



**Amir Tsarfati**  
**Israel Unveiled: Mount of Beatitudes**  
[https://youtu.be/jquUK\\_ozVGo](https://youtu.be/jquUK_ozVGo)

So here we are on the Mount of the Beatitudes. There's no doubt this is the scene of



probably the most taught and analyzed sermon in the history of mankind. The Bible says that Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up on a mountain, sat down as a teacher should, opened His mouth, and taught. That teaching is probably the subject of

thousands of sermons that were written later on by so many pastors and teachers in history.

However, in my eyes, the sermon on the Mount is one of the most misunderstood messages of Jesus. And the reason is people take it out of context. People take it out of the context of the land, the people, and of Jesus' other words, and other teachings. Here we are on the Jewish side of



the Sea of Galilee, at the time of Jesus. We all know that at the time of Jesus, the Sea of Galilee behind me was not all Jewish-inhabited. We know that at least two-thirds of the lake was actually inhabited by Gentile pagans. It is the Jewish people who controlled only that

northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee from that canyon over there, all the way throughout the Mountain of Beatitudes; we have Magdala, we have Gennesareth, we have Tabgha, and, of course, Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin. So, we are here in a predominantly Jewish-inhabited area, and Jesus, knowing that most of the listeners here are Jews, well-versed Jews when it comes to the Word and the traditions, is now giving them probably one of the most amazing teachings they would ever hear in their lives.

In fact, in order to understand the Beatitudes, we must go back a few verses into **Matthew 4:23–25**. The Bible says “<sup>23</sup> **And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.** <sup>24</sup> **Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.**” There’s not even a single case here that we know Jesus turned down anyone. He healed them all. And “<sup>25</sup> **Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and even beyond the Jordan.**” The message of Jesus was not really limited to a specific people, a specific nation, a specific part of the land. It was a universal message. It was a message to the whole world and let anyone who has ears hear that which the Spirit has to say. Now, the interesting thing is people take that message, that “universal message,” and they are actually making it something completely detached from Jesus, and we’ll see that in a few minutes.

The Bible then starts and saying in **Matthew 5:1–2**<sup>1</sup> “<sup>1</sup> **And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.** <sup>2</sup> **Then He opened His mouth and taught them,...**” So first of all, we’re talking about Jesus surrounded by multitudes, and then the Bible says that “<sup>1</sup> **... seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain.**” Contrary to most people who think that Jesus was down there, [pointing to bottom of mountain] and everybody was seated all around on top, Jesus went actually on top of the mountain right where we are standing right now, and the people remained down below. The thousands of banana trees that we have below us today could easily represent the people that were there 2,000 years ago. Many people from different places, predominantly Jewish people as we are in the Jewish area by

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<sup>1</sup> Amir is teaching Matthew 5. Scripture other than this chapter will be referenced

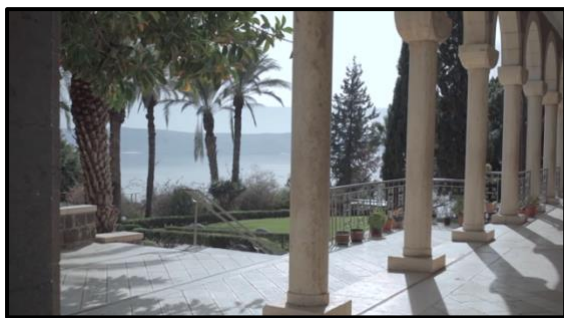


the Sea of Galilee. Now, it's very interesting because many universities around the world came and conducted geographical and geological surveys of this region trying to find out how come a person, by standing on top of one single

mountain, can be heard by thousands of people without a problem. And throughout the entire surrounding of the Sea of Galilee, there was only one spot that had the excellent and perfect acoustic conditions for such an event. And this is exactly where we are right now. That depression in the ground, where thousands of trees have been planted in the last, I don't know, 50 years or so, this is the only place where people could stand down below in the valley, and while down there, a man or any person could just go up here, sit on a rock, open the Bible, teach, and every single person can hear almost every word that comes out of his mouth. It's quite significant. That's why for the last 1,600 years, people point at this very location as the place of the Beatitudes.



That maybe explains why, in the late 1920s, Benito Mussolini sponsored the building of this church, the Catholic Church, that today is on top of the Mount of the Beatitudes. The Church of the Beatitudes, that was built by the famous Catholic monk who was an architect, Antonio Barluzzi. Barluzzi tried to bring the entire message of Jesus in one building, by way of (a) building the church to stand with a beautiful balcony all around to show



that Jesus spoke outside. And then, of course, (b) he made it from three different materials: the

basalt stone, which is the local rock because Jesus stood right here; the limestone arches are actually from Nazareth because Jesus is Jesus of Nazareth; and, of course, the marble walls inside the interior part of the church—these are from Rome—to say that he is the head of the church of Rome. Interestingly enough, by saying that He is the head of the church of Rome, we immediately go back to the Vatican, into the teachings of some of the popes regarding the Beatitudes.



