

**Eight Steps To True Happiness**  
From a message by Darrell Martin  
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New England Valley Mennonite Church

May the blessings of God continue to grace our assembly here today. It is certainly appreciated the scriptural teaching we have received thus far, it is an inspiration and challenge to my personal life, humility is one of those things that we continue to work at but by the time that we begin to think now we're humble we no longer are because we never get to the place where we decide that we are humble because then we are still proud. So may God continue to help us that we may be lowly of mind and humble of heart.

The message this morning you may open your Bibles to Matthew five, it is a familiar portion of scripture, first part of this chapter is what we call the Beatitudes. We have eight brief statements beginning with the word "blessed" there is actually nine if you separate verses 10 and 11 but we put those together because they are the same thought and we call it eight Beatitudes. Our Lord gave these at the beginning of the sermon on the Mount as an introduction to his sermon and in the sermon on the Mount Jesus clearly explains to his disciples to the multitude that was there he is clearly explaining to them what it means to be a disciple, what it means to follow Christ, what it means to be part of the kingdom of Christ and these eight introductory statements that he gives give us a clear picture of what it means to be a true Christian, a true child of God, we could call them the keys to the kingdom, the thought is that we must possess them to be a child of God.

There is value in studying each of these individually, I think about 12 years ago we had that here, a series of messages looking at them one at a time and it was about two years ago we had a back page series in the Eastern Mennonite Testimony looking at them individually. This morning I would like to take an overview approach and look at each one briefly. The value of an overview is to see the relationship of each one to the whole and especially what I would like us to see is the progression that is here in these eight statements these eight Beatitudes, they are like climbing the

rungs of a ladder or like going up steps and each one seems to take us higher and I would like to keep that in mind as we look at those, so I am using the title “Eight Steps To True Happiness”.

The thought of true happiness is drawn from this word blessed which simply means truly happy, very happy, a state of bliss or happiness. Even the original word carries with it the idea that we are to be envied that we are so happy so content so blissful that others looking on have a bit of envy and would like to experience that as well. Well certainly that is descriptive of the Christian life. It is true joy and satisfaction found in God and it is directly connected to these qualities of *blessed are they* and then it gives a quality and so the happiness is found in these qualities. We say that true Christian joy is not dependent on outward circumstances, that doesn't affect it, conditions in life that we face even other people, we notice from the Sunday school lesson how Mordechai's behavior destroyed Haman's joy, well it was because it was not true joy. Other people cannot affect out true joy. So this true happiness is found here and also another thought yet is that it is not what natural man would think would bring happiness, we call them paradoxes, and in fact it is the exact opposite of what man would think to find happiness. Haman thought that happiness would certainly be having position and authority but it made him a very unhappy man.

This is where true happiness is found. And so since these eight statements, eight qualities, eight steps what ever you want to call them, since they are exactly opposite of what we would think is the way to happiness then what it means is if we are going to be truly happy it means that we must give up ourselves, we must give up our ideas of happiness and we must completely submit to God's way. This is God's outline, it is God's way of true happiness and we must give up our way and take God's way and taking God's way is what we have described here for us in these eight qualities and it is the way to true happiness and to truly being a child of God.

Let's read the first 12 verses here and then look at these individually:

[Matthew 5:1-12](#)

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: [2] And he opened his mouth, and

taught them, saying, [3] Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [4] Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. [5] Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. [6] Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. [7] Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. [8] Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. [9] Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. [10] Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [11] Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. [12] Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

I would like to divide them into two groups of four. The first four we think of as steps in coming to God and then the last four as steps in growing to be God-like to be more godly.

So first of all steps in coming to God.

We have the first one: First step is to be poor in spirit from verse three, Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Be poor in spirit, it is having a conscious need of God, having a conscious need of God is the exact opposite of being proud and self-sufficient as we were thinking about our Sunday school lesson. Poor in spirit is recognizing our own helplessness, our own inability to do good in our own strength. Romans seven verse 18 describes that, Paul describing a person before he becomes a Christian struggling with wanting to do what is right and finding that he doesn't have the ability to do it:

[Romans 7:18](#)

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not”.

