



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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## **Matthew 5:1-12** **New American Standard Bible** **June 30, 2019**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, June 30, 2019**, is from **Matthew 5:1-12**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(Matthew 5:1) When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.**

Jesus probably taught this sermon with variations many times to thousands of people wherever He traveled, which would help His disciples memorize the message so they could repeat it when they taught and wrote after His death and resurrection. These beatitudes of Jesus (“beatitude” means “a state of utmost bliss”) may reveal the course of

spiritual development for every disciple (student) of Jesus Christ as they mature. The Bible calls the process of spiritual development for Christians “sanctification.” The traditional position for teaching in the day of Jesus was sitting.

**(Matthew 5:2) He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,**

The gospel message is not only a few facts or truths about Jesus life, death, and resurrection that one should believe or memorize in order to be saved. The gospel message in the New Testament includes the call to repent, the call to faith in Jesus the Messiah as Lord and Savior, and the call to living daily in relationship with God in the kingdom of God by the power of the Holy Spirit according to the Bible. Jesus expected those who followed Him to learn and apply the truths in the beatitudes so they could enjoy a taste of heaven in this life as well as mature spiritually to become more like Christ morally and spiritually.

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

The word “blessed” has more recently been translated “happy.” The beginning of spiritual development and growth must include the recognition that one is in need, that one is spiritually poor and not spiritually rich or morally perfect. When we recognize we are morally and spiritually poor, we will feel sorrow for what we have done, which should lead us to repent of our sins. If we believe the

good news about Jesus, we will turn to Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, cleanse us from sin, and empower us to live for Him. Turning to Jesus Christ for spiritual direction and a new beginning begins with humility and knowing that we are poor in spirit. By turning from immoral and worldly concerns to spiritual and moral concerns based on Jesus' teaching, and by believing Jesus' teaching as our Lord and Savior, we can begin a new life and enjoy an earthly portion of the kingdom of heaven now; for Jesus' kingdom is not of or from this world but in our midst (see John 18:36).

**(Matthew 5:4) “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”**

Beginning with the recognition of our spiritual poverty and moral lapses (or moral imperfections, sins, times of disobedience, and rebellion against God) we will naturally mourn for our sins and their consequences in the lives of others as well as ourselves. We will look back and think of the sorrow and heartbreak our sins have brought others. We will regret missed opportunities and how our sins and the sins of others have changed the course of their lives and ours. We may mourn that we are not the type of person we wanted to be spiritually or morally (or could have been). We will mourn because of our former self-centeredness and pray for the Holy Spirit to help us become more Christ-centered. In this beatitude, Jesus promises that even though we mourn because of our sin and selfishness, He will comfort us if we will receive the

gifts of grace, forgiveness, and empowerment from Him through the Holy Spirit and seek to grow spiritually in relationship with Him in this life according to the Bible.

**(Matthew 5:5) “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.”**

A meek person demonstrates humility and keeps their strength, emotions, and words under control with the Holy Spirit’s help when they are hurt or offended by others. A meek person patiently endures when others sin against them; in part because they know they too have sinned (as in Moses’ and Paul’s cases who were considered meek). Jesus was meek and without sin. Jesus chose not to strike back at His enemies with resentment and the power to destroy them; rather, Jesus endured the cross: see Hebrews 12:2. A meek person will not try to appear before the world as better than others or better than he knows he is. Instead, he will love and serve others and try to respond to others in ways that will help them come to know something about Jesus and the Christian faith. The meek will inherit the earth from our heavenly Father; therefore, they do not grasp for more and more “things” (or recognition or money, etc.) in this life. As Christians, Jesus will work in our lives to help us become more meek.

**(Matthew 5:6) “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”**

As we grow spiritually, we will become more meek and we will seek the power and grace of God to live, think, feel,

and choose the right things to say and do that honor Christ, rather than live to express our formerly self-centered will. We will want the will of God done by us as well as others, and God wants us to live in righteousness and peace. We will hunger for this positive righteousness in our lives and not just the cleansing from sin that we also hunger to enjoy (and that Jesus promises to give His followers). We also hunger to live in a just, merciful, and righteous world—the kingdom of God now and forever. Someday, Jesus, the King of the universe, will be visible for all to see, and He will make all things right when He comes.

**(Matthew 5:7) “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.**

As Christians, we have meekly recognized our need to live righteously. We have hungered for righteousness in our own lives. Because Jesus Christ has mercifully forgiven us for our sins and is now helping us live righteously in Him, we show mercy to others. We recognize our continuing need for mercy from our just, merciful, and loving God, and from others too. God knows our need for mercy, because God knows that we have sinned. To act with both justice and mercy toward us, God sent His Son into the world as the perfect sacrifice for our sins (see 1 John 2:2 and 1 John 4:10). We are not yet perfect in all that we say and do; therefore, we know the value of receiving mercy and of extending mercy to others. As we continue to grow spiritually, we cease being judgmental and seek to treat

others with mercy. As followers of Jesus, we choose to be merciful toward others, and we pray they will receive mercy from God and seek to truly follow Jesus too.

