II. Caught from Christ – Jesus told His disciples “Follow Me,” because He wanted to share the happiness He had in the attitude of kingdom living: living a life dependent on God, in tune with God’s heart, and in humble submission to God’s will. The first of these is...

A. The attitude of personal poverty – v.3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

1. Poverty “in spirit” is the underlying theme in the other Beatitudes [the Hebrew concept of poverty developed from the idea of “the poor” being without power; and because without power, oppressed; and because oppressed, dependent on God.] (Realizing our utter helplessness, we can look only to God for spiritual life and salvation.)

2. The accompanying promise is “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

   a. Spiritual poverty and dependence on God makes a person a citizen of God’s kingdom right now! It’s a present reality!

   b. [Christians often get accused of putting all our eggs in a future basket, but when He came, Christ brought God’s future basket with Him.] The Lord’s prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” is answered when people confess spiritual poverty and become totally dependent on God. This turns the poor into the truly rich!

B. The attitude of sincere sorrow – v.4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

1. “those who mourn” [the strongest Gk. word for grieving] (How can God say that this is a "happy" state for anyone?)

   a. Death, and the separation it brings, does something for us that nothing does better: it highlights the really important things in life and casts a shadow on the frivolous. (Sorrow always has more to teach us than Enjoyment does. It takes us from surface things down to the depths. Someone wrote...

      "I walked a mile with Pleasure, And ne’er a word said she, But left me none the wiser For all she had to say."

      b. There's another kind of grief: grieving over the sufferings of the world [for just that reason, Luther translated this word mourn as "sorrow-bearing"] (True disciples should mourn over the wrongs in the world and should long for and work towards social reform.)

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C. And Jesus didn't whisper [lit. Gk. is "He opened His mouth"]— He spoke about kingdom living directly to the disciples, but loud enough for the crowd to hear. (The Church is a believer's meeting, but it has a message that the world should feel welcome to come and listen to.)

"I walked a mile with Pleasure, She chattered all the way, But left me none the wiser For all she had to say."

"I walked a mile with Sorrow, And ne'er a word said she, But, oh, the things I learned from her When Sorrow walked with me!"

b. There's another kind of grief: grieving over the sufferings of the world [for just that reason, Luther translated this word mourn as "sorrow-bearing"] (True disciples should mourn over the wrongs in the world and should long for and work towards social reform.)

c. There's also sorrow for our sins that can bring us to God. (Grief over sin is the only proper prelude to true repentance.)
2. This beatitude's promise is "they will be comforted," which means...
   a. encouraged by the compassion of fellow travelers in life. (This should especially be the testimony among fellow believers.)
   b. and strengthened by the God of comfort -- 2 Co.1:3-4, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (This is the source of our encouragement to others.)

C. The attitude of a tamed temperament -- v.5, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

1. This word "meek" is hard to translate; it carries the idea of...
   a. Aristotle's virtuous "mean" (a place between wrong anger at insult or injury to self and no anger (at wrongs done to others);
   b. or the idea of taming a wild animal by breaking and bringing its will under human control (like the Spirit-fruit of self-control);
   c. or the idea of a humble heart, one that is willing to learn, honest about weaknesses (able to face the truth when being corrected).

2. What is the promise to the "meek"? "they will inherit the earth." (where Adam and Eve failed, the meek, led by Christ will fulfill that dominion over this planet and over the whole creation, which was the original destiny God planned for humanity.)

CONCLUSION: (with some questions)
   - If true happiness is not just taught by Christ but caught from Him, where are we today? with the crowd, or learning at Christ's feet?
   - Do we recognize our spiritual poverty and our dependence on God?
   - Are we sorrowing over separation and sin? Christ defeated them both.
   - Have our haughty hearts, wild wills, and turbulent tempers been tamed by the power of Christ to fit us for citizenship in God's Kingdom? (His Spirit still has work to do in my own life!)

   These first three characteristics are like foundational stepping stones into a relationship with Christ: first, enlightenment about spiritual poverty; next, sorrow over our sins, and finally, willingness to come humbly to Christ, and become like Christ: Matt. 11:28-29, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."