



**Series:** The Upside Down Kingdom

**Date:** March 17, 2024

**Speaker:** Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor

**Text:** Matthew 5:5<sup>1</sup>

**Title: Blessed are the Humble**

### **Introduction - coming out of baptism video**

Hey if it seems like we are making a big deal about baptisms...it's because we are! If you have not been through believers baptism, we want to call you to take that step of following Jesus this Easter. Baptism is a sign Jesus has given the church to practice so that when someone comes to faith there is a public declaration that comes with it.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> WORKS CONSULTED

Iain M. Duguid, *Hero of Heroes: Seeing Christ in the Beatitudes* (P&R Publishing, 2001), pp.25-31.

And I can think of no better time to get baptized. To declare your allegiance to Christ that you are his and he is yours...than easter. And I know you can come up with LOTS of reasons not to get baptized.

- I'll be wearing easter clothes - We will coach you on the clothes you'll need and if you don't have any that work, we'll provide them.
- I've got plans after - We've got all the stuff you need to get dry and changed. Towels & hair dryers & everything.
- I've got people coming to church with me - Well, I promise you that if you invite them to church and tell them you are getting baptized, they'd probably be honored you invited them. What a GREAT opportunity.
- Wait I was baptized as a child - Most likely that was a sign of your parents faith. PRAISE GOD for your parents! You getting baptized now is not nullifying their step of faith but instead it's you ratifying what they prayed would happen in your life.
- I'm nervous - I understand. Baptism is not a spectacle though, it's a step of obedience. He's

John MacArthur, *The Only Way To Happiness: The Beatitudes* (Moody Publishers, 1998), pp. 91-108  
A.W. Pink, *The Beatitudes* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), pp. 9-12.



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going to call you to many more. You are not the main character, Jesus is. We celebrate what he did and listen every member here has gone through it. And listen, Jesus didn't die privately but publicly, and he calls us to a public faith. On top of that, your courage may encourage someone else in the step of faith God is calling them to take.

Listen I know you've got reasons but here are two that should compel you. ONE - the practice of the NT church in scripture is one of belief followed by baptism. And TWO - if God has called you here to this church, this is how we acknowledge our faith to one another as we come into the church. Anyway, you can go to our website [mercycharlotte.com/baptism](http://mercycharlotte.com/baptism) or, have a conversation with me or one of our pastors after the service.

### **SERMON intro**

On to the sermon. LET'S GO! Matthew Chapter 5. We are walking through the first words of the first sermon Jesus ever preached. It's a set of blessings, often called the beatitudes, that Jesus gives to the citizens of his kingdom. And what we've been saying makes this so upside down is that the descriptions he's giving of his people - poor in spirit, mourners, humble,

persecuted...they don't sound blessed. After all, what KING goes around celebrating that his people are poor, persecuted, & mourning. At first read It's like he's announcing his kingdom is a kingdom of losers.

And yet, the more we consider his words the more we realize the blessed life is, in so many ways, the opposite, the reverse, the upside down of the life this world calls us to.

So, if you are new to Church and Christianity, welcome. This is a great series of sermons for you to get to know Jesus and the Christian faith. Because in these messages he's laying out not just the core Christian message and the Christian way of life but all the promises that come with it. So today we are in verse 5. Like I said last week these build on each other so let me start in verse 3 and read through to verse 5.

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

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.

-- Matthew 5:3-5

Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth. Man, this one is RICH with meaning and implications for us. Here's our outline for understanding it and figuring out what God wants for us in it.



1. the explanation - especially that word humble. Some translations read meek, some gentle. So, we'll get clear on what he means here. AND we'll talk about the promise he makes. Like all the other beatitudes he says blessed are this kind of people and part of that blessing is a promise for the future.
2. Look at the example of Jesus
3. And finally, we'll talk about how to live this beatitude out.

What it means, what it looks like, and how to live it out.

### Let's start with what it means

You guys know Legos, right? If you've been here a minute you know I like Legos. I don't like when they are left on the floor for me to step on like a home alone booby trap. BUT outside of that, I like them. Well, we are going to build a definition of HUMBLE, kind of like building with Legos. Because it turns out the bible has a lot to say about this. So, we gotta get what God means and not just what we think humble means. Or what the world thinks humble means or what Kendrick Lamar thinks humble means. (If you know, it was for you. If you don't, it wasn't.) But humble is a familiar word in our English language. Just like mourning was last week. So, we could be tempted to think we already know & to form an idea before we really HEAR from God's word. And then we'd miss out on something

about who God calls us to be and the promise available to us. So, let's go find these Lego pieces and see what God has for us.

