

A close-up photograph of a red granite surface, showing a dense pattern of small, light-colored mineral inclusions within a darker red matrix. The texture is rugged and crystalline.

**Red Granite**

**10 Daily  
Devotions**

**THE  
BEATITUDES**

**brought to you by  
Marshall Jones**

**Published by  
Red Thread Poets**

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**Daily  
Devotions**

# **THE BEATITUDES**

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by  
Marshall Jones

Published by Red Thread Poets Inc

The contents of these Daily Devotions, are based on quotations from The Holy Bible, King James Version, and the inspired writings of Marshall Jones, and include but are not limited to his opinions expressed; permission to use previously published materials included; and any advice given or actions advocated are solely the responsibility of the author, who assumes all liability for said work and indemnifies the publisher against any claims stemming from publication of the work.

Published by Red Thread Poets Inc

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## ENDORSEMENTS

From : Jessica Reavis-Christensen,

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=forged%20by%20fire%3B%20iron%20sharpening%20iron>

I'm a former Recreational Leader of the New Lisbon Correctional Institution and I have to say that I am SO thankful for the 9 months I got to spend in prison. I would have never understood the need for prison reform if it wasn't for my experience.

When I was hired at N.L.C.I., I came in with the understanding that my position was to help rehabilitate the men to become successful citizens of society. I encouraged them to put the work in during their time, so they would have the tools to thrive in their freedom. Well, administration did not like that. The administration was threatened by the joy and empowerment that I brought to Recreation. They didn't like that the men were choosing healthy outlets, they didn't like that the countenance of the general population was lifting, they didn't like that the men were excited to be treated with humanity rather than unimportant scum. My time in prison was cut short because of the administration feeling threatened by the atmosphere I brought to the dark institution. Light is not wanted within those walls and that is something I believe needs to change.

After 40 days of unpaid administrative leave, I was terminated on Friday, December 13th 2019 for "not passing probationary standards". It didn't matter that all the programming I had added and built upon was changing the atmosphere in the institution for the better. They needed a scapegoat to get rid of me, and "not passing probationary standards" was it. Friday, December 13th was a day of sadness but also a day of resolution. As I drove away from N.L.C.I., no longer employed by the DOC, I made a pivotal decision to write Marshall Jones.

Marshall Jones was one of four inmate workers that assisted me in my Rec Leader position. He lead fitness classes, reffed all competitive events, assisted setting up Rec events, helped encourage men that came to Recreation, and counseled the men to prepare for their release. Marshall's conduct spoke for itself and I could see he was a man of his word by the actions displayed. He worked hard in Rec and Marshall worked even harder doing his time by becoming a published author of his first book, "A Raven's Meal". While working with Marshall, I learned he was serving a double life sentence, and I was shocked he would be there for the rest of his life. The reason I was shocked was because Marshall lived more free within the walls of that prison than any other person I've met in my life. How is that possible? It was possible because of the faith he so boldly lives. Marshall was incarcerated at 21 years old and has served 17 years of his sentence. When I drove away from N.L.C.I. I decided I wanted Marshall to know that he was remembered by someone. I wanted him to know he made an impact on my life by living the way he did within the walls of prison. I wanted him to know that despite the circumstances, I wanted to extend the olive branch of becoming his friend. Writing Marshall Jones was one of the best choices I have ever made in my life.

I believe so many men like Marshall are deserving of a second chance. This is something I wouldn't have ever understood if I didn't have my time in prison, working closely with the general population. There is a deep need for prison reform and Marshall is the perfect story of a cast away finding redemption. I know how many second chances I have had. I believe it's time for those who have proven rehabilitation exists, get their second chance. To make evident their efforts aren't for nothing.

