What’s a Beatitude?

Jesus began his sermon on the mount with a number of statements starting with the word “blessed” (Mtt 5:1-11).

These statements are often called “beatitudes” but what does that mean? It's not the sort of word we use on day by day. You don't go into a shop and ask for a dozen beatitudes, or say to your friends, “Have you heard any good beatitudes lately?”

The word “beatitude” is from the Latin word beatus which means (you guessed it!) “blessed”.

Well, what does it mean to be “blessed”? Some say it means to be “happy” and that's probably close enough, except that it should be regarded as a special kind of happiness.

The word “happy” comes from the same root as words like happenstance and haphazard. Now happ is a Norse word that means good luck. Some happiness may be nothing more than good luck, but a state of blessedness is never attributable to luck. It is bestowed by God intentionally and purposefully, and it is sought from God in the same manner. We must seek it. It won't just happen.

The Beatitudes

Sermon on the Mount, Lesson 2

By Ron Graham

We continue our study of the Beatitudes with which Jesus opened his sermon on the mount in Matthew chapter 5. This lesson starts with the third beatitude.

THE MEEK

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Mtt 5:5).

The first beatitude held the ideas of contrition and humility, the second sorrow and patience. There is a natural progression to the idea of meekness in the third beatitude.

These states of mind, contrition, sorrow, and meekness, may indicate weakness to the worldly, who see strength as dominance over others.

But there is nothing weak about the meek and gentle.