

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

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This is Dr. Bill Mounce in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2.

Okay, let's move on and then down through the Beatitudes. Watch the golden chain and see how all these links come together.

God's approval rests on a person who recognizes spiritual poverty, Beatitude 1. This is the person who recognizes, the person who recognizes his spiritual poverty will do what? Will mourn. It's a natural response. You see your depravity and you'll see, that's a good Calvinist term, Bob.

Bob's questioning whether I'm really reformed or not. Depraved person, person who sees his spiritual poverty will mourn over his own spiritual bankruptcy. The chain is what keeps the Beatitudes from becoming a list of do's and don'ts.

You get further down the chain, and you'll say, oh, blessed are the merciful; they shall be shown mercy. Okay, I'm going to just try really hard to show mercy. Can that person do that? No.

You can't just kind of start partway through the chain and then say, oh, that's what I'm going to try to do. You've got to start with the spiritual depravity, the spiritual poverty, and then it works its way down the chain. This is what keeps it from becoming a list of do's and don'ts.

So, what does it mean to mourn? Again, I've already said it, it's to mourn over your spiritual poverty. And mourning is a, it's something the church has just forgotten, has it, for the most part. Have you seen Michael Card's book? I guess it's ten years old now, it's on lamentations.

Michael Card, the singer. It's a really good book on lament, and it's an appeal to bring lament for sins back into the church. And I think you can make the argument that if there is no lament, there's really no recognition of sin.

Because you, if you recognize sin, if you see who you are and who God is, you have to lament, you have to mourn. I mean, it's the only thing that happens. Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, I think, yes, for the most part, yeah, that there's, when we've moved away from the priesthood, we've moved away from the idea of individual lament, but there is a corporate lament, too. There are corporate lament psalms, and there are

simply times that I would say that your church needs to lament over the fact that we murder three million unborn babies a year. Or lament over the fact that we, as a whole, are not counter-cultural.

I think there's a, I understand what you're saying, and there's certainly corporate lament starts with individual lament, but I think there's a place for the corporate, too. What does it mean to mourn? I've got three things that, when I would preach this, I would cover. Mourning or lamenting one begins with a confession of sin.

It's, and all you're doing, and I encourage you to tell people this, you're just agreeing with God. You're not telling God something He doesn't know. He already knows that you sinned.

He knows what you did was wrong, and so mourning is simply agreeing with God that He's right and that you're not. So, it's, mourning starts with a confession of sin, but then secondly, mourning moves from confessing sin to confessing I am a sinner. In other words, true mourning, true lament, moves from an act to character.

And even though I am redeemed, I am justified, reconciled, and all these things, I am, it is, and the mastery of sin has been broken. There is still a part of me that just sins. Now Paul, speaking as an incredibly mature Christian, says it's not me who's sinning, it's a sin who sins in me, which is really a hard thing to preach, right? Unless you're speaking to some very old saints who understand what that means.

But, the Chinese use WeChat. Do you know that app? It's, it's, it's more for audio texting, and the problem is that the government uses WeChat to gather a lot of data on its people, so you have to be careful with WeChat. But anyway, it's the main way that the Chinese people communicate.

And so, I got a WeChat from a friend two or three days ago, and he asked if I was righteous or a sinner. And I said, yeah, the way I answer, it was a really interesting question because, again, the Chinese church is a very guilt-ridden, performance-based kind of culture. I mean, again, broad-stroke generality. We absolutely love the Chinese people.

That's why I think about them so much and how to help. But this is their challenge. One of their main challenges is that

And I said, well, before conversion, you are a sinner. After conversion, you are righteous; you are redeemed, but you still sin. Mastery of sin has been broken.

He's saying, "I'm getting a lot of questions from people who think that after conversion, their basic core nature is still, "I am a sinner." And I said, "You need to preach sermons on the great doctrines of the faith. You need to teach what

justification is, what redemption is, and what reconciling is. "I mean, they need to know that something fundamentally changed who they were.

So, it's been a very interesting conversation. But again, see, they're just, they fail, so they try harder. And they don't want to say they're righteous because they sin so much.

So that's kind of a caveat to what I had written here. I am a sinner. Well, on one level, I'm not because the mastery of sin has been broken.