**From: Kelli**

Comment from Kelli, who read the Climb, a poem by Marshall on Red Thread Poets Website  
[www.redthreadpoets.com/the-climb/](http://www.redthreadpoets.com/the-climb/)

Re: The Climb, by Marshall Jones

This poem personally speaks to my heart because I know the struggle of many who are fighting for their freedom from incarceration. Prisons are full of people who have been given unmerciful harsh sentencing who are just wanting to be given a chance to redeem themselves in society to help others. God wants to use those who have surrendered their hearts to His Son Jesus Christ who's incarcerated to become the mentors for our youths in today's culture. God has a plan for every individual's life. Keeping people confined to incarceration who God need to be Ambassadors for His Kingdom is certainly not the answer. Treating all people how one would want to be treated should be the defining moment when passing a judgment onto others. Love and mercy covers a multitude of sins. God and the Lord Jesus are expressing love and mercy everyday towards all people and humanity must practice in doing the same. God Bless all who read this comment and take it to heart.

**From: Peter W Stevens,**

Friend to the Founder of Red Thread Poets (Our Triune God). [www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/peter-will/](http://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/peter-will/)

I met Marshall through Jessica. We have become very close brothers in just a few short months emailing everyday. I live north of Toronto in Canada and was building a website to glorify God and honour poets. Red Thread Poets. Marshall sent me his poems, i have his book a Raven's Meal and he is one of our honoured poets on the site. HOWEVER it is his daily devotionals under the 'banner 'RED GRANITE' that show his anointing - they are high impact for me every day. We post them in Facebook under Red Thread Poets, and recap them on the website. <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/>. Marshall is DEARLY LOVED, peter

## INTRODUCTION

What does it really mean to be "blessed?" The world has its own idea of what it means to be blessed, usually based upon things possessed, how much money is in bank accounts, or the power they are able to wield, but those things don't make us blessed. Being blessed is not surface deep, but it is a spiritual state of divine well-being that believers in Christ have that qualifies them to remain in the presence of our Heavenly Father. Being blessed is when we are willing to rid ourselves of our self-sufficiency, entrusting this solely to God, assured He will give us everything we need to live amazing lives as children of God. The Beatitudes is a study designed to bring believers back into a heart of worship, into undivided minds, and into a relationship with God where we experience the kingdom of God right here on earth. Through this study, we will discover that salvation is only a small part of God's incredible purpose, that He is preparing us to experience the power which comes from our place as His children. Being blessed doesn't rely on outside factors and circumstances, but rather where we stand spiritually with God. Let us experience The Beatitudes from a new set of eyes.

## WHY KJV (King James Version)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

This is one of my favorite Bible verses, a constant source of encouragement for me to dig deeper and deeper into the Word of God to receive truth in its deepest form. I believe it is our job as believers to study as deep as we can, and then build our way up. The King James Version of the Bible is one of most popular early translations of the Bible to English, so that is where my study begins. I have come to learn that by putting the King James Version side by side with other translations that may be easier to read, that easier doesn't always keep the deeper meaning intact. The "thee", "thy", and "ye" can be a little overwhelming at first, but as with anything else we study continuously, it will become easier to decipher.

The Bible I use, the KJV AMG Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible, gives me an enormous tool to not only study the Word of God from an earlier English translation, but gives me access to study the keywords in the Scripture to find the deeper meaning of the verses I study. The more I studied the Word of God, the deeper I wanted to go. When I first started my incarceration over 17 years ago, I read the NIV version of the Bible. As I matured as a reader, I went back to the King James Version in 2007, wanting to learn the most difficult English translation. I went to the Hebrew-Greek Keyword Study Bible in 2014 and have been using it since. I recently was given a MacArthur Study Bible, NASB, which I use for scriptural cross-references and commentary purposes. I am in no way saying it is wrong for anyone to study any translation other than the King James Version, but I do suggest that everyone possesses one, so we can break down the Word of Truth side by side. It is important to go to the earliest possible translation, to see the modernized translations accurately convey the Word of God.

Studying the Word of God pleases Him, and I desire to break down the Scriptures rightly, understanding that by studying the Word of God, I am breaking down truth so I can position myself for the Holy Spirit's teaching. Whatever I learn, I then share, and by sheer repetition, I am able to retain what I learn better.

May the study of God's Word release amazing truths and powerful revelations in your lives.

God Bless!

