

Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Bill Mounce's lecture, the second part of a series on the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, explores the interconnected nature of these blessings. He argues that recognizing one's **spiritual poverty** naturally leads to **mourning over sin**, which in turn fosters **meekness**—strength under God's control. This progression culminates in a **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, a deep desire to align oneself and the world with God's moral perfection. Mounce emphasizes that these are not isolated commands but a chain reaction initiated by acknowledging spiritual destitution and progressing towards a profound longing for God's righteousness, a journey of becoming more like Christ.

**2. 24 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 2 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (New Testament → Gospels → Sermon on the Mount).**



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3. Briefing Document: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2

Briefing Document: Dr. Bill Mounce on the Beatitudes (Part 2)

Overview: This document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Bill Mounce in the second part of his lecture on the Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. Mounce emphasizes the interconnectedness of the Beatitudes, describing them as a "golden chain" rather than a list of isolated commands. He delves into the meaning of mourning, meekness, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness, highlighting their significance in the Christian journey.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Golden Chain of the Beatitudes:

- Mounce stresses that the Beatitudes are not a random assortment of instructions but are linked together in a natural progression. He calls this the "golden chain."
- He argues that one cannot simply pick and choose which Beatitude to focus on without understanding the preceding ones. For example, trying to be merciful without first recognizing spiritual poverty and mourning over sin is futile.
- "The chain is what keeps the Beatitudes from becoming a list of do's and don'ts."

2. Blessed Are Those Who Mourn:

- **Mourning over Spiritual Poverty:** Mounce defines mourning in this context as lamenting over one's own spiritual bankruptcy and depravity, stemming from the recognition of spiritual poverty (Beatitude 1).
- "So, what does it mean to mourn? Again, I've already said it, it's to mourn over your spiritual poverty."
- **The Church's Loss of Lament:** He expresses concern that the modern church has largely forgotten the practice of lamenting sin, both individually and corporately.
- "Mourning is a, it's something the church has just forgotten, has it, for the most part."
- He references Michael Card's book on lament as an appeal to bring this practice back.

- **Three Aspects of True Lament: Confession of Sin:** Mourning begins with simply agreeing with God about the wrongness of our actions. "Mourning or lamenting one begins with a confession of sin... you're just agreeing with God. You're not telling God something He doesn't know."
- **Confession of Being a Sinner:** True mourning moves beyond acknowledging individual acts of sin to recognizing sin as part of our character, even after redemption. "Mourning moves from confessing sin to confessing I am a sinner." He acknowledges the theological nuance that while the mastery of sin is broken, the inclination to sin remains.
- **Sin Against God:** Ultimately, all sin is against God. He cites Genesis 39:9 (Joseph) and Psalm 51 (David) to illustrate this point. "Ultimately, my sin is against God." "Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."
- **Sorrow vs. Getting Caught:** Mounce distinguishes between genuine sorrow for sin and regret for being caught. He laments the American church's potential loss of the awe and holiness of God, leading to a lack of genuine mourning. "Are you sorry that you sinned, or are you sorry that you got caught?"
- **Divine Passive and Comfort:** The comfort for those who mourn comes from God. He highlights the scriptural cycle of being emptied (mourning) before being filled (comfort). This comfort is both present ("already") in the confession of sin and future ("not yet") in its ultimate removal in heaven (Revelation 21:4). "Blessed are those who mourn, that is, mourn over their sin, for they will be comforted. And these are all divine passives, right? The agent of the blessing and all the beatitudes is God."

3. Blessed Are the Meek:

- **Countercultural Definition:** Meekness, in the context of the Beatitudes, is presented as a countercultural concept, distinct from timidity or weakness. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. You want to talk about a countercultural statement, right?"
- **Attitude and Action:** Mounce defines meekness as both an attitude of submission to God and an action in how we relate to others.
- **Submission to God:** A meek person recognizes their spiritual bankruptcy, leaving no room for arrogance, and willingly submits to God without resistance. He quotes Quarrels: "A meek person is a person who, quote, subjects himself to God quietly without resistance."