There are building blocks all across scripture that speak to what Jesus is saying here. We are going to look at just 4. So, it means you gotta track with me as we go collect these Legos BUT, in about 10 minutes we'll have an informed and really helpful definition. Cool?

Ok the first Lego, first building block is over in the Old Testament in Psalm 37. And the reason we track all the way back there is that what Jesus is saying here is pretty much a verbatim quote of Psalm 37. And on that note, if you really want to understand Jesus...read the Old Testament. He's always quoting & referencing and fulfilling the Old Testament. Anyways, Psalm 37.11 says **11 But the humble will inherit the land and will enjoy abundant prosperity. Psalm 37.11**

Where this verse says "land" it's basically the same word for "earth" that is in Matthew 5.5. Jesus is quoting the psalm. look up just two verses in the Psalm and you will see something about these humble people:

**9 For evildoers will be destroyed, but those who put their hope in the Lord will inherit the land.**

Alright so already there's a Lego right there to WHO the humble are. They hope in the Lord. And in fact, if



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you go further back up in this psalm you'll see even more about the humble.

5 Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act,

6 making your righteousness shine like the dawn, your justice like the noonday. 7 Be silent before the Lord and wait expectantly for him; do not be agitated by one who prospers in his way, by the person who carries out evil plans. 8 Refrain from anger and give up your rage; do not be agitated — it can only bring harm.

Ok so here's how I would summarize the Lego piece, the building block, that Psalm 37 gives us to help shape our definition of "humble" from today's beatitude.

The humble: those who trust in the Lord and wait on him.

At this point I think it's good to acknowledge something we've acknowledged the past two weeks. When Jesus says blessed are the humble - he's talking about a spiritual humility. Not just some generic humility. Like oh that guy or girl doesn't talk about themselves & always lets people go in front of them in line or something. It's spiritual. Connect it to the other 2 beatitudes because I told you these build on themselves -

Just like we are poor in spirit meaning we know we have nothing to bring to God on our own. Just like we mourn spiritually meaning we grieve SIN and its effects on us and on the world. Humility is trusting NOT in ourselves BUT placing that trust somewhere. That TRUST is IN the Lord.

Psalm 37 says God's people trust in the Lord for him to act on their behalf. Here's why this is going to matter - at the bedrock of TRUE humility - is security.

AND YA'LL LISTEN BECAUSE THIS WILL SET SOME OF YOU FREE FROM a lot of self-imposed stress in your life. Humility is only possible when you are secure. I'm secure enough in something that I don't need to defend my name and reputation in this moment. When Jesus is saying blessed are the humble...the favor of God rests on the humble...he's talking about these folks who know they are spiritually poor, who grieve their spiritual poverty, and then turn to the LORD for help instead of trying to climb out of their spiritual poverty on their own. PRIDE comes from trying to PROVE your self worth. And the lie pride tells you is that you will be secure once you prove yourself. But you never are. Security comes instead when you humble yourself. Isn't that wild?

And remember what we said about these beatitudes? The beatitudes are talking about ONE PEOPLE not 8 different people. Jesus is talking here about ONE people, HIS PEOPLE. And he says BLESSED - which means the promised favor of God - RESTS UPON his



people who ARE HUMBLLED by their sin. And then RESTING in the work GOD has done for them in Christ. So, the HUMBLE are BLESSED because man, they don't have to try and make a name for themselves & they don't have to solve their greatest problem - their sin and the guilt & condemnation it brings. Instead, they are SECURE...but not secure in their own power...secure in GOD's power. In GOD's strength and in GOD's work on their behalf.

Turn to the Lord for security and trust he will provide it. Trust he will take care of you when your name & reputation is drug through the mud. When you feel like you gotta prove yourself. When you feel like your identity is wrapped up in your performance. You instead can be silent and wait on the Lord and he will provide!

And I'm telling you that is UPSIDE DOWN to what this world tells you to do. This world tells you to build your name and reputation and then defend it from all attackers.

And here this Psalm is saying the opposite. Commit your way to the Lord, trust in him, and he will act. The humble trust in the Lord and wait on him and they are silent. Alright let's go find some more Legos. I want to show you the other two times in Matthew where the SAME WORD is used. & one surprising but really helpful time in 1 Peter.

Matthew 21 - Jesus is coming into Jerusalem knowing he's coming to be crucified & die for the sins of the

world and tells his disciples to go ahead of him and get a donkey for him to ride in on. Upside Down Kingdom stuff right here. The King of Kings doesn't come in on a noble steed. But he does it to fulfill a prophecy about the messiah. And Matthew acknowledges it.