But in a very real sense, sin is still part of my character, right? So I am redeemed, and I commit acts of sin because there's still something about my character. So, with all that as kind of a theological safeguard, yeah, I am a sinner. Mastery of sin has been broken.

It's not just actions I do that are disconnected from my character. They're part of my character still. So, you move from committing an act of sin to I am a sinner.

Thirdly, I think true lament means that I have sinned against God. And I think that's where all lament needs to end. A recognition that even if I do something against Matt and I'm doing it, I am redeemed and a sinner at the same time.

Ultimately, my sin is against God. You know the verses. Well, no, except I am righteous.

He who knew no sin was made to be sinned so that I could be made the righteousness of God. So, Christ's righteousness has been given to me. Whatever the term imputed, I guess, has been imputed into me. And so, I have been fundamentally changed.

I know where you're going with it, but theologically I am righteous. And so the call is for me to act in accordance with who I am, to learn to act in righteous ways. Is what? Well, I don't think it's a better word because 2 Corinthians 5 says, the verse I just quoted, I mean, yes, I am redeemed, but God, as John Bunyan says, God looks on me and views me as he views his son, and his son is righteous.

And so, I have been made the righteousness of God. It's not like God kind of pretends that I'm righteous. I am righteous.

I am sanctified. And I mean, that's right. That's biblical teaching.

The call of my life then is to act like it. And so, you have positional sanctification and experiential sanctification. I am sanctified.

It's why Paul can call the Corinthians holy. They call them saints because they are. They are saints.

Now it's time they start acting like it. Their position before God is as saints, and in experience, they are learning what that means. So, it's anyway.

Genesis 39.9, how can I do this great wickedness again and sin against God, Joseph says, right? He understands that the sin may have been with Potiphar's wife, but ultimately, that sin would go against God. But Psalm 51 is the great one. Against you, this is David's psalm of confession after Nathan confronts him about Bathsheba.

Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight. Well, I don't know. You impregnated a woman.

You murdered her husband. You sinned against a couple of people. But David understands that, ultimately, all sin goes against God.

And in the crying out of his heart, that's what's bothering him the most. Against you, you only have I sinned. So, I think when we talk about lament, it's helpful to move that we're dealing with actions, we're dealing with character, and we're dealing with ultimately who we sin against, which is God.

There are a million other things if we had time, and we don't, but you know, one of the things I ask when mourning comes up in discussion is, "Are you sorry that you sinned, or are you sorry that you got caught?" So many people. Kids. Oh, I'm so sorry.

Okay, why are you sorry? You're sorry that I got caught? I'm taking your phone away for two weeks. Well, that's not sorrow. That's just frustration you got caught. Um, but I just think the American church is, the American church has lost its sense of the grandeur, and the majesty, and the awe, and the holiness of God.

And I long to walk in a Sunday morning gathering where somebody remembers that. And you know, and this is just me. I have no interest in a pep rally.

I have no interest in a pep rally. And it seems that so many churches I go to are just pep rallies to make me feel good about my sin. I don't know; I'm a little jaded.

I just want to be reminded that God's majestic and glorious, and I'm not, and that's okay. And I want to find a church where there's actually mourning over sin because God is so holy. It's so joyful to truly worship God for who he is rather than screaming, yelling, and waving happy birthday to Jesus on Christmas. I don't know.

Anyway, mourning. Do you have anything you want to say about mourning and my jaded state? Oh, I need to finish. I'm sorry.

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. So the comfort is coming from God.

I love the cycle in scripture of being emptied before you're filled. I assume you've heard that. It's a way to look at a lot of the Bible's ethical teachings.

It's only those who know mourning, that's the emptying, who will truly be comforted, that's the filling, right? Blessed are those who recognize their poverty as spirit, that's the emptying, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven, that's the filling. And so, you have this cycle. You have to, Titus 3 and Salvation. You were washed and then regenerated.

It was the emptying and the filling. And the question is, when does that comfort come? Well, already, but not yet, right? It certainly comes when you and I confess our sins when we confess that it's still part of our character and that ultimately our sin is against God, that comfort comes. But it's nothing compared to the comfort that's going to come when we stand before the judgment seat and all this is taken away.

