



# **BEING A CITIZEN OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

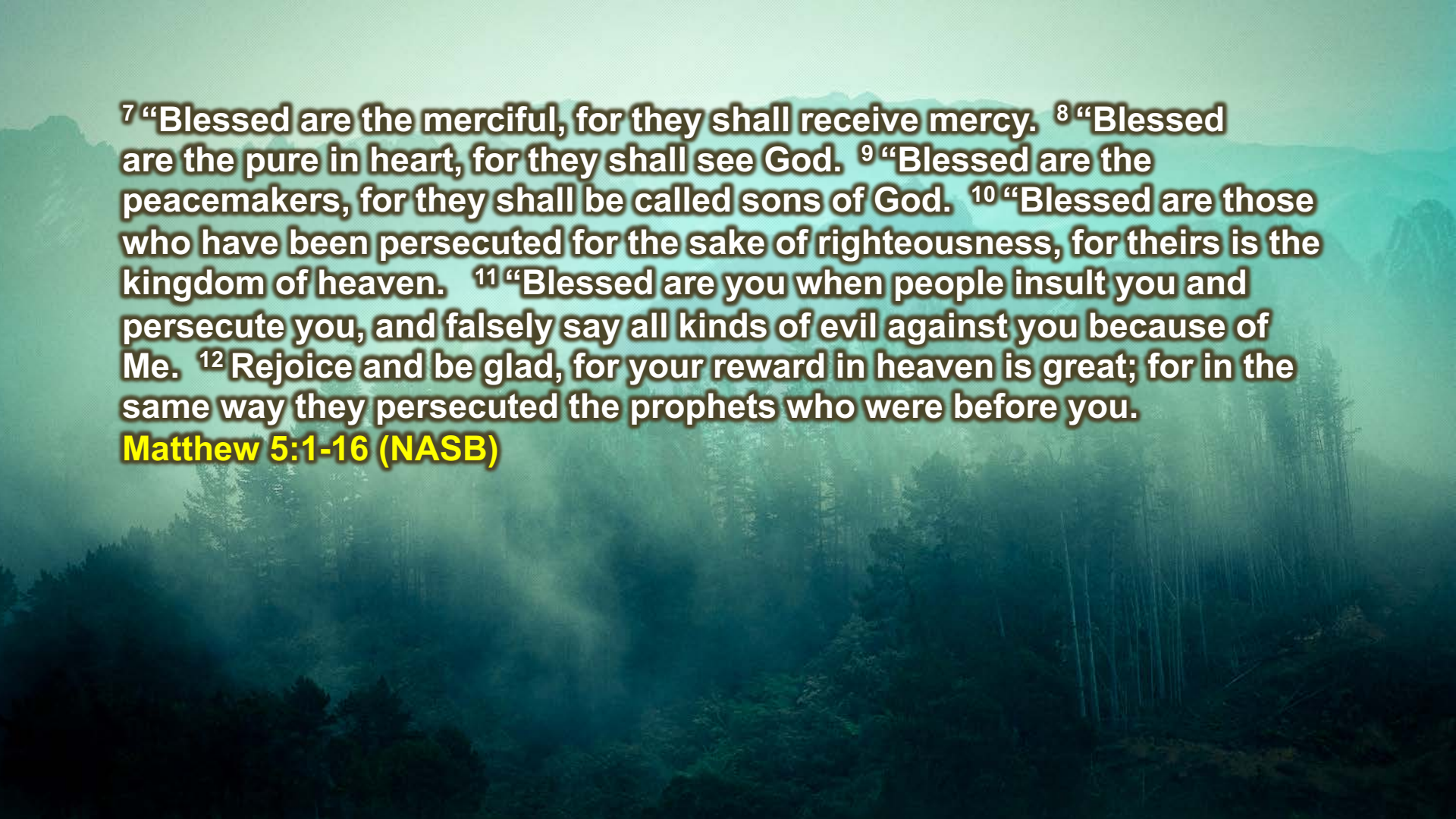
**MATTHEW 5:1-16 (NASB)**

**Elder James Lee • 13 September 2020**

## **Matthew 5:1-16 (NASB)**

### **The Sermon on the Mount; The Beatitudes**

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. <sup>2</sup>He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, <sup>3</sup>“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>4</sup>“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. <sup>5</sup>“Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. <sup>6</sup>“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.



**7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. 8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. 9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. 10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

**Matthew 5:1-16 (NASB)**



## **Introduction**

- **Sermon on the Mount is one of the most important sermons by our Lord Jesus**
- **One of the first sermons preached by Jesus after He was anointed and commissioned by God**



## **Introduction**

- **God incarnate coming down from the mountain and speaking to men for the first time.**
- **Jesus started His sermon with the Beatitudes.**

## **Introduction**

- **If the Sermon on the Mount is preached to us today :**
  - **How would we respond?**
  - **How would we apply?**

## **Introduction**

- **The concept of the kingdom of heaven**
- **Jesus' central message**
- **A new kingdom where He is the Ruler and King**
- **Significant that the kingdom of heaven is mentioned both in the first and the last Beatitude**

