with you. They hate lavish worship, but they sure love to monetize it.

And they'll say things like this to me. Hey, so what are you actually doing? What's the plan for that worship team? What's the next step? Who's getting your stuff all together? What's the next step? There isn't a next step. Because that's not the goal.

Does this make sense? It's not the goal. I don't know how it became the goal. And when you... When true north is off, you make really dumb decisions.

That's why the scripture says, show me your ways, that I might, or teach me your ways, that I might know thee. That knowing isn't here, it's here. It's deep in the soul.

So there's a marriage at stake. There's a transforming going on. It's that Pauline prayer, that I might know him.

That powerful hymn. And the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings. We usually stop there.

Being conformed into his death, that's the third phase. And the fourth is, if by any means I may attain the resurrection of the dead. Sometimes we have to take our eyes off the now.

And remember, what the Lord is really doing. What's he after? What's the end goal? And who does that goal even look like? You don't remember the stencils you could use, you'd color in the little cut out papers. Jesus is that stencil.

That's the goal. That's the goal. And the father is committed to rewarding, listen to my words carefully, his worthy son.

He's committed to rewarding his worthy son with a bride that is like his son. Self justification is the opposite of meekness. I'll never forget having a vision of the Lord a few weeks ago.

I'll never forget it. There I saw the Lord, with his back turned, his head down, white robe, before the Sanhedrin. And I heard a voice, it was a dream actually, like a night vision, and I heard a voice say, Jesus did not defend himself because he knew a greater judge was in the room.

That's meekness. Pliability, the receiving of God's correction. The scripture says, God chastens those who he loves.

We need it. Oh, God forbid a Christianity that runs from it. Aren't friendships tested when someone says you're off there? I was telling Steph yesterday, I'm not sure I know how to pastor.

In fact, I don't know how to pastor outside having the liberty to bring correction when there's sin. Now I'll encourage you all to fly and soar. Nothing makes me happier than to see our teams ministering to the Lord and you guys out on the streets and you flourishing in your gifts.

But I guess my question is, do you want a pastor who turns his eye to what will destroy you? Down deep in your heart, is that really what you're after when you say the word pastor? Because the word mean, the Greek word is pimenos, which means shepherd. And the scriptures teach us that a shepherd will give an account for how he's shepherded souls. This is a big deal.

Now personally, I believe in God. Hopefully that's refreshing for you. I believe in the existence of God.

And I believe this is the word of God. I actually believe that. I believe every verse.

Some challenge me, but I believe the ones that challenge me. I don't understand them all. I'm trying.

If you think you do, you need to hear what I'm saying about meekness. I believe that I will give an account. I believe it wholeheartedly and it freaks me out.

If it doesn't freak us out, I'm not sure we've prayed through the atmosphere of the throne room. What it's not is a counselor's office. Though I believe in counseling.

Don't take that the wrong way. It's not a coffee shop. It's flooring is a sea of glass mingled with fire.

When you walk in, you will know you're there. And the one who dwells in unapproachable light is going to ask for an audit. An audit of every motive.

And do you want to know one of the great plagues that is infecting the body of Christ right now? It's this one. That the ends justify the means. It doesn't matter what I do because I'm leading a lot of people to Jesus.

Oh, you've just joined the company of Saul, Balaam, and others, and Judas who thought the same thing. You think God needs your compromise to get people saved? Do you think the power of the Holy Spirit will flow through you more powerfully because of compromise? And don't make no mistake about it. You can compromise under a Christian banner.

But God is not blind. God is not deaf. What did the king say of Elijah's ministry? This guy's in my bedroom.

He hears my conversations when he's not even there. What he didn't know was the Holy Spirit listening. This is serious to me.

It's very serious to me. The fact that I'm sitting here demands a greater judgment of my life. And I'm not... I can't say I'm excited about that.

That freaks me out. That freaks me out. I can only cast my life upon his mercy.

You say, oh, you're fine, you're born again. This is for those who are born again. This is Christian language.

