

Matthew 5:1-5:16, The Beatitudes

The reading for today includes the nine (or eight) beatitudes, and the passage referring to us being the salt and light of the world.

Outline:

1. Introduction (5:1-2)
2. Approval in relating to God (5:3-6)
3. Approval in relating to people (5:7-10)
4. Approval during persecution, expansion of 8th Beatitude (5:11-16)
 - a. Understanding persecution (5:11-12)
 - b. Witness during persecution (5:13-16)

The Sermon on the Mount

5:1 When He saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He began to teach them, saying:

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

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

5 Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

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

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

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

11 You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

13 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. 14 You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Synoptic Parallels:

Luke 6:20-23 (the beatitudes), 14:34-35 (salt and light)

Mark 4:21 (light), 9:50 (salt)

Contrasts between the parallels:

Matthew	Luke	Mark
Kingdom of Heaven (5:3)	Kingdom of God (6:20)	
Mourn (5:4)	Weep (6:21)	
Comfort (5:4)	Laugh (6:21)	
Persecuted (5:10)	people hate you, when they exclude you, insult you, and slander your name as evil (6:22)	

For righteousness' sake (5:10)	On account of the Son of Man (6:22)	
You are the salt of the earth (5:13)	Salt is good (14:34)	Have salt with yourselves (9:50) – <i>compare to Heb 10:25</i>
<i>(Salt that has lost its taste)</i> should be thrown out and trampled under people's feet (5:13)	<i>(Salt that has lost its taste)</i> isn't fit for the soil or for the manure pile (14:35)	
<i>(Light)</i> Under a bushel basket (5:15)	<i>(Light)</i> In a cellar or under a basket (11:33)	<i>(Light)</i> Under a basket or bed – only temporary (4:21)

Although there are nine beatitudes, the last is an expansion of the one before it, so we should consider there to be eight. Matthew writes these in a way that confirms this, as the first and last of the beatitudes (5:3 & 5:10) are written in the present tense and bracket the others by saying “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The 2nd through 7th beatitudes are written in the future tense. Matthew also divides the eight beatitudes into two sections, with the first four focusing on our address to the LORD, and the later four focusing on our address to our fellow man.

Biblical commentators differ on whether these beatitudes (or blessings) are to be taken as *requirements for the attainment of God's righteousness*, or whether they should be considered the *fruits of a right relationship with God*. The latter must be correct unless we are to determine that our good works are to be part of our salvation. We are also tempted in reading these to consider which category we fall into among those listed. We may ask ourselves, “which one am I?”. Instead, we should read, and then pray that we are transformed to become each of these. Matthew is telling us that these should be the desired state of our hearts – toward God, and others.