

Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 7

Review of the Beatitudes and Promises:

<p>BLESSING #1 <i>BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT</i></p>	<p>We are “poor” in spirit because we acknowledge that we are not self-sufficient and that we need God in our lives. We come to Him in childlike faith, knowing that we cannot make it on our own without Him.</p>
<p>PROMISE #1 <i>FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN</i></p>	<p>When we acknowledge the sovereignty of God over our lives, we discover that He does not save us because of what we have done, but He saves us because of what Christ has done for us. If we persevere in faith, we are promised the gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.</p>
<p>BLESSING #2 <i>BLESSED ARE THEY WHO MOURN</i></p>	<p>As we yield to spiritual childhood, admitting poverty of spirit and kneeling in His presence, the more clearly we see God. The more clearly we see God the more we become aware of our imperfections. We become humbled in His presence and we feel the burden of our sins. The result is that we mourn our sins and the sins of the world. Repentance and genuine sorrow for our sins purifies us. To mourn sin is a natural outflow of surrender to God through “poverty of spirit.”</p>
<p>PROMISE #2 <i>FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED</i></p>	<p>Not only does the Holy Spirit comfort us in our sorrow and repentance but through living the Sacraments of our faith He gives us the strength to resist sin and the strength to stand against sin in our community and in the world. We bear our suffering with a spirit of atonement, reconciliation and love, and the result is comfort and strength.</p>
<p>BLESSING #3 <i>BLESSED ARE THE MEEK</i></p>	<p>Christian “meekness” is not weakness. It is based on humility which is expressed in the New Testament as the supernatural quality that is the outgrowth of a renewed nature. This renewal can only come when we surrender to God and seek His divine will in our lives. It is this third step that renews us and places us as a useful tool in the hands of the Master of the universe.</p>
<p>PROMISE #3 <i>FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE LAND</i></p>	<p>No longer does Satan have the power to dominate us because we have been reborn through Christian baptism into the family of God. We belong to the God who created and dominates the earth. As His children and Christ’s heirs we inherit the earth and the universal kingdom He has established on earth to lead the nations into the family of God—the Catholic (universal) Church.</p>
<p>Michal E. Hunt © 2011</p>	

Handout 2: Matthew Lesson 7

Now we know that what the law says is addressed to those under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world stand accountable to God, since no human being will be justified in his sight by observing the law; for through the law comes consciousness of sin (Rom 3: 19-20).

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness ...

The Old Covenant Law showed man the path to righteousness but was incapable of providing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit or offering eternal salvation (CCC 1963). In the New Testament, righteousness is not defined in the Old Covenant Law but in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ:

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, though testified to by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe... (Rom 3:21-22)

God appointed him as a sacrifice for reconciliation, through faith, by the shedding of his blood, and so showed his justness; first for the past, when sins went unpunished because he held his hand; and now again for the present age, to show how he is just and justifies everyone who has faith in Jesus (Rom 3:25-26).

For just as through the disobedience of one person the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one the many will be made righteous (Rom 5:19).

My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world (1 Jn 2:1-2).

*Simon Peter, a slave and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of equal value to ours **through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ**, may grace and peace be yours in abundance through knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2 Pt 1:1).*

For they shall be satisfied ...

'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.' Now He calls those parties, lovers of a true and indestructible good. They will therefore be filled with that food of which the Lord Himself says, 'My meat is to do the will of my Father,' which is righteousness; and with that water, of which whosoever 'drinketh', as he also says, it 'shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.' St.

Augustine (354-430 AD), *The Sermon on the Mount*, Book I, chapter II, 6

In Matthew 26:28 Jesus said ... "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup gave thanks and gave it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." For the sake of a humanity crushed under the burden of slavery to sin and death—a humanity thirsting for salvation—God the Son gave them, from His perfect sacrifice on the altar of the Cross, His very Blood to drink and His very Flesh to eat that they might have eternal life (Jn 6:53-58). The Eucharist unites us to Christ (CCC 1391), cleanses us of past sins (CCC 1393), strengthens our response to showing God's mercy to others (CCC 1394), and preserves us from future mortal sins (CCC 1395), thus imparting the "righteousness" of Christ to the believer.

Handout 3: Matthew Lesson 7

The fourth beatitude (“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ...”) is the turning point in the Beatitudes. Up to this point the focus has been on the most basic aspects of our relationship with God. Up until now the focus has been **our need**:

- Our need for God in our earthly struggles and our desire for heaven
- Our need for repentance
- Our need to yield ourselves in humility to God’s plan

But in the fourth beatitude the focus has been changed to our need for union with the fullness of God—therefore focus turns to Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, who fulfills of our desire for union with the fullness of God Himself in the gift of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the Most Holy Trinity gives Himself completely to the soul who hungers and thirsts for Him—He gives Himself completely in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. He comes to us in the miracle of Transubstantiation as the Bridegroom giving all of Himself to His Bride, the Church.

“Blessed are the merciful ...” In the Old Testament Hebrew being “merciful” meant the outward manifestation of pity, but in the New Covenant this expression of mercy and pity is to be expressed by one who is actively compassionate as God is actively compassionate—a compassion generated internally but expressed externally as acts of mercy. Although compassion, a feeling of sympathy, is part of mercy [*com* meaning “with”, and *passion* meaning “suffering” so “with suffering”], mercy differs from compassion in that mercy is the active practice of compassion in the readiness to assist those in need. Therefore, the “merciful” are those who are not passive in showing love and compassion but who take an active role in bringing aid to those who suffer. This same Greek word for “mercy” is used to describe Jesus Christ as our High Priest in Hebrews 2:17: ... *therefore, he had to become like his brothers in every way, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest before God to expiate the sins of the people*, and it is used for those who are called to live lives of mercy and compassion “like God” as here in Matthew 5:7 as well as in Luke 6:35-36 which ends with the command *Be merciful, just as [also] your Father is merciful*.

“For they shall obtain mercy.”

*So speak and so act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. For the judgment is merciless to one who has not shown mercy; **mercy triumphs over judgment** (Jam 2:12-13; emphasis added).*

Because you are God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you (Col 3:12-13).

5th petition of the Lord’s Prayer: ... *and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ...* (Mt 6:12). Are works of mercy necessary for our salvation? See CCC# 1473; 2447.