So it is coming to that place of awareness of our helplessness and our own inability to do good in our own strength and it needs to go further than that. First of all it is recognizing our own helplessness but then beyond that it is recognizing our need of salvation and deliverance, recognizing that we need help, we can't do it ourselves we need God's help, and like the prodigal son the account there says that he came to the end of himself, and he

was ready to say I need help, he came to the end of himself, that is being poor in spirit, recognizing that we have a need. The person that is not poor in spirit has all the answers, he is proud, he is self-sufficient but the person that is poor in spirit recognizes that I need help.

Now going a bit further it is not only recognizing that we need help but that we need God's help and we reach out to Him, that is what David said in Psalm 70 verse 5 he describes very vividly his need of God's help:

[Psalm 70:5](#)

“But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O Lord, make no tarrying”.

Come quickly and help me because I am needy and I need your help, Thou art my help and my deliverance. So it is recognizing that we need God's deliverance, we need His cleansing power, we need His power to do right because it is not in ourselves and that is certainly the first step into entering the kingdom - recognizing our need of God, God's deliverance and He says those who are poor in spirit theirs is the kingdom of heaven. So it is, we could say, the door that enters us into the kingdom and we enter through that door of being poor in spirit.

Not only is it the first step in entering the kingdom but we must continue to remain poor in spirit and as we go on in our Christian life we must continue to have a conscious need of God because we never outgrow our need of God's help, we daily need His grace, we need His power, we need His strength and so we continue to be poor in spirit in order for God to use us. We sang the song this morning: “I need thee every hour, I need thee, O I need thee every hour I need thee!” And that needs to be our prayer every-day that we have that conscious need of God's help. That is being poor in spirit and from it we can find blessedness and true happiness.

Step number two from verse four is be sorry for sin; Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Be sorry for sin, it is being genuinely contrite and penitent. Mourn is the thought of deep grief and sorrow, sorrow of heart and it is the next step up the ladder, we sensed our need of God and now it is recognizing and acknowledging that we have transgressed the holy law of God, we are guilty before God, we have sinned and so we must sorrow in genuine contrition

because of our personal sin and our personal guilt before God. Not only recognize that in sorrow but cry out to God for His mercy and part of that is what is in focus in verse four; Blessed are they that mourn, sorry for sin. The Psalmist said in: [Psalm 38:18](#): “For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin”.

That is confessing our sin. That is confessing that we have transgressed and crying out to God for mercy and pardon all like the publican in [Luke 18:13](#) it says:

“And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner”.

That is blessed are they that mourn, calling out to God for mercy and for pardon because of our sin. Well the verse’s promise is: For they shall be comforted, they shall be comforted. If we are truly sorry for our sin Jesus will comfort us with His forgiveness and that is the reason why Jesus came. I like the familiar verses in Isaiah 61 again that outlines what Jesus came to do, these are the verses that Jesus read there in the synagogue in Nazareth, in [Luke chapter four](#) I believe it is, but he outlines in Isaiah 61 what he came to do and I will break in at the end of verse two:

[Isaiah 61:2-3](#)

“..... to comfort all that mourn; [3] To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

He came to turn their sorrow and their mourning into joy, blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. The blessedness the happiness is not so much in mourning that is necessary but it is in the comfort, the comfort of forgiveness and he exchanges the ashes full beauty and the garments the spirit of heaviness he gives in its place garments of praise. That is the fulfillment of the promise they shall be comforted. [1 John 1:9](#) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins...

