

Well, for all of those of you out there watching this video, these are the Beatitudes. I hope you see them a little differently than you have before. There have been so many messages and sermons about all of these things; it's mind-boggling—an entire series of messages on each one of them. I'm going to pass over them very quickly. I'm not going to try to make any application. I would rather seek to discover with you what really happened. In a way, they speak for themselves when that takes place. And what's here is very pertinent.

I'd like for you to forget the Beatitudes, if you can, for a minute, and drop all your preconceived notions about this whole thing. I think there's a totally new discovery to make here that might help you. In fact, I can almost wish we could go back there when these simple statements were made. We'd be shocked. I'm going to try to rebuild the historical setting of what took place, and it will not be like anything you recall or have heard of in the past.

I want you to begin by seeing the Lord Jesus. He is very busy. He is now in his popularity. In my judgment, He is about to begin His three years. Everything that's happened up till now has been a beginning year. I hold to the theory that He ministered four years, rather than three and a half. There was a very, not a slow beginning, but perhaps an almost undefined beginning. Now He's very popular.

I want you to see Him having picked up approximately a hundred very determined fans. Now, whether the word fan or disciple should be used here, I'm not sure, because I'm not sure how many of those people He actually turned around and said, "Follow me." I cannot believe it was to all 80 or 90 or 100 of them. He has definitely said this to a large group of people numbering 25, 30, 40, 50- I don't know- but for sure at least 20. Of that, we are certain. *Come follow me*. But He has picked up about 80 to 100 people who follow Him all the time. Some have left their homes because He said, "Come." Others are simply determined to follow Him wherever he goes. And they literally do this from town to town, place to place.

He is very burdened today. He knows He's about to do the most important thing He will ever do this side of the cross. A heavy burden, perhaps even distracted, sad, and dreading. I think all those things are true. And He gets alone. He probably has fasted all day. He goes out alone to pray. Be careful. Don't look at that picture on the wall: the Lord Jesus with His hands folded, a big rock in front of Him, and a stained-glass window-type light casting down from heaven on His face while He looks up so godly. Remember that He lived all eternity in heavenly realms, and that He has a direct line to that place constantly.

I think that there is a good possibility that in His spirit...and His spirit is not like my spirit... He can do things I can't do. It may be that He revisits that very realm, within His being. He is praying. The hours go on and on. It is midnight, it is one, it is two. His praying becomes more intense. He has spent the entire night in prayer. It may be that He has not only visited the other realm, but it may also be that He has visited other places in time and space, and

outside of time and space. Maybe He has even visited eternity future. He has had one of the most momentous experiences or encounters of His time here on earth. Perhaps nothing except Gethsemane.

Why has He spent a whole night in laborious prayer? Why has He done this thing? And boy, this speaks volumes. He did it in order to know which men to pick to be the twelve. The twelve. Upon them, the new Jerusalem will be built. Upon them, the house of God, the church of God, the Christian faith, Christendom. Everything! He has somewhere between 80 and 100 people to pick from now. "Where did you come up with this 80 or 100? Because a little bit later, He sends out seventy men in 35 groups of two, so He has got at least 70 people following Him, and He has a number of women, at least 10, around 10; that's 80. So if we say 80, I would round it off to 100. There may be some others following Him, too. I do not know, but a minimum of 80 people are following Him all the time. Some have sold everything and go with Him, and they have nothing.

There's a possibility that others are well off enough to just tour with Him. Others may have mothers and daddies sending them money, and they just go out and follow Him. Some may fall in for a week or two, go home to fish or plow or beg money from mother and daddy, then come back and follow Him some more. But He's a spectacle. He is spectacular, and they are following Him. And out of this menagerie of 80 people, He must pick twelve upon whom He will lay everything. They will be the ones He spends the most time with, although He will spend time with all. I'm going to call it 80 from now on, okay?

All 80 of them, and they are a varied group of people, and you need to get to know them - at least 12 of them. You need to get to know them really well, because even the twelve are a varied group of people. Here are 80 people; I have no question in my mind: some very wealthy people are following Him around. There are some women. There are probably some married couples. A lot of young men. Some young women. All sorts of backgrounds. Some of them can barely get a meal a day because they're following Him. I wouldn't even call that blind faith. Just sheer determination. They'd rather starve than miss this. They follow Him, and don't tell me people won't do things like this. I've seen people do things like this, and for men less than Jesus Christ.

