

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT THE BEATITUDES

By Messianic Rabbi Ed Rothman

## *The Kingdom of Heaven*

In Matthew 4:17, Y'shua (Jesus) began to teach, saying, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" The term *kingdom of heaven* (Malkhut HaShammayim) means the same as the Kingdom of G-d. In Jewish literature there is a tradition of using *heaven* in pious avoidance of saying the word *G-d* and taking His name in vain, honoring the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment. In New Covenant theology, it can also give us the insight that through Y'shua, G-d intended to bring the reality of His Kingdom of Heaven into the earth in and through the lives of His followers.

When Y'shua came to earth the Kingdom of G-d was beginning to break into the earth in the greatest manifestation that had been seen since Moshe Rabbeynu (Moses, our Teacher). The Kingdom is the dominion, ownership, and rulership of G-d in and through our lives. Y'shua encouraged His followers to "*Seek first the Kingdom of G-d and His righteousness; and all other things would be added unto you* [Mathew 6:33]."

When Y'shua first arrived, we saw the 1<sup>st</sup> dimension of the New Covenant *Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven* [Matthew 6:10]. The 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension was during the Book of Acts that the Holy Spirit manifested through the Followers of Messiah. The 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension is the Kingdom of G-d in our *present day* (malkhut olam hazeh). The 4<sup>th</sup> dimension will be when Y'shua returns to set up His Kingdom here and reign from Jerusalem [the Kingdom to come, the Millennium, Revelation 20:4] (malkhut olam haba). And the 5<sup>th</sup> and final dimension will be when we enter with our Messiah into the new heaven and the new earth [2 Peter 3:13 & Revelation 21:1]. *For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever* [Matthew 6:13b].

Some theologians have described it as the Kingdom, *Present and Future* or the Kingdom *Now, but Not Yet*. There is an aspect of Kingdom which Y'shua wants all His followers to experience now (Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in Heaven [Matthew 6:10]) and yet there is a fullness of the Kingdom which we cannot experience until Y'shua returns and fulfills prophecy. Restoring Israel to the head of the nations [Deuteronomy 28:1 & 13, Isaiah 2:1-4 & Zechariah 8:20-23], setting up His Kingdom in Jerusalem [Jeremiah 23:5-6, Zechariah 14:16-17] and binding hasatan (the adversary, the devil) for 1,00 years [Revelation 20:1-3].

To enter His Kingdom now, we must *repent* (make Teshuva, turning our heart & mind around, turning back to G-d), otherwise we will really not be living in the Kingdom of G-d, but we will have tried to invite G-d to live in our Kingdom, the Kingdom of Me. Oy vey! G-d forbid! Abba Father, please touch our hearts by the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) with Your grace to turn from our sins back to You, through the suffering, death, and resurrection of our L-RD Y'shua (Jesus) the Messiah (the Anointed One), in His Name, Amen! [Joel 2:12-13 & 32, John 3:3 & 5-6, Acts 2:38-39 & 3:19-21, Romans 10:9-13]. No sin is too great, no mistake too big, no failure too immeasurable, to keep you from the loving, forgiving arms of G-d, through Y'shua the Messiah [Matthew 11:28-30]. He has good plans for you and will listen when you cry out to Him [Jeremiah 29:11-13] and there is nothing can separate you from His astounding, amazing love [Romans 8:38-39].

## ***The Beatitudes – The Constitution of The Kingdom of G-d***

It is no mistake that the Sermon on the Mount is placed near the beginning of the New Covenant. Its position indicates its significance and its importance. In it the King summarizes the character and conduct that is expected of His subjects, His disciples (talmideem = students / followers). These are the laws and principles that govern the King's subjects as they have chosen to live under the authority of His reign.

Y'shua's words had a distinctly Jewish flavor (as seen in his allusions to the Council [Sanhedrin], the altar, and to Jerusalem). Even so, His words were not just meant for the Jews of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, but for believers in every age who crown Messiah as King of their hearts. The Sermon on the Mount was meant to provide invaluable wisdom, insight and understanding for anyone at anytime who confesses that Y'shua (Jesus) is both Messiah and L-RD and desire to live within His domain under His dominion.

*“And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain and when He was seated His disciples (talmideem) came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them saying: **Blessed** (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous – with life-joy and satisfaction in G-d's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) **are the poor in spirit** (the for humble of heart, reduced to being destitute of human influence), theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [Matthew5:1-3]”*

*Blessed* (Greek) *Makarios* – Strong's #3107 = From the root word *Mak*, indicating large or of long duration. The word is an adjective suggesting happy, supremely blessed, a condition in which congratulations are in order. It is a grace word that expresses the special joys and satisfaction granted the person who experiences salvation.

