

Matthew 5

Bible Study Notes (Part 1)

A. The True Disciple (Part 1): Who He Is and His Reward (the Beatitudes), 5:1–12

(5:1–12) **Introduction:** seldom in history have so few words been spoken with so much meaning. The Beatitudes of our Lord are powerful, holding before the world a descriptive picture of the true disciple of God. The Beatitudes cover the glorious hope and reward the believer can expect, now as well as in eternity.

1. The multitudes: seen by Jesus (vv. 1–2).
2. The poor in spirit: given the Kingdom of Heaven (v. 3).
3. The person who mourns: will be comforted (v. 4).
4. The meek: will inherit the earth (v. 5).
5. The person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness: will be filled (v. 6).
6. The merciful: will obtain mercy (v. 7).
7. The pure in heart: will see God (v. 8).
8. The peacemakers: will be called the children of God (v. 9).
9. The persecuted: will be given the Kingdom of Heaven (vv. 10–12).

1 (5:1–2) **Compassion:** Jesus saw the multitudes. It is to be noted that the Sermon on the Mount was given to *the disciples* not to *the multitudes*. “Seeing the multitudes,” Jesus was moved with compassion over their desperate plight and need. He knew that He could not reach them by Himself, so He was driven to get alone with His disciples. He had to begin preparing them for their ministry to the multitudes.

How long was He with His disciples on the mountain? A day? A week? Several weeks? It simply says that “when He had come down from the mountain, multitudes followed Him” (Mt. 8:1).

Thought 1. There are two basic ingredients for reaching the multitudes.

- (1) Compassion: seeing the multitudes; keeping one’s eyes open so people and their needs can be seen.

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Mt. 9:36).

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Is. 63:9).

- (2) Discipleship: realizing that one cannot accomplish the task alone. Others must be taught to help in the great commission.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all

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things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt. 28:19–20).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Ti. 2:2).

Thought 2. Preaching and teaching are not to be done only in the church, but wherever people are found—on mountains, by the seashore, in homes, on the streets—any place and every place.

Thought 3. Crowds are important, but a small band of disciples is critical to accomplish the great commission. The mission of the Lord is reaching people, but the *method* of the Lord is to make disciples. It is giving intensive training to a small group so they can help in the ministry to the multitudes. Making disciples was also the method of Paul (see notes—Mt. 28:19–20).

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Mt. 28:19–20).

“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek.... Him would Paul have to go forth with him” (Ac. 16:1, 3).

“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Ti. 2:2).

Thought 4. Christian leaders are to call together small bands of disciples for special training and preparation. Matthew says without any explanation that “His disciples came to Him” (v. 1), but Mark and Luke say that Christ called the disciples together for training and preparation (Mk. 3:13; Lu. 6:13).

Thought 5. Three things are needed for training and preparation: a place, a time, and a message. The words “He went up ... and when He was set” seem to be saying that Jesus had deliberately chosen this place and time for this training. All had been planned; Jesus was personally prepared. (What a lesson too often neglected.)

(5:3) **Blessed** (makarios): spiritual joy and satisfaction that lasts regardless of conditions; that carries one through pain, sorrow, loss, and grief.

Thought 1. “To be blessed” is what men seek. The problem is that they seek it in the things of this earth: position, money, fame, power, and sensual pleasure.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth

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corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mt. 6:19–21).

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Co. 6:17–18).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn. 2:15–16).

Thought 2. Man seeks to be blessed only in this world. This says several things about his nature.

(1) Man is carnal and corruptible, and he is sinful and dying.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Ro. 8:5–8).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Ro. 3:23).

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Ro. 6:23).

“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (He. 9:27).

(2) Man is deceived and blinded to his real need, that of a renewed spirit.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3).

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ep. 4:23–24).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pe. 1:23).

(3) Man is ignorant of the Kingdom of Heaven (See *DEEPER STUDY # 3, Kingdom of Heaven*—Mt. 19:23–24).

- ⇒ He is misguided and deceived about it.
- ⇒ He is unbelieving about it.
- ⇒ He prefers something else to it.
- ⇒ He is hardened to it.

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- ⇒ He is neglectful of it.
- ⇒ He is unconcerned about it.

