



Matthew 5:3

Who is the Spiritually Prosperous Person?

There are three questions people in the media keep asking: How do I look? How am I doing? How important am I?

The evening news and talk shows are filled with observations based on appearance, achievement and acceptance.

More than ever I am convinced the Word of God has the answer to the basic needs of our personal lives. In the words of Jesus we gain an understanding of the righteousness of God, and practical principles for Christian maturity. In the Beatitudes we learn how to enjoy inner happiness. The Sermon on the Mount does not present the way of salvation, but the way of righteous living for those who are already in God's family.

The Beatitudes teach us how to live the Christian life. Here we find the attitudes of the believer. This how the believer is to live the Christian life.

In fact, the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount applies only to Christians. It relates to the Kingdom of God, not a means of gaining entrance into the Kingdom. Jesus did not give a code of conduct or a law to keep in order to enter the Kingdom. The only means of entering is by simple faith in Him and the atoning sacrifice He made for the sinner on the cross. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

The Beatitudes are where we find the secret to power in living for Christ. Act on these principles or beatitudes and you will experience the promised blessings.

Jesus suggested that if we are going to live the spiritually prosperous life we will live above the chances, changes, and circumstances in life. Jesus said, ". . . I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly (John 10:10b).

Can you find a better way to describe that life than in the words of the apostle Paul? He says such a life is full of the fruit of the Spirit, and that kind of life is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22-23).

Spiritual prosperity is an independent joy, a mind set that takes us through our pain, sorrow, loss, grief, tears and fears.

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Jesus Christ satisfies all of our need for security, significance and sufficiency. He said, I'am the way, the truth, and the live. As we make ourselves available to Him He supplies our inner personal needs.

The Beatitudes teach us to place our trust in Christ for our security and significance. He loves us unconditionally. We love Him because He first loved us. Because of that great act of love we matter. We are appreciated. We are important. Ultimately the only thing that matters is how we stand with Him. Our need for sufficiency is found in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. He sustains us and gives us the power to live a life pleasing to Him.

I pray God will place in every believer a hunger for an abundant, victorious spiritually prosperous life under the control of His Spirit. My God give us a thirst to abide in Christ.

THE CRAVING FOR SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

God has created us with certain basic spiritual and personal needs that He alone must satisfy if we are going to have a spiritually prosperous life.

We have a need for security.

This is an awareness of being unconditionally and totally loved without needing to change in order to win love. It is a love that is freely given and cannot be earned and cannot be lost. A healthy person has an awareness of being wanted and accepted, of being cared for and enjoyed. It is the "we" feeling experienced when we sense we are wanted or desired by someone person or group of people. We watch for evidence that certain people really want us. They must take the initiative to make us feel accepted or we doubt if they really wanted us. It rests on the voluntary attitude of others accepting us just as we really are.

We have a need for significance.

We have a need to be involved in something that will still be worthwhile a million years from now. We want to have a significant impact on the lives of others. This is the "I'am good, or I'do count, or I'am right" feeling. We sense worthiness when others show positive attitudes toward us. When they criticize us we lose it. It is related to doing right. Self-control is important to our sense of significance. It rests on the introspective attitude of self approval.

We have a need for sufficiency.

This is that feeling of competency, or adequacy, courage, of hopefulness and strength to carry out the tasks of daily life situations. It is the "I'can do it" feeling of being able to face life and cope with it. It takes into consideration one's weaknesses and strengths. It is affected positively by our successes and negatively by our failures. It is also affected directly by our goal setting and our obtaining them. This sense of sufficiency rests on our past accomplishments

obtaining them. This sense of sufficiency rests on our past accomplishments and present sense of achievement.

