

Finding Joy in the Lord – The Beatitude Emma King

Matthew 5:3–6

When we think about **joy**, what usually comes to mind?

Maybe laughter, a party, a holiday, or everything going the way we want.

We tend to think of joy as something that happens when life feels good.

But in the Beatitudes, Jesus turns that upside down.

He says that real joy—the kind that is blessed by God—can be found in places we wouldn't expect.

In poverty of spirit, in mourning, in meekness, and in longing for righteousness.

I want to share today not just from Scripture but also from my own experience in Taizé.

A few weeks ago, I spent time in **Taizé**, a small village in France where a community of brothers has lived together in prayer for decades.

The community in Taizé was founded by Brother Roger, who stayed there until his untimely and tragic death in 2005.

I have been reading his journals and they are quite fascinating, quite simple, but also deeply moving. They also make me feel better that he also struggles with little things and gets cross at God because of them!

But because of him, now every week, thousands of young people from all across the world come to pray, sing, and sit in silence.

- There are no luxuries, it is all very basic.
- There is no entertainment apart from the going to the Oyak for an hour in the evening where the young people could get a fizzy drink and they would all play music together and sing.
- There is no noise during the prayers, only the few shuffles as people sit in the floor or the odd cough, but yet, the place overflows with joy.

We had bible teaching during the day by Brother Pablo who broke down this wonderful simple teaching from Jesus to his disciples into three sections.

Joy, Simplicity and Mercy.

I was struck by how brother Pablo described The Beatitudes as our Christian ID. I'd never really thought of it like that.

But not just thinking that we resonate with one of them.... But how each one of them makes up our Christian DNA.

To follow Jesus is to live this way.

He said that, quite boldly, you could see everyone sit up quite straight, that if we aren't doing this, we need to ask ourselves if we are truly followers of Jesus!

Through this teaching Jesus is offering us a new path, and that path is a path to Happiness.

Happiness comes from the Greek word Eudaimonia (or eudaemonia; pronounced **"yew-de-MO-nia"**). Quite often it can be translated as "living well" or "flourishing".

Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who all of his works were based off of The Beatitudes, found that using the Hebrew word **'eshrey'** was a much better word, meaning incomprehensively happy. Following Jesus brings a happiness that cannot really be described.

It is said that witnesses who were at Bonhoeffer's death say that as he was dying he was resighting the Beatitudes.

Whether that is true or not, is for those who were there, but we know that through these words, Bonhoeffer was inspired and went on to inspire millions of people in his writings.

Jesus says in Matthew 5, verses 3 to 6

- Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

These are the first four Beatitudes.

Each one is a doorway to joy in the Lord

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

To be “poor in spirit” means to know that we need God.

It’s about humility, about admitting we can’t do life on our own.

The world tells us that joy comes from independence—being strong, successful, and self-sufficient.

The world tells us that joy comes from who has the most possessions.

But Jesus says joy comes when we admit our weakness and open our hearts to God.

At Taizé, I saw this lived out. The brothers live very simply—no personal wealth, no big possessions.

And yet, their joy is unmistakable.

Their treasure is not in things but in God’s presence.

That’s the kind of joy Jesus is pointing to: A joy that comes when our hands are empty, so God can fill them with what he wants for us.

We were asked three questions in Taizé on each Beatitude to reflect on in our own time, so I wonder if we might do this today, and these are printed out at the back for us to take away if you would like.

1. How does poor in spirit help me to understand the nature of God?
2. Where is the poverty in me?
3. Am I poor in spirit?

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

Jesus doesn't say we'll never mourn.

He says that in our mourning, God Himself will comfort us.

To mourn means not only grieving for loved ones we've lost, but also carrying sorrow for the pain and brokenness of the world. But the joy of the beatitudes can pierce through our pain.

Jesus promises that joy comes—not by ignoring pain—but by finding God's comfort right in the middle of it.

We know from reading the New Testament, that it is full of people who were crying.

The tears of Jesus himself, the tears of Peter as the rooster began to cry and the realisation of what he'd done and how he had betrayed Jesus.

The heart is at the centre of thinking, showing our emotion.

When we cry, we are thinking with our heart.

We are mourning out loud.

We are realising what is wrong. And through our tears we are outwardly asking God for help, asking for comfort from him when words fail us.

Children often communicate with tears. In Luke 18, Jesus tells the disciples about the children..