2 (5:3) Poor in Spirit: to acknowledge spiritual poverty. It is poverty, absolute and abject poverty of spirit. It is being destitute and conspicuously poor in spirit. Note several significant facts about the *poor in spirit*.

a. Being *poor in spirit* does not mean that a man must be poverty-stricken and financially poor. Hunger, nakedness, and slums are not pleasing to God, especially in a world of plenty. Christ is not talking about material poverty. He means what He says: poor *in spirit*. Being “poor *in spirit*” means several things.

- 1) To acknowledge our utter helplessness before God, our spiritual poverty, our spiritual need. We are solely dependent upon God to meet our need.
- 2) To acknowledge our utter lack in facing life and eternity apart from God. To acknowledge that the real blessings of life and eternity come only from a right relationship with God (see note—Ep. 1:3; see Jn. 10:10; Ga. 5:22–23).
- 3) To acknowledge our utter lack of superiority before all others and our spiritual deadness before God. To acknowledge that we are no better, no richer, no more superior than the next person—no matter what we have achieved in this world (fame, fortune, power). Our attitude toward others is not proud and haughty, not superior and overbearing. To be *poor in spirit* means acknowledging that every human being is a real person just like everyone else—a person who has a significant contribution to make to society and to the world. The person *poor in spirit* approaches life in humility and appreciation, not as though life owes him, but as though he owes life. He has been given the privilege of living; therefore, he journeys through life with a humble attitude and he contributes all he can to a needy world out of a spirit of appreciation.

b. The opposite of being *poor in spirit* is having a spirit that is *full of self*. There is a world of difference between these two spirits. There is the difference of thinking that we are righteous versus acknowledging that we need the righteousness of Christ. There is the difference of being self-righteous versus being given the righteousness of Christ. Self-righteousness goes no farther than self; that is, it goes no farther than death. Self dies and everything with self including our self-righteousness. But the righteousness that is of Christ lives forever. (See notes—Ro. 3:21–22; note 3 and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Ga. 2:15–16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16. See outline and notes—Ro. 10:6–7.)

“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro. 3:21–22).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Co. 5:21).

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“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph. 3:9).

c. Two critical steps are taken by the person who truly acknowledges his spiritual poverty.

- 1) He turns his primary attention away from the things of this world. He knows things can never make him rich in spirit.
- 2) He turns his primary attention to God and His kingdom. He knows God alone can make him rich in spirit (see note—Ep. 1:3).

d. The *poor in spirit* are weary and burdened for the world. They know the truth of this world and of eternity. Therefore, they have set their faces to do their part for both.

- 1) They are weary of the deceptive appearances and enticements of this world. They have learned that “all is vanity [empty]” (Ec. 1:14) and all is corruptible. All waste away, even human life itself. Therefore, they feel weary and burdened for those who are still lost in the world.
- 2) They are weary from having labored so much to reach their generation. They have labored to serve and make their contribution as God has called them. They have toiled so laboriously for one reason only: the love of Christ constrained them to reach their generation (2 Co. 5:14).

e. The *poor in spirit* are those who approach the world as a child (see notes—Mt. 18:1–2; DEEPER STUDY # 2, 3, 4—Mk. 10:14. These notes give an excellent description of what it means to be *poor in spirit*.) All children are very, very precious to God and are given angels to look over them (Mt. 18:10 see Ps. 91:11).

DEEPER STUDY # 2

(5:3) **Poor in Spirit—Reward—Kingdom of Heaven:** the “poor in spirit” are blessed with the Kingdom of Heaven (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt. 19:23–24). The “poor in spirit” inherit three significant things.

1. The poor in spirit receive forgiveness of sin and God’s continued remembrance: the assurance that God will never forget.

“For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (He. 8:12).

“And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (He. 10:17).

“He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations” (Ps. 105:8).

“And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Je. 31:34).

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2. The poor in spirit receive a fellowship with other believers who walk as they walk. (See outline and notes—Ac. 2:41–47; Ep. 2:19–22.)

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Ac. 2:42).

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ep. 2:19–22).

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1 Jn. 1:3).

3. The poor in spirit receive the gift of life that is forever: the eternal fellowship with both God and the congregation of those who are poor in spirit.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (Jn. 5:24).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro. 8:15–17).