The amazing thing is that God in His grace meets all of these needs personally. Our tendency is to look for the solution to our basic personal needs in the wrong place and in the wrong way. Satan has led us to believe we can get them met by physical beauty, intelligence, wealth, family heritage and position in life. Jesus spoke to this issue in Luke 16:15 when He said, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

The tragedy is we carry these false ideas of spiritual prosperity over into the most vital areas of our personal lives. God's standard is faith, hope and love. There is a craving for spiritual prosperity that cannot be satisfied in the world's philosophies. You will always feel empty and void until you let Jesus Christ meet those needs.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

Jesus Christ offers us the solution to this craving for abundant spiritual life. Jesus told His disciples, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He used this word "blessed" nine times in verses 3-11. I think He is trying to tell us something if He repeats it that many times in so few sentences.

Jesus offers us the solution

What does the word "blessed," mean? The word in the original is *makarios*. It is essentially a state of mind and is identified with pure character that is founded in God's righteousness. Sometimes you will see this word variously translated "to be envied," "spiritually prosperous," "filled with life joy," or "satisfied." The spiritually prosperous person is not bound by the chances in life. To be "blessed" is to be conscious of perfect joy, perfect peace, and perfect rest. It is the inner condition of being a believer in Jesus Christ. It describes a person who is in a right relationship with God.

Happiness is not a good translation because its root is "chance." I am happy if everything is going my way. It is purely a subjective evaluation of current events, feelings and emotions. Jesus is not teaching pop psychology or how to feel good.

Jesus is describing the inner state of a believer who is trusting in Him. Here is a life joy that is completely untouchable and unassailable by the events in life. It is a word that describes the spiritually prosperous person who lives above the chances, changes and circumstances in life. It describes a joy that is completely independent of all life situations. There are no chances in life if we trust our lives to Jesus Christ. Life is not full of chances. It is moving toward an eternal goal—the consummation of and the unveiling of Jesus Christ as Lord and Master in our lives. If we take Romans 8:26-30 at face value they describe a life free from daily cares and worries because God is in control of our lives. This is the person whom Jesus describes as "blessed."

M. R. Vincent described the word "blessed" as "a sense of God's approval founded in righteousness which rests ultimately on the love of God." He added it is "the express symbol of happiness identified with pure character."

This is the spiritually prosperous person. He has an intimate, personal right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. He enjoys the blessings of being in that relationship with Him. He has been graced by the grace of God. He is the recipient of God's favor because of the right relationship.

This spiritually prosperous person experiences a blessedness and life joy because God has been gracious to Him in providing salvation. It has nothing to do with our outward condition or status in life. *Makarios* is the life-joy that is evident from God's blessings on a person's life.

The only person who can be described in such a way is the believer in a right relationship with Jesus Christ. This is the state or condition of the believer who has experienced God's saving grace. He is the recipient of the new birth, salvation, and responding to the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in his life. When we cooperate with Him He produces this kind of life in us. He is enabled to minister these blessings to the believer when he is yielded to the Holy Spirit and cooperates with Him. This is the state or condition of a man to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed by faith.

The blessed person or spiritually prosperous is the state of a person to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed by faith. Such a person is promised the kingdom of heaven, comfort, mercy, shall inherit the earth, see God, is called a son of God, etc. It is a blessing that comes from God to those who trust in His Son for salvation and life. When we believed on Jesus Christ as our personal Savior we came to share in the very life of God. He gave us eternal life. It is Christ living His life in and through us by the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Him we have everything we need to live the spiritually prosperous life.

Here is a life joy that takes us through our pain, sorrow, loss, grief, tears and fears. Change in fortune, collapse in health, failure of our plans, disappointments of our ambitions or dreams in life do not affect it.

The Beatitudes are not wishful glimpses of some future eternal sunset. They give us life and hope today. The spiritually blessed person is secure in Christ, significant in God's Kingdom and sufficient in God's provision. He is the recipient of divine favor and blessing. He is prosperous because of God's saving and sustaining grace (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 8:1; Colossians 1:28).

This spiritual prosperity comes through faith in Jesus Christ. The world does not have anything to match this kind of life. Humanism can't touch it.

Who is a spiritually prosperous person?

Jesus said such a person is spiritually poor. He is one who mourns over his poverty. He is Spirit controlled. He hungers and thirsts for a right relationship with God. He is gentle, merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker and is persecuted because of His intimate relationship with God.

