

## **Sermon Guide: The Sermon on the Mount: “Beatitudes” | Samuel Voo | April 14, 2024**

### **Summary**

In this sermon, Samuel Voo begins by sharing a story about stabilizing an airplane in a nosedive by, counterintuitively, pushing down on the control stick—and thereby going faster—rather than pulling up and going slower. This experience parallels the counterintuitive nature of the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount, which at first glance seem to turn the world upside down, but upon deeper reflection, reveal the world to be upside down and the teachings of Jesus to be right side up.

Sam seeks to accomplish three main goals in this message: First, to explain the relationship of the beatitudes to the rest of Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 5-7; secondly, to help hearers understand the movement and structure of the beatitudes; and thirdly to offer some questions for reflection and to challenge hearers to apply the message of the beatitudes.

First, the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 are connected closely with Isaiah 61, which prophesied of God bringing good news to Israel in exile. Jesus taught that this prophecy was fulfilled in him. Thus, those whom the beatitudes describe are blessed first of all because God’s kingdom is now arriving in him and Jesus is restoring mercy and justice to those most in need. This kingdom is not a political or geographical entity but a spiritual reign that transcends boundaries, where we, as citizens, bring the kingdom with us through our actions and lives. Secondly, Sam discussed the progression within the Beatitudes, from being poor in spirit, a posture of utter dependence on God, to becoming peacemakers and, ultimately, facing persecution for living out the kingdom's values. This progression reflects a journey from recognizing our need for God to actively participating in His work of peace and justice.

Sam concludes with an invitation for reflection and action, asking hearers to consider places in their lives that remind them of their need for God, reflect on values that may be counterintuitive in their context, and areas where they can be peacemakers.

### **Key Takeaways:**

1. The Beatitudes teach us that the kingdom of God is for those who recognize their spiritual poverty and need for God's rescue. This recognition is the starting point for experiencing the fullness of God's kingdom and His blessings. [\[01:02\]](#)
2. The kingdom of God is not confined to a physical location but is present wherever we, as citizens, live out the reign and rule of God in our lives. Our actions and presence bring the kingdom to the places we inhabit, transforming our environments through God's justice and mercy. [\[05:08\]](#)

3. The progression of the Beatitudes from being poor in spirit to becoming peacemakers and facing persecution reflects the transformative journey of a disciple. As we grow in our understanding and embodiment of kingdom values, we will inevitably encounter resistance from a world that operates on different principles. [\[33:09\]](#)

### **Bible Reading:**

Matthew 5:1-12

Isaiah 61:1

Psalms 70:5

### **Discussion Questions**

1. In Matthew 5:1-12, what are the characteristics of the people who are described as "blessed"? How do these characteristics compare to the world's typical view of happiness and success?
2. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit," and why is this the first Beatitude mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 5:3?
3. How might understanding being "poor in spirit" as a recognition of one's spiritual neediness transform one's approach to faith and life?

### **Going Deeper**

1. Identify a situation in your life where you feel spiritually poor or in need. How can you allow this situation or these feelings to be a vehicle for God's kingdom in your life?
2. Reflect on a recent experience where the world's values clashed with the values of the kingdom of heaven. How did you respond, and what might you do differently in light of the Beatitudes?
3. Consider a time when you faced opposition or misunderstanding because of your faith. How can you find encouragement in the Beatitudes to persevere in such situations?