- **Response to Others:** This submission to God dictates how we respond to others, especially in conflict, characterized by love, giving, and patient endurance rather than retaliation (referencing Ephesians 4:32).
- **Martyn Lloyd-Jones' Insight:** He shares an anecdote about Martyn Lloyd-Jones' definition of meekness as responding to criticism by acknowledging being worse than perceived. While Mounce found this challenging to preach personally, it highlights the deep humility inherent in true meekness. "True meekness hears someone's criticize me, and a meek person responds, yes, if you only really knew me, you'd know I'm much worse than you think I am."
- **Strength Under Control:** Mounce emphasizes that meekness is not weakness but "strength under God's control." He uses the analogy of a tame stallion: possessing immense power but being responsive to the rider's guidance.
- **Inheriting the Earth:** This promise is largely a future fulfillment in the "new heavens and the new earth," a physical reality where the meek will care for God's creation. He recommends Randy Alcorn's book on heaven for a deeper understanding of this physical future. "It is on we will one day inherit the earth. We will have the new heavens and the new earth." He connects this to the original mandate in Genesis to care for the earth and expresses disappointment with Christians who disregard environmental concerns. "Christians should be the greatest ecologists, period, hands down."

4. Blessed Are Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness:

- **Definition of Righteousness: God's Righteousness:** His moral perfection in character and behavior.
- **Our Righteousness:** Living in conformity with God's will and character.
- **Progression from Previous Beatitudes:** This hunger and thirst for righteousness is a natural consequence of recognizing spiritual poverty, mourning over sin, and embracing meekness. Because we lack inherent righteousness, we deeply desire God's righteousness in our lives and the world.
- **Deep Desire, Not Nibbling and Sipping:** Mounce emphasizes that this beatitude speaks of a profound, all-consuming desire for righteousness, not a casual or transactional approach to faith. He uses the metaphor of a "patchwork quilt" to illustrate how people often compartmentalize their lives, reserving only certain areas for God.

- **Critique of Complacency:** He expresses concern that many Christians are too easily satisfied with a superficial faith and do not have a genuine, driving passion for God's righteousness. He references Barna statistics regarding evangelical pastors and pornography to highlight this issue (though emphasizing he's not intending to shame).
- **Piper's "Desiring God":** He discusses John Piper's emphasis on making God the all-encompassing passion of life, referencing "Desiring God" and recommending "Don't Waste Your Life." However, he also acknowledges the tension in Piper's definition of salvation as loving God more than anything else, admitting his own struggles with this concept ("already, but not yet").
- **A Process of Becoming:** Mounce clarifies that this beatitude doesn't necessarily mean having already achieved a complete and unwavering love for God above all else, but rather being in the process of growing towards that. He emphasizes God's patience in this learning journey. "The blessing is pronounced on those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. I don't think it means that we have to have arrived at the final state of Jesus truly being our all-encompassing passion above anything and everything else. Because then, well, none of us are blessed. But it's a process, isn't it?"
- **Imagery of Hunger and Thirst:** Jesus uses these powerful images to convey the essential and life-sustaining nature of this desire for righteousness. The ultimate satisfaction of this hunger and thirst will be fully realized in heaven (John 6:35).
- **Life as a Journey:** Mounce concludes by emphasizing the metaphor of life as a journey, a process of learning and growing in grace. He is even writing a book titled "The Path" based on this concept. He sees the Beatitudes as guiding principles for this ongoing journey of becoming more like Christ.

Conclusion:

Dr. Mounce's lecture on these four Beatitudes highlights their interconnectedness and profound implications for the Christian life. He challenges listeners to move beyond a superficial understanding of these teachings, emphasizing the necessity of recognizing spiritual poverty, genuinely mourning over sin, embracing meekness as strength under God's control, and cultivating a deep and persistent hunger and thirst for God's righteousness as an ongoing journey of grace and transformation.