It was December of 2000, when I remember sitting in Los Angeles, reading The Los Angeles Times, and I stumbled upon a little ad that says, “Pope takes an inclusive stand on salvation.” And in that article it said that Pope

John Paul II said that all who live a just life —I’d say in the spirit of the Beatitudes—will enter the kingdom of God even if they do not know Christ or belong to the Church. We’re going to go now into the Scriptures and try to understand, can you really be saved without Christ? Actually, did Christ really talk about things here that are detached from Him, that anyone who practices them can be saved? That, of course, can be seen as we dig into the Scriptures.

So, Jesus opened His mouth and started teaching the multitudes, knowing that most of them are Jewish people and they all are well-versed with the law of Moses. Jesus was aware of the fact that He is teaching His disciples, yet thousands of people can hear every single word that comes out of His mouth. In the first part of the teaching of the Beatitudes although to the ears of the disciples, Jesus actually meant for everyone to hear it. And He started by saying [**Matthew 5:3**], “**3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**” I often wondered: what is it to be poor in spirit? And it’s interesting because the Bible says that without the Spirit of God, we can really do nothing. David himself after he sinned, he said in **Psalms 139:7**, “**Where can I**

**go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”** We cannot run away from God; the Spirit of God is everywhere. We must come to the point where we understand that we are poor if we do not have His Spirit. This is exactly what David said in Psalm 51 when he was exposed by Nathan the prophet with the sin of Bathsheba. David said, “Take not your Holy Spirit from me.” David understood that without the Spirit of God, he would be poor and miserable. So, blessed are the poor in spirit are those that are poor in their own spirit, knowing that they need the Spirit of God. That’s what makes you blessed: the understanding that you need the Spirit of God and then, of course, you will have the kingdom of Heaven. How can one enter the kingdom of Heaven? If Jesus said, “I’m the way, I’m the truth and I’m the life. No one can come to the Father but through Me”, obviously, it is only by having the Spirit of God, through Jesus, that you will be able to inherit the kingdom of Heaven. So, the poor in spirit are those who understand their need for the Spirit of God because they do not have it.

And then, of course, comes the point where it says, “**4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**” Now, why would a mourning person be blessed? What would make him so blessed? Of course, we all have to remember that when the children of Israel one day see Jesus’ return in the skies, and His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, the Bible says that they will mourn, and they will cry over Him as one cries over his firstborn. The mourning is not that mourning over someone who died in your family. The mourning is not mourning over something that happened to you personally. The mourning is when you understand that you can do nothing, that there is nothing in you, that there’s nothing about you that you can ever give to God to earn your salvation by yourself. And the Jewish people will mourn and cry when they will see the One whom they pierced, and they will understand this is our Redeemer, this is our Messiah. So, blessed are those who mourn, when they understand that they were following the wrong person, they were

following the wrong traditions, they had the wrong spirit throughout their whole life, and they need Jesus. That's the only way they can be comforted because the Bible says that we are to be comforted by the Spirit of God. In fact, **2 Corinthians 1:3–5** says, “<sup>3</sup> **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,** <sup>4</sup> **who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.** <sup>5</sup> **For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.**” The comfort that we can find is in Jesus. We can only be comforted in Him, and we can offer that same comfort to those who need to be comforted. So, when we come to talk about mourning and comforting, we have to remember it is really all about Jesus. And the only way we can ever comfort someone is by giving him Jesus Himself, because the Bible says by that same comfort we were comforted, we can comfort others. That may be the reason why in Isaiah chapter 40 it says “Comfort! O, Comfort my people.” (Isa 40:1: “‘Comfort, yes, comfort My people!’ Says your God.”) The people of Israel need Jesus and the only people that can ever comfort them are those who know the Lord and can give them that which is the way, the truth, and the life, that which is the source of peace in their life, in their country, and in their world.

Then we move to the next one and it says here: “<sup>5</sup> **Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.**” Blessed are the meek. What is it to be meek? To be meek is to be humble. To be humble is to understand that it's not about who you are, it's about who He is. It's not about what you did, it's about what He has done. That's to be meek, to bring yourself to the right proportion of being the creation and not the Creator. And it's interesting because the Jewish people, every Shabbat, every Sabbath, they read from Psalm 92. And in **Psalm 92:4–5**, which is the only psalm written for the Sabbath day, they actually read the following words, they say, “<sup>4</sup> **For You,**

**LORD, have made me glad through Your work; I will triumph in the works of Your hands.**

**<sup>5</sup> O LORD, how great are Your works! Your thoughts are very deep.**” So, we see once you understand your role, and your part, and your place, and you give God the glory, then you are really, truly meek. Jesus testified of Himself that He is humble, that He is meek, not because He was so boastful to say such a thing; it’s because He wanted us to learn from Him. So, if we think we are big shots, if we think it’s about something we do, it’s about somehow what we are, I don’t think we’ve gotten the Beatitudes right. And the Bible says in **Ephesians 2:8–9** the following thing: **“<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.”** So, when Jesus said, blessed are the meek, He meant that only those who will really humble themselves before the Lord will be lifted up, and they will inherit the earth. They will truly be the owner of that which God gives to mankind. And so, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!