We will all give an account for everything done in the body, Paul said. How many of you think Paul was born again? When he says we, that means us. The church.

The meek... Ooh, listen. When the meek are in the Spirit, they welcome, they welcome what makes us uncomfortable. I told someone earlier, a few weeks ago, honor is meant to inconvenience us.

And then I told them, loyalty is tested in inconvenience. Well, what if it affects me and I suffer if I'm loyal? You're supposed to prefer somebody else as being greater and above you. That's the point.

And then you throw that into the hands of God and then the great rewarder who never misses rewards you with riches from heaven. Meekness. Now, what do the meek receive? Look down at your Bible.

Give me 10 more minutes. I said I wouldn't do that, forgive me, Lord. What do the meek inherit? Say it loud.

What do the meek inherit? One more time, what do the meek inherit? That's not bad. The hard-hearted who have to be right, do you know what they inherit? Being right. And that usually you forget about being right in like a half a day.

Remember Jesus said, don't do these things for the applause of man. For those that do have their reward. What's their reward? Their reward.

By the time they get home, they forgot the religious even applauded them. But here the Lord promised, put that back up on the screen please, thanks. Here the Lord promises the earth to the meek.

He promises that the meek now and in the age to come, now they serve the Lord in the earth, bring His kingdom to the earth. The Lord will assign the earth in the age to come to the meek. You'll be glad that you were soft and supple in the age to come.

See much of what we fight for here means absolutely nothing. It means nothing. I think part of the challenges of pastoring is a part of the challenge of pastoring is a when you travel, you just kind of roll in and roll out.

It's not that that's bad. God moved beautifully when I was primarily traveling. But when we started gathering here with the school and all that, I remember asking Danny Silk and then the church started.

I said, why is this harder? And he goes, well, how many people do you have in the school? And I said, I don't know, it was a couple hundred at the time. And I said, he goes, great. Now you have 200 times more the opportunity to have an issue every day.

And I go, oh gosh, that math makes sense. And when we started the church and the school, Paul Teske told me, now you're sure you want to do this? I go, yeah. It's gonna be great.

You get to teach the word. He goes, yeah, that's a small part of it. He pastored for 40 years.

He's like, you sure you want to do it? I'm like, yeah. He goes, I'd count the cost. That's good advice.

That's good advice. But when the enemy comes at any of you in a certain way, and fear is always involved there. Bill used to say, you either react out of love or fear.

It's one of the two. What do you go back to? Listen carefully. Is the wellspring of your earliest days.

Now, they know I love them. I love all of you. The worship team knows I love them.

The media team knows I love them. Yohan is a glorified yodeler. I think he's wonderful.

I think he's beautiful. Our serve teams, whatever. They're wonderful.

Carla and the staff, wonderful. Our intercessors before, they're back there for an hour praying for this meeting. Every service, not just in the morning.

They're wonderful. But they know. They know.

If they all disappeared tomorrow, they know I could sit right there on that step and close my eyes and minister to the Lord. And he'd come. We're all replaceable, me included.

That's what meekness sounds like. Meekness doesn't fight for position or right even within their own assignment. Meekness sounds like David when he leaves the city and Absalom's in his house and David goes, I'm not going to fight for what God gave me.

You all need that in your callings because the one who launched you cannot be taken. It doesn't matter what the enemy tries to do, take, steal, whatever. There is no being in existence who can steal the flame of the Holy Spirit, not the devil himself.

The Bible teaches that if every demon, angel, saint, elder, seraph, cherub, living creature, if they all appeared before the throne, if height, depth, width, powers, princes, if they all came and appeared before the throne and said, Jess is not worthy, Steph is not worthy, the Father would not hear it because of the presence of one advocate. Jesus. Jesus.

Fear wants you to forget how and where it all began. And let's be honest. Let's be honest.

You Jesus School students. You know, you come, you get a role, you start serving. Let's say you're an intern.

Sometimes you get hired. Isn't it human nature to protect? And the Lord needs to remind us. You remember how it all started? Remember Dion? Coming down here by faith.

