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| Topic | Unlocking the Secret to Happiness |
| Reference | Matthew 5:3-5 |
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| Speaker | Leong Sat Sing |

The word *blessed* Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount is from the Greek word *makarios* which means to be happy or blissful. It is not used for God but more used for man but it had a spiritual connotations. It means you want to be happy and blessed by God. So it is a self-contained happiness and the idea of that happiness is independent of our circumstances.

Jesus's definition of True Happiness is blessedness.

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

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

5“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6“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 are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

So these seven components are Jesus's definition of happiness or blessedness. It is counterculture. It is not what we are used to, to the world is even mind boggling; how we can live this way, but Jesus is not a man pleaser so he tells us the truth. He is the way, the truth and the life. He tells us the way to abundant life and this is kind of like a formula of how we can have that abundant life, the blessedness.

So comforted, be filled, inherited speak about something that happen inside us, things that change and the higher part is things that related to God; our position before God, our position in this world, the possession that we have in eternity and the provision that what we will see in the future. So these encapsulate what it means to be a blessed person or with true happiness.

So I may not have everything I want in life but I am blessed enough to have all I need.

So it is good, it is blessed if you come to this level and say this and need to be grateful.

A person who is being transformed internally realize his or her position by the grace of God, knowing his future, the hope that he has, knowing who God the father is to him. Sometimes we come to a point during worship, listening to sermon or reading the bible that a truth just penetrates into our hearts and we begin to realize something deeper than what is on the surface. At that moment we become so appreciative of God and realize how sinful we are before God. This leads us to believe that God is so good to us that we have more than what we deserve.

There are three things about blessedness.

1. Be dependent

Blessed are the poor in spirit

To be poor in spirit means we acknowledge that we are spiritually bankrupt that means there is nothing that we have or that we can do that can earn any point for spirituality. Because of that we have nowhere to turn to and we turn to God. Paul in Roman says

Romans 7:18

- For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. (NIV)
- For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing (KJV)

Have we at any time felt like what Paul felt?

Why is this so, because in Isaiah say

Isaiah 64: 5-6

But when we continued to sin against your ways, you were angry. How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

That means yes, you and I may have done some good things, helped the poor, give good offerings, prayed for the sick, gave words of encouragement, helped in some ministries or even preached. But when we continued to sin, we are the same as unclean. Our services are like filthy rags. There's nothing to be proud of. Nothing to boast or lift our heads high to. The way God look at us, we may have some righteous acts but we are still sinful, we still have wrongdoings, so our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

Luke 18:9-14

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: **10** "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' **13** "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a

sinner.’ **14** “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

So when we stand before God we are spiritually bankrupt, some of us realize, some of us don’t realize, some of us still hang on to our good deeds and we think God is pleased with us.

Phil 3: 7-8

But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ.

Paul is saying that I am of chosen nation, I am a Hebrew, I was circumcised on the eight day, in regards to law I am like a Pharisee, in regards to righteousness I am faultless, so he put all his credentials to have approval from God much more than anyone else. We may sometime be boastful about our qualifications or the things that we have done for God that is better than others, but to Paul these are all garbage, nothing, before God we are nothing.

In search of happiness the prodigal son took his inheritance from his father and went away. The father loved him and reluctantly gave it to him. He spent all his money gallivanting, womanizing, drinking and all that and after he lost all his money he realized he just have to be a worker and tending to the pigs. He was depressed, devastated, disillusion about his friends, where is all the happiness that he used to have. In reality all those things didn’t give us happiness. The prodigal son realized his wrongdoings and spiritual bankruptcy. One of the conditions of being blessed is the realization of our spiritual bankruptcy.