We are supremely blessed by and a blessing to G-d when we no longer live as though the world revolved around us and we begin to realize that we are not the center of the universe! *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Jesus, who being in the form of G-d, did not consider it a thing to be grasped to be equal with G-d, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, coming in the likeness of man. [Philippians 2:5-7]”*

The phrase *made Himself of no reputation* comes from the Greek word *kenos*, which means to make empty, to evacuate, to vacate, to divest, or to relinquish. Y'shua taught us that if we want to be supremely happy we must divest ourselves of a self-centered life, if we are poor in spirit (Humble of heart) the Kingdom will be ours to enjoy. Abba Father, reveal to us the urgent need for us to surrender our hearts and lives to the higher call of Your Kingdom. May we always seek first your Kingdom and Your righteousness in the thoughts and intents of our hearts, expressed humbly through our words and deeds.

*“**Blessed** and enviably happy [with happiness produced by the experience of G-d's favor and especially conditioned by the revelation of His matchless grace] **are those who mourn** for they shall be comforted! [Mathew 5:4]”*

*“. . . to comfort all who mourn. To grant [consolation and joy] to those who mourn in Zion – to give them an ornament (a garland or crown) of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, the garment of [expressive] praise instead of a heavy, burdened spirit. [Isaiah 61:2c-3c]”*

*“Better to be of a humble spirit with the meek and poor than to divide the spoil with the proud. [Proverbs 16:19]”*

We mourn both over our own sins and also in intercession for the sins of the world. Sin is what causes the sad condition that our world is suffering in. When we are being led by the Spirit, there will be times of great sorrow and sadness over the deteriorating spiritual condition of those who reject the love of G-d revealed in Y'shua the Messiah. But we have a wonderful promise from G-d Himself that he will lift those burdens from our hearts and fill us with His joyful praise, restoring peace to our hearts in the midst of trouble and tribulation. Abba Father, please teach us to mourn in a manner that is pleasing to you and will bring spiritual breakthrough both in our lives and the lives of those for whom we mourn.

*“I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have (perfect) peace and confidence. In the world you will have tribulation, trials, distress, and frustration; but be of good cheer (take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted)! For I have overcome the world (I have deprived it of power to harm you and conquered it for you). [John 16:33]”*

*“**Blessed** (happy, blithesome, joyous, spiritually prosperous – with life-joy and satisfaction in G-d’s favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) **are the meek** (the gentle, patient, and long-suffering), for they shall inherit the earth! [Mathew 5:5]”*

*“But (in the end) **the meek shall inherit the earth** and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. [Psalm 37:11]”*

I have heard it said that meekness can best be pictured by a wild stallion which has been tamed and trained to yield and subdue it’s mighty strength to gently obey and cooperate with it’s Master’s leading. Some of the fruits of the Spirit are gentleness, long-suffering and self-control [Galatians 5:22-23]. Meekness does not mean we are lily-livered wimps who never stand up for what is right and good, but that we choose our battles very carefully and do not react according to the dictates of our carnal nature, but by the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit. If we are people of biblical meekness, have nothing to prove and no agenda to promote, we just want to walk in close fellowship with our Heavenly Father, obediently following His every directive. When a child is so cooperative and honoring to it’s parents instructions, their hearts open wide toward their child and the child could ask whatever almost anything and it would be done for them! Abba Father, we yield our lives to You, both our weaknesses and our strengths. May you help us to bring our hearts into a place of tender surrender to the gentle leading of Your mighty Spirit in and through each of our lives.

*“**Blessed**, fortunate, happy, and spiritually prosperous (in that state in which the born-again child of G-d enjoys His favor and salvation) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (uprightness and right standing with G-d), for they shall be filled and completely satisfied! [Matthew 5:6]”*

*Wait and listen, everyone who is thirsty! Come to the waters: and he who has no money, come buy and eat! Yes, come buy (priceless spiritual) wine and milk without money and without price (simply for the self-surrender that accepts the blessing). Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your earnings for what does not satisfy? Harken diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness (the profuseness of spiritual joy). Incline your ear (submit and consent to the Divine will) and come*

*to Me; hear, and your soul will revive; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercy (kindness, goodwill, and compassion) promised to David. [Isaiah 55:1-3]"*

What are we hungering for? What are we looking for in this life to satisfy and fill the longings of our heart? In St. Augustine's *Confessions* we find this quote, "Thou, O G-d, hast made us for Thyself alone, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee." Similarly, Blaise Pascal said, "In the heart of every human soul is a G-d-shaped vacuum." There is no experience in life that can satisfy and fulfill us to the depth and breadth of our being as having a personal, intimate relationship with the living G-d through His only begotten Son, Y'shua (Jesus) the Messiah. As Y'shua emptied Himself of His divinity to be filled by the Holy Spirit without measure [John 3:34], so we too can empty ourselves of our self-centeredness and ask G-d to fill us with His holy presence.