So, we are mourners, we are becoming mourners, and we will ultimately, in this case, get to a point where it's all going to be taken away, which is really cool. I have Revelation 21.4 written down and I'm not sure why. Let me look it up.

You know, I'm so used to using this that I can look up stuff a lot faster. I'm sorry? Oh, that's the wife. Okay, yeah, let me.

Our electronic Bible is amazing. I still, when I study, I still, I want paper. But boy, I mean, just to have your whole library right here.

I'm really curious: How many Logos users are there? Interesting. Accordance? One. Okay.

What? BibleWorks? BibleGateway. Yeah. You use BibleGateway? Yes, sir.

Cool. All right. Yeah, yeah.

I like being able to carry it with me. I worked for BibleGateway for a year, and it was a fascinating year. I learned so much about so many things.

But you'll notice a very special translation on BibleGateway. Mine? Yeah. All right, all right.

All right, 21.4. Oh, sorry. Wrong language. This is when new heavens and new earth are happening.

The holy city is coming down. God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. And I think this is actually the theme that ties the whole Bible together.

They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And then here's verse four. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

There'll be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying, or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. So, there will be a point at which mourning is no more, and that'll be a great time. And that's when we'll be fully comforted.

Okay, any comments or questions on that beatitude? It's one of the things I like about liturgies. I pastored in a Baptist church, and Baptists don't like liturgies. If I could get them to do responsive reading, I thought that was pretty good. But what they didn't know was I was working with a worship guide to affect liturgies.

And kind of regardless of what I would be preaching on, there would be some Sundays where the initial songs were confession of sin and then songs of thankfulness for forgiveness, which is a liturgy. And we would kind of cycle through liturgical themes in the songs that we picked. It was kind of a tricky way to get Baptists to follow a liturgy.

Okay, well, I encourage you to find some way to help your people learn to mourn. Okay, we'll come to the third beatitude in verse 5. Blessed are the meek, for they get nothing in this world and die in misery and shame. That's the new NIV.

No, sorry. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. You want to talk about a countercultural statement, right? Because in this world, the meek don't get anything.

But in Jesus's economy, in the kingdom of heaven, the meek get everything. They inherit the earth. Meekness.

Meekness is a really hard thing to define, isn't it? In fact, it's one of those words where it's almost easier to define what it isn't rather than what it is. Meekness is not timidity, fearfulness, indecisiveness, being unsure, being a wallflower, wishy-washy, or weak. That's what the world says meekness is.

I'm not aware of any other religion that holds meekness up as a virtue. I don't know all the world's religions, so I may miss one. But I'm not aware of any.

So, this is kind of a peculiarly Christian quality. It's not those things. I define it, and it's coming out of the books, as two things.

It's an attitude and an action, and you've got to have both of them together. Remember the golden chain. A meek person is the person who understands his spiritual bankruptcy and therefore has no place for arrogance and pride.

Quarrels, one of the books I asked you to read, which again starts really slow and gets a lot better. I don't know if you found that to be your experience, but yeah, it is good. The way it starts is like, I don't want 40 pages on Jesus is the new Moses, you know, get on with it.

But anyway, I don't know how to say his name properly. Does anyone know him? It is Quarrels, Q-U-A-R-L-E. He's the, where is he? Vice President, yeah, in what school is it? Louisiana College, which I'm assuming is in Louisiana.

Anyway, I'm going to say Quarrels hopefully I'm saying his name. However, how would you say it in the Deep South? Quarrels? Quarrels, okay, so you soften and lengthen the A, Quarrels. I mean, did you go to school with him or just another person? Quarrels, okay.

Let's see, but I'm a Yankee, so I make my vowels all short and harsh. In the south, vowels are an art. Yes, they are.

If it's a one-syllable word, two, yes. If it's a monosyllable, you say it is two. If it's a polysyllable, you get it into one.

You want to try to say his name on the side. Quarrels, Quarrels. You're getting there.

Am I getting there? Yes. All right. Actually, I'm more southern than probably most of you.

My grandpa was born in Gravel Switch, Kentucky. They dug a hole in the ground to get gravel out for the railroad, and it became Gravel Switch.