4 This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled: 5 Tell Daughter Zion, "See, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." -- Matthew 21:4-5 (CSB)

See that word gentle? That's our word from our beatitude. In the Greek its pronounced "praus." and what we are seeing here as a Lego for us...is that Jesus doesn't just call us to be humble. He models humility. He sets the example. So, when says the humble are blessed and calls us to that way of life he's calling us to follow him. The humble Jesus says are blessed are not just ones who trust in the Lord and wait on him...they are ones who follow in the footsteps of a king who is humble. So, we don't just trust in the Lord and wait on him, we follow the example he sets. Here's our Lego:

**The Humble: those who follow the example of Christ**

And I think right here is probably where our definition of the humble most closely aligns with the world's definition. Our king doesn't exalt himself, he takes the humble road. And something that even if you are not a Christian...something that is compelling in a good



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leader - that makes you want to follow him or her - is someone who has great strength or wealth but doesn't use it to exalt themselves. They don't parade it. They appear like the commoner even if they aren't. And they use their wealth or power to lift up others. We LIKE those kinds of leaders.

Where do you think that narrative came from? That kind of character - the man or woman of the people who though rich, lives among the poor & uses power to serve others...that is borrowed from Christianity. Where do you think characters like Robin Hood, Harry Potter, Neo, Aragon & Frodo got their inspiration? From the example of the king who came to us "gentle" or humble or lowly. In fact, let me take us to the next Lego. It's where Jesus talks about himself...And this one is SO good...

28 "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." -- Matthew 11:28-30 (CSB)

See that word humble? That's our humble from our beatitude. And now Jesus is talking about the accessibility he offers to weary and burdened people like you and I. How powerful is this. Dane Ortlund said it really well in his wonderful book gentle and lowly.

"For all his resplendent glory and dazzling holiness, his supreme uniqueness and otherness, no one in human history has ever been more approachable than Jesus Christ. No prerequisites. No hoops to jump through...the minimum bar to be enfolded into the embrace of Jesus is simply: open yourself up to him. It is all he needs. Indeed, it is the only thing he works with." - Dane Ortlund

What a beautiful and powerful notion that really helps us get our head around who the humble are. Right? The humble are the ones who, emptied of themselves, go to their humble savior and there they find help.

The humble: those who go down to Jesus to find rest for their souls

And I think for some of you that will be your big takeaway today. That JESUS is approachable. Because you are carrying burdens, and you need to lay those burdens down man. Your SOUL needs rest. And you can find that rest, finally, in Jesus. I imagine if you are soul tired, you've tried some things already. What makes the gospel so wonderful is the one who has the power to save you, to rescue you, and to give you rest...doesn't ask you to climb UP to him but to come down to where he is. Gentle and lowly. And find rest in him. WHAT OTHER GOD IS LIKE THIS?!?! Where rest & security are not found in achievement but in humility. What a gift for you and I. Listen I am by all personality tests an achiever. Don't waste my time just tell me



what the achiever is in your test & I'm that. Do you know the dark side of that for me is I need people to approve of me in order for my soul to rest? I need accomplishment to feel complete. That's what sin does. It distorts our understanding of rest. And it does it differently to all of us. And Jesus comes along and says stop thinking rest is in achieving. THATS PRIDE. Rest is in laying your burden down. Not in building but in releasing. Upside down.

Ok one last Lego. And its interestingly found in the apostle peter's instructions to wives.

3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, 4 but rather what is inside the heart — the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 -- 1 Peter 3:2-5

That gentle - that's "Praus" again. Now how wonderful is this for you who are wives or will be wives? Sometimes there's a strain of Christianity that talks to wives as if they are to be docile. And use that word meek as if it means weak or docile or you are supposed to just be a doormat for your husband or something. But listen - this is the word Jesus uses to describe himself! And he is not weak. He's God. He's the sight restoring, leper healing, storm silencing, dead people reviving, demon exorcising, food multiplying, sin forgiving, death defeating, eternally reigning boss. But as he approaches his sheep, all that great strength is under control and surrendered to the will of the father

and he says I am gentle & lowly, and God calls wives...and all Christians...to that same posture.

**Humble: Those whose God-given strength is used to serve the glory of God and the good of others.**

So, wives - you are powerful. And you are meant to Represent the great humbleness of Christ. The posture he chose so that others would see his love for his church. THERE, Peter says - is true beauty. Upside down kingdom. Beauty is God given strength submitted to the Lord in such a way that you carry yourself with gentle & quiet spirit towards others.