4. Study Guide: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2

Sermon on the Mount: Beatitudes, Part 2 - Study Guide

Key Concepts

- **The Golden Chain of the Beatitudes:** The idea that the Beatitudes are interconnected and build upon one another, starting with the recognition of spiritual poverty. This chain prevents them from being viewed as a disconnected list of rules.
- **Spiritual Poverty:** Recognizing one's complete dependence on God and lack of inherent spiritual resources. This is the foundational element of the golden chain.
- **Mourning (Lament):** A natural response to the recognition of spiritual poverty, involving sorrow and regret over one's sinfulness and separation from God. This includes both individual and corporate lament. True mourning involves confession of sin, acknowledging oneself as a sinner, and recognizing that sin is ultimately against God.
- **Meekness:** Not weakness, but strength under God's control. It stems from understanding one's spiritual bankruptcy, leading to a lack of arrogance and a willing submission to God without resistance. This attitude influences how one responds to others, especially in conflict, with love, forgiveness, and patience rather than retaliation.
- **Righteousness (as it pertains to God):** God's moral perfection in His character and behavior. He is the ultimate standard of what is right.
- **Righteousness (as it pertains to humans):** Living in conformity with God's will, character, and actions. It is a deep desire to be right with God and to see His righteousness reflected in the world.
- **Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness:** A profound and all-encompassing desire to be right with God and to live in a world aligned with His moral perfection. This is a natural progression from recognizing spiritual poverty, mourning sin, and embracing meekness. It is portrayed not as a casual interest but as a deep, driving need.
- **Divine Passives:** The grammatical structure in the Beatitudes indicating that the blessings come from God.

- **Already, But Not Yet:** The theological concept that the blessings of the kingdom of God are experienced in part in the present but will be fully realized in the future.
- **Positional Sanctification vs. Experiential Sanctification:** Believers are declared holy (positional) at the moment of salvation, and then progressively grow in holiness in their daily lives (experiential).
- **The Journey Metaphor:** The Christian life is portrayed as an ongoing journey of learning, growth, and deepening understanding of God and His ways.

Short-Answer Quiz

1. Explain the significance of the "golden chain" in the context of the Beatitudes according to the lecture. Why is this concept important for understanding these blessings?
2. What are the three key aspects of true mourning or lament that Dr. Mounce discusses? How does mourning relate to the recognition of sin?
3. How does Dr. Mounce define meekness, and what does he emphasize that it is *not*? Use the analogy of the stallion to illustrate this concept.
4. Describe the two ways Dr. Mounce explains the concept of righteousness. How does understanding God's righteousness lead to human hunger for righteousness?
5. Why is it important to understand spiritual poverty before one can truly hunger and thirst for righteousness? Explain the connection between these Beatitudes.
6. What does Dr. Mounce mean when he discusses the church having "lost its sense of lament"? What are some examples of lament he suggests?
7. According to the lecture, what is the relationship between meekness and submission? How does this submission influence a believer's interactions with others?
8. Explain Dr. Mounce's analogy of "nibbling and sipping" in relation to hungering and thirsting for righteousness. What does he suggest is the alternative to this approach?
9. What does Dr. Mounce say about the timing of the comfort promised to those who mourn? How does the "already, but not yet" concept apply here?

10. How does the idea of life as a "journey" help in understanding the process of spiritual growth described in the Beatitudes, particularly in relation to hungering and thirsting for righteousness?

Answer Key

1. The "golden chain" refers to the interconnectedness of the Beatitudes, where each blessing builds upon the previous one, starting with the recognition of spiritual poverty. This chain is crucial because it prevents the Beatitudes from being misinterpreted as a random list of rules or actions one can simply decide to implement without the foundational spiritual understanding.
2. The three aspects of true mourning are: confession of sin (agreeing with God about wrongdoing), confessing "I am a sinner" (acknowledging sin as part of one's character), and recognizing that sin is ultimately against God. Mourning is a natural and necessary response to recognizing the depth of one's sinfulness and separation from a holy God.
3. Dr. Mounce defines meekness as strength under God's control, characterized by a willing submission to God without resistance, stemming from an understanding of spiritual bankruptcy and a lack of pride. It is not timidity, fearfulness, weakness, or being a wallflower. The stallion analogy illustrates this: a powerful animal (strength) that is trained and responds to its master's commands (under God's control).
4. As it pertains to God, righteousness is His moral perfection in all aspects of His being and actions. As it pertains to humans, it is living in conformity with God's will and character. Understanding God's perfect righteousness highlights humanity's lack of it due to spiritual poverty, naturally leading to a deep desire or hunger to possess and live in accordance with God's righteousness.
5. Recognizing spiritual poverty, the first Beatitude, is essential because it creates an awareness of one's lack of inherent righteousness and complete dependence on God. This recognition leads to mourning over sin and an understanding of meekness (submission). Consequently, realizing one's spiritual bankruptcy naturally fosters a desperate hunger and thirst for God's righteousness as the only means of being made right with Him.
6. Dr. Mounce suggests that the American church has largely forgotten the practice of lament, both individually and corporately, which indicates a potential lack of true recognition of the seriousness of sin. Examples of corporate lament he

mentions include mourning the number of abortions and the church's lack of counter-cultural impact.

