

*Series: A Life That Actually Works*

Part 1: How can I actually be happy?

Matthew 5:1-16 - [Watch online](#)

### **Summary:**

God created us with an innate desire and an incredible capacity to be happy. And so we try to fulfill that desire in hundreds of ways only to come away unsatisfied. True happiness seems so fleeting and constantly fading. But Jesus offers a better way. A way to have a truly happy life that actually works.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What tends to make you happy?
2. Which of Jesus' "blessings" stand out to you most and why? (Matthew 5:3-11)
3. Jon said, "We experience a happy life when we experience life in the Kingdom of Heaven." What do you think it means or looks like to "experience life" this way?
4. Read Matthew 5:13-16. What stands out to you? When you read this, what emotions come to the surface? Why do you think that is?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

### **Main points:**

- God wants you to be happy.
- We try to find happiness by being "more."
- Happiness is not the result of finding the right MORE but of changing what we are looking for in the first place.
- We experience a happy life when we experience life in the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Those who are seen as less most often see more clearly than others.
- The least are the first to be offered God's MORE.
- When we experience the happiness of the Kingdom of Heaven, we can't help but invite more to it.
- We find true lasting and satisfying happiness by becoming more like Jesus.
- The happiness we find in Jesus is the MORE we are all searching for.

### **Weekly Challenge:**

Ask Yourself:

1. On a scale of 1-10... Am I happy?
2. What MORE am I hoping will make me happy?

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### **Transcript:**

**IN:** Fact: **God wants you to be happy.**

He created us with an innate desire and capacity to be happy. And if he created us with that desire/capacity then there must be a way to fulfill it? HOW?

It's closer than you might think... So, let's talk about it... together.

**WE:** We try to find our happiness in a lot of different ways...

The self-help/personal development industry in the US \$11.5 billion in 2021.

- Books, seminars, classes, online quizzes
- Nothing wrong with... A lot of wisdom and good advice/practices

Vacations... nothing wrong... Self-care "treat-yo-self." Education- to better ourselves

Nothing wrong with... But there still seems to be something missing... something elusive...

We never make it to the right "more" or we have to keep refilling it.

- More knowledge\Need another Vacation
- Doesn't last

What do all of these have in common? One thing, all attempts to be MORE...

**We try to find happiness by being "more."**

- More wealthy/healthy/relaxed/informed/self-aware/influential/successful/organized

And when we try find happiness by being more there's never going to be an ENOUGH...

Jesus knew this... in fact his most famous teaching is about how humans can actually find deep lasting satisfying happiness... the happiness we were actually created for... that lasts and that is MORE than ENOUGH

And at first glance it makes zero sense... then as you think on it you realize just how genius it is...

**Happiness is not the result of finding the right MORE but of changing what we are looking for in the first place.**

**GOD:**

Jesus' main message- **Matt 4:17.**

- Repent! Uh that sounds more holy than happy?!
- Not just feeling bad for bad things you've done.
- It's a change of allegiance from ourselves and pursuing what we want to an allegiance and reliance on God's kingship.

The Kingdom of Heaven [God] is near... next to you... here now for you to experience... Good News!

KoH- Not Heaven in some distant future... God reigning now in people's hearts and minds.

**We experience a happy life when we experience life in the Kingdom of Heaven** (Children of God)

Then Jesus explains what this life is like and who can experience it...

Called Sermon on the MT. Often seen as collection of Jesus' teachings... and has been treated a lot like... Jesus' Code of Ethics

BUT- not just giving rules to live by (self-help stuff)... he is describing what the true happy life looks like... the life we were all designed for... the life he came to offer... that is found in only one place...

[Leaning heavily on teacher [Tim Mackie](#)]

### **Matt 5:1-2**

Who is he talking to? Disciples? 12? Not yet...

- A few fisherman
- Common people from the area that he has healed from their sickness and diseases
- A crowd of people- who were considered some of the least happy people in society
- No importance, no money, no power or influence.

So he teaches them what KoH is... starts w/ a list of people who are “blessed” who will experience this kingdom in their lives...

**Blessed**- Hebrew word- Happy/Favored by God/ DW- the highest type of well-being possible for humans... Deep joy-filled contentment... not affected by outside circumstances, tragedy,

Not a new idea... Rabbis in Jesus' time... “blessed are those who don't have to answer to anyone else, don't find themselves in the subservient role... the rich/powerful/influential/honored and admired by everyone...

“God is with those who have made it... who have found the right MORE”

- We do it too

But Jesus turns it on its head/surprising...

### **Those who are seen as less most often see more clearly than others**

As we read these... not a formula/ideals/virtues to help us get on God's good side to earn his blessing... or just a new way to “make it”...

Not 9 separate types of people... Take all together to paint a picture of kind of people who experience KoH...

**Matt 5:3** Poor in spirit? What does he mean?

Economic? overlooked/abused b/c of social status?

Spiritually? Nobody looks to for spiritual guidance... no one cares what have to say about God? Spiritual zeroes?

Well, Both- Can't separate them...

When poor no one seems to care about your opinion... church world does it... never have a pastor of small church headlining conferences.

Jesus is saying, if your fund yourself in this position, be happy... God sees you. He is for you.

This (being poor in spirit) the most favorable position you can be in... b/c when people find themselves here... They are the most likely to respond to his invitation to experience the kingdom...

Those who find themselves in hopeless situations are the ones to which Jesus first offers hope.

**The least are the first to be offered God's MORE.**

The next 3 just make no sense at first...

**V. 4-6**

Mackie- these work together by actually looking at the 3rd one first... help put this all in context...

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...**

These people have a scorching thirst and hunger (ever been that hungry/thirsty) longing /pain for things to be made right.