The *Amplified Bible* reads: "Blessed —happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous [that is, with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions . . .]"

Jesus Christ is our best example of the spiritually prosperous person. The night of His crucifixion He spent the evening comforting and preparing His disciples for His death. When He needed encouragement He went to the Mount of Olives to pray. In Gethsemane He took Peter, James and John aside and began to be grieved and distressed (Matthew 26:37). He said to them, My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me. Then Jesus went a little further and fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt. When He came back after a period of prayer He found them sleeping. It must have added to His agony of spirit as He fought the battle alone. So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? Then He added, Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Then Jesus returned to the place where He was praying alone and prayed, My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done (v. 42). When Jesus returned to the three He found their eyes heavy

in sleep, so He returned and third time and prayed. Moments later, all the disciples left Him and fled as Jesus was led away to the high priest for trial and crucifixion.

Jesus lived above the chances, changes and circumstances of the hour. He knew only one thing: Not my will, Thy will be done! He drew His strength from the Father's presence. He could say with confidence and security, But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled (v. 56). That is the spiritually prosperous man.

You may be asking yourself, yes, but how do I get it. How can I be this kind a person?

THE CONDITIONS FOR SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY

Two errors in modern thinking

There are two errors in our thinking about happiness. We often get into the trap of thinking the solution to our personal happiness depends on a change in our circumstances. Lord if you would only change _____. I'll be happy. The other error is to think the solution depends on a change in our feelings.

The mature believer assumes his own responsibility for personal growth. I choose to be all that God wants me to be in Christ Jesus. I choose to live a spiritually prosperous life. Jesus said, Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (Matthew 6:33). We must assume our responsibility in living the Christian life. It is not automatic. God will not pry a hole in your head and fill it with knowledge of Him. He does not turn us into robots. Jesus said, If we love Him we will obey Him (John 14:15).

A critical decision

Have you made that all important choice to accept Christ as your Lord and Master? Yes, it begins with a personal relationship with Him. Everything I have said is foolishness if you have not turned your life over to Jesus Christ. You cannot have the spiritually prosperous life without being born again. Spiritual birth must take place before you can grow in your knowledge and faith in Christ. You cannot become like Him until He has come into your life through the spiritual birth. This spiritual life begins with the deep realization of sin in your life and that Christ died on the cross for your sins. If you have never done so, will you pause and ask Jesus Christ to save you?

The focus of this message has really been on the Christian's attitude toward God's kind of life. Jesus used this word blessed to express the happiness identified with pure character. It is a sense of God's approval founded on His righteousness. It describes a person who enjoys God's favor and who is destined to enter His eternal kingdom. He stands right in the sight of God. It is the consciousness of perfect peace, perfect joy and perfect rest. The emphasis of this blessedness is on the grace of God. It is something God does for man. It is His gift to people living in absolute, abject spiritual poverty. It is for those of us who consider ourselves the worst kind of sinners, the chiefs of sinners. Here is hope to the one who will cry out, O God, woe is me and Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? "

Are you enjoying Kingdom living *now*? Where is your spiritual poverty today? Where is the spiritual need in your life as a Christian? Where is the Holy Spirit pointing His finger and saying here is the place where we need to work? Are you bringing that need to Christ? We can never grow as believers until we recognize our need and ask God to supply it His way.

It may be that you have never come to a place of realizing your spiritual poverty. The pŕoor in spirit ŕiave a humble opinion of themselves. It is the opposite of arrogant pride and selfishness. The pŕoor in sprit ŕealize they are depraved sinners and have no righteous standing on their own. They are willing to be saved only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. They exchange their own self rightheousness for the grace – righteousness of Christ.

God always gives His very best to those who leave the choice with Him. That is the supreme joy, peace and security of living the exchanged life. He is our only source of security, significance and sufficiency.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

Give me more on this subject.

[Series on the Beatitudes index.](#)

Here are some more studies on justification by faith in Christ: [Romans Series](#) and our [Union with Christ](#).

Title: Matthew 5:3 "Blessed" The Spiritually Prosperous Person

Series: The Beatitudes of Jesus

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