

Experiencing True Happiness

Key Verse: *“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”*
—Matthew 5:6

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:1-16

THE SERMON ON THE

mount opens with a series of beatitudes, or blessings, promised to Gospel Age believers whose lives exemplify the acquisition of various Christian graces.

While others might have extolled individuals who were rich, prominent, or exalted in the eyes of the world, the Master regarded those who manifested humility, “the poor in spirit” (vs. 3), as having a virtue essential towards receiving a heavenly reward.

Those who mourn (vs. 4) are commended by Jesus because of their sympathetic attitude and pity for the poor, groaning creation of mankind, who continue under the death sentence passed in Eden. How privileged are these mourners now to proclaim to others that in the glorious, soon-to-be established kingdom “all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”—Luke 3:6

The blessed meek (vs. 5) have gentle dispositions. This trait requires submission to the Divine will by all who would emulate Jesus, who described himself as “meek and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:29) By nature, Christians might have a combative attitude, but under the influence of the Holy Spirit they learn such is not God’s way. In acquiescing to the will of the LORD, these

meek ones also will patiently endure persecution and false accusations, realizing, in so doing, they will receive a great “reward in heaven.”—vss. 10-12

Our Key Verse states that those who would be Jesus’ disciples must love truth and righteousness. They must have a deeply seated hunger and thirst for these principles. Not only will Jesus’ footstep followers be filled now as a result of godly living, but they will ultimately experience the greatest satisfaction imaginable by their abundant entrance “into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:11

To be merciful is to demonstrate compassion, and to manifest the greatest degree of leniency towards others, as circumstances permit. To exact the fullest measure of judgment against an erring one, without seeking some means to recover that individual, would be rather unbecoming on the part of any who profess to have the spirit of Christ. All true followers of Jesus should be sensitive to their daily imperfections. As such, they are exhorted to ask forgiveness from God for their transgressions. The Lord declares further, however, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—Matt. 6:15

Special blessings accrue to Christ’s followers who develop pure hearts and are also peacemakers. (Matt. 5:8-10) As they take to heart the spirit of Truth by diligently applying its principles in their lives, their ultimate association in glory with the Heavenly Father and Christ Jesus is assured, as they “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”—Heb. 12:14

Our lesson concludes with the exhortation for Christians to fulfill their commission of being the “salt of the earth” and the “light of the world.” (Matt. 5:13-16) May the influence of each believer’s life prove to be a glorious foretaste of the blessings offered to mankind when Christ’s righteous kingdom is established in the earth. ■