Oh the joy of sin forgiven! I'm sure we can all remember that release of the burden of guilt and even so as we need for forgiveness, but let's finish up here first, the joy of sin forgiven, the happiness of joy is not so much we said in the sorrow of mourning as it is in the comfort of forgiveness. And

again like being poor in spirit we will never outgrow that need for God's forgiveness. We needed that when we entered the kingdom but we continue we must continue to have a broken and a contrite heart. We must continue to have a hatred and a sorrow for sin, a hatred for sin that keeps us from sin but if we do stumble and fall into sin we must have that hatred and abhorrence that God has for sin and sorrow anew for sin. [Romans 12:9](#) Brother Alvin read that verse: "Abhor that which is evil and cleave to that which is good".

Abhor, hate it, put it far away, detest it and that is all part of the sorrow for sin. We need to continue to have that attitude as we grow in a Christian life that we can find the state of true happiness and true blessedness.

Now moving on to number three from verse five, this one is be meek, the third step is be meek: Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

This is simply having the spirit controlled nature. The word meek is a little misleading in our English language because in English, if you look it up in the English dictionary, it means weak or mild or deficient in courage and spirit. But that is not the way the Bible uses the word meek and that is not what the original Greek word here means, rather the original word translated from Greek is the thought of possessing power and strength under control, the person has great power and strength but it is controlled and I think the best illustration of that is a strong wild animal that has been tamed and he is under control, that is what meekness is. And meekness is self-control, it means complete control of the passion part of our nature, we are untamed by nature, wild and strong but being meek is having the spirit controlled nature and meekness is expressed, self-control is expressed in patience, long-suffering, gentleness, those are attributes that are not found in carnal man, it is only because of the Holy Spirit controlled nature that we can be patient, we can be long-suffering and gentle.

But at the same time meekness never compromises principles of truth, it is not soft and being ready to back off and compromise, not at all, meekness is strength but it is complete control of the passion part of our nature, and it is impossible in our own strength. We cannot control ourselves by our own power we saw that in Romans seven and so meekness means not only having self-control but being spirit controlled, having the spirit control our nature, it means God's spirit dwelling within and so this is the third

step. After we acknowledge our need of God, after we have confessed our sin then God's spirit comes to dwell within and He gives us a new heart, a new mind, a new nature and God's spirit within provides the power to keep under control the carnal expressions, the passions, our old carnal nature and keep it under control. And that is certainly where true happiness is found.

Jesus said in [Matthew 11:29](#): "...and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls".

Rest, that is the state of bliss, the blessedness, the happiness we are talking about but it comes in being meek and lowly in heart. Meekness is one of the fruits of the spirit. In [Galatians 5](#) it is given there is one of the expressions of God's spirit dwelling within and meekness is very valuable in God's sight this is brought out in [1 Peter 3:4](#) it talks there about the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God a great price, great value. Having the spirit controlled nature.

Now it says blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Now how does meekness relate to inheriting the earth? Now we may not understand that entirely but one thought that I do have I'll share is that [Romans 8:14](#) tells us: For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

And so being spirit controlled, giving expression of a spirit controlled nature is a proof of sonship in God's family, that we are sons and daughters in God's family and it is the sons or the children who are entitled to the inheritance in a natural sense and also the scriptures teaches that it is the sons of God that receive the inheritance and so blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth because they are the sons of God. Those who are meek are truly the sons of God.

Moving on to number four, the fourth step is be hungry and thirsty for truth, verses six: Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

That is simply having a spiritual appetite for God's Word, a spiritual appetite for God's Word and it naturally follows the sequence of progression, when we have received spirit of God, let back up, as we confess our sins, we have acknowledged our need, we have confessed our sins we receive God's spirit within now we have been born again and received the new na-

ture and with that comes a desire to grow in the things of God and like a child needs to eat and wants to do that so that he can grow. If a child does not have an appetite we get concerned as parents because a child needs to eat and to feed himself because that is the only way he will grow and so it is with the children of God we must have a desire an appetite for the Word of God so we can grow thereby. God's Word feeds our soul it provides strength and nourishment for the in a man and we need that to grow.

[John 4:14](#) Jesus talks about the word of the water of life, God's Word is the water of life. Jesus says the water that I shall give man he shall never thirst, and so whilst it is symbolic of Jesus it is also symbolic of Jesus words the Word of God, it is the water of life. In [John 6:35](#) it is the bread of life and we need the water and the bread to continue to nourish our spiritual life.