3 (5:4) **Mourn** (penthountes): to have a broken heart. It is the strongest word possible for mourning. It is like the deep mourning and wailing that occurs over the death of a loved one. It is sorrow—a desperate, helpless sorrow. It is a sorrow for sin, a broken heart over evil and suffering. It is a brokenness of self that comes from seeing Christ on the cross and realizing that our sins put Him there (see Js. 4:9). Note several significant facts.

a. Who is it that mourns? Who is it so full of grief that he cries and weeps and utters groanings deep from within? There are three persons who mourn and utter such groanings.

- 1) The person who is *desperately sorry* for his sins and unworthiness before God. He has such a sense of sin that his heart is just broken.

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Lu. 18:13).

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- 2) The person who really feels the desperate plight and terrible suffering of others. The tragedies, the problems, the sinful behavior of others—the state, the condition, the lostness of the world—all weigh ever so heavily upon the heart of the mourner.

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Mt. 9:36).

“And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick” (Mt. 14:14).

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him” (Ps. 103:13).

“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Is. 63:9).

- 3) The person who experiences personal tragedy and intense trauma.

b. Men are to mourn over their sins. This leads to confession and humility before God and results in being lifted up (Js. 4:8–10).

c. The person who mourns is comforted by Christ Himself. Christ was called the *man of sorrows* and was acquainted with grief (Is. 53:3). He is able to succor and to draw a person ever so close, comforting and strengthening him beyond imagination (He. 2:18; 4:15–16).

d. There is a godly sorrow, but there is also a worldly sorrow (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—2 Co. 7:10 for more discussion). There is also a self-centered sorrow (see notes—2 Co. 1:6–7).

DEEPER STUDY # 3

(5:4) **Comfort:** they who mourn *shall be* comforted (see note—2 Co. 1:3).

1. There is a present comfort.

a. A settled peace: a relief, a solace, a consolation within.

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (Jn. 14:27).

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (Jn. 16:33).

- b. An assurance of forgiveness and acceptance by God.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ep. 1:3).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:9).

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"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation [sacrifice] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:1–2).

- c. A fullness of joy: a sense of God's presence, care and guidance (Jn. 14:26); a sense of His sovereignty; a sense of His working all things out for good to those who love Him.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Ro. 8:28).

"And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people" (Ro. 15:11).

"As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Co. 6:10).

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11).

- 2. There is an eternal comfort.
 - a. A passing from death to life.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (Jn. 5:24).

- b. A wiping away of all tears.

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it" (Is. 25:8).

"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Re. 7:17).

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Re. 21:4).

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4 (5:5) Meek (praeis): to have a strong, but tender and humble, life. It is a strong, yet teachable, spirit. It is not being weak, bowing or spineless. It is a man who is strong, very strong, yet he is humble and tender. It is a man with all the emotions and ability to take and conquer, but he is able to control himself. It is discipline—a man disciplined because he is God-controlled. The opposite of meekness is arrogance or pride. In too many persons there is an air of sufficiency and superiority. A meek person knows that he has needs and does not have all the answers.

a. Who are the meek?

- 1) The person who is *controlled, not undisciplined*. The mind and body are disciplined, never let loose. Passion and urges, speech and behavior, sight and touch are always controlled.

“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Ro. 6:12).

“All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Co. 6:12).

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Co. 9:27).

“For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (Js. 3:2).

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pe. 1:5–7).

- 2) The person who is *humble, not prideful*.

- a) He is humble before God. He knows his need for God and for God’s hand upon his life, his need to be saved and controlled by God.
- b) He is humble before men. He knows he is not the epitome of mankind, nor the summit of knowledge among men. He does not have it all nor does he know it all.

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith” (Ro. 12:3).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Ph. 2:3–4).

- 3) The person who is *gentle, not easily provoked*. He is always in control when dealing with people: cool, even-tempered, able to show displeasure without reacting

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impulsively, able to answer softly. (See *Christ*, Mt. 11:29; 1 Pe. 2:23; see *Moses*, Nu. 12:3.)

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Ti. 2:24).

“[Love] doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Co. 13:5).

- 4) The person who is *forgiving, not revengeful*.

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Mt. 6:14).

“Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head” (Ro. 12:19–21).

- b. The meek person is a *quiet* person. He studies to be quiet.

“Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still” (Ps. 4:4).

- 1) He is quiet before God. He quietly surrenders to God, acknowledging his need without show or pomp, and he quietly goes before God daily, depending upon God for guidance and care.

“Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth” (Ps. 46:10).

- 2) He is quiet before men. He walks quietly before men, controlled in all things, in both speech and behavior.

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you” (1 Th. 4:11).

“[Pray] for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Ti. 2:2).

“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price” (1 Pe. 3:4).

DEEPER STUDY # 4

(5:5) **Inherit the Earth:** there are two points to be stressed in the reward to the meek (see Ps. 27:11).

1. The meek inherit the earth *now*; that is, they presently enjoy and experience the good things of the earth.

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- a. The meek have found themselves. They are comfortable with themselves. They know who they are; therefore, they are strong and confident, yet tender and humble.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Ph. 1:6).

“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Ti. 1:12).

- b. The meek know where they are going; they are teachable. They have nothing to prove. They have purpose, meaning, and significance in life.

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Ti. 4:8).

“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever” (2 Ti. 4:18).

- c. The meek are assured of victory, conquest, triumph over whatever confronts them. They are controlled; therefore, they control circumstances instead of letting circumstances control them. They are free from stress and tension.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us” (Ro. 5:1–5).

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Co. 10:13).

- d. The meek have peaceful souls. They carry whatever pressure and tension comes their way to Christ, and He relieves it all.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Mt. 11:28–30).

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2. The earth is theirs eternally, that is, the new heavens and earth. An inheritance of eternal life and dominion is promised them, for they are joint-heirs with Christ.

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Ro. 8:16–17).

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Tit. 3:7).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pe. 1:3–4; see 2 Pe. 3:10–13).

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away” (Re. 21:1).

5 (5:6) Hunger and Thirst: to have a starving spirit. It is real hunger and starvation of soul. It is a parched and dying thirst. It is a starving spirit and a parched soul that craves after righteousness. But there is something more: righteousness means *all righteousness*. The true believer is starved and parched for *all righteousness*. This is shown by the Greek, for the verbs hunger and thirst are usually in what is called the Greek genitive case. This simply means that a person sometimes feels a little hunger and a little thirst; therefore, he hungers and thirsts for a bit of something, for example, an apple or a glass of juice. But in the beatitude, hunger and thirst are in the accusative case. This is most unusual. It means a hunger and a thirst for the *whole thing*—for all righteousness, not for little tidbits. This is significant: it means that the promise of a *filled life* is conditional. A person must starve and thirst for *all righteousness* if he wishes to be filled with the fullness of life. Note several significant points.

a. Who is blessed? The person who hungers and thirsts *to be* righteous and *to do* righteousness. To do righteousness is not enough. To be righteous is not enough. Both are essential in order to be blessed (See DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt. 5:6).

Thought 1. Many want just bits and pieces of righteousness—just enough to make them comfortable.

b. There are those who *stress being righteous* and *neglect doing righteousness*. This leads to two serious errors.

1) The error of false security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has believed in Jesus Christ. But he neglects doing good. He does not live as he should, obeying God and serving man.

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- 2) The error of loose living. It allows a person to go out and do what he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his faith in Christ. He knows that wrong behavior may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behavior does not affect his salvation and acceptance with God.

The problem with this stress is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means *being righteous* and *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing about being righteous *without living righteously*.

c. There are those who *stress doing righteousness* and *neglect being righteous*. This also leads to two serious errors.

- 1) The error of self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works, behaves morally, keeps certain rules and regulations, does the things a Christian should do, and obeys the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance—that God loves him and accepts him not because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ (See DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt. 5:6).
- 2) The error of being judgmental and critical. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and censors others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept because he keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized, and censored.

