

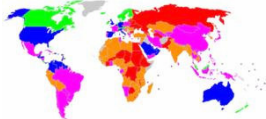
## THE CHRISTIAN AND HAPPINESS

Matthew 5:1-12

As we continue our series on the Sermon on the Mount  
I was reminded of the words that were on the back of a T-Shirt  
worn by LAPD Bomb Squad:  
"If you see me running, try to keep up."

That is the way I feel when I open the Bible  
God's word is so good for us,  
And yet so challenging that we almost feel like  
Running to keep up to Jesus' highest ethical and spiritual teachings.

So what is the Christian DNA of Happiness?  
Dennis Wholey, author of *Are You Happy*" reports only 20 percent of Americans are  
happy And maybe that explains why in the  
[Satisfaction with Life Index](#). That the happiest nation in the world is not USA.



Green = Happiest > Blue > Purple > Orange > Red = Least Happy; Grey = Data not available

With Denmark, Switzerland, Australia, Iceland  
US listed as the 23rd most happy nations.

Missionary Albert Schweitzer said: "Happiness is nothing more than good health and a bad memory.

Yesterday's newspaper said: Adult search for happiness, children create happiness.

In my research for this sermon I came across a happiness test.  
I took it.  
I got 44 out of 55  
(Some test, didn't make me very happy.)

**So let look at the DNA of happiness found in the Beatitudes**  
Beatitude in Latin means Blessed or happy.

### I. INTRODUCTION TO BEATITUDES

The first word Jesus utters as he began to teach his disciples is BLESSED  
He repeats it 8 times.  
the number eight in Scripture represents a new beginning.

We need a new beginning as we look at our world.  
Not just in Iraq, but in America and in the homes of America and in our churches.  
Where do you see happiness?

One Sunday in church a small child was turning around smiling at everyone. He wasn't gurgling, spitting, humming, kicking, tearing the hymnals. He was just smiling. Finally, his mother jerked him about and whispered in a voice that could be heard back in the secretary office said: "Stop grinning! You're in a church!" She gave him a little pinch on the back side, and as tears rolled down his cheeks she replied, "that's better," She returned to her prayers.

Wouldn't you like to grab that child and tell them that God is a happy God, a blessed God, the smiling God, whose sense of humor created the giraffe and the aardvark, the zebra and cricket.

Where do we see happiness today in our world, or in our church?

Have we forgotten what Jesus really came to give us?

Paul called God the "**Blessed God**" **I Tim. 1:11 (the Law) conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.**

Do we think of God as being happy?

Or as some Religious Power that wants to squeeze the joy out of our lives.

Our God is a blessed God and wants you to be a blessed people.

A happy people

Jesus knew that our happiness was a matter of attitude.

Because character comes before conduct.

What we are determines what we do.

All the rest of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 will deal with the DNA conduct that grows out of character.

Lets look at the

## **II. PROGRESSION OF THE BEATITUDES**

In the beatitudes Jesus shows us the process of becoming a mature and joy-filled Christian.

He starts by looking at our original state of sinfulness.

### **1. Blessed are the "Poor in spirit" (v. 3):**

This beatitude recognizes that thru Adam and Eve we were born into sin.

And we are blessed when we recognize our lost state, and admit our need.

**A elementary teacher who, for reasons of her own,**

asked the kids one day, "If all the bad children were painted red

and all the good children were painted green,

which color would you be?

One very wise child answered the teacher: "Striped"

**We are all stripped.**

**We have all sinned.**

**We are caught in the huge trap of a sinful world.**

H.H. Staton was traveling on an ocean liner headed to the Middle East.

Nine hundred miles out to sea they sighted a sail of a small boat on the horizon, Waving a distress flag. Their navigation system had broken down and they were lost. Stanton said For nearly an hour the liner circled the little boat, while the captain gave the crew its correct latitude and longitude. All the passenger on the liner were watching including a 12 year old boy who remarked aloud to himself "It's a big ocean to be lost in."