We visited it once. It's in the Appalachians. They're all hillbillies.

And it was so strange to drive into town. Everyone was named Mounts. Everyone was named Mounce.

And I mean, it felt like the Burt Reynolds movie Deliverance. I don't know. God, do I have to get out of the car? Yeah.

But it was fun. My grandpa, first day grandpa ever stepped foot in a school was as a teacher when he was 17. His parents traded chickens with a traveling teacher at a grade to teach him.

And he ended up being a professor at the University of Chicago. So, he did okay. But anyway, there is some Southern in me that way.

I'll claim that.

I can do that. Where on earth am I in my notes? Oh yeah. A meek person knows of spiritual bankruptcy and, therefore, has no place for arrogance and pride.

Quarrels says that the emphasis of the word is on submission. And I've not read that elsewhere, but it fits, and I like it. A meek person is a person who, quote, subjects himself to God quietly without resistance.

A meek person is a person who knows who God is and knows who he is because this is a third link in the chain. This is the person that's come to understand his or her spiritual bankruptcy and it's driven them to mourning. And therefore, because of their understanding, they willingly and gently submit to God without resistance.

And in that sense, meekness is much like humility, I think. So meekness is an attitude, a willing submission to God, but it's also an action. And a lot of the discussions of meekness in the Bible have to do with how we relate, how we respond to other people.

In fact, quite a few of the discussions of meekness are how we respond in the midst of conflict, like 1 Peter 3:14 to 17, that passage. So, it's a willingness to submission to God that dictates how we respond to other people. In other words, in the midst of conflict, we don't retaliate.

We love, we give, we patiently endure. The verse I go to a lot is Ephesians 4:32, which doesn't use the word meekness, but it gets at the point. I can't quote the verse, I can't quote it.

Be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you, right? And so, it's a recognition, who are we? We're forgiven people. Who's God? He is who forgave us. Therefore, humility and submission to God should move us to forgive others, not retaliate, and not insist on our rights, but rather forgive.

Again, the verse doesn't use the word "meekness," but it's a good picture, I think, of a meek person. When I preached through, I got to love Martyn Lloyd-Jones's stuff. I don't normally read other sermons.

I've heard that preaching is truth through personality. And then, on top of that, you add spirit unction. And you can't replicate what one person does in the pulpit, and you just can't.

You're a different person, a different set of experiences, different workings of the spirit, perhaps. And I just find reading other people's sermons really boring. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, I was fascinated to read, just fascinated to read it.

In fact, I broke the binding. You know, the current one, it's a single volume paperback, and I broke the binding within a couple of months. And I went to my dad because he had the two-volume hardback, and I about had to beat him up to get those two away from him.

So, if you ever see Martyn Lloyd-Jones's in two volumes on Hardback buy it. Because I've not seen it since I got my dad's. But anyway, I really like Martyn Lloyd-Jones.

And in preaching through the sermon, there was only one thing that he said: that I couldn't make part of my sermon. And it had to do with where I was spiritually and with some conflict in the church. But here's, when he talks about meekness, this is how he says it, is if a person who is truly meek hears someone criticize them, okay, so you're the pastor, someone's being critical of you, how do you respond? Well, my reaction would be, you know, if you only knew me, you know that's not true.

I'm not power-hungry. I'm not up here doing that. I mean, I had people who, we were looking at this thing about having small groups be based on the sermon if they wanted to.

But I had one guy in the church who thought all pastors were inherently evil and power mongers. And I was trying to prove to him that I wasn't going to be an evil power monger. And so, you know, we didn't do that with small groups.

And, you know, he would say, Bill, I've known you for all these years, but you know, you're just really into power. And I wanted to say, if you only really knew me, you'd know that's not true. But Martin Lloyd-Jones says this way, 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.

In good conscience, I couldn't preach it because I wasn't there. And I tried not to preach things that I couldn't say. Page 57 in the first volume of his book.

But that's hard, isn't it? Because, you know, I tell seminarians, be really careful when you go to a church, they're going to put you up on a pedestal. The only reason they're putting you up on a pedestal is to get a clear shot at you. Like I said, be really, really careful.