*IF TIME - a great example of this...I've read a handful of ancient sources who talked about the best horses as the ones who were "PRAUS." Am I comparing wives to horses? Never. But Solomon did in Song of Solomon so its biblical if I were to do that. BUT listen - In horse training the best horse was the one who was STRONG but also under control. Strength without control is dangerous. The war horses, etc. that were the most prized were those that used their strength to serve their rider. Likewise, men and women are called to be strong but controlled by God & his desires, not our own.*

Ok we've got our Legos. The humble trust in the Lord and wait on him, the humble follow the example of Christ, the humble find their souls rest in Jesus, the humble use their strength to serve God's glory & the good of others.



So, what is Jesus saying in our beatitude? Maybe a way to summarize this:

**The humble are those who find security and strength in Jesus and live for his glory, not their own.**

The humble trust in the Lord...they don't defend themselves or go after their own glory. After all we remember our first two beatitudes. Poor in spirit - nothing to bring to God.... mourning our spiritual poverty...but this is crucial...and we said it last week - mourning over our sin brings about a repentance and, in our repentance, we find security that CHRIST has paid for our sins. We find security in his work on the cross. And we find strength in our identity in Jesus because our future cannot be shaken. We are called sons and daughters of Jesus and...here's the second half of our beatitude...the humble will inherit the earth. There is GREAT strength for us in this promise.

Interestingly in the time Jesus said this - the Jewish people did not own one square inch of real estate. Even the temple was sitting on soil claimed by Rome. So, the promise of Psalm 37...that the humble would inherit the land...it hadn't been fulfilled yet. And what Jesus is saying is that this promise is actually not just about the promised land of Canaan, but about the whole earth. The humble...the people of God...will inherit what 2 Peter 3 calls a new heavens and a new earth. At the end of all things Revelation 21 tells us that the people of

God will dwell with God in a new heavens and new earth. WE will inherit the earth but not just the earth...the renewed earth. No longer broken by the effects of sin. That's a POWERFUL promise that gives security and strength to the humble.

So, now we have our Lego built definition of the humble - those who find security and strength in Jesus and live for his glory, not their own.

Let me show you the example of Jesus. If anyone had the right to be proud & defend himself, it was Jesus, right? If anyone could justify 100% of his actions...it would be Jesus because he was 100% righteous in all he did. And yet...Philippians 2 says this about him...

6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even to death on a cross. -- Philippians 2:5-8 (CSB)

Jesus who was God...humbled himself. To the point of death. He had the power to summon legions of angels to defend himself. But he didn't do that. No instead even when he was facing a tortuous death he said 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." -- Luke 22:42 (CSB)





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Gentle and lowly. Concerned more about the father's will than even his own life. And the ones who follow him are the ones who will share in his inheritance.

So, what does living the humble life look like? Blessed are the humble for they will inherit the earth. What does it look like? Part 3 of our sermon should be pretty quick.

**Prioritize the kingdom of Christ over the kingdom of self: "Not my will but yours be done."** Men and women is your zeal for Christ and his kingdom? Or for you and your kingdom? See the upside down kingdom says you will actually experience life when you lose your life for the sake of him and his glory. Blessed are the humble. The ones not concerned with their own lives but concerned with his. So let's get real. When I talk about your money - what does the green paper say you are about? What about your time - What does your family calendar say you are about? About God and his kingdom or the kingdom of kids activities? What about your relationships? Are you looking to honor God in your relationships? What about work? Are you building your kingdom or advancing God's kingdom in your workplace? Guys prioritize your INHERITANCE!! Find your hope in the promised new earth NOT in this broken one. You'll be much more at peace when all your hopes and dreams are not bound up in this world.

Here's one - when I talked about baptism - that's a kingdom of Christ thing. Are you thinking about what it will do to your kingdom or are you thinking "not my will but yours be done?" That's just one and its specific to only some of you but the point is - be specific. Look at the real situations of your life and ask God WHAT DO YOU WANT from THIS God?

**Look for ways to serve others** - The humble are ones who do not need to serve themselves. They trust that work to God. And they are FREE from their own self-exaltation that they can, like Christ, give their energy to serving others. You will actually find JOY in following the path of Christ here. This is the humble life. What if you went through this week asking the question to yourself about the people you interact with the most - What can I do to serve him? What can I do to serve her? To serve my boss, to serve my spouse, my friend, my parent, my sibling...GET YOUR EYES OFF YOURSELF. TRUST GOD WILL ACT FOR YOU and like Christ go serve others.

**Rest in Jesus' work, not in your own** - The path to true humility is receiving the finished work of Christ and then resting in it.

