

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
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Blessed Are the Meek

Matthew 5:1-5

5:1 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

5:2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

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

5:4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5:5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

**1. The Blessings of the Kingdom of God**

Since 2012, the United Nations and the University of Colombia have published the “World Happiness Report” out of all 157 countries. The newest report came out March 16<sup>th</sup> of this year (2016). According to the report 2016, Denmark is the first, Switzerland second, Iceland third, Norway fourth, Finland fifth, Canada sixth, Holland seventh, New Zealand eighth, Australia ninth, and Sweden tenth. The United States is thirteenth, and Japan is fifty third. All the countries listed on the top are the countries of freedom, wealthy, and full of social welfare. However, the criteria of happiness is not only those things; therefore, people who are living in these countries might not feel happy. On the other hand, people who are living in the inconvenient, poor and short of social welfare might feel happy.

If there were the “World Happiness Report” in the first century, Judea might be very low in the ranking. They were the subordinate

countries to the Roman Empire, and people there were very poor and did not have a guarantee for their near future. However, Lord Jesus said to his followers, “Blessed are the people...” firmly. Why did Lord Jesus say that? If you believe in Lord Jesus and follow Him, you are the people of God’s Kingdom. The people of the Kingdom of God shall be happy. If you are the people of God’s Kingdom, you have received the best happiness and blessings that can not be measured in this world. It must be truly true because Lord Jesus who is the King of God’s Kingdom says, “You are blessed.”

However, what is the Kingdom of God? The people of Judah thought that the Kingdom of God would come with the revival of Judea. They believed that the great king such as David and Solomon appeared again and established the independent states, and the Kingdom of God became real. However, the Kingdom of God, which Lord Jesus taught them was not like that. The Kingdom of God was not only for the people of Judea and it was not winning the independence from the Roman Empire, It was not a political one. The kingdom of God is for everyone all over the world, and to release the people from the darkness of the world. We can not specify where the Kingdom of God. It exists where Lord Jesus who is the King of the Kingdom, is, in other words, it exists in the people who believe in Lord Jesus. The people can enter the Kingdom by accepting Lord Jesus in their heart and life. No matter where they live, they can enter the Kingdom of God and receive the blessings. According to Romans 14:17, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

When we say the Lord’s Prayer, we say “Thy kingdom come”. We

say this because we pray for the visual realization of the kingdom of God but also pray that it works on our life invisibly now. As we aim for the heaven, we experience the blessing of God's kingdom and wish it will be spread to all over the world.

## **2. The King Knows the People's Pain**

So, the second reason Lord Jesus could powerfully declare the blessings was that He knew all of the poverty, sorrow, and despair of the people. If He didn't experience any sufferings, all of His needs were satisfied, and lived very happily with no problems; no one would listen to His words, "Blessed are the poor," "Blessed are those who mourn." They might have counter-argued like, "Does He actually know the sufferings of poor," or "He wouldn't know any of sorrows in His life."

Lord also said that blessed are the meek, and the word "meek" has one meaning "vanished." When you suffer from something, you might get pressured, and your heart would be broken and desperate. So if Jesus wasn't likely to understand people's despair, they would feel like, "He wouldn't know our disappointments and despair," when listening to His verse "Blessed are the meek."

However, Jesus knew all of sufferings that the people might experience. He knew how people become poor, while saying "Blessed are the poor." 2 Corinthians 8:9 say, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." Recently it could happen that wealthy men lose everything at one night and become homeless, but it's more than unbelievable that Jesus became

poor. He didn't prioritize any of His glory that He had in Heaven as the Son of God, and became a human to come to this world. This is the incredible drop that could ever be compared on the earth. If He became a human and gained respectful treatments, it may sounds better; but He was born as a child of a carpenter, grow up in the poor environment, and knew the pain of being poor. He deserved the throne of the palace, but only a rock on the mountain was provided for him as you see in Matthew chapter 5. People welcomed Jesus at first, but sooner or later their attentions were decreased and didn't listen to the truth Jesus taught. Jesus loved with whole heart and life, but people despised and rejected Jesus. There's no one got poor like Jesus did.

