

One

Beatitude means happiness

What do all people want? What is everyone searching and striving for? Happiness. Beatitude means happiness. And the Eight Beatitudes are God's eight-step plan for true happiness.

I was walking into the Mt. of Beatitudes in the Holy Land and I overheard a guide say to a group, "Most Christians don't know the Beatitudes." That is probably true and it is tragic to live life without knowing the surefire way to get what everyone wants – happiness. So here it is...

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Now, the real issue is this: what do each of these mean and how do I live them?

Two

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

What do you think it means to be Poor in Spirit?

St. Augustine said that “poor in spirit” means humility. We can begin to understand the Poor in Spirit and Humility by first looking at its opposite: Pride

All sin is pride. Pride is like ice cream, it comes in many different flavors. Pride is all the ways we turn away from God.

In pride, we act as if we don’t need God and His plan. “I can do it on my own. I can do it my way.” We live in pure self-reliance.

Now, we don’t come right out and say this, but we live this way. We try to control everything, and we find it really hard to surrender to God. Pride shows itself so clearly when we are too busy for prayer, too busy to spend time with God and rely on him.

We live in pride because we think everything depends on us, and that is a terrible way to live.

Three

Who is your Atlas – you or God?

Humility is to know and live as if God is the foundation of existence. But, if you remove Him as your foundation then you become the foundation and you are not wise or strong or big enough. That is why

you feel overwhelmed, anxious, and angry. Because you are trying to be the Atlas of the Universe. Atlas was the Titan condemned to hold up the universe forever. He's got the weight of the world on Him. He was condemned to live this way but we do it willingly.

Now you've got the weight of the universe resting on your shoulders. And that is overwhelming and unmanageable, and that is why you feel out of control. Because Pride is a break with God's order. Pride says, "I don't need this boat (God and His plan) In fact, I'm getting out of this boat into the ocean."

Can you imagine the panic if you fell out of a cruise ship at night and watched it sail away? That is what pride is. We panic because we can't deal with this!

Then we try to soothe or escape the pressure, the feeling of being overwhelmed, and the pain of addiction to busyness, entertainment, food, alcohol, drugs, porn...we try to soothe the pain with distraction. But it doesn't work.

Four

Humility

Jesus said to Catherine of Siena, "Do you know who you are and who I am? If you know these two things, you will be blessed and the Enemy will never deceive you. I am He who is; and you are she who is not." This is the essence of humility which overcomes pride.

Humility consists of two truths: The first truth is that God is the Atlas of the universe. He is my Father. I can depend on Him. I am not alone in the world.

The Second truth is that I am not God. I have limitations. I cannot do all things or control all things. But with God, united to him in Jesus, I am a son of God, you are a daughter of God. And with God as my Father, no matter what happens, I am safe because He works all things for good for those who love him.

The saints lived in happiness and peace but also in power and confidence – saints like St. Frances Cabrini and Maximilian Kolbe – and they did the impossible precisely because they were Poor in Spirit, they were humble, they made it a habit to remember that God was God so they didn't need to try to be God. And that was way easier.

Five

So how do we get out of the trap of pride and self-reliance and live in humility, to be Poor in Spirit?

Once when Catherine of Siena was overwhelmed with many cares and worries Jesus said to her, “Think of me; if you do, I will immediately think of you.”

What Jesus meant was this: Go to God the first thing every morning and the last thing every night in prayer because He is God and you are not God.

Jesus made a deal with Catherine. He said, “If you think of me in prayer, I will think of you and take care of everything you are worried about.”

You will become Poor in Spirit, humble if you do this. If you are too busy or distracted to spend time in silence listening to God in prayer in the morning and the evening, then you are enslaved by pride, by self-reliance. Let God speak with you every morning and every night in mental prayer. Then if we forget reality, if we forget who is God and

who is not, the next morning or night we can come back to reality, and make a new resolution. This is the power of mental prayer and a resolution.