**(Matthew 5:8) “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**

Kierkegaard said that purity of heart is to will one thing—the will of God. As we develop the spiritual traits revealed in Jesus’ beatitudes by following Jesus Christ, we come to seek and desire the will of God in everything that happens and in everything we do. We seek and desire doing the will of God, and we also desire that the perfect will of God be done in our lives and in the lives of all those we know. We trust God perfectly, and we turn our lives and our futures over to Jesus in every detail. We seek a pure heart, cleansed by the blood of Jesus, and we also seek to follow and obey Jesus in everything. We want God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and this is our prayer. We seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that we will see God someday (see Matthew 6:33).

**(Matthew 5:9) “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**

As we seek and receive both righteousness and purity in our lives as a gift by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we find and enjoy peace with God, peace with other children of God in so far as that rests with us, and peace within ourselves. Without compromising the truth about Jesus and how His followers should live, we can also work

toward a measure of peace with our enemies. We cease to be at war with God (which is wanting our will to be done instead of His will be done). We cease to be at war within ourselves (which involves planning to do something wrong while knowing we should obey God). The Spirit of God within us enables us to act as Jesus himself would act in similar circumstances, so we are truly called children of God by our heavenly Father (if not by others). Through faith in Jesus Christ, we have been adopted into God's family and are rightly called children of God.

**(Matthew 5:10) “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

When we have grown spiritually, and after Jesus has substantially transformed our lives enough for others to see the difference Jesus makes (and the beginning of this change can sometimes be seen the very day we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior), some will see us as children of God, as sincere Christians, as workers for justice and righteousness according to the commands of God our Father and of Jesus as revealed in the Bible. Some will see us trying to help others come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior too. Some people will see us as seeking and working for righteousness and peace based on the truth, justice, mercy, and love of God in Jesus Christ; therefore, those committed to doing and promoting “this world's ways” will begin to persecute us. The world does not want to behave according to the will of God. The worldly do not

want to obey God's commandments. In some places they will fight to prevent the mention of God in some public places. They will fight against public prayer or allowing the Bible to be read in many places. They will promote every sin that the Bible rightly condemns; therefore, they will harm others as well as themselves. They will persecute the children of God. Those persecuted for living in righteous ways are living in the kingdom of heaven now, for the kingdom of God is theirs now (even as they suffer persecution) and the kingdom of God is in our midst. Someday, after Jesus Christ visibly returns to Earth, Christians will rule and reign with Jesus Christ in the kingdom of God over the entire world.

**(Matthew 5:11) “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.**

The worldly, those of this world, and the devil hate Jesus. The worldly crucified Jesus based on false charges. The world and the devil hate the disciples of Jesus, and they persecuted those who first followed Him—killing many. When the world sees that you are different from the world because you follow Jesus, you will be persecuted on account of Jesus. As you become increasing like Jesus morally and spiritually, even the worldly will begin to see Jesus in you by the way you act and speak; therefore, you will be insulted, persecuted, and lied about because of Jesus in you. How wonderful to grow spiritually to the point that others recognize that you are a true follower of



Jesus Christ, so much so that the world hates you and wants you silenced—persecution will be painful in this world until Jesus returns or you go to heaven to be with Jesus. By the grace of God, we may say someday, “I am blessed by Jesus, even though some are insulting me, persecuting me, and falsely saying all kinds of evil against me.”

**(Matthew 5:12) “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

How amazing to live so close to Jesus moment-by-moment that you automatically and supernaturally respond to persecution, insults, and falsehoods told about you by rejoicing and being glad! At this point in the beatitudes, the true disciples of Jesus Christ have grown spiritually (during the process the Bible calls sanctification) to the point that they can rejoice, even choose to rejoice, even choose to be glad when those of the world and the devil persecute them. Jesus Christ living in the life of Christians gives Christians this victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. The prophets and Jesus were persecuted by the religious leaders and the political leaders of their day. As the Old and New Testaments clearly describe, the greatest persecution for the true followers of Jesus Christ can even come from some in their church and not just from those of the world; but even then, Jesus’ beatitudes encourage us to rejoice and be glad. If we are persecuted for the sake of

righteousness or for Jesus' sake, our reward from God is great, and we will be rewarded by Jesus in the future when He says to us, "Well done good and trustworthy servant" (see Matthew 25:21).

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Why do you think Jesus began His beatitudes by saying those who are poor in spirit are happy or blessed? How might this differ from a worldly perspective?
2. What is the promise in the second beatitude? How might this promise encourage a follower of Jesus?
3. What does the world usually think of a meek person? What does Jesus think about a meek person? Why do you think there is a difference in thinking?
4. What is the relationship between hungering and thirsting for righteousness and purity of heart?
5. Why are the followers of Jesus persecuted rather than honored by the world? Why do you think some in the church persecute those in the church who are truly seeking to follow Jesus?

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*International Bible Lesson.*

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