25 years ago when I was a new Christian I remember an incident when in my room I thought back of things that I said either to my friend or colleague I cannot remember. I was so sorry for what I said because it showed me that I was very proud, very egoistic for saying those things and I remembered I knelt down in my room, I banged my head on the bed and said, “why I am like this, why have I not changed” and I felt very bad for myself and was very angry with myself and at some point I felt that I am the most terrible sinner in the world. There was a time I was reading a book called Unconditional Love and in the course of reading that book I realized we ought to have perfect unconditional love to everyone and at that time I was having exam, also there was a stress of exam and I brought stress upon myself. A friend came in and asked me who are you. That how are you is like liberating and so I began to tell him, I don’t think I can’t be a Christian, I can’t have this unconditional love that we supposed to have and I cannot do it. That brother talked to me and the beautiful thing that I remembered that I learned from him is, it is okay that we cannot live this perfect life that God intended us to be and we fall but the important thing is when we fall we get up, Jesus always extend his hand for us to get up. We can fall again but getup, fall get up and the rate of falling will drop. So that gave me the relief like a renewed life, not able to sustain that perfect living and yet there is this grace of God which I did not

embrace so much but that afternoon it was liberating for me that I can always rely on God's grace.

So when we have experienced this poor in spiritually bankrupt situation we learn to be dependent on God, no longer on ourselves.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME TODAY?

Being poor and spiritually bankrupt.

Do I live with God's righteousness or with self-righteousness? Do I always rely on the good things that I have done or the ability I am able to live a sinless life or do I always depend on Jesus my righteousness. Do I demand on superiority or hierarchy, respect, you know I am elder than you or I have a certain position better in a company or in a church, so inside me do I demand that. If we are spiritually bankrupt we are all equal before God. There is nothing we can bring that can earn us any credit. So we have no other way but to be dependent on God.

2. Be repentant

Blessed are those who mourn,

John Stott calls it "*Happy are those who are unhappy*"

".....It is one thing to be spiritually poor and to acknowledge it, but it is another to actually grieve over and mourn over it."

So in position wise we are bankrupt but we can just say, okay we are bankrupt and walk away. So what he is saying here is a different thing. If you realize your position you can walk away or you can grieve over and mourn over it. With that realization there is this action, a resulting grieving. King David wrote that a "broken spirit" and a "contrite heart" are offerings that most please to God (Psalm 51:17).

God is pleased not so much with our righteous act but actually with our contrite heart, but that shows we mourn, we know we are bankrupt and that is why we need God. So we feel or express sorrow with grief and lament. So it is an expression. There must be an action after a realization. The prodigal son had it, he mourned, he realized what desperate condition he was in and he began to feel my father's house got so much food left over; I can go back to my father and repent. So he expressed remorse, repentance and he was contemplating that he needs to go back.

To some of us we may have similar thing against our parents, we demand something and your parents didn't give to you or you feel so angry, you walked away, you disappear for few days that after a while maybe you realize all along my parents actually loved me. They actually wanted what is good for me and you take that humble journey back, you realize you have been wrong all along and that continual love of your parents actually is what is needed by you and we take that humble journey back and to be received back by our loved ones. So repentance does

not mean anything if we keep doing what we are sorry for. There must be a meaning of repenting. That means we don't want to do it anymore. If you keep doing it then it is not repentance.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME TODAY?

- Feeling truly sorry for wrongdoing

Things that we say was wrong or hurtful, things out of our pride that we did but once found it you have excuses. Bill Clinton had an incident with his intern. He was interrogated in 1998, at first he denied after that he realized that evidence is too much he have to accept that fact that is the truth

"Indeed, I did have a relationship with Ms. Lewinsky that was not appropriate. In fact, it was wrong," Clinton said. "I misled people, including even my wife," he said. "I deeply regret that. "It is time to stop the pursuit of personal destruction and the prying into private lives and get on with our national life," Clinton said. (Originally published by the Daily News on August 18, 1998)

But he stopped short of a full apology.

Giving excuses are common for not really apologizing or saying sorry.