And so, you know, some of my experience is jaded that way. But a truly meek person, because they understand their depravity of sin and are mourned over it, they have a better understanding of who they are and of who God is. And instead of retaliating, they respond in meekness.

They respond gently and peacefully. That's the meek person. It's a hard word to define, isn't it? That's the best way I have found to describe it.

Meekness is not... I got a quote marks around this, so I may have gotten this from someone. I don't know who. Meekness is not weakness.

It's strength under God's control. A meek person, meekest person in the Bible is Moses. Well, okay, Jesus.

After Jesus is Moses. You know, not exactly a wuss. Meekness requires a phenomenal amount of strength.

It's not being weak. And again, I'm assuming this is Martin Lloyd-Jones' illustration. He says meekness is the difference between a wild and a tame stallion.

Have any of you ridden horses? Not a lot of horse... I'm finding there's not a lot of horse riders around anymore. We had a horse when I was in high school. And I remember the first time I sat on a horse, the amount of power was... It was scary, right? I mean, there's so much muscle.

Horses have... Each one has its own personality. They're not docile creatures. And you never really know what a horse is going to do.

Except a horse will always run under two circumstances, always. Point it uphill, and it will run and die if you don't stop it, right? And it will... When you turn it towards the barn, it runs. Those are the two most dangerous times in horse riding because the animal just wants to lunge.

A horse will literally run itself to death. So, what you have to do with a stallion is that you got to break it, and you break it with a bit, among other things. And so, a well-trained horse, as powerful as it is, is the point of the illustration, as powerful as that animal is; all it takes is a simple moving of the reins, and it turns, right? All it takes is when you're lunging up the hill, you just pull back, and it stops if it's trained.

Okay, my horse wasn't trained. But that's what I'm told a trained horse will do. That's a great example of what a meek person is.

A meek person is a stallion. It is a phenomenally strong person because you know who you are, and you know who Christ is. But you are under his control, and when you are pell-mell running down a direction, and God goes, you stop, and you turn left, stop and you turn right.

That's what a trained stallion does. That's what a meek person does. So, meekness is strength under God's control.

It's not weakness. And they promise the blessing is that they will inherit the earth. Again, this is a totally counter-cultural idea because in this world, the meek have nothing.

And the question, of course, here is, what's the earth? Because in this day and age, very rarely do meek people get anything. The heavy emphasis is on the not yet, the fulfillment. It is on we will one day inherit the earth.

We will have the new heavens and the new earth. Have you read Randy Alcorn's book on heaven? I really encourage you to. He's got a great big, thick one.

And I stopped partway through it because I agree with him so much I didn't need any more argumentation. But he's arguing against the position that heaven is a bunch of fat cubits playing harps bouncing off clouds, which isn't in the Bible in any shape, way, or form. He wrote a smaller abridgment of it and I really encourage you at least to get that.

It's an easy read. It'll give you a feel for it. But Alcorn, I think, properly understands the new heavens, the new earth, they're a very physical place.

What's in both Genesis 1, 2, 3, and in the end of Revelation? Garden, the river, the tree of life, right? And in heaven, the new heavens, the new earth, the tree of life is so big it spans both sides of the giant river and fruit for the healing of the nations, and we will eat it and be healed. It's a very physical reality. I was flying. I guess I was flying here, and I was looking out the window, and you could see a bit of the curvature of the earth and the clouds.

When we took off from the Portland airport, there were clouds, and you could see Mount St. Helens, the top of what's left, you could see Rainier, Helens, and Adams. And it was an amazing sight. It was just absolutely gorgeous.

And you just, it reminds you this is God's precious earth. You know the only time Jesus was angry? You know Jesus was only angry once, as far as we know? Pardon? That's what every people think. It never says he was mad.

It's when the disciples couldn't cast out the demon. And there's a textual variant, but most likely, it says Jesus got angry. There's a related word that means deeply moved.

And a lot of people shift to the deeply moved, even though it doesn't have a strong attestation in the Greek text. Jesus was angry, but he was angry at sin. He wasn't angry at the disciples.

He was angry that sin had so messed up his world. And when I was flying here and I was looking at the curvature of the earth, and I love volcanoes, and I just looking at, and then you come over and you can see all the irrigation circles all the way through central Washington, and you get over the, I mean, I got to see all this. And you go, this is such a precious place.