Getting that little Presbyterian fellowship hall, tile, horrible acoustics. We had a cajon that Kyle broke four or five times. Ryan was our first whatever.

Our drummer would be a lie with a man bun. And then this guy's wearing a man bun now. Luke.

That's how it all started, right? And it started way before that. It started way before Jesus' image. Jesus was around way before Jesus' image.

In all of us. We know our identity is not in this place. It's in Him.

No matter what happens in my life, I can close my eyes and go back to the days where the Lord would come into my room. Most people didn't believe it was happening. Really.

Even the ones I wanted to see it didn't see it for five, six years. And I wanted them to see it because I looked up to them. I mean, I was having glorious encounters with the Lord for a decade before my father-in-law finally saw the power of the Spirit flow through me.

Before he ever even sat in a meeting. You know, sometimes we as the Israelites crafted an idol and named it Jehovah sometimes we want to build our pastors after our own image as well and get them to work for us just like they should. And if they don't they're just not pastoral enough.

No, no, no. They're just not manipulated enough to be crafted into the image. Of something people want to build.

It was the best thing for me that my father-in-law didn't give me a pulpit. The best thing. It bothered me.

And I fell into judgment in those days. I really did. I'm just being an open book before you.

I fell into judgment in those days because he would have other young guys in and I was like I didn't smell a drip of glory on them. And I'm thinking they're not even part of our family. Why this guy? Something was off.

I mean you didn't even need to have you didn't even need to be born again. And I'd wonder Lord, and then I'd open my mouth sometimes in judgment. If I were doing that I would do it different.

That's not me. That's the great sin of presumption. And something I love about Jesus is that he asks us to look at the plank in our own eye before determining the speck in someone else's.

That is meekness. So I want you to think about for a moment what we trade. What we exchange the earth for.

Steph and Jeremy really changed my life when we were living in Reading and before that. I mean the nations have been impacted through what the Lord has done in Steph. I say often Steph is not just a psalmist or a worship leader.

She is a gift to a generation. Steph embodies what it looks like to burn before the Lord. That's why she's so instrumental at House of Bethany our worship school.

Because she is like a living epistle as to what it really looks like to lavishly love the Lord at the expense of being misunderstood. And Steph is a true and faithful friend. She's loyal.

And some I have to remember when the oil comes on Steph she's not my friend. She is and she's not. She's a servant of the Lord.

And for years I would sit in my room and be impacted by what the Lord was doing through Steph and Jer. Hours and hours and hours a day. Every Tuesday.

6 a.m. to 5 or 6 p.m. Every Tuesday with the Lord. And that's a long time. And you go through a lot of songs and when you're learning you learn to stop on the songs where there's real oil.

And then you delete the ones that are not. So when I got to Bethel for that year we spent I was more deeply impacted. We were speaking about this the other night.

The first time I took a platform with Steph was at the call in Cleveland. And Jer was there leading I think with Amanda as well. I would hear something from the Lord and then I'd hear Steph's voice literally sing the exact phrase that I would hear over and over and over again.

And I learned something that night that in many ways was a surreal night for me to Jesse was there taking pictures. It was special for us to be with people that we honor and love. That place had thousands of people in the arena.

But when the Lord came I forgot they were even there. I forgot Steph was there Jer was there and the crowd was there. When I'm in the presence of God here I forget we're at OCC.

I forget that how God has grown this congregation without the horrific strategies that the church has adapted that are Babylonian in nature that are harlotry unto a supposed greater goal of whatever it is. Because when the Lord comes everything becomes a shadow. Listen carefully.

Even what he does in us and through us becomes a shadow and light of him. So what we fight for disappears when he really comes. What we grope for vanishes because the goal the goal is to be like Jesus.

Whatever that requires. Come blessing come difficulty come resurrection come death come whipping post come walking on the sea of Galilee. This is about being like Jesus.

Not making it because making it is to have eyes like his. The meek the meek receive the earth. There's something about being tender.

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