Sin is a big ocean to be lost in.

Sin is a big ocean in which we can be mixed up and turned around, deceived and confused .

Listen to the confusion of Joe Theismann the ESPN commentator, allegedly explaining to his soon-to-be-ex-second wife why he had an affair: "God wants Joe Theismann to be happy."

Really,  
but what happens when the waves of guilt and despair  
roll over us like some great tsunami?.

**That is why Jesus begins here. Because we are poor in spirit  
He givew us the correct longitude and latitude to find our way home.**

Apostle Paul.

**For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace though the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:23-24**

Jesus knew God as a Shepherd in search of one lost sheep.

Jesus knew God as a woman searching the dark crevasses for a valuable coin.

He knew God was a Loving Father welcoming home a lost son.

We are lost in our sin..

**Jesus moves us one step up in the second beatitude.**

**2. Blessed are those who "Mourn" (v. 4):**

Its one thing to recognize your sin,

It is another to mourn or grieve that sin.

**A little boy wasn't getting good grades in school.**

One day he tapped his teacher on the shoulder and surprised her with an announcement.

"I don't want to scare you, but my daddy says

if I don't start getting better grades...

somebody is going to get a spanking!"

I think he missed the point of responsibility.

We have a society full of people who miss the point of responsibility.

You know as I have done ministry over the past 40 years,

The most common emotion I have heard in my office is crying or weeping.

Laughter can be heard here and there sometimes,  
 but by and large, weeping predominates our days.  
 As we grow older the sound and reason for crying changes,  
 but it doesn't stop.  
 Babies can cry anywhere even in public.  
 But I have found that most of us as adults.  
 Cry in the dark and we cry alone.

Isn't it ironic that a new born babies never laugh in the OB ward.  
 In fact we want them to cry. We swat them to cry.  
 Jesus was saying that our new birth in Christ  
 Comes from the tears of remorse

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

**Then Jesus steps us up another notch into the arena of our relationship.**

**3. Blessed are the meek (v.5)**

A meek person realizes he is sinful and fails and acknowledges his limitation.  
 And in his meekness he calls upon the living God  
 To be able to live fully here on earth.  
 But a sinner is a braggart

**Its like the Farmer Josh who killed a pig and hung it up for the night,**  
**intending to butcher it in the morning,** but the next day it was gone.  
 He didn't tell a soul about it, and nothing happened for more than two months.  
 Then another farmer, who lived down the road, came by and said,  
 "By the way Josh, did you ever find out who stole your pig?"  
 "Nope," said Josh. "Not until just now."

Sin lets us lie and deceive and think we can get away with anything we want.  
 And when we overrate ourselves our sin will find us out.

Jesus takes us a step higher, he says:

**4. Blessed are those who "Hunger and thirst after righteousness" (v. 6):**

Do we desire to live a godly life here and now?  
 Friends we receive His righteousness by faith because we ask for it.

This beatitude calls for a certain attitude  
 And our attitude calls for certain conduct in our Christian lives.  
 Once we get our character corrected, our conduct will follow.  
 Marriage can improve and .  
 Relationships with children can change for the good.

Christianity is a profession of faith but also a conduct of faith.  
 Think about it, you can sleep around and still be a good brain surgeon.  
 You can cheat on your mate, lie to your family, and still practice law.

You can raise funds fraudulently, lie and still stay in politics.  
 You can be a successful salesperson and cheat on your income tax.  
 But we cannot do those things as a Christian  
 and continue enjoying the Lord's blessing.

We must live and do right in order to have true integrity.  
 If we can't come to terms with evil or break habits  
 that continue to bring reproach to the name of Christ,  
 then we should resign our place of leadership,  
 Are you a Christian who lives and breathes, truth, and honesty  
 In all your living?

And then we are moved toward a world of mercy.

**5. Blessed are the "Merciful" (v. 7):**

Here Jesus says we are to have a forgiving spirit and love others.  
 And have mercy on them as we know God has had mercy on us.