Abba Father, we are empty without You filling our hearts and minds. Please forgive us for looking to the cisterns of this world to fulfill the deep longings of our hearts. Please cleanse us from the soiling and stains that have encrusted and hardened our hearts toward You and Your Kingdom. We seek You O G-d, we seek Your Face and Your Heart, we hunger and thirst for Your Presence in our lives. Please fill us to overflowing with Your sweet, life-changing power and glory. May we never be the same as You change us into Your Image and Likeness, from faith to faith and from glory to glory, even as by HaRuach Adonai (the Spirit of the L-RD) [2 Corinthians 3:17-18]!

***'Blessed*** (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous – with life-joy and satisfaction in G-d's favor and salvation, regardless of the outward circumstances) ***are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!*** [Matthew 5:7]"

***"With the kind and merciful, You will show Yourself kind and merciful.*** With an upright man, You will show Yourself upright. [Psalm 18:25]"

***"So be merciful (sympathetic, tender, responsive, and compassionate) even as your Father is (all these).*** [Luke 6:36]"

*For to him who has shown no mercy, the judgment (will be) merciless, but **mercy** (full of glad confidence) exults victoriously over judgment.* [James 2:13]"

*"Then Peter came up to Y'shua and said, 'L-RD, how many times may my brother sin against me and I forgive him and let it go? (As many as) up to seven times?' Y'shua answered him, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven!'"* [Matthew 18:21-22]"

The standard for forgiveness taught by the ancient Rabbi's was 3 times for a person, for the same offense, in the same day. Peter was being generous by doubling that and adding one more time for good or (G-d) measure, but Y'shua blew that extra human effort out-of-the-water by multiplying Peter's stretch at forgiveness by seventy times! The number seventy times seven did not mean to keep count up to 490, but could represent unlimited, perfect, complete forgiveness or maybe it was a reference to the 70 sevens prophecy of Daniel 9:24.

Being merciful does not come naturally to most of us. Yet it is an absolute standard of living and operating within the parameters of G-d's Kingdom. If we believe that someone has offended us so severely that they do not deserve our forgiveness or mercy than we have just

enacted G-d's judgment against us in the very same manner. Oy vey! G-d forbid! You do not want to go there, it is the very worst of some very bad news. Do not test the L-RD in this area. You are better off erring in mercy than in judgment. Please trust me on this one.

*“**Blessed** (happy, enviably fortunate and spiritually prosperous – possessing the happiness produced by the experience of G-d's favor and especially conditioned by the revelation of His grace, regardless of the outward conditions) **are the pure in heart, for they shall see G-d!** [Matthew 5:8]”*

*“With **the pure** You will show Yourself **pure**, and with the perverse You will show Yourself contrary. [Psalm 18:26]”*

*“Who shall go up into the mountain of the L-RD? Or who shall stand in His Holy Place? He who has clean hands and **a pure heart.** [Psalm 24:3-4a]”*

*“. . . Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, **whatever is pure**, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, . . . think on these things. [Philippians 4:8]”*

*“The purpose of our instruction is love which springs from **a pure heart**, a clear conscience, and sincere faith. [1 Timothy 1:5]”*

*“. . . pursue faith, love, and peace in fellowship with all who call upon the L-RD **out of a pure heart.** [2 Timothy 2:22b]”*

*“True religion that is **pure and unblemished** in the sight of G-d the Father is this: to visit and help care for the orphan and the widow in their affliction and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. [James 1:27]”*

*“Since by your obedience to the Truth through the (Holy) Spirit you have **purified your hearts** for the sincere affection of the brethren, (see that you) love one another fervently from a pure heart. [1 Peter 1:22]”*

*“And everyone who has this hope in Him, **purifies (cleanses) himself**, just as He is pure (chaste, undefiled, guiltless). [1 John 3:3]”*

The purifying of our hearts is a straightforward, but painful process. We must seek, study, think about, and desire a pure heart. We must care from, love with, and obey the Truth to purify and cleanse ourselves from the spiritual uncleanness of this world. Moses was the most humble man in all the earth and chose to identify with His kinsmen in slavery, rejecting all the wealth and power of Egypt, and as a result of these choices ultimately came face-to-face with G-d. [Hebrews 11:25-26 & Numbers 12:3 & 6-8] G-d has promised us that if we seek after G-d with all of our heart we will find Him [Jeremiah 29:12-14]

O Abba Father, we cry out to You to cleanse and purify our hearts and minds. Take away our desire for the things of this world and replace it with an unquenchable, insatiable desire for You and Your Kingdom. O Master of the Universe, bathe our hearts in the blood of Y'shua, in the water of Your Word, and by the washing and regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Capture our hearts with Your incomprehensible glory and fill us with Your immeasurable love. May Your Kingdom come to each of us and take over ownership of our hearts and minds!