We need the attitude of [Psalm 19:10](#) More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

You know we desire the words of God even more than gold, it is more valuable than gold and sweeter than the honeycomb or [Jeremiah 15:16](#) he says there: "... and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts".

Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, this speaks about the appetite and a desire to feed on the Word of God. Well with God's nature within us our interests and our desires are on the things of God and what happens then is that the worldly and the earthly pleasures lose their appeal and our appetite is on the things of God not on the things of the world. "Fade, fade each earthly joy Jesus is mine". That needs to be out testimony; it is part of being hungry and thirsty for truth and God's Word.

This last part of this verse is very interesting it says Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. They shall be filled. Jesus promised that whomsoever would drink of the water of life and eateth the bread of life he said they shall never hunger and they shall never thirst, it completely satisfies. ([John 6:35](#)) Now if the bread and water of life completely satisfies or as this verse says we are filled, how then do we continue to hunger and thirst after righteousness?

Well in the physical realm we eat because we are hungry, we are hungry and we sit at the table, we have an appetite and the dishes are passed around and soon we are filled we had plenty we are full and now the food no longer appeals to us we, can pass them around and pass them around and nobody takes any because we are full we are just not hungry, the food does not appeal any more we are full.

Well in the spiritual sense it is a different kind of hunger and I will try and explain it this way this is how I have thought of it as I studied this verse.

We feast on the Word of God and we receive blessed refreshment and satisfaction from the Word of God and so we are filled we are satisfied because the Word of God is satisfying it brings that satisfaction but it is so satisfying that unlike natural food when we are full we don't want more, the Word of God is so satisfying it is so satisfying that we want yet more and with the blessedness of being filled comes a renewed hunger and thirst for more righteousness, I think that's the way God's Word works and that is how we can continue to hunger for righteousness, hunger and thirst and at the same time be filled because, yes it satisfies, because it is so satisfying we want more and we continue to reach out for more. And so the promise is that we will be filled and yet we never get to the point where we don't need any more because we are full but with that fulfillment and that satisfaction becomes a desire for more.

And so we not only have an appetite for the Word of God when we become a Christian, and that is very important, but all through life we need to continue to grow and continue to become strong and more and more filled with the Word of God. You know we said that the Word of life strengthens us strengthens our spiritual life, as a person grows older and his physical strength declines our spiritual strength should be increasing and we should be getting stronger and stronger we never outgrow our need for being filled with the fullness of God and the Scriptures should ever be rich and meaningful to us. It is a blessing when you visit older people older Christians and you ask them what you can read and they have favorite portions of Scripture that they want you to read and that is because they have been finding their strength in the Word of God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

All right let's now move to the last set. These are steps in growing to be godlike, first four in particular are in coming to God, coming to the kingdom although we saw we need to continue to exercise those but these last four I see in a different category and these are growing to be like God, godlike.

The fifth step then is be merciful verse seven: Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

It is the thought of being compassionate and gentle to others. Merciful is an attribute of God. Mercy is altogether heavenly, again you don't find that in the carnal natural realm, we defend ourselves rather than thinking of compassion and gentleness to others, but it is an attribute of God, God is merciful and Jesus said in [Luke 6:36](#): "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful".

And so it is an attribute of God and we are called to be merciful like God. The child of God delights to show mercy because we have been recipients of God's mercy. Let's turn to those familiar verses in Psalm 103 that remind us of God's mercy and how He has been so merciful to us and therefore we delight to show mercy to others:

#### [Psalm 103:8-11](#)

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. [9] He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. [10] He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. [11] For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

So God is merciful and as we ponder verses like this of how God has been merciful to us and been slow to anger and He has not dealt with us according to our sins but His mercy has been great so that it inspires in us, it behooves us to show mercy to others. Not only has God been merciful to us but others have been, others have been so patient and so forbearing with us, our parents, our brothers and sisters, those we work with, they have been patient and forbearing with us and so we delight in showing mercy and kindness to others and we find true happiness. He is saying blessed are the merciful, that is where true happiness is, true blessedness is found in being compassionate and gentle and gracious and forbearing with all others, and shall I add for the children, even with our brothers and sisters at home we

need to be compassionate and forbearing and patient as we live together as families and as we work together because He says blessed are the merciful.