Marshall Jones



## Matthew 5:3 - blessed are the poor in spirit

Self-sufficiency is not a requirement in the kingdom of heaven. This world is driven peoples insatiable desire to "make their own destiny", to become "self-made successes", and to author their own story. There are tons of best-selling self help books that teach these principles, but all it is doing is teaching people to push God out of His rightful position as Lord over all. This world is driven by selfish people with no desire for God's authority to have reign, and while our world increases in wealth, it is decreasing in the faith. God is looking for people who desire to be led by Him, people dependent upon the Lord for everything they need to live the life He intends us to live, and people who understand that they are completely nothing without Him. God is looking for a people willing to relinquish their will for His will, and believe His will to be the only way. Today we will begin a study into the Beatitudes, in Matthew 5:3, becoming the poor in spirit to inherit the kingdom.

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

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". These are the words of Christ, and if He determines someone to be blessed, then that's exactly what they are. In Isaiah 55:11, the Bible says, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." God created the world with His word and the world became exactly what He spoke it to be. There is no denying God's word. In Numbers 22:12, the Bible says, "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." When God declares us blessed, no one can speak against it. In this world, people correlate blessings with finances and what finances can do, but blessings are regardless of what you have, but rather WHO you have. In Philippians 4:11-13, the Bible says, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christ's strength gives us the ability to be content in all situations, and in it, we understand that God's blessing has nothing to do with our financial circumstances. In Ephesians 1:3, the Bible says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ". The person who is declared blessed is blessed with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. When we are looking for our blessings to come from the world, we have completely missed the mark.

The word "poor" means "helpless, a beggar, people of low estate". The phrase "poor in spirit" refers to those who have a deep humility, understanding that we are spiritually bankrupt without God. These are the people who understand that we are completely hopeless and lost without the Lord God's presence and leading in our lives. A beggar is hungry, willing to ask for what they don't have from God, recognizing He is the only person who can provide it. In Psalm 51:17, the Bible says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The poor in spirit come before the Lord broken, understanding that only God can heal us and transform our lives. God will not despise the person who is humble before Him. In Luke 18:13-14, Christ says, "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Unless we are poor in spirit to understand that we don't deserve to be in the presence of the Lord, and that we don't deserve to even look towards heaven, we miss that God's love and mercy justifies us, making us acceptable. It is only by Him!

"for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"

The word "kingdom" means "realm of dominion where we have access to privileges and rewards as being children of God." Heaven is the abode of God and His glory". In 1 Corinthians 15:50, the Bible says, "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." When we cry out for our Father in our spiritual poverty, seeking His salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, He responds with His Spirit, empowering us to experience the kingdom of heaven right now!

Do we recognize our desperate need for God, or do we still think we can do it alone?

## Matthew 5:4 - blessed are they that mourn

When we reflect on our former selves before salvation, what thoughts come to mind? I still cringe when I think about how far I was from God, how horribly I disappointed Him, and how lost I was. I really couldn't see how bad I really was then because my mind and heart was so warped by sin. It was only as God held a mirror up, showing me who I allowed myself to become that I saw my need for true repentance and restoration. That moment in my life made me fall to my knees, and I cried out to God, asking Him to change my heart. Oddly enough, it was during the time I was mourning a death in my family, the murder of my older cousin. At the same time, I was in mourning over Angelo's passing, I was in mourning over my sin, how it was destroying my life and relationship with God. Today, we will dive deeper into The Beatitudes, looking at Matthew 5:4, our mourning turned into comfort.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored by God regardless of circumstances". In Deuteronomy 28:1-2, "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." The verses didn't say just "hearken", but it says, "hearken diligently". Our ears are to be tools of obedience, so when we hear, we are hearing for the purpose of carrying the Word out. In James 1:21-22, the Bible says, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." When we receive the Word of God, we not only take it in, but we associate ourselves with the Word of God. In order to do so, we must lay anything aside that will interrupt our fellowship with God and our association with the Word of God. When we hear the Word and don't carry the Word out, we think that we are safe like any other religious churchgoer, but our life doesn't change, because we don't see the mirror God is holding up to us. In James 1:23-24, the Bible says, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Our identities are engrafted into the Word of God and if we are not doers of the Word, then we will easily forget who we are! Deception is inevitable when a person doesn't know who they are!