The kingdom of God belongs to them he says. To us.

In Taizé, one of the most powerful moments each day is the long silence in the evening prayer.

Hundreds of people sit quietly together, bringing before God their griefs, their sins, their questions.

That silence can feel heavy, but when the singing begins again, there's a deep sense of joy—because God meets us in our mourning with His comfort.

Questions

1. Do I have a heart that cries?
2. How do the beatitudes help me to understand myself?
3. How do we slow down our phenetic activities and let our eyes get wet with tears?

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”

Meekness is not weakness.

The word meek means, humble, a non violent person, chooses to serve and not be served.

It's gentleness instead of aggression, humility instead of pride.

It's strength under God's control.

The world tells us joy comes when we push ahead, assert ourselves, and get our way.

But Jesus says joy comes through meekness—through trusting God's way, even when it means stepping back.

The meek know how to stop egos, using hospitality to create relationships.

We see this in Isaiah 54, it reads “enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your curtains wide, do not hold back”

We read about Abraham and Sarah offering hospitality to strangers

There are countless stories of this throughout the bible...

At Taizé, people from all nations, languages, and cultures gather.

Praying together, singing together, learning together.

No one is trying to be the most important person.

People eat simple meals, clean up after one another, and listen across differences.

In that gentleness, there is joy.

Through Meekness we create a space on earth for peace, and peace brings joy.

Questions

1. Do we have to win all the time?
2. How can we be gentle and tender to others?
3. When was the last time I helped a stranger?

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

Hunger and thirst are strong desires—we can’t ignore them.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness means to deeply long for God’s kingdom, for His justice, for His presence in our lives and in the world.

The world tells us to hunger for wealth, success, comfort, or recognition. And we chase these things, but they never truly satisfy. Our hearts remain restless.

But Jesus promises: that hunger will be satisfied.

We find that in Communion with Him in prayer, reading his Word, and worshiping him daily will satisfy our spiritual hunger.

Righteousness means living in right relationship—with God, with others, with ourselves, and with creation.

It means longing for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. We say this in the Lords Prayer, weekly, daily?

This hunger is not weakness—it is a gift.

To long for God's presence, to thirst for His justice and peace, is the path to true joy.

Jesus promises that those who hunger and thirst in this way *will be filled*. Not with temporary pleasures, but with God Himself.

In Taizé, I met young people who had come from all over the world—places of wealth, places of war, places of poverty.

Many of them came because they were hungry.

Hungry for meaning, for truth, for forgiveness, for peace, for God.

And in that place of prayer, they found joy—not because all their problems were solved, but because God's Spirit was filling their hunger.

Questions

1. What do we hunger and thirst for?
 2. Do we settle for lesser things?
 3. Do we let our deepest desire be for God and His righteousness?
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Do you notice a pattern?

Each of these Beatitudes describes a situation that doesn't sound joyful

- poverty of spirit,
- mourning,
- meekness,
- hunger.

And yet each one comes with a promise:

- the kingdom of heaven,
- comfort,
- inheritance,
- being filled.

That's the secret of Christian joy.

Joy doesn't come from avoiding pain, or from pretending everything is fine.

Joy comes from being close to God, from trusting His promises, from knowing that He is with us in every circumstance.

In Taizé, joy was not noisy or flashy.

It was quiet, steady, and deeply rooted in prayer. And I surprised myself at how much I enjoyed that. I realised that this was what was missing from my life.

It used to be there, but in amongst the busyness and business, I'd lost that. So I'm so thankful that the Lord sent me there to find it again.

That's the joy Jesus offers us—the joy of His presence.

So I'm going to add these at the end of the questions for us to reflect on this week.

- **Be poor in spirit:** Admit to God that you need Him, every day.
- **Mourn:** Bring your sorrows honestly before God, and allow Him to comfort you.
- **Be meek:** Practice gentleness and humility with the people around you.
- **Hunger and thirst for righteousness:** Make space for God's kingdom in your choices, in your prayers, in your hopes.

When we do these things, joy begins to grow—not a shallow happiness, but a deep, lasting joy in the Lord.

Let's hear the words of Jesus once more:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

This is the joy of the Beatitudes.

This is the joy of life with God.

This is our DNA through Jesus.

At Taizé, I learned that joy does not depend on circumstances or possessions, but on God's presence.

Amen.