Jesus also knew the sorrow of people. Isaiah 53:3 say "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

He knew despair, too. People can go through with patience in any sufferings unless they lose hope like "there is a way and the one who saves me." Job, a person in the Bible, lost his family and properties, and got serious illness. People looked after him couldn't say anything while 7 days with him, because he was in such disaster. However, Job still had light of hope. He said in Job 19:25, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth." I am sure that Job could survive his hell of life through this hope.

Jesus experienced the death of life on the cross, but He lost any light of hope at the time. When He was crucified, the cross was totally covered by darkness while noon to 3pm. Jesus shouted in the darkness, described in Matthew 27:46, "My God, my God, why have

you forsaken me?" He was forsaken as it says, by His Father God. This is for that He owed all of sins in this world and became a sinner. Lord experienced any kinds of poverty, sorrow and despair, and died on the cross in order to save people from sin, the source of poverty, sorrow, and despair. We are wealthy because of His poverty, we are joyful because of His sorrow, and we have hope because of His despair.

This is our salvation and blessings. The blessing Lord Jesus declares is the one Jesus paid with His life for those who believe. We have to count it important and receive it by faith.

### **3. The Rewards to the Believers**

The third reason, Lord Jesus could vigorously declared the blessings of the Kingdom of God, is that He can change poverty, sorrow, and even despair to the blessings.

Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*" to the people who are suffered from poverty. He turned our eyes from materialistic poverty to spiritual poverty by adding the word, "in spirit" after "the poor". The Lord wanted that the believers did not go on only materialistic poverty, but become the persons who would trust more in God and become rich in faith, by knowing they were powerless and poor before God. He had the same thought when He said, "Blessed are those who mourn." The believers shouldn't mourn about their unhappiness or misfortune, but they should mourn their sins and be led to the repentance. Poverty and sorrow shouldn't end up as unhappy things. They should be transformed and bring blessings to the believers.

The Lord never leave the believers who have broken hearts by various pains and pressures, and are experiencing disappointments and despairs, in their problems. He changed their hearts broken to God. “Meek” means “obedient”, “humble”, and “gentle” other than “vanished”. It points the person whose selfishness is broken, and becomes obedient to God and gentle to others. God never turn the believers’ pain in vain. He changes the believers those who are meek. He gives them the blessings of the Kingdom of God, as verse 5 says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

“They shall inherit the earth” does not mean that the meek are to get the land as their property. These words are taken from Psalm 37:11. It says, “But the meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant peace.” The meek, who become to trust in God through various sufferings, should be protected in this world by God. It is obvious in Psalm 10:17-18. It says, “O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.” In Isaiah 29:19 promises saying, “The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel. “

In Matthew 11:29, the Lord says, “I am gentle and lowly in heart.” He talks to us, “I know your sufferings, troubles, and pains” by the words. He also talks us, “If you follow Me, you should become gentle and lowly in heart like I am.” Then, He continues, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, .... and you will find rest for your souls.” Even the believers experience the pressure both in mind and body. They may encounter the situations which make us to say, “Why

do I have to suffer from this?” Don’t forget this when you will be in such situations. Any kinds of suffering will be changed to the blessings in Lord Jesus. Even disappointment and despair become a step of the process that we are becoming the meek, and they change the blessing that make us inherit the earth. And, their souls shall find the rest.

Let us start this week by listening to and being led by the word of blessing. You are not alone in your journey. The Lord walks with you. Fix your eyes on the Lord and His reward and take the first step of the journey of faith.

**(Prayer)**

Father, You made the believers in Lord Jesus the people of Your Kingdom. And you gave the blessings that the world never gives us. Teach us, the believers, how the blessings are great and rich. Help us to walk in the blessings. In the name of Lord Jesus, Amen.