The word "mourn" means "to grieve, to be sad or sorrowful, to beat the breast as an outward sign of inward grief." This grief is because of our sin that causes disappointment to God and separation from His presence. In Isaiah 61:1-2, the Bible says, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of

the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." Sin causes separation, broken hearts, captivity, and creates prisons for people enslaved by sin. In Luke 15:21, Christ says speaking of the prodigal son, "And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." When we mourn over our sin, we understand that we have been sinning against God, under His eye, and we don't deserve the title of being His children. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, the Bible says, "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." This mourning produces our desire to race after God's forgiveness.

"For they should be comforted"

The word "comforted" means "to invite to help, encourage, to aid". In Revelation 21:4, the Bible says, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." God responds to our mourning by wiping our tears, and removing the consequences of our sin from our presence, allowing that old nature to pass away. In 2 Corinthians 1:4, the Bible says, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." We are to take the comfort we have received, and show others how to be comforted in repentance and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

When we mourn over our sins, God responds with the help we need to overcome.

## Matthew 5:5 - blessed are the meek

I used to think there was something wrong with gentleness. In some of the neighborhood I've lived in, a gentle person was taken advantage of, was the target of bullies, and always seemed to be on the bottom rung of the ladder. In my neighborhood, it was expected that we would be tough, that rebellion was second nature, and fights were inevitable in keep "respect" between its members. Looking back, that was one of the biggest lies we received into our minds, and the enemy has had a field day on urban communities everywhere. Meekness isn't the sign of weakness I once thought it was, but it is a symbol of great strength. As believers, our conduct has the ability to point the way to Christ, and our conduct bears testimony of what spirit is at work within us. Meekness is allowing the Holy Spirit to have reign over our attitudes so that we resemble Christ in our lives. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:5, an inheritance through meekness.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."

The word "blessed" means, "happy, fortunate, or favored regardless of circumstance". People incorrectly tie blessing to circumstance, like everything has to be going great in order for us to be blessed. If life is going bad, how can a person be blessed? In Proverbs 20:21, the Bible says, "An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning; but the end thereof shall not be blessed." A person's financial portfolio isn't what makes them blessed. In Jeremiah 17:7, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." A person who is blessed is one who places their full hope and trust in the Lord, being confidence of the Lord's presence being with and in us everywhere we go, and under all circumstances. It is important that we see blessings correctly. Is giving a drug addict a million dollars cash a blessing? More like a curse, right? In Proverbs 30:8-9, the Bible says, "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." What the world

deems to be blessings can actually be things that threaten to break the fellowship between God and us. We, as believers, have to come to an understanding of what blessings truly are, or we will become ensnared in the world's perception of blessings and curses.

The word "meek" means "mild, gentle, or humble, the result of a strong man's choice to control his reactions in submission to God. It is a balance born in strength of character, stemming from confident trust in God, not from weakness or fear". This debunks everything the streets have ever taught me about toughness, aggression, and how to handle conflict. In Proverbs 16:32, the Bible says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." A meek person is one that isn't easily angered, someone who can remain rooted in Christ no matter what comes their way, and no matter who comes their way. Not fighting is better than winning a fight. In Proverbs 25:28, the Bible says, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." A person who is easily angered is the most vulnerable to attack, but the meek remain under the protection of a loving God, operating within the space He gives us. In Psalm 25:9-10, the Bible says, "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way. All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies." The meek present themselves as willing to be taught and guided by God in everything we need to live a Godly life.

The word "inherit" means "to obtain, acquire or possess". In Psalm 95:6-7, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice". The meek humble themselves before God, receiving a place in the kingdom as children of God. In Galatians 5:22-23, the Bible says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence within us. The meek display the evidence of the indwelling Holy Spirit at work within us. In Galatians 4:7, the Bible says, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Our inheritance as the meek is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, giving us the power to become the children of God, operating in the earth as Christ did.

Sounds like the meek are exceedingly strong, doesn't it?