7. According to the lecture, meekness is closely tied to a willing submission to God. This submissive attitude dictates how a believer should respond to others, particularly in times of conflict. Instead of retaliating or insisting on their own rights, a meek person will respond with kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness, mirroring God's forgiveness.
8. The "nibbling and sipping" analogy describes a superficial or transactional approach to the Christian life, where individuals engage with God in isolated moments or on their own terms, without a deep and consistent commitment. The alternative is to have an all-encompassing passion for God, where He becomes the central focus and desire of one's entire life, leading to true satisfaction.
9. The comfort promised to those who mourn is both present ("already") and future ("not yet"). It begins when one confesses their sins and acknowledges their sinfulness, and it will be fully realized in the future when all sorrow and sin are removed in God's presence, as described in Revelation 21:4.
10. The metaphor of life as a journey emphasizes that spiritual growth, including the development of hunger and thirst for righteousness, is a process of learning and deepening understanding that unfolds over time. It highlights God's patience as He walks with believers, guiding them through cycles of learning and growth in grace, rather than demanding immediate perfection.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the interconnectedness of the first four Beatitudes (spiritual poverty, mourning, meekness, and hungering/thirsting for righteousness). How does each beatitude build upon the others to create a holistic picture of the initial stages of spiritual transformation?
2. Analyze Dr. Mounce's understanding of mourning (lament) and its significance for the individual believer and the church as a whole. Why does he believe the loss of lament is detrimental, and what steps might be taken to cultivate this practice?
3. Compare and contrast the world's understanding of meekness with the biblical understanding presented by Dr. Mounce. How does the concept of "strength under control" challenge conventional views of power and humility, and what are its practical implications for Christian living?
4. Explore the concept of righteousness as discussed in the lecture, differentiating between God's righteousness and human righteousness. How does a proper understanding of both fuel the "hunger and thirst" described in the fourth Beatitude, and what are the implications for a believer's pursuit of holiness?
5. Evaluate the significance of the "already, but not yet" framework in understanding the blessings promised in the Beatitudes discussed in this lecture. How does this perspective provide both present comfort and future hope for believers as they navigate their spiritual journey?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Beatitudes:** The blessings pronounced by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12), each starting with "Blessed are..."
- **Spiritual Poverty:** The recognition of one's utter lack of spiritual resources and complete dependence on God for salvation and everything else.
- **Mourning (Lament):** Deep sorrow and regret, specifically in the context of sin and separation from God. It involves acknowledging one's sinfulness and its impact.
- **Meekness:** Not weakness, but humble strength under God's control; a willing submission to God and a gentle response to others.
- **Righteousness (Divine):** God's perfect moral character and actions; the ultimate standard of what is right and just.

- **Righteousness (Human):** Living in accordance with God's will and character; a state of being declared just by God through faith.
- **Justification:** The act by which God declares a sinner righteous in His sight through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Redemption:** The act of being bought back or rescued from sin and its consequences through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- **Reconciliation:** The restoration of a broken relationship, specifically between humanity and God through Jesus Christ.
- **Sanctification:** The process by which a believer is progressively made holy and conformed to the image of Christ.
- **Imputed Righteousness:** The righteousness of Christ credited to believers by God through faith.
- **Divine Passive:** A grammatical construction where the subject of the verb receives the action, and the agent (in this case, God) is often implied rather than explicitly stated.
- **Liturgy:** A set form of public religious worship, often involving prescribed prayers, readings, and rituals.
- **Counter-cultural:** Opposing or going against the prevailing norms, values, or practices of a particular culture.
- **Ecologist:** A person who is concerned with the relationship between living organisms and their environment.
- **Theology:** The study of the nature of God and religious belief.
- **Eschatology:** The part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind.
- **Atonement:** The reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love extended to humanity.