And we were put here to care for it. And we messed it up. Christians should be the greatest ecologists, period, hands down.

We don't have to believe in global warming, but we should be the greatest ecologists because this is his world, and we messed it up. So, he's going to fix it. And this is the point I'm trying to get to very slowly.

Alcorn says it's a heaven. The new heavens and earth is a physical existence. He thinks there's going to be manufacturing.

He even wonders if there's going to be star travel. It's very physical: what are we going to do for eternity? You can't praise God all the time. But it's a very physical reality.

It's the Garden of Eden, it's what things are supposed to be. And I just was kind of swept over with appreciation for God's earth as I was flying here. I'm going, someday after you fix it all, we get to live in it and care for it.

We get to care for the trees. We get to care for the fish. We get to care for the animals.

We have to make sure we don't deforest things again. I mean, we get to care for this place. That's why Alcorn really does not like the song: this world is not my home; I'm just passing through.

He goes, this is home. It's home now. It's going to be a home for eternity.

So, all that to say, it's the meek will inherit the earth. It's going to be an amazing earth that we inherit. And it's going to be all ours to care for.

Pretty cool, huh? One of the questions I have in Revelation is, to me, there's no pain. So if I go rock climbing and break my leg, will it not hurt? I don't know. I think about a lot of silly things.

Anyway. All right. All right.

Move on to beatitude number four, verse six. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will, their bellies will be filled. All right.

There are some important terms here. What's righteousness? Well, two parts of it, I think. One is when you speak about God's righteousness, you're talking about his moral perfection, right? His perfection in his character, his perfection in his behavior.

Everything that he is and everything that he does is perfect, morally, and in every way. God is righteous. He's the definition of righteous, right? Ultimately, that's why Christians have to come to terms with suffering because suffering screams that God's not righteous.

Right? Forty thousand children a day die of starvation. God is the definition of what is right and what is morally perfect. I think this is the great conflict, for me anyway, I think it's the great conflict for, should be for all Christians, is how do you line up this world with God's righteous character? But I don't know that's in the Sermon on the Mount, so we'll move on.

So, righteousness as it pertains to God is his moral perfection in all things, activity, and character. Secondly, as pertaining to us, righteousness is us living in conformity with his will. I think that's what Quarles says, living in conformity to his character, living in conformity to his actions.

So, who hungers and thirsts for righteousness? If you preach, you need a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Again, your people respond, oh great, something else I have to do, right? So, you have to do the chain. Poverty spirit, everything is on that.

It drives us to mourning. It makes us understand meekness. But because we have no righteousness of our own, since we're spiritually bankrupt, because we have no righteousness of our own, we desperately desire God's righteousness in our life and in our world.

So, you can't just start at the fourth beatitude, right? But it is a natural progression from first, second, third, to fourth. The first three links of the chain necessarily lead to a: now that you've recognized you are not righteous, you've recognized that God is righteous, you desperately want his righteousness to be in your life. We recognize that we are not right with God and we can never be on our own.

It's a desire to be freed from every influence of sin. It's a desire to live a life that is pleasing to God and, in fact, to display God's righteousness. Make sense? One of the greatest changes in my life, theologically, was when I stopped reading Jesus in the light of Paul.

I'd always done that. When I first went to Gordon-Conwell, I requested to teach a New Testament survey, and they were happy to give it to me. I love surveys because I can touch more people in the school than you can if you just teach upper-division classes.

And I had taught survey a gazillion times at Azusa, and I said, I'm going to try and experiment. I'm going to teach the Gospels as if Paul didn't exist, okay? And I'm going to let Jesus talk for Jesus. Because in my head, it's always Paul saying, yeah, yeah, he talks about poverty spirit.

Bill, you like justification by faith, so you need to talk about justification by faith when we talk about beatitudes. And I said, I'm going to fight that. I'm going to let the Gospels be the Gospels.

And it radically changed how I read the Gospels. Because you'll notice I'm not using Paul hardly at all in defining the beatitudes. I'm trying to let Jesus.