## Matthew 5:6 - they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness

What do we hunger for? What are the deepest yearnings in our heart? As believers, what are we supposed to hunger and thirst for? Did anyone just feel the gut shot I did with that last question? Truth be told, unbelievers aren't the only ones that hunger and thirst after the wrong things, but we must take a real assessment of our desire to make sure that they are in line with what God desires. Our loving God desires us to hunger after His righteousness, to live a life pleasing to our God. Our loving God wants to see His children appreciate our salvation by bringing glory to His name through the things we say, the way we treat others, and through the Word of God that flows from our hearts towards others. The person who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is the one who constantly stays at the feet of our Father, looking to be led and guided by the Holy Spirit in all aspects of their life. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:6, and insatiable appetite for righteousness.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". In Proverbs 10:22, the Bible says, "The blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." Do we really understand that true wealth has nothing to do with money, but it is the power and the presence of the living Word of God working within us, giving us the power to be the children of God? What good is a royal that doesn't have or operate in their authority? They would be no different than anyone else in the world, correct? In 1 Peter 2:9, the Bible says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light". God chose us, He made us priests and kings in a world ravaged by sin, and He called us to walk in His light. We are blessed by the Lord, so we are supposed to be different, think differently, and live differently from the world around us.

The word "hunger" means "to famish or to crave". Hungry people desire food, but do we feed? We have the Word of God available to us in almost any form possible, but how often do we study? The amount of study ultimately paints a picture of our level of hunger. Do we make adjustments to our schedule to accommodate our study time? How hungry are we? In Proverbs 10:3, the Bible says, "The LORD will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked." The soul of the righteous doesn't famish because they are filled with the Word of God. In Mark 8:7-8, the Bible says, "And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets." When God's blessing is upon something, it multiplies, and people are filled as a result. Christ is the bread of life, the real food that satisfies our hunger. Here's why? In John 6:51, Christ says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." What type of bread do we hunger for, something that fills for a moment, or something that fills for an eternity? The Word of God fills for an eternity.

The word "righteousness" means "justification, having our hearts right towards God, piety towards God, or Godliness". In Romans 10:10, the Bible says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Our hunger for righteousness has to come from the deepest places in us because in Matthew 6:20-21, Christ says, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." When the Holy Spirit fills our hearts, we receive true treasure from heaven, and God's Word is the righteousness that we must hunger and thirst after. The word "filled" means "supply food in abundance". God gives us more than enough of His Word to feast on! What are we supposed to do with the excess? Share it! In Ephesians 3:19-20, the Bible says, "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." The fullness of God fills us by the Holy Spirit, allowing us to do the unfathomable, accomplish the impossible, all because of the power working in us!

Kinda brings new meaning to 'Give us this day our daily bread', doesn't it?

## Matthew 5:7 - blessed are the merciful

I know what it feels like to be in need of mercy, and I also have the experience of being blessed by the mercy of someone else. The salvation we walk in is the result of God's mercy upon us. Ever experience the favor of someone when we had no right to experience it? Ever received love from someone when we ourselves felt most unlovable, or given kindness at the precise moment we needed it? There are tons of ways we can experience mercy in our lives, but

we are never to forget these moments when it comes time to be merciful. God pours His mercy upon us so we will develop the desire to do the same for someone else. The mercy we show someone else can ultimately lead to their salvation, painting a clear picture of the gospel through our actions. The mercy we refuse to show others will also become the mercy we are not shown in our time of need. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:7, the merciful obtaining mercy.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". In Romans 4:6-8, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." We have received the righteousness of God without having to earn it. We have received salvation when we did nothing to deserve it. We have received the forgiveness of sins, having the gift of salvation made available to us while we were still in our sins. In Proverbs 8:33-35, the Bible says, "Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD." Hearing the Word of God, with the desire to obey it, and those who seek the Lord's face daily are the ones who are considered blessed, because we seek to remain in the presence of our loving God. In Psalm 34:8, the Bible says, "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him." The blessed are the ones who experience the Lord and place their trust in Him. Money and materialistic things do not amount to the blessings of our God. The blessings of our God are rooted in love!