Some people are hard to forgive.

**Ruth Youngsman brother was murdered during a robbery.**

The murderer had been caught and served 18 years at Walla Walla prison,  
 He was then released on probation had settled into life on a dairy farm.

Ruth, compelled by Christ command to forgive,  
 met him 20 years after his crime. And pronounced forgiveness.

She said: "Tonight I ate dinner with the man who killed my brother."

Then she took him to her father's deathbed,

Where he was able to make reconciliation AS WELL.

Some wouldn't call this a success story,

Because John didn't become a Christian or dedicate his life to Christ.

But one night he said to his friends with a broken voice.

"Christians are the only people I know that even if you kill their son,  
 they will make you a part of their family.

I don't know the Man Upstairs, but He sure is hounding me."

**Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy. Matthew 5:7**

We show mercy because we have received mercy.

The mercy of the Cross-of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**6. Blessed are the "Pure in heart for they will see God" Matthew 5:8**

Next Jesus moves us toward holiness.

To being like God.

Jesus is probably quoting Psalms 24:3-5

**Who may ascend the hill of the LORD Who may stand in his holy place? <sup>4</sup> He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false. <sup>5</sup> He will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God his Savior.**

Jesus is saying that we can live in the purity and holiness of a loving God.  
How about you are you living more with a clean lives and clear motives.

Then Jesus moves us outward toward the community and peacemaking.

**7. "Blessed are the Peacemakers for they will be called the sons of God. " (v. 9):**

We should bring peace, between people and God, and between those who are at odds with each other.

We know how difficult this is as we continue our conflict in Iraq.

Someone said this about the Iraqi situation...

“They keep talking about drafting a Constitution for Iraq .

Why don't we just give them ours?

It was written by a lot of really smart guys,

it has worked for over 200 years,

and ANYWAY we're not using it anymore.”

Peacemaking is a tough job.

How do we bring together the warring religious factions.

It will not be by human flesh and wisdom.

Peacemaking is of the spirit.

It is a DNA characteristic of the Living Christ.

Jesus said he is the Prince of Peace.

Do representatives, Senators, and politicians running for office no longer

Believe in God’s word or his rule of law to live by?

Do they think they can solve this conflict on their own?

Jesus said: No --there are some things you can’t do yourself

Because we do not have the spiritual ability and adequacy.

**John 15:5 I am the vine you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.**

Nothing

That is also in the arena of peace.

**Jesus said: Peace I leave with you; my pace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your heart be troubled and do not be afraid. John 14:27**

**8."Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. " Matthew 5:10**

**Are you and I willing to live our faith even when  
People will ridicule and laugh at our love for Jesus.**

**<sup>12</sup>In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,  
<sup>13</sup>while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being  
deceived. II Timothy 2:12**

If it was God’s intention simply to get Christians to heaven.

Then he would whisk them off right away.  
 But his intention in this beatitude is to let Christians know that it is  
 God's intention to leave Christians on the earth in spite of persecution  
 So that we might become a channel for change in society.

**What about you?**  
**Will you respond to God**  
**Acknowledge your sin and**  
**Seek to live as Christ has called?**  
**No matter what other may say or do?**  
**No matter what the consequence?**

**THEN**  
**THE PROMISE OF GOD'S LOVE AND BLESSING**  
**WILL BE YOURS**

God loves you today just as you are friend,  
 But there is a greater blessing that comes if we are obedient  
 Every beatitude ends with a promise....

**YOU SHALL BE FORGIVEN**  
**YOU SHALL BE COMFORTED**  
**YOU SHALL BE FILLED**  
**YOU SHALL RECEIVE MERCY**  
**YOU SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH**  
**YOU SHALL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD**  
**YOU SHALL SEE GOD**  
**YOU SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.**

It's the rainbow after the storm.  
 And God welcomes us home to his arms.  
 Because there is no limit to the blessing God wants to give us,  
 In this world and in the next.