3. Be meek

Blessed are the meek

Lloyd-Jones rightly applies meekness to our attitudes toward others. *"We may acknowledge our own bankruptcy and mourn. But to respond with meekness when others tell us of our bankruptcy is far harder."*

In terms of our relationship to people is different thing because all of us this ego in us. If we do not respond well then we don't have the meekness. So meekness is really accepting that we are spiritually bankrupt and other people knows about it.

The word "meek" (*praus*) means gentleness and self-control. It is completely the opposite from what the world extolls. Greeks considered meekness is weakness and only servants are meek. So meekness is an active and deliberate acceptance of undesirable circumstances that are wisely seen by the individual as only part of a larger picture.

When Jesus was nailed on the cross he knows the larger picture. He can even ask God to forgive the soldier that was nailing on him. So a meek person is not easily swayed but what people think or do against him because he knows, he knows he himself don't deserve good things, he knows he himself before God is bankrupt and he knows how to behave to others. So it is strength under control. Jesus said

Matthew 11:28, 29 - "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for **I am meek** and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Paul said

Ephesians 4:1,2 - "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and **meekness**, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;"

He said about longsuffering and forbearing because he knows we all who have stepped on each other's toes every now and then we need to have longsuffering, bear with one another's wrongdoing. We don't react all the time. We don't scold the person all the time. In meekness and loneliness we bear that is meekness. We may have a right to react but you don't. Meekness means strength under control.

Biblical Examples

- Abraham who was called to a Promised Land and then Lot came with him and there were some quarrels among their herdsman. To solve the problem Abraham told Lot to not quarrel and choose the land whichever he chooses. Abraham the person chosen by God and in his meekness does not argue.
- David spared the life of King Saul in the cave; he respected him as he is the anointed king. So King David was completely meek at that time.
- Jesus when caught at the garden of gethsemane can do anything to the people catching him but Jesus submitted himself to God's will.

So the prodigal son then knew his position was restored, he enjoyed the house and the father's providence; he wanted to be just one of the servants but no he is back to be the son having controlled over the servant whatever he wants to do around the house. So I believe that prodigal son will have a renewed attitude. His attitude will be different instead of domineering. Even though he is a son he will have that gratefulness forever and that meekness, his attitude was changed.

A lamb with a lion is a perfect symbol of a peaceful relationship and meekness shown by a lion who can do anything to a little lamb but just wanted to be there with him.

SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MEAN TODAY?

- Let's forever be grateful & thankful because we don't deserve what we have in the kingdom of heaven.
- Gracious to others' shortcomings; we are all not perfect.

- Allow ourselves to be wrong and criticized, don't always insist of our right, want to appear right but let God be our righteous judge. Let us not worry so much of what other people judge on us.
- "Whoever is forgiven much, love much"

The elder brother refused to join the party. The elder brother wants recognition, one special mention of something, hardened heart, and no transformation at all, self-righteous, refuse to budge, jealous and envious. This is like someone who has no such transformation who don't realize they are spiritually bankrupt, never mourn for their sin, never been meek, then we will demand what is ours. We will have what we call something like a tight fist, holding on to what is mine, insist on my right, my way, protect my pride, compare, be envious of each other.

Happiness is not like that. Happiness is like opening our palm, open to receive and open to give. Not holding tightly to your rights. Job said, naked I come naked I go that is the attitude.

THE PREREQUISITE & PROCESS

- ✓ Poor in spirit
- ✓ Mourn about it and be meek in your relationship with each other.

So when we are poor we realize this there is a conviction, something happen inside us we will be dependent on God because in ourselves we cannot do it and that comes out with expression then we mourn and that make us repentant not to do it anymore and in our relationship then we continue to be meek, power under control as well and this is what Jesus said to be blessed. It is counterculture, not the same as many of us talk about, it is something that is Jesus is the truth that is the truth of abundant life. There is a requirement how to have this true happiness.

Living in Blessedness, I need to embrace;

Daily in dependence, looking at His face;

Repent with meekness, I don't need Rat Race;

Wretched me is saved, Amazing Grace!