The problem with this stress is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is both *being righteous* and *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without *being made righteous* in Christ Jesus (see DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt. 5:6; see 2 Co. 5:21. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, 2—Ro. 4:22 for more discussion.)

d. The answer to righteousness is not what most men think when they think of righteousness. When most men think of righteousness, they think of doing good—doing good deeds, good works, and helping their fellow man. As man walks through life, he faces appeal after appeal for help, and he helps. And he feels comfortable with himself because he has helped. He feels his *good deeds* make him acceptable and righteous before God. But the Bible is not saying that men never do good; it is saying that men are not righteous—not perfectly righteous within their hearts (See DEEPER STUDY # 5—Mt. 5:6).

e. Christ does not say, “Blessed are the righteous,” for no one is righteous (Ro. 3:10). He says, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst *after* righteousness.” Man is not righteous, not perfectly righteous. His chance to be righteous is gone. He has already come short and missed the mark. He is already imperfect. Man has but one hope: that God will love him so much that He will somehow *count* him righteous. That is just what God does. God takes a man’s “hunger and thirst after righteousness” and counts that hunger and thirst as righteousness. God does this because He loves man (Ro. 5:6, 8–9. See DEEPER STUDY # 1, 2—Ro. 4:22; note—5:1.)

Thought 1. The question each person needs to ask is this: How much am I seeking after righteousness? Am I seeking at all—seeking a little—seeking some—seeking much—

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seeking more and more? What Christ says is this: a person has to crave, starve, and thirst after righteousness. A person must seek righteousness more and more if he wishes to be filled and satisfied.

f. Every person has some pull and some influence that urges him to do good. The pull and influence need to be nourished. In fact, it has to be nurtured or else it weakens, and it can be subdued and weakened so much that it is killed completely. It is just hardened against doing anything except what self wants to do (He. 3:13 see Pr. 21:29; 28:14; 29:1).

g. Righteousness is the only thing that will fill and satisfy man's innermost need. Food and drink will not. Any honest and thinking man knows there is nothing anywhere on this earth that can meet his deep need for life (permanent life, life that never ends). Only God can fill a life and satisfy the deep need for permanent life. This is the reason Christ says to hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Thought 1. Being filled means to "be filled with the spirit" (Ep. 5:18). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace...." (Ga. 5:22–23).

DEEPER STUDY # 5

(5:6) **Righteousness:** What is righteousness? (Also see notes—Ro. 3:21; 4:4–5; DEEPER STUDY # 1, 2—4:22; notes—5:1; 10:5; 10:6–7; note 3 and DEEPER STUDY # 1—Gal. 2:15–16; DEEPER STUDY # 2—2:16; see Gal. 3:10.) In the Bible *righteousness* means two simple but profound things; it has a double meaning. It means *to be* right and *to do* right. It may be said another way: *to be good* and *to do good*. This is critically important in the Bible.

"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Ro. 3:10).

"There is none good but one, that is, God" (Mt. 19:17).

"All ... come short of the glory of God" (Ro. 3:23).

What is being said is that God alone is righteous; He alone is perfectly good. Man is not perfectly righteous; he comes short. How then can a man become perfectly righteous? What is the answer? The answer is what Christ says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." What happens is this.

God takes a person's "hunger and thirst after righteousness" and *counts* it as righteousness. The person is not righteous, but God counts him righteous. This is the great love of God. A man hungers and thirsts after righteousness; therefore, God fills him.

Several things need to be said about righteousness.

1. Righteousness is explained throughout Scripture in the word *faith*. Faith is believing God and trusting the goodness of God to take our faith and count it as righteousness (See DEEPER STUDY # 1, 2—Ro. 4:22; note—5:1; see 4:1–3). Hebrews 11:6 says it clearly: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

It is the person who *diligently seeks God* who really believes God. The man who so *hungers and thirsts after God and His righteousness* shall be counted righteous and shall be filled. (See outline and notes—Ph. 3:7–16.)

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2. The righteousness of God has been shown to man. Just what God wants man *to be* and *to do* has been demonstrated perfectly in Jesus Christ. This is the love of God. God has not given man just the written Word describing His righteousness; He has given man a life—the life of His own Son—to show what He means by righteousness. Jesus Christ is perfect righteousness; He did nothing but good. This is what the Bible means when it talks about Christ's being “the righteousness of God.” Christ is the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of righteousness—of *being right* and of *doing right*.

“Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ... righteousness” (1 Co. 1:30).

“... the righteousness of God in Him [Christ]” (2 Co. 5:21).

“Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Ph. 3:9).

3. Righteousness involves the mind. Scripture says it involves being “renewed in the spirit of your mind” (Ep. 4:23), and being “renewed in knowledge” (Col. 3:10).

