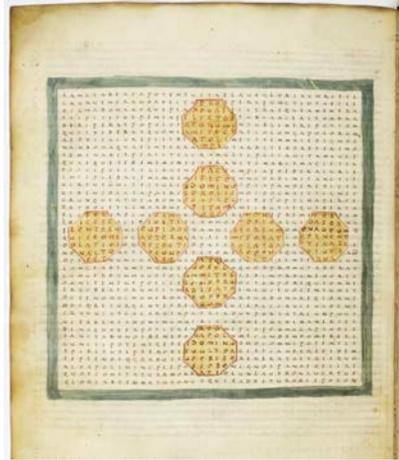


## Blessed

Uncovering the real meaning of what it means to be blessed by God

Matthew 5:1-12 & Luke 6:17-26

May 4, 2025  
Pastor Tyler Williams  
Greenfield Community Church



## The Beatitudes according to Matthew

The First Discourse: The Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29).

- The Setting: on the Mountain (5:1-2).
- The Beatitudes (5:3-12).
- Disciples as salt and light (5:13-16).
- Main Body of the Sermon (5:17-7:12).

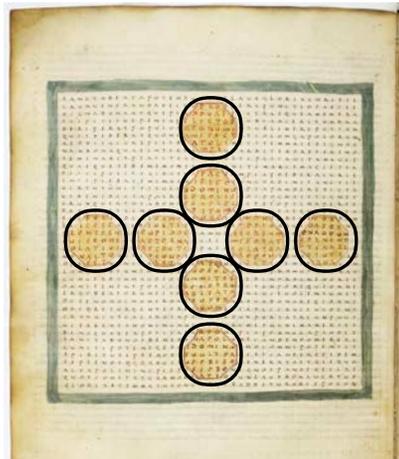
## Structure

Stanza 1: Love God (5:3-6)

- Poor in spirit (present tense) ←
- Mourn; meek; hunger and thirst for righteousness (future tense).

Stanza 2: Love Others (5:7-10)

- Merciful; pure in heart; peacemakers (future tense).
- Persecuted (present tense). ←



## The Blessing

*Makarios* (Gk. Adjective μακαριος; translates Heb. *asherai* אֲשֶׁרִי).

- Being fortunate or happy because of circumstances; *fortunate, content, happy*.
- Privileged recipient of divine favour; *blessed, joyful, blissful*.
- The source of blessedness is always the God of Israel.

## Understanding the Blessing

### Prescriptive

- Virtuous qualities that God promises to reward.
- Present focus: Wisdom values meant to be lived out.
- Personal moral formation and call to just action in the world.

### Descriptive

- Undesirable conditions that God promises to reverse.
- Future orientation: Eschatological in-breaking of God's kingdom.
- Focus on consolation and hope in God.

## Understanding the Blessing

Neither & Both

- They are God's **value judgments** describing the type of people who inhabit the (already and not-yet) kingdom of God.
- They point both to **present and future** blessedness.
- They are not imperatives, but statements, yet implicitly they hold up these **characteristics lived out by Christ and his followers**.

## The Beatitudes Point to Jesus

The Beatitudes *point to Jesus* as well as to *the way of Jesus*.

- Long history of them being understood as a crystallization of the teachings of Jesus, and are actually embodied by him.
- Followers of Jesus should embody and live out the values represented by the beatitudes, not as a way of merit, but as a way of grace.

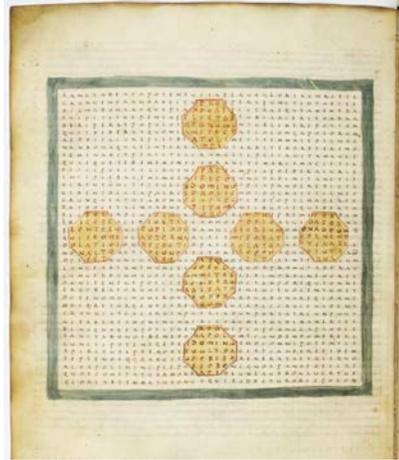
## The Beatitudes Point to Jesus

"Jesus is the secret centre of the Beatitudes as a whole and, therefore, of each one in particular. He is finally their real subject matter, and in them he points to his own person. *It is he who embodies each personal attribute, he who is truly the blessing, and he who is always the promise.* The Beatitudes are thus best understood as the self-interpretation of Jesus.... At the same time, they are a call to discipleship and a sign of hope for the world" (George Hunsinger, *The Beatitudes*, 134).

## Entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3; Luke 6:20, 24).

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## Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God... But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort" (Luke 6:23-24).

## The "Blessed" Condition

"Poor in spirit" (Matthew) vs. "Poor" (Luke)

- "Poor" (*ptochos* πτωχος) – primarily refers to the economically disadvantaged, those who are continuously dependent on others; *poor, destitute*; also those who recognize their dependance on divine resources, those in special need of God's help.
- Luke emphasizes God's longstanding concern for the economically disadvantaged (as he does throughout his gospel), while Matthew picks up on the underlying posture of dependence and makes it explicit with his "poor in spirit."

## The "Blessed" Condition

"God blesses those who are poor *and realize their need for him*, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs" (NLT); "Creator's blessing rests on the poor, *the ones with broken spirits*. The good road from above is theirs to walk" (FNV).

- Matthew explicitly extends the meaning to include to those in special need of God's help (but this does not eliminate the economic meaning).
- "Poverty of spirit" is not just an external condition, but an internal disposition.

## The “Blessed” Condition

“The poor do not inherit the kingdom of God because they are poor. That would be a perversion of the gospel—a kind of ‘salvation by social class.’ The poor who inherit the kingdom of God are the poor in spirit *who stand before God and the world in utter helplessness*” (Darrell Johnson, *The Beatitudes*, 29).

## The “Blessed” Condition

But, we can’t ignore the uncomfortable teaching about poverty & riches in the Scriptures.

- While poverty is never held out as an ideal, God’s special concern for the poor and disadvantaged is found throughout Scripture.
- Conversely, the dangers of riches and wealth are highlighted throughout Scripture, because they may blind us to our need for God.

## The “Blessed” Condition

“The blessing that Jesus pronounces upon the poor in spirit is a promise of reversal and deliverance. It is a blessing that announces to the poor in spirit that they are not forgotten by God. Because Jesus is present to them, they have a hope beyond every impulse to despair” (George Hunsinger, *The Beatitudes*, 211).

## The Reason

The “poor in spirit” are blessed, *because* “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

- Explanatory clause is marked by the Gk. *οτι hoti; for, because.*
- Pronoun “theirs” is emphatic = “theirs and only theirs.”
- Greek verb is present tense (“*is* theirs”), rather than the future tense. This expresses something that can be experienced in a present, ongoing, manner.

## Invitation

It is first and finally Jesus who defines what it means to be "poor in spirit" (Phil 2:6-11).

And as followers of Jesus, we too must humble ourselves as we come to God at the foot of the cross (and remember the poor).