They look at the world the way it actually is and see how messed up and experience an intense frustration over it.

- EX. Movie/Shows where bad guy is so bad that you are frustrated and anxious that something needs to be done about it
  - SVU/Harry Potter- Prof. Umbridge/Emperor in Star Wars and Gladiator... those characters we just hate...

Jesus is describing the people who see the brokenness of the world, relationships, God, and have that gut reaction for it to be fixed.

- Burn w/ a desire for things to be made right... bothers them to their core

You're happy b/c you notice what God notices- something needs to be done

- Be happy b/c the KoH is here and you **will** be satisfied.

Now we look at the previous two and it makes more sense...

**Blessed are those who mourn?** Mourn over what?

Not what everyone mourns- death/loss...

Mourn over the evil and the tragedy of brokenness in our world- broken relationships.. .and it's result: Death.

They pay attention to the brokenness and don't try to ignore it/numb it/explain it away/distract themselves from it by being "MORE"

They acknowledge the reality of the world and mourn over it... Jesus with Lazarus, wept over death

Be happy b/c in KoH will be comforted.

**Blessed are the meek/humble?** Meek not a word we use much.

The unimportant (at least in their mind)/ the weak... No influence/power to do anything about the brokenness around them...

They see the hurt and pain but have no power to fix it... Be happy b/c in KoH you will have the earth and ability to fix the pain you see...

So what do they do? They are blessed and Jesus is with them... and it moves them to do something... but what?

### **V. 7** Merciful

Mercy- Care and compassion for those who are hurting.

The merciful are those who see the pain/hurt in the world and wish they could feed all of the starving/ house the unsheltered...

But instead of saying "welp, guess I can't do anything"... they take care of who they can take care of... they help those around them in the way that they can.

They do for one what they wish they could do for all. (Andy Stanley)

- This type of mercy that changes the world... created 1st hospitals/orphanages/adopting abandoned children

And in doing that... the mercy of the KoH starts radiating out and starts coming into the world one act of mercy at a time.

### **V. 8** Blessed (deeply happy) are the pure in heart... Don't care about prestige/honor/being influential.

Care only about how God seeing them... cultivating their relationship with God as a child of God and letting that relationship flow out into actions and choices.

### **V. 9** Blessed are the peacemakers...

As that relationship with God grows and their heart becomes purer their longing for rightness in relationships grows.

When see two people in conflict, two people loved by God... and they will insert themselves in between these two and do the hard work of reconciliation.

This peacemaking is doing and exemplifying the good news of the KoH- Jesus came to reconcile humanity to God and unity to each other.

And it is hard work b/c if you put yourself in the middle of two people fighting- They both end up shooting at you. Each side might think that since you are NOT fighting FOR their side, you are fighting against them.

Jesus says... you are blessed b/c you are truly acting like your Father... you are truly being a child of God.

### **V. 10-12**

You are blessed when you are just trying to do what is right and people hate you for it... Assume motives of you that aren't actually yours.

When people find out your allegiance is to Jesus and they get awkward and weird and assume they know what you stand for (are against)... And label you and cancel you b/c you are "one of those"

Be happy b/c (even though society might think you're nothing) you are in the same ranks as the greatest prophets and you will be rewarded... and you are being used by God to be and do something different for the rest of the world.

Now... Like I said earlier, Jesus isn't commanding people to be these things... they are a picture of the type of person Jesus has 1st invited into the KoH...

BUT it DOES motivate us doesn't it? Makes us want to be this way...

Not b/c if we do we will be blessed... but we want to be this way b/c we *are* blessed... gives real purpose to each interaction.

**When we experience the happiness of the Kingdom of Heaven we can't help but invite more to it...**

### **V. 13-16**

Now here's the point...

This description paints a picture... who is it really a picture of? Jesus... he is the epitome of these blessings.

Jesus, God, became less in order to bring MORE. To bring the KoH to earth now.

As we follow Jesus, and experience his kingdom, and are transformed into his likeness by the HS, we allow our heart/motivations/life to be shaped by Jesus and his value system, we actually become MORE...

We acknowledge more of our need for God and rely on/trust him MORE... our heart becomes MORE of a reflection of his heart...

- We mourn MORE over that which God mourns
- We long MORE for God's justice to make the world right
- We show MORE mercy b/c we have been shown mercy
- We become a force for MORE peace in a world that is insisting on being divided.
- And as we become MORE like Jesus, we bring this happiness to MORE of those around us.
- *This is being blessed*

Might Sound trite/cliche' but it's the secret to a life that actually works...

**We find true lasting and satisfying happiness by becoming more like Jesus.**

Not circumstantial happy- deep down peace, confidence, joy that overcomes the worst of the pain and evil we experience.

It is the promised outcome of knowing the God of love and sharing it with others with our words and actions.

**YOU:** So... where are you?

Have you "made it?" Have you found the right "MORE" Do you feel like you have everything you want? Then these blessings are a challenge... what will be left of your happiness when you lose what you have?

- There's always someone with more... there's always more to acquire...
- Are you using what you have to distract/numb yourself to the real world and its pain and fear?

Maybe life hasn't turned out the way you wanted... maybe feel unimportant, insignificant, unseen b/c you're too young, too old, haven't achieved what you think you should've achieved, aren't along as far as you think you should be either in life or in faith... ?

You are the one who is blessed... You are who the KoH is made up of. The KoH belongs to you,

My guess is a lot of us are a mix...

**ASK:**

1. On a scale of 1-10... Am I happy?
2. What MORE am I hoping will make me happy?

**WE:**

God wants you to be happy...truly, deeply, satisfied happy.

He created us to be happy. We can experience this happiness no matter what situation we find ourselves in...

**The happiness we find in Jesus is the MORE we are all searching for.**