

# Understanding Jesus' Beatitudes

Jesus taught about the ways of his kingdom as he traveled from place to place with his disciples. One of his most famous sermons, “The Sermon on the Mount,” begins with a series of statements that start with “Blessed are...” Known collectively as “The Beatitudes,” these teachings of Jesus hold profound meaning for us as disciples today. Join us as we discuss the context and setting of Jesus’ Beatitudes and their connection to the Old Testament with our guest, Dr. Danny Daley. We’ll gain a deeper understanding of the purpose and meaning of this list of blessings and how they serve as a guide to a kingdom lifestyle on our journey of discipleship with Jesus.

**AWARENESS** Before listening reflect on what you already know or understand about topics we'll cover in the episode.

- What do you know about Jesus’ beatitudes?
- How would you explain what “blessed” means?



**LISTEN TO THE EPISODE:** [Understanding Jesus' Beatitudes](#)

**READ** [Matthew 5:1-12](#), [Luke 6:20-26](#)

**REFLECTION** After listening, consider the following questions:

- In segment 1, Dr. Danny Daley taught us that the beatitude was a common form of speech found in the Old Testament and would have been familiar to the disciples. He referenced Psalm 1 as an example (read [Psalm 1](#)). What other Psalms or Old Testament verses can you identify that share the same form as Jesus’ beatitudes?
- In [Luke 6:20-26](#), the Beatitudes are followed by a list of woes. Even though the record of Jesus’ beatitudes in [Matthew 5:1-12](#) is not followed by a list of woes, Danny suggested that they are still present; the gospel writer moved them to chapter 23 to better serve the goal of his gospel. Now read [Matthew 5:1-12](#) alongside [Matthew 23:13-32](#). Where do you see the direct contrasts between Matthew’s lists of beatitudes in chapter 5, which show us ideal discipleship, and woes in chapter 23, which show us the opposite?
- In segment 3, Danny identified the three most prominent interpretations of Jesus’ beatitudes: 1) as entrance requirements, 2) future hopes that are promises to those in negative conditions, and 3) positives, conditions to cultivate and pursue in our lives that help us flourish in God’s kingdom. Which of those interpretations sounds most like how you’ve been taught to understand the Beatitudes? Now what do you think? How would you answer Danny’s question, “Do you think that the first half of each of these beatitudes refers to positive things like virtues that you should cultivate, or negative things that are unfortunate circumstances that you are hoping God will one day reverse on your behalf?”

- Danny explained that one of the reasons he believes the Beatitudes are like virtues we should cultivate for a kingdom lifestyle is that Jesus modeled each of these beatitudes throughout the Gospels. Reread Jesus' Beatitudes in [Matthew 5:1-12](#). Which stories from Jesus' life would you say show Jesus exhibiting each of the Beatitudes?

## RELATED PASSAGES for further study

[Psalm 1](#), [Isaiah 61](#), [Psalm 37](#), [Matthew 23:13-32](#)

## CONCLUSION

Through his beatitudes, Jesus taught what it looked like to live a kingdom-oriented life. Danny and hosts Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney firmly rejected the suggestion that the Beatitudes were “entrance requirements for the kingdom,” reminding us that Jesus first invited the disciples in by grace. Danny also discussed how the translation of the Greek word *“markarios”* as *“blessed”* is a fair translation, but it is passive. He prefers thinking of it as *flourishing*, and he also encouraged us to consider the Beatitudes as attitudes to cultivate in our lives, rather than as ways to escape negative situations. As Danny, Scott, and Darrell studied Jesus' beatitudes, which parts of their conversation broadened your perspective or understanding? Did anything bring you comfort or assurance for your faith? What benefited your journey of discipleship?

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