

Series: The Beatitudes in Revelation: Discovering Unity in Biblical Beatitudes

Sermon Text: Matthew 5:1-12; Revelation 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14

Last week, we explored the profound unity between the Beatitudes Jesus spoke from a Galilean hillside and the Beatitudes Jesus spoke from the heights of His heavenly throne. We realized that together they are the expression and the essence of God's plan that has not only become real in our lives right now but planned for us before creation and will one day be complete in the future. This morning we'll continue with the theme of unity but also push forward and talk about how and why I think they land with such power in Revelation. In the end, we'll arrive at this...

BIG IDEA: God's Presence is our Key to the Beatitudes.

The Grace found in the first set of Beatitudes is reinforced by the Grace of the second set. Think of it like a Grandfather Clause or a Vested Rights Doctrine. These are claims that can't be taken away by future changes or external shifts, and there are major shifts in the book of Revelation. Our status as "*Blessed*" was secured in eternity past and is reinforced for eternity future. Well, that's easy to say, but it turns out, living this out isn't easy in this sinful, hard, and dramatic world. It can be intimidating, especially when things are viewed through the lens of our limited human nature. This creates the struggle to overcome, and we often get overrun. So, let's look at 4 reasons why and how I think the unity of the Beatitudes land with such power in Revelation.

Reason 1: Revelation's Beatitudes are like Liturgical Anchors Amid Chaos.

While worship is the general act of honoring God, liturgy describes the specific rhythms we repeatedly practice on Sundays to help us worship during the week. These "*liturgical anchors*" ground us in "*sacred rhythms*" so that our worship can be stable and consistent even when personal feelings or external circumstances might be turbulent. While the Sermon on the Mount is more famous, the seven Beatitudes scattered throughout Revelation serve as the heartbeat of John's vision. Think of them as liturgical anchors for how we live. John's vision is filled with massive stormy imagery - dragons, plagues, the bowls of judgment, and terrifying beasts. In the middle of all that otherworldly chaos, these seven blessings anchor us.

They are mooring (the act of tying, tethering) the apocalyptic big picture to the deeply personal, pastoral promises Jesus made at the start of His ministry and continues from the throne. Let's quickly consider the Seven secure Anchors in the chaotic book of Revelation:

1. 1:3 Blessed are those who read, hear, and keep the prophecy.
2. 14:13 Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on.
3. 16:15 Blessed are those who stay awake and keep their clothes on (spiritual readiness).
4. 19:9 Blessed are those invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.
5. 20:6 Blessed are those who share in the "first resurrection."
6. 22:7 Blessed are those who keep the words of the prophecy.
7. 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes to enter the city.

Reason 2: Revelation's Beatitudes move us from character to conduct. This is where the Beatitudes begin to land with such power. Think of it like this: Matthew is where we find our footing and learn the alphabet of grace. It's like a child learning to read. Getting the hang of things like humility and heart-work. But by the time we hit Revelation, now the child is reading to learn. We aren't just sitting with those virtues anymore; we're using them as a guide to make sense of things all around us but to also behave/ take action/ respond to those things accordingly. Matthew's Beatitudes are about character: Most of them describe a spiritual state followed by a promise. "*Blessed are those who mourn (condition), for they shall be comforted (promise).*" Revelation's Beatitudes are about conduct born from character: These are active and strategic. They emphasize action: Stay awake. Wash your robes. Keep the faith. In Matthew Jesus gave us the heart of a Kingdom citizen, in Revelation He puts boots on our feet to navigate life's rocky and sometimes treacherous terrain.

Reason 3: Revelation's Beatitudes move us from Victim to Victor. In our fallen nature, we often view ourselves as victims of our chaotic circumstances rather than victors in Christ. The Beatitudes serve as a psychological intervention and a spiritual lens as we experience life. They help us with the "unseen" things so we can appraise and reframe good times and bad times, success and failure, well-being and suffering to ensure our character remains undefeated by earthly outcomes. Never-

the-less...we do...often feel defeated. We've all likely felt defeated by the job, the bank account, the diagnosis, the broken relationship. We've sat down for a cup of coffee and shared with someone the heavy things weighing on our heart and mind. In these circumstances, the Beatitudes don't feel like a lecture, they feel like a lifeline. They help us appraise and reframe good times and bad times, success and failure, well-being and suffering to ensure our character remains undefeated by earthly outcomes.

2 Corinthians 4:17-18 puts it this way: *“For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory... as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen.”* The Beatitudes come together to meet our bad days and offer an incredible sense of relief. D.A. Carson notes that the eternal weight is only understood when we realize that the seen things (our pain, decay, and loss) are actually less real and less permanent than unseen things (the sovereignty and presence of Jesus). Alfred Hitchcock said: *“Suspense is the essence of a good story.”* Here's the essence of ours in the prior verse 4:16; *“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”* Our trials aren't just things we get through; they are the tools God uses to forge weightiness or substance in our character. You aren't just surviving; you are being made heavy with the presence of God. Next time you feel overwhelmed, even defeated, try to remember that your current struggle is not the end of the story. In light of this, here are 2 questions to challenge how we view the struggle and then how we walk with one another: “Do these insights change how we look at the person sitting across from us having coffee, who is defeated by earthly outcomes?”, and “How might we help each other identify and keep the specific unseen eternal fruits that God is forging through our seen afflictions?”

