Matthew 5:1-12 (2-6) Psalm 1; A Blessed Relationship with God I. Those who are Blessed II. What they Receive

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, this morning we are starting a series through the Sermon on the Mount- and we begin in Mt. 5 with the Beatitudes. Now children, the word beatitude simply means blessing or blessed. As each verse starts with the word – blessed. In Matthew 5, Jesus has gone up into the hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee- and from here He has gathered his disciples around him. This is an important reminder- Jesus is here describing the life of His disciples. These blessings are reserved for those whom He has chosen to be His own- and they mark the life of His learners who come after him. In other words, these blessings are reserved for and promised to the people of God- they are not to be read as a way to earn blessings but rather as a description of those who are already blessed. These are uniquely spiritual traits that carry covenantal blessings. Blessed is the man- Psalm 1 begins. Or as Abraham is told in Gen. 12- through your descendants I will bless the nations. In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So these Beatitudes are describing the lifestyle of and reward promised to God’s people. In reading them you will be able to identify a true follower of Jesus Christ. The blessings here promised are reserved for God’s people. So this morning we consider this theme: Jesus Christ promises and provides a blessed relationship with our God.

**I. Those who are Blessed**

As we begin our series on the Sermon on the Mount, we start with 3 sermons on the Beatitudes. This week we will focus on v. 3-6 and the first 4 of the Beatitudes. These first 4 focus on the blessed relationship that we have with God- and expands upon the benefit we receive now that we are in a peaceful relationship with Him. So in v. 3 we read, blessed are the poor in spirit. Looking at the poor in society, it is hard to say that they are blessed. They have nothing- right? But the poor in view here are those who know they are spiritually poor. The poor in Spirit defines those who we are lowly, helpless and unable to help their own cause. Jesus has revealed the state of our heart to us. We are spiritually bankrupt. There is nothing that we can do- no power in our hands. We are poor towards God on our own and we lack the means to make ourselves wealthy. A Christian in one who sees and acknowledges- nothing in my hand I bring. Our spiritual bank account is empty- without resources- we cannot add the necessary payment. We have no ability to save ourselves or to offer to God what is necessary. As Psalm 34:6 puts it- this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his trouble. God’s people recognize this truth about themselves- we are poor and needy. Not poor in a general sense- our deepest need is not one of money and financial stability. Financial poverty is not what Jesus has in view here. Spiritual bankruptcy. So God’s people see their own poverty- and they mourn over their sin. Second- Blessed are those who mourn. They are grieved because of their sin and misery. They lament over their spiritual rebellion. They are grieved over their transgressions. As Psalm 130:3 puts it, if You, O Lord should mark iniquity, who could stand? Their actions grieve them- wretched man that I am! Who will save me from this body of death? It is not that they are sad because they lost their job or sad because something they love has been taken away. Not sad because of some broken relationship or broken promise. No, it is chiefly a spiritual sorrow in view here. Grief over their sin and misery. The blessed ones are also meek- blessed are the meek v. 5 continues. Meekness is a character trait of God’s people. We see how weak we truly are- how much we are in need. The result is that we become gentle in spirit- lowly- and humble towards God and others. Here Moses comes to mind- who is said to be one of the humblest people to ever live. Or even Jesus- who describes his heart as gentle and lowly. There is no room for pride or boasting in the heart of God’s people! For what can we boast- what do we have that we have not first received. Rather we surrender all our rights to God- leaving our life and our times in His hand! Knowing that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. We consider the needs of others before our own- because we have a Savior who put our needs before His own! But this meekness is not just a low self-esteem or self-effacing in the presence of others. It is meekness towards God- like the sinner who beat his chest and cried out for mercy in the temple. And finally- v. 6- blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. God’s people have a spiritual craving for righteousness- they long for true, spiritual food and living water. As we are able to celebrate today- God’s people long to be fed with the body and blood of Jesus Christ! Why? Because we know our need! Righteousness is not something that we can grow or produce ourselves. We are unable to be self-sufficient. Rather, we earnestly desire the righteousness that can make us right with God! We hunger for justification- we crave the necessary atonement that secures our peace with God! We are not working for bread that perishes- our deepest need is not water that is used up and leaves us thirsty again! We need true food and true drink! Psalm 42- as the deer pants for water, so my soul thirsts for You, O God! We hunger and thirst for that which only God can and has provided in Jesus Christ! Man does not live and bread alone! Rather we live on the Word! So to summarize our first point, what does a follower of Christ look like? How can a true disciple of Jesus be identified? Well, they are known by their need- how they view themselves and where they look for provision! There is no room for boasting, pride, self-reliance or dependence on what we can do or provide! Rather we have a sorrow over our sins and we look to the hand of our Savior for everything that we need! This kind of life is so foreign- so strange to those outside of Christ. Who would pick this kind of life? Who wants to be poor, who wants to mourn or to be meek or to live a life of hunger? Well, those who know God have a secret to share- in the end it is these who will be blessed!