Now again the last part is very inspiring. He says: Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy, they shall obtain mercy. We said that we delight in being merciful because we have already received mercy but this verse promises even more mercy in return, blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. As we continue to show mercy and express gentleness and compassion to others we have the promise of more mercy in return. And again we are daily in need of God's mercy, it is not just that we needed God's mercy back then but we are in daily need of God's mercy and the promise is that they shall obtain mercy; they shall continue to receive the mercy of God.

Let's move on to step number six be pure verse eight: Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

It means being free from anything that would defile. And again that is another step to being godlike, God is pure, it is an attribute of God. [1 Peter 1:16](#): "Be ye holy; for I am holy".

And it calls for diligent effort to be pure in the midst of an impure world. Pure in heart is the emphasis here, to me that means being pure from the inside out all being pure through and through not just outwardly appearing pure but being pure in thought and heart, and we said that calls for diligent effort.

[2 Corinthians 7:1](#): "...dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God".

It is an ongoing work of progressive sanctification, we continue to be cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit and perfecting is the sort of action going on we continue to grow in perfection and Holiness.

[1 Peter 2:11](#): "...abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul".

We cut off those things that would bring that would defile us they war against the soul.

[Philippians 4:8](#): ".....whatsoever things are pure....think on these things".

We all know that impurity begins in the thought life and whether pure or impure the things that we see and hear and read fill our minds and fill our thoughts and so whatsoever things are pure think on these things. And it

takes a diligent effort to be pure in heart. The promise is those that are pure in heart they shall see God, they shall see God. God is holy and only the pure and only the holy will be welcome into His presence. That's what Psalm 24 makes clear to us verses three and four raises the question: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" The answer comes back: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully". He shall receive the blessing of the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (Psalm 24:3-5). He that has clean hands and a pure heart they are the ones that shall stand in the presence of God.

Also Revelation 21:27 there in the closing chapter when he is describing to us the holy city the New Jerusalem it says: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth". Only the pure in heart shall see God.

Now I'm giving that in a future sense that standing in the presence of God and being welcomed into His presence but it is true that already in this life sin in one's life obscures God and it puts a distance between us and God, but the pure in heart that they shall see God. When we have purity in heart that is accompanied by a real consciousness of God and a delightful comforting sense of His presence and we can see God by the eye of faith when things are clear between us and God, so there is also a sense that we already experience that, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.

Moving on to step number seven, this one is be peaceful first nine: Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

It simply means to be quick to resolve strife, quick to resolve strife and again it is an attribute of God. The New Testament refers to the God of peace one of the benedictions that we use occasionally, the God of peace, God is it is an attribute of God. Also Jesus is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and He brought peace. There are many scriptures we could look at but I think of Ephesians 2 He brought peace. At His coming the angels heralded peace on earth, goodwill to men (Luke 2:14). So Jesus came as the Prince of peace to bring peace, His kingdom is one of peace and to be part of His kingdom to be a follower of Christ we must be a peacemaker that is very clear, quick to resolve strife, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. A peacemaker is one who works hard to make peace and then to keep peace, make peace bring about peace

and then keep or maintain peace, quick to resolve differences, quick to settle strife, quick to say I'm sorry, that is all part of being a peacemaker and it takes effort to be like God in this way to grow in this quality and this attribute but it is where true blessedness and happiness is found.

[Romans 12:18](#): "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men".