So, there's a lot I could pull from about righteousness and pull it from Paul. I'm trying just to stick in the Gospels, all right? And so, this is the, because there's obviously a ton of stuff about righteousness in Paul. But I'm trying, how would Jesus' disciples have heard the words? A desire to be that God is righteousness.

God is righteous. He is right in all his moral perfections. I am not.

I mourn over it. But I desperately want to be a God kind of person. And I desperately want to live in a world that lives in accordance with God's righteous character and behavior.

And that's what this is about. It's hunger and thirst. A deep desire to be right with God.

A deep desire to live in that kind of world. I'm going to say this is just a preaching line, more than a teaching line. But I said it doesn't say that those who nibble and sip on God are blessed.

It doesn't say, blessed are those who taste him once at conversion and starve themselves the rest of their life. And I'm just so convinced there's so many people in the church that nibble and sip. And I'm not talking about the people that come to church on Christmas and Easter.

I'm talking about the people who view their Christian life as a series of transactions of unrelated events. And I'm going to do something here. And I'm going to do something here, maybe every other Sunday morning.

And I'm going to help park at VBS. And I'm going to do this. And we have this, I used to talk, I always wanted to get a big patchwork quilt and hang it behind me.

Because I use a patchwork quilt as an illustration all the time. Is that we've so segmented our lives into little squares. And so many people say, okay, this square is for God, this square is for God.

But you know, what I do on the computer 11 a night on, you know, some porn site, that's no one's business but mine. Or molestation issues. And it just, huh, I love Barna.

Do you guys read? Do you watch Barna? Did you watch this? I'd really subscribe to Barna site. They're always coming out with really good statistics that help us understand the church. And I'm going to be quoting quite a few of them.

For, and not to pick on porn, because it is a sin. So is pride and arrogance and all those things. But it said the average evangelical past, their poll is, and this is from people that actually answered the poll.

The average evangelical pastor intentionally visits a porn site once a week. And I don't, I don't know if any of you struggle with it. My guess is some of you do.

And I'm not saying this to shame you. I once preached a difficult sermon when I was done. I sat down with a buddy of mine as a counselor and I said, so how did I do? And he goes, well, if your purpose was to shame everyone, you did a really good job.

I said, okay, help me rewrite the sermon for the second service. I want to do that. But so often, we nibble and sip on God.

We have our favorite sins. We have our favorite times of the day and night. Our people nibble and sip on God.

They have their favorite times of day and night. They have their quilt. The little track that Billy Graham used to hand out was Roger, his house, his home.

Is that what it was called? Robert Munker? Is that how he wrote it? And it talks about after you become a Christian, the spirit starts walking through your house and, and you shut the door and go, no, that's none of your business. Spirit says, actually it is.

And it's this very powerful track about us opening all the doors in our house to make everything his home.

It's a video now. Really? Oh, I got to get that. Cause I love the imagery.

I love the imagery. The blessing is on people who make Jesus the all-encompassing passion of their life. Hunger and thirst for Christ.

Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you. This is to balance that though. Let me balance it.

We, I had our elders read through Piper's *Desiring God Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*. Familiar with it? It's his main book. He jokes that every book he writes is just a rewrite of that.

Have you seen *Don't Waste Your Life*? Have you read that yet? *Don't waste your life*. Okay. That's the best Piper book there is.

We used to give it out to everyone graduating at any stage of their life. It's an easy read. High school students can do it.

And it's just a plea to make God the all-encompassing passion of their life. And don't waste their money trying to, don't waste their life trying to make a lot of money or gain a lot of influence and power. It's Christ.

We are, it is a plea to hunger and thirst for righteousness. It's a really, really good book. I want to be careful because I think it's chapter four is the chapter we struggled with because Piper defines salvation as those who love him more than they love anything else.

Which means we're all going to hell, right? I mean, honestly, does anyone here love Jesus more than their spouse? I don't. I know I should. I know I'm growing.

I know I'm learning. But I really love my wife. I really love my kids.

And it would be hypocritical for me to say, oh sure, I love Jesus more than Robin, Titor, Pearson, and Hayden. I don't. Sorry.

That's the already, but not yet. And I think Jesus is so patient. And he's saying you'll learn slowly but surely.

I may have to allow pain in your life for you to figure some of this stuff out, but slowly but surely you will learn that I am more desirable than Robin. I may not know that till heaven, but it's a learning. It's a growing process.