What does this mean? Very simply, the man who seeks “after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” He “puts on the new man” and is “renewed in the spirit of [his] mind” (Ep. 4:23).

Another way to say the same thing is this: the man who seeks after God has “put off the old man with his deeds; and [has] put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (Col. 3:9–10).

DEEPER STUDY # 6

(5:6) **Filled—Life, Abundant:** the believer who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is wonderfully filled with both abundant life and eternal life.

1. He is “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge” (Ro. 15:14).
2. He is “filled with all the fullness of God” (Ep. 3:19).
3. He is “filled with the Spirit” (Ep. 5:18).
4. He is “filled with the fruits of righteousness” (Ph. 1:11).
5. He is “filled with the knowledge of His [God's] will” (Col. 1:9).
6. He is “filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit” (Ac. 13:52).

6 (5:7) Merciful (eleemones): to have a forgiving spirit and a compassionate heart. It is showing mercy and being benevolent. It is forgiving those who are wrong, yet it is much more. It is empathy; it is getting right inside the person and feeling right along with him. It is a deliberate effort, an act of the will to understand the person and to meet his need by forgiving and showing mercy. It is the opposite of being hard, unforgiving, and unfeeling. God forgives only those who forgive others. A person receives mercy only if he is merciful (see Mt. 6:12; Js. 2:13). Several significant facts need to be noted about mercy.

a. The person who is merciful has a tender heart—a heart that cares for all who have need, seen or unseen. If he sees the needful, he feels for them and reaches out to do all he can. If he

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does not see them, he feels and reaches out through prayer and giving as opportunity arises. The merciful just do not hoard or hold back any kind of help, no matter the cost.

- 1) They have the love of God dwelling in them.

“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 Jn. 3:17).

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (Js. 2:15–16).

- 2) They know that it is *more blessed to give than to receive*.

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Ac. 20:35).

b. Every believer can be merciful. Some may not have money or other means to help, but they can be tender and compassionate, demonstrating mercy through expression and prayer. In fact, God instructs the believer to be merciful. He charges the believer to do some very practical things:

- 1) “Deal ... bread to the hungry” (Is. 58:7; Js. 2:15).
- 2) “Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house” (Is. 58:7).
- 3) “Cover him [the naked]” (Is. 58:7; Js. 2:15).
- 4) Strengthen and comfort the broken and grieving soul (Jb. 16:5).
- 5) Pity the afflicted (Jb. 6:14).
- 6) Bear the burdens of others—even to the point of restoring them when they sin. But we reach out to them in a spirit of meekness. (Ga. 6:2 see 6:1).
- 7) Support the weak (Ac. 20:35).

c. The results of being merciful are numerous.

- 1) A person is given the mercy of God—forgiveness of sins (Ps. 18:25; see 2 S. 22:26).
- 2) A person does good to his own soul (Pr. 19:17).
- 3) A person is paid back what he gives—by God Himself (Pr. 19:17).
- 4) A person behaves like God Himself (Lu. 6:36; see Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:15).
- 5) A person is blessed (Ps. 51:1).
- 6) A person is assured of finding “mercy in that day” (2 Ti. 1:18).
- 7) A person shall inherit the Kingdom of God—forever (Mt. 25:34–35).

d. The unmerciful are warned by God.

- 1) They shall face “judgment without mercy” (Js. 2:13).

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- 2) They shall face the anger and wrath of God (Mt. 18:34–35).
- 3) They are not forgiven their sins (Mt. 6:12, 14–15).

e. Two opposite attitudes are shown toward mercy.

- 1) The attitude of shutting up one's compassion from those in need (1 Jn. 3:17; see Js. 2:15–16).
- 2) The attitude of putting on a heart of mercy (Col. 3:12).

DEEPER STUDY # 7

(5:7) **Mercy**: see note—Ep. 2:4–5 for discussion.

7 (5:8) **Pure** (katharoi): to have a clean heart; to be unsoiled, unmixed, unpolluted; to be cleansed, purged, forgiven; to be holy; to have a single purpose, that of God's glory. There are several significant points to note about the "pure in heart."

a. The person who is *pure in heart* lives a clean life.

- 1) He *keeps himself unspotted from the world*.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Js. 1:27).

- 2) He washes his heart from wickedness that he may be saved.

"Wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" (Je. 4:14).

- 3) He obeys the truth through the working of the Holy Spirit.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pe. 1:22).

- 4) He keeps his hands clean.

"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (Ps. 24:4–5).

- 5) He seeks to be without spot and blameless.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Pe. 3:14).

b. A person's very best behavior is seldom (if ever) free from some mixture of self. It is questionable if a sinful creature can ever act perfectly—perfectly free from mixed motives. As the Bible says, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ro. 3:12). The believer is to

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constantly search his heart and cleanse it of impure motives. Motives involving self are insidious and deceptive.

- 1) Is a person employed primarily for self, or to serve Christ and to earn enough to help others who have a need (Col. 3:24; Ep. 4:28)?
- 2) Is a person ministering to help the needy, or to have a sense of self-satisfaction (see Mt. 5:7)?
- 3) Is a person worshipping to honor God, or to satisfy a feeling of obligation?
- 4) Is a person praying daily to fellowship with God, or to gain comfortable feelings that he pleases God through praying?

Impure motives enter the believer's heart so quietly, so deceptively. The believer is too often unaware of their presence. He needs to pray often: "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (Ps. 51:10)!

c. The *pure in heart* minister in two very practical areas:

- They visit the fatherless.
- They visit widows in their affliction.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Js. 1:27).

DEEPER STUDY # 8

(5:8) **Pure in Heart:** there are two wonderful promises made to the *pure in heart*. The pure in heart "shall see God" (Mt. 5:8).

1. Presently, the *pure in heart* shall see God by faith, "through a glass, darkly" (1 Co. 13:12). Just imagine! The *pure in heart* endure in the faith "as already seeing Him who is invisible" (He. 11:27).

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Co. 13:12).

"By faith he [Moses] forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (He. 11:27).

2. Eternally, the *pure in heart* shall see God face to face. They shall see Him as He is and behold "His face in righteousness" (Ps. 17:15).

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Co. 13:12).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn. 3:2).

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“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness” (Ps. 17:15).

8 (5:9) Peacemakers: to bring men together; to make peace between men and God; to solve disputes and erase divisions; to reconcile differences and eliminate strife; to silence tongues and build right relationships.

a. Who is the peacemaker?

- 1) The person who strives to make peace with God (Ro. 5:1; Ep. 2:14–17). He conquers the inner struggle, settles the inner tension, handles the inner pressure. He takes the struggle within his heart between good and evil, and strives for the good and conquers the bad.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ro. 5:1).

“For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh” (Ep. 2:14–17).

- 2) The person who strives at every opportunity to make peace *within* others. He seeks and leads others to make their peace with God—to conquer their inner struggle, to settle their inner tension, to handle their inner pressure.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Ro. 14:19).

- 3) The person who strives at every opportunity to make peace *between* others. He works to solve disputes and erase divisions, to reconcile differences and eliminate strife, to silence tongues and build relationships.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Ph. 2:3).

“Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers” (2 Ti. 2:14).

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient” (2 Ti. 2:24).

b. The peacemaker is the person who has made *peace with God* (Ro. 5:1), and knows the *peace of God* (see note—Jn. 14:27).

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c. Peacemakers love peace, but they do not passively accept trouble. There are those who claim to love peace, yet they remove themselves from all trouble. They ignore and flee problems and threatening situations, and they often evade issues. They make no attempt to bring peace between others. The peacemaker (of whom Christ speaks) faces the trouble no matter how dangerous, and works to bring a true peace no matter the struggle.

d. The world has its troublemakers. Practically every organization has its troublemakers, including the church. Wherever the troublemaker is, there is criticism, grumbling, and murmuring; and, too often, a division within the body—a division that is sometimes minor, sometimes major; sometimes just distasteful, sometimes outright bitter. The peacemaker cannot stand such. He goes forth to settle the matter, solve the problem, handle the differences, and reconcile the parties.

e. The gospel of Christ is to be spread by peaceful means, not by forceful means. There are many kinds of force.

- 1) There is verbal force through loudness, a dominating conversation, improper sales tactics, threats, bigotry, and abuse.
- 2) There is physical force through facial expressions, body motions, an overpowering presence, and attacks.