It is a scriptural call and I guess that scripture makes room for some that are simply difficult to get along with but it says: As much as lieth in you. Or as much in your ability, it means that we do our best to live peaceably with all men, that is excluding none. This is possible only as we have the peace of God ruling in our hearts, again it does not happen on its own we cannot do it in our own strength but we need the peace of God ruling in our own hearts and that is what [Philippians 4:7](#) says: "The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and mine through Christ Jesus". It is the thought of God's peace taking control and ruling or even guarding, *Garrison* I think is the original meaning there it is a military term of surrounding, God's peace completely surrounds us and keeps our hearts and minds under control and it is when we have the peace of God ruling within that we can reach out to our others.

Having peaceful relationships is a proof of being one of Jesus followers, that is what this verse is saying they shall be called the children of God when we are known as peacemakers then that is an expression or it is a proof that we are one of God's followers and that is why Jesus said in [John 13:35](#) "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another". That is how others know that we are the children of God when we are peacemakers.

All right let's move to the final one step number eight is to be willing to suffer for Christ, from verses 10 to 12: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake [11] Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you.

It is being ready to bear reproach and false accusation and this top rung of the latter is perhaps the most difficult. It is most certainly a paradox indeed to be persecuted and falsely accused and reproached it is certainly the most unpleasant but He says: Blessed are ye, truly happy are ye. And verse 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad. How can that be? We can say is that even

possible under persecution? We don't know about persecution, maybe a little mockery or reproach but we don't know what these verses are talking about but we try to put ourselves in that experience and we say is that possible that we could rejoice and be exceeding glad?

Well the Apostles did it in [Acts 5: 41](#) when they were dismissed when they came out of prison or came out of the council there it says that they rejoiced because they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ's name. And so they did it, they suffered reproach but they rejoiced. And there are many accounts, many stories of Christians who died singing and praying and so yes it is possible.

Well then we could say how was it possible, how is it possible? Well I thought of first Peter four, the chapter that speaks about suffering as Christians: [1 Peter 4:13-14](#) says:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. [14] If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; *Why, how?* for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

So how is it possible that we can rejoice that we would face persecution and reproach in the name of Jesus Christ? Well again it is not in our own strength but He says you can do it because it is possible because the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. And certainly that is one of the answers as to how it is possible because God's spirit resteth upon us, the spirit of God the spirit of glory. It made me think of Stephen when he was there in the council room and they were falsely accusing him and persecuting him, it says that his face shown like the face of an angel. ([Acts 6:15](#)) Certainly he had the spirit of glory and of God resting upon him.

Well also I see two things here in Matthew five that make it possible, one is the promise of the reward of heaven, he gives this twice.

[Matthew 5:10](#): "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven". And then in verse 12 [Matthew 5:12](#): "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven".

So the promise of reward helps to make it possible, I think that is what helped many of the Christians as they faced suffering and knew that their

physical life was coming to an end, their thoughts were on heaven and the reward in heaven and that is what helped to make it possible.

Great is your reward in heaven! It is more than sufficient compensation for the suffering and the difficulty in life and that is how we can, and any suffering Christian, can rejoice and be exceeding glad.

It is a paradox men don't understand it, the persecutors, the executioners they didn't understand it, how these people could sing but it is because that is where true happiness is found.

Another thought here of how it is possible is the knowledge that others have been faithful. He says at the end of the verse 12: So persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

You know there are others who trod the same road, others were faithful, the prophets and the martyrs, we have record of them in scripture and [Hebrews 11](#) gives a whole list and the end of those who died for their faith. The Martyrs Mirror is a long list of those who were faithful.

And so should this be our lot we could be faithful, which could find true happiness because we know that others have been faithful and God's spirit rests upon us.

God certainly wants us to find true happiness and fullness of joy that's what He wants us to find, He wants us to experience it in this life and in the next and so He has given us these keys, He has told us and given us these eight steps, these eight keys so that we can find true happiness in Christ.

May God help us to continue to grow in these qualities, may He help us to continue to grow in His likeness so that we can be truly like Him in these areas.

Shall we kneel to pray.