The dawn comes, and He calls them together, and He says I'm going to take twelve of you, and you're going to be special. And all 80 of them grabbed their hearts. Every one of them wants to be one of the twelve. He picks them. Twelve men who are going to be very, very close to Him: Simon Peter, who will run around with Andrew; James, who will run around with John; Philip, who will run around with Bartholomew; Thomas, who will run around with Matthew; James, who will run around with Jude Thaddeus; and Simon the Zealot, who is so zealous for the Lord, he doesn't care who he runs around with. So the Lord has Him run around with Judas of the land of Iscariot. He picks them, and the others are disappointed, but they are glad for the ones who were picked.

Now, we didn't just learn that the Lord is pressed for time; we learned this recently: that, from His viewpoint, He has no time to become a disturbing, controversial person while He's here on earth. He will become one, but He won't do it deliberately. He's going to be like the smoking reed, a broken piece of flax, smoking flax, a broken piece of reed. He will not cause problems. He's got to spend three years with 80-100 people, and especially He's got to spend time with about twelve people. He's going to need every moment He can get His hands to live with these men.

Well, He is now surrounded by this small group of men, who are a result of a night of agonizing prayer. He has seen something that they have not seen. They have never been to the Sermon on the Mount, and they don't know all the things that He knows. He knows which one is going to betray them. He knows exactly who will preach at Pentecost. He knows all sorts of things, but He's also captured in time and space, and He's going there for them, and He's going to live out this drama. He's going to pace Himself with these men, and He's going to teach them according to their needs...and they are very needy.

Some of these men have not had a good meal in several days. Some of them have sold everything they've had and spent what little money they had left. Some of them are very rich and very well to do. They are a sordid lot. They are all gathered around Him, following Him. With the twelve nearest to Him, it's probably around eight or nine o'clock. Already from out of the cities and the villages around, thousands and thousands and thousands of people are beginning to gather on the hillsides to see what this man is going to do, when He's going to call for a time to heal, or when He's going to speak to them. They just want to watch something spectacular.

The Lord walks up; first, He sees the multitudes while He's in a valley, a flat plain, and He sees them. He sees them beginning to come from there and from there and from everywhere. And He sighs. He walks up the side of a hill, and His 80 followers follow Him. Some of them haven't had breakfast. They've got no food. Some of them have eaten really well this morning. Some of them are not smart. Some of them are confused. Each one has a different need. Some of them are just bent over double because of their sinfulness. Some of them really feel unworthy. Some are determined to see their lives changed.

The Lord turns around and looks at them. While they are standing there looking at Him, He sits down. They are standing. He looks up at them as they stand around Him, and while thousands of people are coming out of the villages around, He addresses these 80 men, with the apostles standing in front of the 80. Have you got the picture?

He turns around, looks at them, and says this. Remember, we're talking to 70 men and 10 women. I'm sure it's more than that. And this is what He says to them. He's sitting there staring down at them. I'm going to tell you this before I tell you what He says. The Beatitudes. A message delivered to Christian workers. The original Christian workers. These are the Beatitudes...to Christian workers who just become extremely or keenly conscious of the fact that there is such a thing as going to be some workers. He has got disciples, and

twelve of them. He has selected them to be very, very personal and very close to Him, but they are all now aware by the very fact that they were not chosen. Twelve out of that group were chosen, and now they're aware that there's a group. They belong to it, and they feel special, whether they be the twelve or the eighty, because it was from this group He chose the twelve. I'm sure you follow.

There have been questions for weeks, perhaps months, and perhaps a year, and He's going to answer many of them today. The questions are not universal in the minds of all these people. Some of them have one thing in their mind; others have another. He's going to answer their questions. He looks up at them, and He sees a brother over here, who a few weeks ago was a middle-class, middle-income follower, a human being, and now He's following the Lord around; he is no longer middle class. He is poor.

(Jesus speaking) Some of you are poor. That's all right. Spiritual blessings are yours because both realms belong to you. Some of you are poor. Spiritual blessings are yours because both realms belong to you. Some of you are poor, but that's all right because the kingdom of God belongs to you. You may not have a lot physically, but you have great spiritual blessings. The kingdom of God is yours. Please note, I also know what it's like to be poor. I am poor, and the Kingdom of God belongs to me. Both realms are mine. You're weighted down with spiritual blessings because the kingdom is yours.