The word "merciful" means "compassionate in thought and in action". Acts of mercy are displayed in our treatment of others, and God is definitely watching our hearts and our movements to make sure that our intentions are pure. In Psalm 41:1, the Bible says, "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble." The word "consider" means "to ACT with insight or wisdom". Praying for the poor is cool, but what good are our prayers if the poor never receive our mercy when it is time to act? We can't be lip-service Christians, who talk the part but refuse to live the part out. The "poor" aren't necessarily impoverished financially, but spiritually as well. Do we expose people's poverty or do we cover it in love? In Matthew 18:32-33, speaking of a certain king, Christ says, "Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?" Do we so easily forget that we were once people needing compassion, needing the mercy of God and others? Were we received in love or were we turned away empty-handed?

In prison, there is a "pecking order", and a lot of times, it is usually by the crime one has been convicted of. The murderers are held to a higher esteem, while the people who commit crimes against children are deemed the lowest form of life around here. How can any believer in Christ adhere to a pecking order that is so strongly against the love and mercy we are called to walk in? In Hosea 6:6, the Bible says, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." What good are our offerings and sacrifices when we are not showing people the mercy God has commanded us to? In Hebrews 6:10, the Bible says, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." When God sees us be merciful unto others, He will be merciful to us. I make it a practice to lovingly interact with anyone society deems undesirable. In Lamentations 3:22, the Bible says, "It is of the LORD's mercies that WE are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." We all stand a huge chance of being consumed, no matter what our backgrounds are. His unfailing love and mercy are the reasons we have access to eternal life.

Would we be so unmerciful to rob someone else of the mercy they need?

## Matthew 5:8 - blessed are the pure in heart

Being washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ changes all parts of our lives. Not only are we redeemed from the penalty of death, able to experience new, abundant, and eternal life in Jesus Christ, but we also have direct and unlimited access to God in prayer, receiving His promised Holy Spirit to dwell in us forever. Having our hearts cleansed is a very important experience, but keeping our hearts cleansed is just as important, because it keeps our access to God intact. We want to be people who can remain in the presence of God, and experience a relationship with Him that will grow and have power. We are unable to have that fellowship if we remain defiled by the flesh after salvation, allowing sin to have reign over our members. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:8, a pure heart experiencing the presence of our Lord.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". In Psalm 24:3-5, the Bible says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Do we as believers see that being able to be in the presence of our Lord makes us blessed? The thing that makes us blessed costs us absolutely nothing, while it costs Christ His life. Is fellowshiping with our God a gift, or do we take this for granted, allowing this invitation to go through one ear and out of the next? In Psalm 67:1-2, "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; Selah. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." Being in the presence of God will cause us to know His way, which will allow us to walk the way He ordains for us to walk. We will understand that it is truly a privilege to dwell in the presence of the Lord and hopefully, that will cause us to live in greater appreciation. In Psalm 72:19, the Bible says, "And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen." God desires to fill the world with His glory, but we have to desire to reside in His presence, allowing Him to work in us for His glory. The person who is blessed is the person who is able to dwell in the presence of our Lord.

The "pure" means "clean, in a moral sense, sincere, upright, void of evil". In Psalm 15:1-2, the Bible says, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart." We can't abide in the presence of the Lord and do whatever we want to do. There is a difference between coming to the Lord and dwelling in His presence. In Hebrews 12:14-15, the Bible says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled". Our attitude towards God isn't the only thing that has to be upright, but also our attitude towards our brothers and sisters as well. In Galatians 5:14, the Bible says, "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." We must have hearts of love in order to dwell in the presence of the Lord. The word "heart" refers to the seat of the desires, feelings, affections, and passions. So our love and sincerity must come from the deepest part of us. In Joshua 24:14, the Bible says, "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD." God knows the difference between the true believers and those merely "playing church".

The word "see" means "to gaze at with wide open eyes at something remarkable, to be in awe of". In 1 John 3:2-3, the Bible says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. "When we come into the presence of our Lord with a pure heart, the Lord shows Himself to us, giving us the opportunity to reflect His image. We will have the ability to be like Him, and see God perfectly! This is why our loving God desires communion with us, so we can become children who bear our Father's image!

Let us present ourselves clean and undefiled before the Lord, able to experience His awesome presence.

