

# Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

7 September 2025

Under the Rule of God

Text: "Looking at his disciples, he said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.'"

*Luke 6:20*

Jesus' perspective on life is different.

As the Lord of glory, he had a view of life that included both the heavenly and the earthly.

As the creator of life, he knew the essentials for life.

His view of life is beautifully demonstrated in the great sermon, the Sermon on the Mount.

A clue to understanding these "beatitudes" and "woes" is found in the very first one.

The "poor" are identified as the ones who have the "kingdom of God."

The suggestion is that they actually possess the kingdom, the rule of God, in this present moment.

While Jesus taught that there would be a future manifestation of the rule of God in a glorious fashion, he also taught that there were some who have already begun to experience the rule of God in their earthly lives.

Jesus opens his great sermon with these "beatitudes" and "woes" because they are essential in a life that will stand up to the stress of the storms of life.

The Beatitudes give us the conditions for coming under the rule of God.

The "woes" give us the barriers to coming under the rule of God.

The conditions for coming under the rule of God.

The Beatitudes could also be called "conditions for entrance into the kingdom of God."

To be in the kingdom is to be under the rule of the King of the kingdom.

The things that our Lord pronounced "blessed" must have been as surprising to the first hearers as they are to us today.

They go against everything the world has set up as being important.

The King makes poverty a condition for coming under the rule of God.

"Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

In his account of the sermon, Matthew adds "in spirit" to "the poor."

While poverty may make it easier for some individuals to realize their poverty of spirit, it does not in itself bring people under the rule of God.

It is not uncommon to find rebellion and bitterness toward God among the poor.

Our Lord is speaking of an awareness of inner poverty that brings a person to God.

The King makes hunger a condition for coming under the rule of God.

"Blessed are you that hunger now. For you shall be satisfied."

Matthew's account says, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness."

This lets us know that our Lord meant more than physical hunger.

Those who are to share in the riches of the kingdom must have an intense desire in the direction.

They must desire to be right with God more than anything else in the world.

The King makes weeping a condition for coming under the rule of God.

"Blessed are you who weep now. For you will laugh."

The word means to weep out loud, audibly.

These are not just any tears but rather weeping that comes from sorrow over personal sin and the sin of others.

Weeping is the outward expression of a "broken and contrite heart."

The great joy of the kingdom comes to those who have sobbed their way into the presence of the great King of mercy.

The King makes identification with himself a condition for coming under the rule of God.

"Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their fathers treated the prophets."

"Because of the Son of Man" is the key phrase for understanding this beatitude.

People do not come under the rule of God simply because they are cursed or mistreated by others. Rather, they come under the rule of God when they so fully identify themselves with the King of the kingdom that the world begins to treat them like they treat the King.

These four statements go together.

Each is an essential condition for coming under the rule of God.

As you consider them, it is not difficult to understand why so few seem to be seeking to come under God's rule.

This will become even clearer as you align the conditions with the barriers to the kingdom as expressed in the "woes".

The barriers to coming under the rule of God.

The "woe" is not an announcement of judgment as much as an expression of sorry and regret on the part of the King.

He desires that all people come to know personally the reality of the kingdom

The King identifies riches as a barrier to the kingdom.

"But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort."

Riches are not evil themselves, but they have the capacity to become a blockade in people's search for God.

They have a way of becoming the object of their trust and the basis for their lives.

They have a way of leading people to believe that they can live without God.

They may begin to see God as a crutch needed only by the poor.

Since almost all of us would fall into the classification of the "rich" in our world, we need to consider the word of our Lord very seriously.

The King identifies worldly fullness as a barrier to the kingdom,

"Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry."

This world does have the capacity to so fill people's lives that they begin to lose their sense of need and their hunger for God.

This deadly satisfaction is a danger to your eternally!

The King identifies worldly pleasure as a barrier to the kingdom.

"Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep."

Our Lord is referring to the laughter that flows out of the pleasure and entertainment of this world.

So many who do not know God seem to spend their days having "fun".

Their lives are filled with one pleasurable event after another.

They ignore the fact that each individual is ultimately accountable to God.

When one stands before the Judge of all the earth, he will be the only basis for joy.

A life without him will not stand the storms.

The King identifies the praise of men as a barrier to the kingdom.

"Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for that is how their fathers treated the false prophets."

The approval of others is such a subtle thing.

Almost unconsciously this can become the basis on which one decides his or her lifestyle.

Every person who has ever come under the rule of God has had to overcome these barriers and meet these conditions.

Are you read to come under the rule of God?

And enjoy all the benefits of being under the rule of God?

They are many and they are glorious!

Now and forever more!