Some of you have not had any breakfast this morning. You're hungry. You don't have anything, not even food. I've been hungry; despite who I am on this earth, I've missed meals because I've had nothing. Spiritual blessings are yours, and you're going to eat, and eventually you're going to have enough food. It's alright to be hungry this morning. You will get enough to eat; I will too.

This morning, some of you cried. You wept bitterly, deep sobs. Some of you cried yesterday. I've cried right here on this earth, but I have laughed after I've cried. You're not going to cry forever. You've cried, and you've wept, but it will soon end. You will laugh again.

His eyes swept the crowd, and He said "Some of you are rich." Now, I don't know what that did to that group when He said to them, "Some of you are rich," in light of the fact that some other brothers in that group didn't even have breakfast. Some of you are rich, and right now you're having all the comforts you're ever going to have. All the comfort you will ever know is the comfort you're having right now. Your comfort is in your wealth. I've never been rich. I will never be rich. Your riches are giving you all that you will ever have. Some of you ate this morning. And some of you have never missed a meal. Well, some of you are eating right now. Be assured, you are going to be hungry. A day will come when you, too, will be hungry.

Some of you are having a great time at this. You're jovial. This has been a wonderful experience for you. I want you to know that you are like the rich brother and the full brother. Your day will soon be like the brother who was weeping this morning. This time of joy and fun will pass. You are going to weep and cry just as they have and as have I.

They're standing there, and the Lord's looking at them, and I think at this point they are getting an interesting reaction within each one of them. But now He says something that includes every one of them. All of you have been disturbed about the persecution that has befallen Me, and the slander you've heard about Me, and the things some of you feel are lies. Perhaps some of you heard them and wondered if they were true, but you've all been disturbed about the vicious and ugly things that have happened, and you don't like it.

Some of you want peace. Some of you are naturally inclined to want to be liked. Liked, to the point that everyone will say nice things about you. There are some of you who need desperately to be liked. There are some of you who really desperately have to have people say nice things about you. People like this have a name. They are called false prophets. You have to work, and you have to work hard to be liked by everybody. It cannot be done easily. You have to be a very special kind of person to receive praise from everyone when you are a prophet. It cannot be done except by great effort. Yet some of you are so obsessed with the desire and need to be liked, you will order and arrange your life so that everyone will speak well of you. Woe to you. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, because they spoke well of your fathers - the false prophets.

There are others of you who are spiritually destitute and helpless; in the realm of things that are spiritual, you have absolutely nothing. Actually, the entire other realm belongs to you. Those of you who are spiritually destitute, yours is the kingdom that is in the heavenly realm. Praise the Lord for those who are spiritually destitute. Some of you have been really mourning. Blessed are you, because right now, even at this moment, you are spiritually prosperous. Blessed are you who mourn, because you are going to be comforted and strengthened. Comfort and strength will come to you.

Some of you are broken. Some of you have your strength bridled and broken. Blessed, spiritual prosperity to those whose strength has been broken and is bridled. The entire earth is your possession. It is yours. You possess the whole earth. Some of you have been physically hungry and physically thirsty, and some of you have been spiritually hungry and spiritually thirsty, and you have thirsted for righteousness. You are spiritually prosperous. Your hunger and your thirst will be completely satisfied. Rejoice in your hunger and your thirst.

Some of you have been very merciful and very caring. You will become the object of mercy and care. Some of you have hearts that are pure. Spiritually prosperous are you, for you will see - with that heart, you will see - the face of God. Some of you make peace and bring reconciliation in this group. Spiritually prosperous are you. You are spiritually prospered. Men will look at you and say, "There truly is a son of the living God. That man can bring peace between brothers."

Some of you are now, and some of you will be persecuted because of righteousness. The entire kingdom of the heavenlies belongs to you. And now I would like to make a prediction. Every one of you will be hated. Every one of you is going to be persecuted. Men shall revile

you. Men shall say all sorts of things against you and speak of you with great intent toward evil. They are going to excommunicate you and denounce you because of your relationship to Me. When that happens, don't get down in the dumps. Rejoice.

This is my promise beyond my prediction, that in the realm of heavenly places, there is a reward for you. Rejoice in that reward when men persecute you because of your relationship to Me. And remember this, my brothers, you're in good company. They have persecuted Me because of My relationship to My Father, and they persecuted the prophets before Me because of their relationship to God.