## Matthew 5:9 - blessed are the peacemakers

The world is stripped of its peace. A 30-minute news show will depict a worldwide pandemic surging yet again, threatening the Olympics in Tokyo, a shooting outside of a baseball stadium, cyber-attacks on United States' computer systems, a cold case murder trial beginning, and one of many wildfires raging in the western part of the United States. Where are the peacemakers, the people willing to mediate between parties at odds, the people willing to represent peace in their lives? In a world that is becoming more and more Godless by the second, it is no surprise why this world is becoming void of peace. There is no peace without the Prince of Peace, there is no peace without the God of peace, and there definitely won't be peace without peacemakers, people who are willing to display and teach God's love to all they come across. Most say, 'Not my problem', but I beg to differ. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:9, the blessed peacemakers of God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance." Our amount of finances or material wealth does not make us blessed, because there are people in poverty who are more blessed than billionaires. In Genesis 39:2-4, the Bible says, "And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand." Joseph was sold in slavery by his own brothers, but he is depicted to be prosperous, and he was made overseer over Potiphar's house. What made a slave "blessed"? God was with him, and God's presence with Joseph made Potiphar's house blessed as well, because the presence of God allowed him to find grace! In Proverbs 10:6, the Bible says, "Blessings are upon the head of the just: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked." When we do right by the things God places in front of us, we will be blessed. Violence is the absence of peace. God took Joseph and transformed his circumstance into blessing. When we start placing value in our relationship with God, valuing His presence to dwell within us, when our desire is to know His word and His will better than we know ourselves, then our perception of His blessings will change.

The word "peacemakers" means "peaceable, an ambassador for peace, a mediator". In Matthew 5:44-45, Christ says, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The road to peace begins with the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit inside of us, and it extends through our interactions with others. Who is the hardest person to have peace with? The person who has hurt or offended us! If we can love people who hurt us, pray for those who despitefully use us, and do good to those who hate us, then being peacemakers in others'



lives should be easy! In Romans 12:18, the Bible says, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." The verse sounds like God is giving us a cop out, but actually, He is giving us no way out. If Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," then it all "lieth" in us as believers! In Hebrews 12:14, the Bible says, "Follow peace with ALL men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Yes, even the ones we feel we can do without! When people see our example in Christ, it will become contagious.

The word "children" refers to those who God loves and cherishes as a Father, the pious worshippers of God, the saints." In Galatians 3:26, the Bible says, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Our faith in Jesus Christ makes us children of God, but we must display our faith. In 1 John 4:7, the Bible says, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." We must bear the attributes of children of God by love being the expression in our relationships with people. In John 8:39, the Bible says, "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Replace "Abraham" with "God". As children of God, we do what our Father does! It is our job as children of God to reflect our Father by obeying His Word.

If we are commanded to love people as we love ourselves, then we should desire peace for all people!

## Matthew 5:10 - blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake

As believers, it is inevitable that we will experience some level of persecution in our walk of faith. As we draw closer to God, we are going to experience some people that will resist the work that God is doing in our lives. We may become the victims of vicious gossip, people may lobby campaigns against us, and the pressure may get to be so much where we may want to retreat. It is when we experience the heaviest amounts of persecution that we must draw even closer to the Lord, seeking His comfort, His perspective, and His direction. The enemy attacks the flock, hoping to scatter the sheep, and through divide and conquer, can more effectively cause believers to stray and become consumed. If we are facing persecution as believers, then we must be moving in the direction God has ordained for us to go. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:10, enduring persecution for righteousness' sake.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". Under what type of circumstance do we consider ourselves blessed, when everything is going well? In Numbers 22:6, the Bible says, of Balak king of the Moabites who wants to engage the prophet Balaam, "Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." Man thinks that because we may have the power to bless and curse, that our determination of what's blessed and what's cursed is supreme law. That couldn't be more false. In Numbers 22:12, the Bible says, "And God said unto Balaam, Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." What God determines as blessed is blessed, and there is nothing man can do to overrule His determination. The question is, will we believe in His Word over the unpleasant circumstances we face as believers? Which perspective do I cleave to, God's blessings or my own grief?

