



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC The Beatitudes (Part 1)

SPEAKER Elder Lok Vi Ming

THEME Values for Living – The Beatitudes

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION TO THE BEATITUDES

What makes a person a Christian?

What is it that gives us moral ground to tell others how to live their lives? What is it about our lives that are attractive to people – both the Christian and the non-Christian?

This week, Elder Lok opens the topic of the Beatitudes with a series of thought-provoking questions. We look to **Matt 5:1-12** where Jesus delivered the eight Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. In studying this passage, Elder Lok reminds us that these teachings aren't instructions for salvation; rather, they are instructions for the **manifestation of faith and salvation in our lives**.

PURSUE MEEKNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, MERCY & PURITY

He begins with Matt 5:5-8, beseeching us to heed Jesus' teachings:

⁵Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

1. BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

In the eyes of the world, a person who isn't meek is aggressive, dominant, persistent, strong etc. To be the 'meek' is the opposite of that; they're easily pushed around, submissive, weak. But meekness, as in the bible, is not described as such. Take it from Moses: Moses had a temper. He was a murderer. He led an entire nation out of slavery. He even gave Pharaoh an ultimatum. Yet, Moses was described as 'very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth' [Num 12:3 KJV; other translations: humble]. Why was this so?

Moses learnt to be **submissive to the Lord**. He yielded his life [Psa 37:5-11], ceded all control and obeyed everything that God asked him to do. The lesson is this: **the more we surrender our lives, strengths, weaknesses and control to the Lord, the further we will go for His glory** [Psa 25:9].

2. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, WHO ARE MERCIFUL AND PURE IN HEART

Consider these propositions:

- 1) Our God is **righteous, just** and, all at once, **merciful** [Psa 89:14]
- 2) Whoever embraces the attributes of God will display similar characteristics [Jer 9:23-24]

To make sense of these statements, we need to understand who God is, and begin by discerning **the attributes of God**, which are evidenced by:

- His **responses** to the Israelites' suffering [*Exo 6:5-8*]:
 - God heard the groaning of the sons of Israel
 - He remembered His covenant
 - He promised to deliver them from their bondage
 - And redeem them with an outstretched arm and with great judgments
- His **laws**, which serve to protect the needy e.g. widows, orphans, poor, foreign workers, disabled etc.:
 - **The Jubilee Law** [*Lev 25:10, 28*] – as we pause from the breakneck speed at which we are moving, we undergo restoration
 - **The Gleaning Laws** [*Deu 24:19-22; Lev 19:9-10*] – this law teaches us to show kindness and grace to aliens and orphans, just as we too have been given accordingly. Elder Lok uses the example of how Boaz allowed Ruth to glean in his field, even feeding her [*Ruth 2*].
 - **Other laws** found in *Deu 24:12-13; Lev 25:36-37*

Then, through the parable of the talents, Elder Lok directs us to see how a **believer's life** would **reflect the character of God**. If we live as stewards of God, then we recognise the truth that the talents which our time, our finances and skills, have been given to us for service unto God. Thus a believer can be merciful and generous because he trusts in his God who provides, he hungers and thirsts after the righteousness that His God seeks. He can serve and give of himself with a pure heart. This is the part Elder Lok terms "The Exchange".

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

With this message, Elder Lok urges us do the following:

- Search ourselves
- Start by showing compassion in little things
- Emulate the likes of Job [*Job 29:12-17*] and Sir Nicholas Winton, the man who rescued 669 children from Nazi concentration camps
- Encourage one another to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly before God
- Not to discourage or disparage each other in doing good

Take this opportunity to pause and reflect upon these: Are we merciful and compassionate? Do we hunger and thirst for righteousness? Do injustice and poverty disturb us? Do our lives reflect the goodness and the lovingkindness of our God whom we claim to follow?

QUESTIONS

In your own words, explain what the first part of the Beatitudes are.

Why are we called to be meek, righteous, merciful, pure in heart?

Take a moment to reflect. How does your life measure up to the character of God? Do you reflect the truths of the Beatitudes? What needs to change today?