I don't know what those men felt like when that was over, but I wish I could have been there and felt its intensity. To have been the brother who was all tied up in knots because of his unrighteousness, and he knew the Lord had promised that he was going to obtain righteousness. The brother who hadn't had any breakfast that morning and had not had a penny in his pocket for days, but he was determined; wherever the man went, he was going to go with Him, to be assured that the Lord was hungry too, and that they were both going to eat.

To perhaps see one of these brothers who was well to squirm a little bit because he had followed the Lord, but he had not come in and made himself part of that group and shared his abundance, and was, in fact, getting a great deal of pleasure out of both following the Lord and using his income to live in comfort that day. It may have been the last day that person ever followed the Lord. That day, he fed some other brothers lunch.

I have a notion that every one of them went away wondering if they were one who was pure in heart. Some of the brothers who had done a lot of mourning, agonizing, weeping, and crying probably walked away feeling really good. But all of them who had determined that they would follow Him had been given a promise that everything that had befallen Him would befall them...unless they couldn't handle it. Then they would not be His followers, but they would arrange it so that they could share some of the things they'd learned from Him, but share them in such a way that they were never offensive to anybody. Then they wouldn't be followers of the Lord; they'd be false prophets.

I think every one of them went away that day trying to figure out how to rejoice when you're persecuted. And I frankly would speak and say, I hope they learned how. Now, that's one trick I have never been able to pull off. When falsehoods and lies come, to rejoice. So the next time you brothers see me having a hard time with something that's been said or done, would you please sit me down and make me rejoice at that moment, because great is my reward in the kingdom of the heavens, and I have a reward for having been persecuted for my relationship to Jesus Christ.

What I feel most is this: even now, we have a religious relationship to that passage of scripture; I want to bring it down and end with a question. Everyone in this room is

married. All of us except one have children, and each of us has jobs and financial responsibilities, and we've got kids, and we've got wives.

If you had been one of those 80 people that day, could you have kept from following Him around from town to town? If He lived today, could you follow Him around from town to town? That's all I'm asking. I'm not asking any big religious thing. I'm simply asking, could you do that? I think it would take a lot of maneuvering on all our parts to pull that off.

In following Him those three years, they really did get hungry, and they really did cry, and they really did have their spiritual poverty. And somewhere or other, those 80 people figured out a way to follow Him for the next three years. In so doing, they probably never broke the habit of being what they were during those three years.

My own feeling is, and I'm sitting here not in any way trying to put you under a pile, but my feeling is, having observed the passing parade for nearly thirty-five years now, Roman Catholic priests are about the only ones that have any idea what it's like to be a worker in the kingdom of God...and I sometimes wonder about them. They take a vow of poverty, and that's how they live. Those men didn't take a vow of poverty, but just by their willingness to follow Him around, it was very uncomfortable how they had to live.

I want you to stop thinking about it. I want you to stop considering it. I just don't want you to get too comfortable. Sister, I don't want you to get too comfortable. I don't want to get too comfortable. I'd like for you, and I'd like for me, to sense what was going on with them: the compassionate heart of reassurance He gave them. The practical and almost frightening declarations He threw at them. And the rebuke He threw at some of them; He spoke to the wickedness in the hearts of many of them.

In it all, there is an atmosphere of what it takes to be a follower. No, a worker. One of the twelve called. When they got through, they had an atmosphere of what it was like, what it was going to be like, and what it was like to be one who followed Him.

Maybe the most encouraging thing, and I'm sure it's been in all of your minds, the most encouraging thing about it all is that everything He said- not, of course, including the false prophet part and things like that - He exemplified everything He said to them. He had wept, and He had laughed; He had been hungry, but He had eaten. His strength was broken and bridled. He hungered and thirsted after maintaining His righteousness. He had seen the face of God.

Reward beyond reward was being laid up for Him in heavenly places. The kingdom of God was His. He had a sense of this far deeper than any of them could have, but not far deeper, not beyond your understanding of what this all is, because you're on the other side of the Sermon on the Mount, and you have a sense of their reward, and you know a little bit about other realms. You know that they were hungry, but they also ate, and then drank. I like for us, I like for you, as I have had to face this, look at it, and review it as somebody who wants to serve the Lord.