5. FAQs on Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Beatitudes (Based on Mounce's Lecture)

1. What is the significance of the "golden chain" in the Beatitudes? The "golden chain" refers to the interconnectedness of the Beatitudes. Dr. Mounce emphasizes that these blessings are not a random list of actions to perform but rather a sequential progression. Recognizing one's spiritual poverty (Beatitude 1) naturally leads to mourning (Beatitude 2), which in turn fosters meekness (Beatitude 3), and this sequence continues. Understanding this chain prevents the Beatitudes from being misinterpreted as a mere set of "do's and don'ts" and highlights the organic development of a God-approved life.

2. What does it mean to "mourn" according to the second Beatitude, and why has the church seemingly forgotten it? Mourning, in the context of the Beatitudes, signifies lamenting over one's spiritual poverty and sinfulness. Dr. Mounce suggests that the church has largely forgotten the practice of lament, both individually and corporately. He argues that genuine recognition of sin, when one sees the stark contrast between their own being and God's holiness, should naturally lead to mourning. This lament involves a confession of sin (agreeing with God's assessment), acknowledging oneself as a sinner at the core of their being (beyond just individual acts), and recognizing that ultimately all sin is against God.

3. How does Dr. Mounce define "meekness" in the third Beatitude, and what is it not? Dr. Mounce defines meekness as both an attitude and an action. As an attitude, it stems from recognizing one's spiritual bankruptcy, leaving no room for arrogance and pride, and involves a willing submission to God without resistance. As an action, it manifests in how one responds to others, particularly in conflict, characterized by love, giving, patient endurance, and a refusal to retaliate. Meekness is *not* timidity, fearfulness, indecisiveness, weakness, or simply being a wallflower. Instead, it is described as "strength under God's control," likened to a trained stallion possessing immense power yet responding obediently to its master's guidance.

4. What does it mean to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" in the fourth Beatitude?

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness signifies a deep and desperate desire for God's righteousness to be evident in one's own life and in the world. Recognizing one's own spiritual bankruptcy and lack of inherent righteousness, this desire is a natural progression from spiritual poverty, mourning, and meekness. It's not just a casual interest but a consuming passion to live in conformity with God's will and character, and to see God's moral perfection reflected in the world. Dr. Mounce cautions against a superficial "nibbling and sipping" approach to God, advocating for an all-encompassing passion for Him.

5. How does Dr. Mounce reconcile the idea that believers are both "righteous" and still "sinners"?

Dr. Mounce explains that after conversion, believers are declared righteous (justified, redeemed, reconciled), and something fundamentally changes their identity before God. God views them as righteous, akin to His Son. This is positional sanctification. However, experientially, believers still commit acts of sin because sin remains a part of their character, even though its mastery has been broken. The call then is to live in accordance with their righteous position, to learn to act in righteous ways, which is the process of experiential sanctification.

6. What is the comfort promised to those who mourn, and when is this comfort fully realized?

The comfort promised to those who mourn their sin comes from God (divine passive). This comfort begins in the present when believers confess their sins and recognize their ongoing struggle with sin. However, it is not yet fully realized. The ultimate comfort will come in the future, as described in Revelation 21:4, when God will wipe away every tear, and there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain in the new heavens and the new earth. This beatitude highlights a cycle of emptying (mourning) and filling (comfort).

7. What is the "earth" that the meek will inherit, and how does this relate to our present understanding of the world?

Dr. Mounce suggests that the "earth" the meek will inherit is not merely a spiritual or metaphorical realm but a physical reality – the renewed heavens and the renewed earth. Drawing from Genesis and Revelation, he envisions a tangible place reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, where believers will live and care for God's creation. This perspective challenges the notion that this current world is not our home and that heaven is an ethereal, disembodied existence. Instead, this world is seen as precious, currently marred by sin, but destined for restoration, and the meek will have the privilege of inheriting and caring for it eternally.

8. How does the concept of life as a "journey" relate to understanding the Beatitudes and Christian growth? Dr. Mounce strongly emphasizes the metaphor of life as a journey (the path with a gate leading to life) to understand Christian growth and the Beatitudes. This journey is a process of learning and re-learning in ever-deepening cycles of grace. The Beatitudes describe stages or aspects of this journey – from recognizing spiritual poverty to hungering for righteousness. This perspective highlights that Christian growth is not about achieving instant perfection or adhering to a rigid set of rules, but rather a gradual, patient process of becoming more like Christ, with God's constant guidance and patience along the way.