**“Blessed** (enjoying enviable happiness, spiritually prosperous – with life-joy and satisfaction in G-d’s favor and salvation, regardless of the outward conditions) **are those who make and maintain peace, for they shall be called the children of G-d!** [Mathew 5:9]”

“Depart from evil and do good; seek, inquire for, and crave peace and pursue it. [Psalm 34:14]”

**“You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind (both in inclination and its character) is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You and hopes confidently in You.** [Isaiah 26:3]”

**“But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; to show that you are the children of your Father Who is in heaven.”**[Mathew 5:44-45a]”

“If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. [Romans 12:18]”

**“The Kingdom of G-d is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.** [Romans 14:17]”

“Strive to live in peace with everybody and pursue holiness without which no one will ever see the L-RD. [Hebrews 12:14]”

One of the hallmarks of G-d’s children is that we are to have an overriding sense of commitment to living at peace with one another. We are actually called to the ministry and message of reconciliation [2 Corinthians 5:19-20]. **“By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you love one another (if you keep on showing love among yourselves).** [John 13:35]” It is incumbent upon those of us who call ourselves a Child of G-d that we work towards answering the last High Priestly prayer of Y’shua’s earthly ministry. **“That they all may be one, (just) as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe and be convinced that You have sent Me.** [John 17:21]”

Abba Father, soften our hearts toward those we have been at odds with and learn to see them from Your perspective. Help us remember that none of us is righteous in our own strength and none of us may stand in judgment of another Believer thinking we are somehow better or more spiritual. May we realize that everyone who is a Child of G-d is my brother or sister in Messiah forever; please touch the hearts and minds of everyone who calls upon Your Name to seek peace and pursue it. May we come to understand that we have as many brothers and sisters as You have sons and daughters.

**“Blessed, happy, enviably fortunate and spiritually prosperous (in the state in which the born-again child of G-d enjoys and finds satisfaction in G-d’s favor and salvation, regardless of the outward circumstances) are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake (for being and doing right), for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven!**

**Blessed** (happy, to be envied and spiritually prosperous – with life-joy and satisfaction in G-d’s favor and salvation, regardless of your outward conditions) **are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things against you falsely on My account.**

**Be glad and supremely joyful, for your reward in heaven is great (strong and intense), for in this same way people persecuted the prophets who were before you.** [Matthew 5:10-12]”

*“Indeed all who delight in piety and are determined to live a devoted and godly life in Messiah Y’shua will meet with persecution (will be made to suffer because of their religious beliefs) [2 Timothy 3:12]”*

*“Bless them that persecute you (who are cruel in their attitude toward you); bless and do not curse them. [Romans 12:14]”*

It seems odd that Y’shua would finish up a litany of Blessings with statements about how we must be glad and joyful when we encounter persecution for being obedient to Him in living out our faith. We have been fortunate to be able to express our faith openly in America with very little resistance to our right to freedom of religion. Yet maybe our comfort and convenience in this prosperous and blessed land has lulled us into a false sense of security. We must take these beatitudes seriously and allow G-d to prepare our hearts for the probability of difficult days ahead.

O Abba Father, we are not yet ready for the challenging times that lie ahead. Only You know what the future holds for each of us. Please give us the grace to learn to trust in You for every moment of every day and to leave the unknown in Your most capable hands. We do not know exactly what each day may bring, but we do know that You bring us each day, providing for our every need according to Your riches in heaven by Messiah Y’shua. Again Abba, please empower us to come to place where our daily desire is to seek You first. Your face and Your heart. To seek Your Kingdom and Your righteousness. May we so hunger and thirst for You that You may fill us to overflowing with Your Spirit, so what You have freely given to us, we can freely share with all who are hungry and thirsty too! May Your Kingdom come and Your will be done, here in earth (in each of us who are earthen vessels) as it is in Heaven! In the awesome name of Y’shua the Messiah, Amen!

“I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good I can do, therefore, or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature, let me do it. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.” – John Wesley

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