Reason # 4. Revelation's Beatitudes are a Complete and Divine Power Move. It's no coincidence that there are 7 Beatitudes in Revelation. We see this number pop up often in the book. Brandon has taught the significance of “seven”, in that, it signifies perfection or divine completeness. By weaving exactly seven beatitudes into this chaotic narrative, it emphasizes to us, like we deduced last week, that these “blessings” of God are not an afterthought or a response – they are a strategic and

devised plan, His complete and final word over human history. Remember the original audience: persecuted and oppressed believers in the Roman Empire. To the seven churches of Asia Minor, the atmosphere of Rome was suffocating. Between emperor worship and economic exile, the presence of the government felt total, while the presence of God felt distant. Knowing the psychological toll of having a victim identity, Jesus performs a divine intervention by disarming (de-powering?) bullies and empowering the faithful.

By declaring them “*Blessed*” in the very moment of their oppression, He performs the ultimate “*power move*.” He reminds the church that WE are not defined by the status imposed on us by the world, but by the status spoken over us by our King of Kings! When our King says, “*Blessed is the one who stays awake,*” He isn't just giving a command; He is promising His companionship as we watch. The ultimate power move IS IN HIS PRESENCE. This whole lesson ultimately brings us to Revelation 21:3 which says, “*Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people...*” If we take anything away so far I hope it's this; the beatitudes in their unity show us that the presence of God is not a static object you hold; it's a dynamic environment you inhabit and a powerful presence that inhabits you.

Conclusion: Bridging Heaven and Earth. Revelation 1:3 opens with, “*Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*” Then Revelation 22:7 closes with, “*Behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.*” Look how these repeated Beatitudes focus on reading and keeping the words of this book. I think it's strategic like bookends to ensure that the terrifying, yet beautiful imagery of Revelation doesn't leave us feeling afraid but feeling favored. Doesn't that just bring heaven down to earth and translate the big picture of the Revelation vision into small, daily practices? **Read the book.** **Stay faithful.** **Be ready.** The essence of the beatitudes is the mind-blowing beauty of God's pleasing plan from eternity past to eternity future. In them is the assurance we don't merely survive life until we see Jesus. Together our lives flourish in this Heaven on earth Kingdom sustained by His Powerful Presence, and that's even more

real than the ground we walk on. As we take our steps together, I for one am truly glad to be taking them with you. Wherever you are today - full of faith or full of questions, let's walk the path together.

Sunday to Monday Connection: The Beatitudes aren't just a list of blessings. They are the unbroken thread of God's eternal plan to shape us into the image of His Son. So, when life feels hard, remember: your "blessedness" isn't based on circumstances but on God's unchanging purpose. He is forming something eternal in you, an unbreakable chain from grace to glory.

- **Question:** Where is God calling you to trust that His eternal work is still unfolding in you, even when life feels anything but "blessed"?
- **Next Step:** Get with some trusted people and share stories about how walking with Jesus has shaped your responses to difficult people and situations.
- **Note:** If you are not a Christ follower and would like to investigate further what all this might mean for you, please come talk with any of our leaders, or the person who brought you.

Takeaways to discuss with your people (in addition to the underlined questions above!):

Quotes related to this passage:

Considerations for discussion leaders:

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the group small for deeper sharing. Single underlined sentences are for discussion, while key points are double underlined.
3. Keep the discussion around 30 mins. Once you hit the "sweet spot", spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Other Articles/Songs/Videos: Please ask us for help obtaining other resources.

- [5 Strategies for Reading Revelation](#) from the Bible Project (the first 17 minutes is GOLD!)
- [Heaven and Earth Theme](#) from the Bible Project
- [Other super helpful Revelation summaries](#) from the Bible Project
- [How Revelation mimics ancient Olympic games](#) by Marty Solomon

Bibliography (Note: Our use of these materials does not imply full agreement with them)

- The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016)
- Michael J. Gorman, Reading Revelation Responsibly: Uncivil Worship and Witness: Following the Lamb into the New Creation (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).
- G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, Revelation: A Shorter Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015).

- Tom Wright, *Revelation for Everyone, For Everyone Bible Study Guides* (London; Louisville, KY: SPCK; Westminster John Knox, 2011).
- Craig S. Keener, *Revelation, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999).
- Steve Gregg, *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 1997).
- R. C. Sproul, ed., *The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version (2015 Edition)* (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2015), 2294.
- John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).
- David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament*, electronic ed. (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996).
- Tim Chester, *Revelation for You*, ed. Carl Laferton, *God's Word for You* (The Good Book Company, 2019).
- Sam Storms, *Biblical Studies: The Seven Letters of Revelation* (Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016).
- Joseph L. Trafton, *Reading Revelation: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Rev. ed., *Reading the New Testament Series* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005).
- Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation, New Covenant Commentary Series* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011).
- Patrick Henry Reardon, *Revelation: A Liturgical Prophecy* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2018), 44-45.
- J. Scott Duvall, *Revelation*, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, *Teach the Text Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014).
- Jon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003).
- Scot McKnight and Cody Matchett, *Revelation for the Rest of Us: A Prophetic Call to Follow Jesus as a Dissident Disciple* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2023).
- Daniel L. Akin, *Exalting Jesus in Revelation*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David Platt, and Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016).
- Nancy Guthrie, *Blessed: Experiencing the Promise of the Book of Revelation* (Crossway 2022).
- G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *The Story Retold: A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2020), 484.
- M. Robert Mulholland Jr., "Revelation," in *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary: James, 1–2 Peter, Jude, Revelation*, ed. Philip W. Comfort, *Cornerstone Biblical Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2011).
- George R. Beasley-Murray, "Revelation," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994).
- David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary: A Companion Volume to the Jewish New Testament*, electronic ed. (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1996), Re 15:2.