DEEPER STUDY # 9

(5:9) **Children of God:** See DEEPER STUDY # 2, *Adoption*—Ga. 4:5–6; notes—Ro. 8:15–17; 1 Jn. 3:2.

9 (5:10–12) **Persecuted:** to endure suffering for Christ; to be mocked, ridiculed, criticized, ostracized; to be treated with hostility; to be martyred. (See note—Lu. 21:12–19; note 1 and DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Pe. 4:12; note—4:14.) Note several significant points.

a. There are three major kinds of persecution mentioned by Christ in this passage:

- ⇒ Being reviled: verbally abused, insulted, scolded, mocked (cruel mockings, He. 11:36).
- ⇒ Persecuted: hurt, ostracized, attacked, tortured, martyred, and treated hostilely.
- ⇒ Having *all manner* of evil spoken against: slandered, cursed, and lied about (see Ps. 35:11; Ac. 17:6–7; see “hard speeches,” that is, *harsh, defiant words*, Jude 15).

b. Who are the persecuted?

- 1) The person who lives and speaks for righteousness and is reacted against.
- 2) The person who lives and speaks for Christ and is reviled, persecuted, and spoken against.

c. Persecution is a paradox. It reveals that the true nature of the world is evil. Think about it: the person who lives and speaks for righteousness is opposed and persecuted. The person who cares and works for the true love, justice, and salvation of the world is actually fought against. How deceived is the world and its humanity to rush onward in madness for nothing but to return to dust, to seek life only for some seventy years (*if* nothing happens before then)!

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d. Believers are forewarned; they shall suffer persecution.

- 1) Believers shall suffer persecution because they are not of this world. They are *called out* of the world. They are in the world, but they are not of the world. They are separated from the behavior of the world. Therefore, the world reacts against them.

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (Jn. 15:19).

- 2) They shall suffer persecution because believers strip away the world’s *cloak of sin*. They live and demonstrate a life of righteousness. They do not compromise with the world and its sinful behavior. They live pure and godly lives, having nothing to do with the sinful pleasures of a corruptible world. Such living exposes the sins of people.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.... If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin” (Jn. 15:18, 22).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Ti. 3:12).

- 3) They shall suffer persecution because the world does not know God nor Christ. The ungodly of the world want no God other than themselves and their own imaginations. They want to do just what they want—to fulfill their own desires, not what God wishes and demands. However, the godly believer dedicates his life to God, to His worship and service. The ungodly want no part of God; therefore, they oppose those who talk about God and man’s duty to honor and worship God.

“But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me” (Jn. 15:21).

“And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (Jn. 16:3).

- 4) They shall suffer persecution because the world is deceived in its concept and belief of God. The world conceives God to be the One who fulfills their earthly desires and lusts (Jn. 16:2–3). Man’s idea of God is that of a *Supreme Grandfather*. They think that God protects, provides, and gives no matter what a person’s behavior is, just so the behavior is not too far out, that God will accept and work all things out in the final analysis. However, the true believer teaches against this. God is love, but He is also just and demands righteousness. The world rebels against this concept of God.

“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me” (Jn. 16:2–3).

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“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also” (Jn. 15:20).

“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not know the Father, nor me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you” (Jn. 16:1–4).

“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (1 Th. 3:3).

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Ph. 1:29).

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Ti. 3:12).

“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 Jn. 3:13).

“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified” (1 Pe. 4:12–14).

e. Persecutions can erupt from the most devilish imaginations of men (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—1 Pe. 4:12 for a description of some of the sufferings of God’s dear people).

f. What is to be the believer’s attitude toward persecution?

- 1) It is *not* to be retaliation, pride, spiritual superiority.
- 2) It *is* to be joy and gladness (Mt. 5:12; 2 Co. 12:10; 1 Pe. 4:12–13).

g. The persecuted are promised great rewards.

- 1) The Kingdom of Heaven—now.

- ⇒ They experience a special honor (Ac. 5:41).
- ⇒ They experience a special consolation (2 Co. 1:5).
- ⇒ They are given a very special closeness, a glow of the Lord’s presence (see note—1 Pe. 4:14).
- ⇒ They become a greater witness for Christ (2 Co. 1:4–6).

- 2) The Kingdom of Heaven—eternally (He. 11:35f; 1 Pe. 4:12–13; See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Mt. 19:23–24).

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