# **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **“Survival of the fittest” originated from Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution**
- **Mechanism underlying the natural selection that drives the evolution of life**



## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Nature has a way of selecting the strongest, fittest and those who have any form of advantage to thrive, and the weaklings will somehow be eradicated**
- **Concept of survival of the fittest has permeated nearly every aspect of life here on Earth**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **A “dog eat dog” world out there**
- **Competition can be relentless in the business and corporate world**
- **On the international front, geopolitics is essentially governed by how big or rich a country is, and the concept of who has the “biggest stick”**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Historically, the concept of survival of the fittest has also spawned untold evil and caused unimaginable human suffering.**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **This is the world that we live in**
- **Dominant way of life since Adam and Eve sinned**
- **Concept of survival of the fittest has in turn shaped the values of the world and the world's definition and meaning of success and happiness**



## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Selfishness and safeguarding our own self-interest above all else is something we have all come to accept as a part of reality.**
- **Success is in turn defined in terms of status, power, connections, education, intelligence, talents and good looks.**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Pursuit of success invariably involves the pursuit of either or all of these attributes**
- **Yet many who spent their entire lives pursuing these, find themselves searching for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow which does not exist.**



**Ecclesiastes 9:11**

**I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all.**

- The world is broken and fallen, and the values of the kingdom of the world reflect this broken and fallen state**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **The values of the kingdom of heaven are meekness and humility, brokenness, mercy, forgiveness, holiness, suffering, peace and turning the other cheek**
- **Values which do not fit in the Darwinian jungle**
- **Foolishness to the world**



## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **We, who are citizens of this kingdom of heaven, are not only to agree and accept them, but to live our lives according to these values**
- **Biggest challenge for us - living our lives according to the values of the kingdom of heaven whilst we are here living in the kingdom of the world**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Impossible for us to live according to kingdom values without relying on the King Himself**
- **Jesus is in effect saying, live your lives according to these values because you are My people and this is how you ought to live**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Success in the kingdom of heaven is very different from success as defined in the kingdom of the world**
- **Living our lives in this world according to kingdom values, we may suffer disadvantage, injustice or even loss**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **You are blessed when you follow me, and I will look after you and provide for you, and you can be assured of a bright future, both in this life and beyond, regardless of your circumstances, because you are My people.**
- **In the kingdom of this world, we need to strive and we need to fight and struggle on our own, by ourselves and using our own efforts.**



## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **In the kingdom of heaven, God provides for everything.**
  - **we have to be able to trust God enough to be totally dependent on Him**
  - **need to have a paradigm shift in our view of what success means to us**
  - **need to have a fundamental change in our attitudes towards life's pursuits**

## **The Kingdom of the World vs The Kingdom of Heaven**

- **Living according to godly values, even when it seems foolish to do so, and to trust and be totally dependent on God for whatever the outcome may be**

## **What Does It Mean To Be “Poor In Spirit”?**

- **First Beatitude was not just referring to material poverty**
- **Dependent, deprived and desperate.**
- **To be poor in spirit is to realise our spiritual bankruptcy and brokenness without God, and to respond in repentance and dependence on God**

## **What Does It Mean To Be “Poor In Spirit”?**

- **One can be both materially and spiritually poor**
- **But one can also be materially wealthy and spiritually poor at the same time**
- **A wealthy person faces the risk of putting his trust on his riches resulting in a false sense of self-sufficiency**





**\* Luke 6:24**

**\* 1 Timothy 6:17**

- **Singapore has one of the highest level of per capita income in the world**
- **Many of us are comfortable materially**
- **The material comforts we enjoy, end up being dulled to our spiritual awareness of our condition if we are not careful**

## **What Does It Mean To Be “Poor In Spirit”?**

- To be poor in spirit means :**
  - to recognise that we cannot make it on our own**
  - to surrender at God's feet in repentance, in worship and in trust and total dependence**
  - having a contrite spirit**

- **To be poor in spirit means :**
  - **have a heart that is filled with love and adoration for God**
  - **to be emptied of self-independence and self-sufficiency and to place our trust completely in God**
  - **knowing that all blessings are in Jesus, and that God is our Provider who knows our needs**

## **Will We Be Ready When Persecution Comes?**

- **We cannot ignore the reality of persecution when we talk about living as citizens of the kingdom of heaven**
- **Persecution in the physical form does not happen in Singapore.**
- **Whenever we come to the subject of persecution, there's always this sense of detachment**







## **Will We Be Ready When Persecution Comes?**

- **Persecution of Christians is very real in the world**
- **Can persecution ever happen to us here in this safe cocoon called Singapore?**
- **Can the non-physical form of persecution escalate into serious social discrimination and economic impact?**



## **Will We Be Ready When Persecution Comes?**

- **Foolishness for us to think that it will never ever happen here in Singapore**
- **Persecution is driven by spiritual forces**
- **Spiritual forces are at work everywhere and do not know any geographical boundaries**



## **Will We Be Ready When Persecution Comes?**

- **How will we respond when persecution come?**
  - **The only way we can stand up to persecution is when we trust God completely, even to the point of death**



# **Conclusion**

