

Sunday, July 19 , 2026 Sunday Morning Worship Sermon

“True Happiness” Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Isaiah 57:15–19, Matthew 5:1–12

❶ **【The Blessing of Being Taught by God】**

Verse 1: “When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain. After He sat down, His disciples came to Him. Then Jesus began to teach them.” Because this teaching took place on a mountain, it is known as the “Sermon on the Mount.” In Judaism, it was customary for a teacher to sit down while his disciples gathered around him to listen to his teachings. Here, too, Jesus speaks in the same manner. This reflects the nature of the church. The church is a place where people gather with Christ at the center, and a place where we learn from Christ. Why does the text specifically state, “Jesus began to speak and teach them”? The Book of Psalms says, “O God, you have taught me from my youth, and to this day I proclaim your wondrous deeds” (Psalm 71:17). The teachings we hear come from God; they are words that God Himself has spoken to humanity.

❷ **【Nine Blessings】**

From here on, nine blessings are described, but these are different from the blessings of this world. This passage speaks of the blessings of believers who seek to live in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 3: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” Although translated as “spirit,” the original text uses the word “spirit.” Those who are poor in spirit are people who cannot be satisfied by the things of this world. Such people come to seek the Kingdom of God. Our souls cannot be satisfied without God.

Verse 4: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” This does not refer to worldly sorrow, but means that those who mourn over their own sins—or who grieve over their inability to love others—are blessed. Such people will be comforted by God.

Verse 5: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” “Meek” means gentle and calm; it refers to the ability to control one’s anger. It is written, “Now the man Moses was very meek, more than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3). Furthermore, there is no one as meek as Christ. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.” (Matthew 11:29) “God is merciful and atones for sin. He did not destroy them, but time and again he restrained his anger and did not bring his wrath to its full measure.” (Psalm 78:37–39) Meekness is a quality of God. God is slow to anger. Those who are quick to anger are far removed from the image of God. The meek will inherit the heavens and the earth.

Verse 6: “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will

be filled.” Righteousness refers to Christ. Human beings have no righteousness of their own. Those who truly “hunger and thirst for righteousness”—that is, those who seek to live righteously—will find righteousness in Christ’s words and in the way He lived. They will always consider what Jesus would do in such situations and live a life that imitates Christ. Just as food satisfies the body’s hunger and thirst, those who do God’s will will have their souls satisfied.

Verse 7: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Mercy is one of God’s attributes, and those who show mercy to their neighbors become more like God. There are two kinds of mercy: physical mercy and spiritual mercy. Physical mercy means feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, caring for the sick, offering lodging to travelers, and helping the poor. Spiritual compassion means treating sinners with a gentle heart, seeking to see the good in them, forgiving their sins, believing in their potential, and accepting them as people who are loved by Christ.

- “Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not shown mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.” (James 2:13)
- “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” (Matthew 9:13)

If you show mercy to your neighbor, God will show mercy to you, both on earth and in heaven.

Verse 8: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” In this world, God alone is pure. Therefore, to purify our hearts, we must fill them with God. “You double-minded people, purify your hearts.” (James 4:8) This passage teaches us that those who are two-faced—relying on both God and the world—do not have pure hearts. When a person looks to God alone, their heart is pure. Such a person can see God. We have seen God in Jesus.

Verse 9: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” Everyone desires peace, but the reason it is difficult to actually bring it about is that we do not want to suffer a loss ourselves. The catchphrase of the radio program “Light of the Heart” is, “Before complaining that it’s dark, let’s turn on the light ourselves.” This is what it means to bring about peace. The model of peace is Christ, for He came to reconcile God and humanity.

Verses 10–11: “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.” Since righteousness is God and Christ, this means that those who are persecuted for Christ’s sake are blessed. This also includes being persecuted for God’s teachings and truth. Such people will enter the kingdom of God.

I believe these nine beatitudes describe a way of life that involves sacrifice in this world. It is a way of life in which one is not satisfied with worldly things, but shows mercy and forgiveness, refrains from anger, and chooses to yield. Yet it is said that

this is the way of life for God's children—the people of the Kingdom of Heaven.

③ **【Let's live in such a way that we never forget the joy of knowing Christ】**

A pastor named Masato Fujio wrote the following:

● “In May 1859, during the Bakumatsu period when public sentiment was in a state of upheaval over the issues of opening the country and expelling foreigners, Riggins (Anglican), Japan's first Protestant missionary, set foot on Japanese soil—a land where Christianity was still banned. A century has passed, and now the Gospel has taken root in the soil of Japan, grown into a tree, and its growth rings now number a hundred years. However, over this past century, how many Japanese people have confessed their belief in Christ only to cast aside their faith like a pair of worn-out sandals? Take, for example, the writers: Toson Shimazaki, Dokubo Kunikida, Hakuchō Masamune, and Takeo Arishima... Thus, the century of missionary work was also a century of apostasy. Why has Christianity in Japan produced so many apostates? When Mr. Tenchi Hoshino concluded his gathering, he said, “We are those who, guided by the holy will of Christ—whom we believe to be the representative of great men—seek to contribute to a new Japan.” For them, Christ may have been the representative of great men, but He was not the Savior who forgives sinners. They were not weak sinners at a loss for themselves, unable to find a way to live without Christ; rather, they were capable people who could manage just fine without Him. Therefore, when faith became a hindrance, they discarded it without hesitation. However, for those for whom faith was not a mere ornament but life itself, apostasy was impossible. Whether one humbles oneself to the utmost, saying, “God, please forgive me, a sinner,” and follows the Lord—this remains the dividing line between faith and apostasy even today.

Pastor Masato Fujio also wrote the following:

● “I long to hear a sermon that penetrates the soul... one that makes my whole body listen. I long to hear a message of the Gospel that stirs my heart—one so powerful that I could recite it by heart after hearing it just once. I long to hear a story of joy that, once heard, compels me to share it with everyone around me. ...Unfortunately, I have already tasted that experience.”

I believe Pastor Fujio has come to know the joy of the Gospel. Those who know this joy will never abandon their faith.

I hope to continue living as a citizen of heaven, never forgetting the deep emotion I felt when I first encountered Christ—when I realized that my deep and grave sins, which I could do nothing about on my own, had been forgiven through the cross—and the joy and emotion that welled up from the depths of my being when I experienced the power of Christ's resurrection, the Kingdom of God, and new life.