And then He says, **“<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,...”** The Bible says in **Psalm 63:1**, **“<sup>1</sup> O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.”** Even when there is no water, the thirst and the hunger is for God, and not for real, regular water. And how can we really be hungry and thirsty for righteousness? It’s only when our mind is changed. When the Spirit of God takes over our life through Jesus, it changes everything. And from now on, we’re not lusting after the things of the flesh, we’re not walking by the flesh. Once we walk by the Spirit, we become people who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and not for the world, and not for the things of the world. And so, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness can only be true, can only be effective, when we have our minds completely changed. And that, of course, can only be done through Jesus.

Then the Bible says, **“<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”** It’s interesting because Jesus Himself gave us mercy. We were exposed to mercy and then, and only then, we can be merciful. Normal people aren’t merciful. I mean, if you look at human beings and the way they act and what is going on in the world today, you see that only mercy that comes from God really changes people and makes them merciful themselves. The Bible says in **Hebrews 4:16**, **“<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** Where can we find mercy? In that which is the throne of grace. And where can we get that access to that throne of grace? Through Jesus Himself. That’s how we can do that. **Hebrews 4:14-16: “<sup>14</sup> ...we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace,...**” Through Jesus, who went and came boldly all the way to the Holy of Holies, we can have that access to the throne of grace and find mercy. So, how can we be merciful? If we have access to that throne of grace where we may obtain mercy.

**“<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”** Wow! Blessed are the pure in heart! The Bible says in **Jeremiah 17:9**, **“<sup>9</sup> The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”** In other words, man’s heart, as a result of the penetration of sin into the world—when obviously the first sin was committed in the Garden of Eden— man’s heart is deceitful; man’s heart is desperately wicked. So, how can we be pure in heart? David the king himself, once exposed by Nathan the prophet, said in **Psalms 51:10**, **“<sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart,...**”, a pure heart. He understood that his heart is not clean, that his heart is not pure. From the heart comes the issues of life. The heart is where everything flows from, everything starts from,



and therefore when the Bible says that Jesus told them, “Blessed are the pure in heart,” who can give us a pure heart if not God? And how can we have access to God, if not through Jesus? And therefore, “blessed are the pure in heart” can only be truly exercised if we know the Lord, if we have the Holy Spirit, if our heart of stone turns into a heart of flesh, and if that which was given to us through the Holy Spirit is now turning our heart into a pure heart. So, “blessed are the pure in heart” are only those who are saved through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, who are given the Holy Spirit and now have a new heart, a new soul, a new spirit. “Behold, I make all things new.” We are a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Then Jesus went on and said, “**9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**” So many times, people who work for some peace initiative, maybe the United Nations—we call them ‘the UN-necessary’ or ‘the United Nothing’—maybe they work hard for peace, but ultimately the only source of peace is the Prince of peace. So blessed are the peacemakers. It’s not about a temporary peace deal for a temporary time period in a very limited location. It’s about the Father of peace who gives us peace everywhere and at all times. And we can only do that through Jesus. The Bible says that He is the Prince of peace. And the Bible says that He gives us peace that surpasses all understanding. The Bible says that Jesus gives us peace that the world cannot give, the world cannot even understand. So, when it says, “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God”, how can we be called sons of God if not by getting that status of sons and daughters through Jesus? So, there is no way we can call ourselves either peacemakers or sons of God unless we truly understand the words of Jesus that we are, through Him, experiencing the peace that surpasses all understanding, and through Him, through faith in Him, are now no longer strangers, but now we are sons and daughters and we can call our God, Abba Father.

The last of the eight Beatitudes is, “<sup>10</sup> **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**” This is not persecution based on political, geographical boundaries. This is not persecution based on historical rights over certain places. This is persecution over righteousness’ sake. In other words, if you speak words of righteousness—and what can be, who is our righteousness? *Adonai Tsidkenu*, the Lord is our righteousness. The Bible says that He who knew no sin became sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. So, through Christ we become righteousness, and through Christ we speak righteousness, and through Christ and for Christ we are promoting righteousness and, therefore, the world is going to persecute us. And it’s great if that’s what they persecute us for because that means we do the right thing. We were not offered great things once we belong to Jesus in this world. Jesus said in **John 16:33**: “<sup>33</sup> **...In the world you will have tribulation;**” We are not surprised. We were not promised a garden of roses. But we were promised something that is much greater than that. Jesus said, “<sup>33</sup> **...In the world, you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**”

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*\* Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.*

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