So, 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? And aren't you glad it's a process? Aren't you glad that we are learning to enjoy, to taste, and see that he is good, and in ever new ways, in ever-deepening ways? And again, let me urge, Jesus is so unbelievably patient, isn't he? He's so patient. He nurtures us and guides us through this process.

And he's okay. I think he's okay with being in second place for a while. We'll learn.

We'll keep learning. Already, but not yet. The key to understanding all of this.

Imagery is really strong, isn't it? Especially in an agrarian society where you worked all day and you got enough money to feed your family that night. Bread's important. In a desert climate, food is essential.

So, Jesus uses hunger and thirst, food and drink, to really drive the point home. And the promise is for those who, I wrote here, who are consumed. Let's be fair.

For those who are becoming consumed with the things of God. Is that a fair way to say it? You didn't know what to do with that comment of mine, did you? The promise for those who are becoming consumed with an all-encompassing passion for the things of God. The promise is they will be satisfied.

We were satisfied with the conversion. That as we let go of the things of this earth and are consumed more and more with the things of God, we are satisfied. But ultimately, only in heaven, I think, will the words, I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. And whoever believes in me shall never thirst. That's the process that's completed in heaven.

We're learning it. We're growing in it. We're reaching in it.

It's always out of our reach, but that's okay because the process is a good process. Someday it will be. Piper says we are too easily satisfied.

We are made for God and yet we settle so often for less. And so many of our passions are for the things of this world that never truly satisfy. Okay, anything you want to say? The metaphor that I settled on is that life is a journey.

It's what I preached on at commencement. It's one of the reasons I joined the NIV is to get some of these metaphors of the walk back into it. Earlier, I think the TNIV got rid of some of the metaphors of walking, and they're back in 2011.

I think the idea that we are on a journey has a starting point; it's the gate. We're traveling the path, and we're headed toward life. It is a really, really powerful image, and it's one that I'm not sure the churches fully understand. That life is a journey.

It's a process, and we talk about forgiveness. I'm going to tell you a story about a man who, a drunk driver, killed three members of his family and helped me understand what forgiveness is. But even something like forgiveness is a process.

We are always learning how to forgive, aren't we? None of us, only one person, ever just forgave, and he was hanging on a cross. We have to learn how to forgive, and we have to want to learn how to forgive. And then when we forgive, we need to really mean it.

As we go through the motions, all of a sudden, you realize that one day, I really do mean this. I do want to forgive. Okay, and I'm going to expand that more later.

But it's, life is a journey. It is a process, and Jesus is so patient with us, helping us to learn gradually, slowly, and surely, learn. I'm actually working on a book.

I started it five years ago, then we went through a series of experiences that I just, I wasn't at a point spiritually where I could keep working on it. But I'm going to pick it back up this summer and finish it. It's called *The Path*, and it's a story of 13 hikes in the Pacific Northwest.

And it's an exposition of the gate, the path, and life. And I was going to call it *Life is a Journey*, but then we ended up using that for the title of one of the classes in biblical training. So I had to shift it.

But that's how much I believe in this cycle that I'm talking about. The book is about how as we travel the journey, we learn. And then we learn it again.

And then we learn it again in ever-deepening cycles. And it's a journey of grace. And it's not a legalistic bunch of do's and don'ts, but it's something we're just learning and going with.

And so, that's how I understand all the Beatitudes. It's who we are, it's who we are becoming, and it's who eventually we will be. That's my understanding of Jesus' ethics.

He's not someone somewhere terribly afraid that someone's having a bad time. So, he doesn't give us a bunch of things that we can't do to make us miserable. But he walks with us on this journey.

Poverty, mourning, meekness, hunger. This is how he works with us. Okay.

All right. Well, we are through four of the eight. That's pretty good.

And so we're actually kind of on track. Let's take a break. And we're going to go to lunch.

And then we come back at 1:30. Darrell, is that right? Okay. So, we'll see you back at 1:30 and we'll finish up the Beatitudes. Thanks.

This is Dr. Bill Mounts in his teaching on the Sermon on the Mount. This is session 2, Beatitudes, Part 2.