**II. What they Receive**

Now that we have considered the marks or signs that set God’s people apart, in our second point we consider the blessings that are promised to them. Blessed are you- the Greek work is “Makarious”- meaning true happiness and prolonged peace. Connected to our word for benediction- God’s blessing is pronounced upon these people. So what then does this blessed life look like- or what do those who are blessed by God receive? Well, those who are poor towards themselves will find that they are in fact rich towards God! Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! No one wants to be poor in earthy things- we like the idea of having our own homes and bank accounts. To be poor is to be in need- but if we are poor in spirit then we will be really rich! Our is the kingdom! Now we are used to saying these words in the Lord’s Prayer- yours is the Kingdom. Jesus is the king of kings- to Him belongs all that is- all things being placed under His feet. But in Christ- ours is the kingdom! We sit with Jesus on the throne if you will! We have the promise of an eternal residence in the kingdom that is to come! We have a home in glory that is being prepared for us! To the blessed ones belongs the kingdom. Continuing- blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Now remember- the thing we mourn over dictates the comfort that we will receive! If we are filled with sorrow for our sins, then we will be comforted when those sins are forgiven! The word for comfort here is “paracaleo”- connected to our word for comfort as applied to the Holy Spirit as our comforter. Those who have a sorrow over their sins will have their tears wiped away- because those sins will no longer be held against them! We receive comfort from the God of all comfort- we are strengthened, encouraged and granted peace! Those who once mourned over their sins will now say- it is well with my soul! Added to this comfort, in v. 5 we find that those who are meek will inherit the earth. Not only will they be granted a kingdom- not only comforted- but they will also inherit the earth! Those in Christ will rule as kings over the whole world. We will reign with Christ- not only in heaven after this life- but on this earth and over the whole world in the life that has no end! As II Tim. 2:12 puts it, “if we died with him, we will also live with him. If we endure, we will also reign with him!” Rom. 8 says that we will share in His glory! Here again, we catch a glimpse of our future. The new heavens and earth to which God’s people look forward to. We will be rulers of this world as kings and queens- having dominion over this new creation as Adam and Eve were designed to be. We will be welcomed into our eternal home- crowned with glory and honor- ruling over all creation- having received the world as our inheritance. Listen to these words from Psalm 37:11-“The meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.” Whatever the meek may miss out of in this life- whatever the humble must give up today- will more than be compensated for in the life to come! Read with me from Matthew 19: 28 -30. What a blessed inheritance we, who are in Christ, can look forward to. Now most parents have a will- or they should have a will. In that will, the desire of the parents concerning their inheritance towards their children is spelled out. But this inheritance is temporary and passing- there is a greater inheritance that can be given! One that permanent and lasting! One that is reserved for the children of God and promised in the words of the Covenant! And finally, back in our text- Mt. 5:6- blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. We who long to be justified- to receive the righteousness of Christ- will get the very gift that our hearts desire. If we go to Jesus looking for true food and spiritual drink, He will satisfy our longing- He will feed and nourish our souls- and He will be to us our righteousness. I Cor. 1:30- “He is the source of our life in Christ Jesus- whom God made our wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord!” Everything we need is here provided- our very food and drink unto eternal life is here supplied! When your heart desires this righteousness- our God will give you your hearts desire! When you long to be fed with Jesus- when you look to Him for your righteousness and life- He will never turn you away!   
To conclude, do you see yourself as blessed? Are you in possession of the blessed life- the happiness, peace and comfort of belonging to a faithful Savior- body and soul in life and in death? In these Beatitudes, Jesus is describe His followers. This morning, Jesus has explained the blessings that belong to us- as we are united to Him by faith! When we are weak, then in Him we are strong! When we are bankrupt, in Him we have a kingdom and inheritance. When we are hungry, in Him our needs supplied! When we are sorrowful, in Him we are comforted! Jesus Christ promises and provides a blessed relationship with our God. Coming now to the Table- let us take from His hand and eat by faith. Knowing that when we hunger and thirst for righteousness- in Him we are satisfied. Remember who we are- and what we have! Weeping may last for the night- but joy and blessings come in the morning!