The word "persecute" means "to cause to suffer, to cause to flee, to pursue with adverse intentions". Persecution is an intentional act on a person in order to cause them harm. Christ tried to warn us that we will suffer some persecution as believers. In John 15:18, He said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." Let us first get

the thought of always being liked or loved out of our heads, because sometimes, being a believer is going to make us hated, whether openly or secretly. Why is this? Well, Christ says, in John 15:19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." We are not of the world, so the world hates us because we are different. Believers are special, set apart by God, and not designed to fit into the world's system. In John 15:20, Christ goes as far as to say, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." Strangely, our sufferings are on full display, and the world is watching, waiting for us to crack under the pressure. If He endured persecution, then why should we ever expect a free ride in the faith?

The phrase "righteousness' sake" means "on the account of Godliness". In 1 Peter 3:14, the Bible says, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled". There is a difference in suffering for righteousness' sake and receiving the penalty for the wrong we have done. Persecution and punishment are two different things. In 1 Peter 3:17, the Bible says, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing."

The phrase "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" ensures that there is an inheritance waiting for us who endure persecution. In 2 Timothy 2:12, the Bible says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us". We will be able to walk in authority with Christ when we endure suffering. In Romans 8:18, the Bible says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." No amount of persecution suffered can be compared to God's glory revealed in us! We endure persecution so God's light can shine in us even more, pointing to the way of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 4:17, the Bible says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh FOR US a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Who ever thought that persecution actually worked FOR US?

If that doesn't make us blessed, I don't know what will!

## Matthew 5:11 – blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you

Having a person accuse us of doing something we haven't done is an emotionally unsettling experience, mostly without any way to correct the record in people's minds. Having a person speak ill of our salvation, call us stupid or naive for serving the one true God, consider us weak for believing in our God can damage us inside. I remember a time a couple months ago, where a guy on my unit, who complimented my commitment to my faith and the changes I've made in my life, called me a "fake Christian" because I disagreed with a point he was making. This is light compared to real suffering, but every believer is to expect some form of this to happen in their walk of faith. If they did it to Jesus Christ, then we will definitely face false accusations. In the face of this suffering, we have the opportunity to hold our peace and display true faith and love by our response. Today, we will look at Matthew 5:11, making our case for Christ in the court of false accusation.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

The word "blessed" means "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". Our blessings do not depend on the opinions and accusations of others, but our blessings completely depend upon the favor God so richly pours upon His

children. In Genesis 12:2-3, the Bible says, "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." What God has to say about us as His children is far different than what the world has to say about us. God promises to defend and protect us no matter what the world's opinions may be of us. In James 1:12, the Bible says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." As easy as it would be to react to the accusations of the world, God determines us blessed if we endure, and has a crown reserved for us.

The word "revile" means "to defame, rail at, to taunt". The word "persecute" means "cause to suffer, to cause to flee. When a person reviles us, they are purposely spreading a false report upon us with the intention to changing our identity and causing us harm in the process. In Luke 6:22, Christ gives more depth to Matthew 5:11 by saying, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." The person who reviles us is the person who hates us, intending on causing division between us and the people we love. Why would someone desire a believer to become divided from people? The Word of God can't go out and be displayed! In 2 Timothy 3:3, the Bible speaks on some of the "last days" behaviors, and it says, "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good". The Bible is written to prepare us to live in a world that will lie to us and hate us for being believers. In 1 Peter 3:15-16, the Bible says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ". Despite the false accusations of this world, God is calling for our response to be meekness and Godly reverence, meaning we respond to the world the same way we will respond to God.

The word "evil" means "a charge or accusation". The word "falsely" means "to utter an untruth or deceive by falsehood". 1 Peter 4:13-14, "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." Wait a minute, these aren't "our" sufferings? Doesn't the Scripture clearly state "Christ's sufferings"? So, this means that it is not about us at all, but about Christ, and if we endure, then God's glory will rest upon us! John 15:21 says, "But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." They are doing it because they don't know better! Knowing this should cause us to view those who falsely accuse us and speak evil about us with compassion, not with contempt.

Who knows, maybe our response may cause them to reconsider their stance and open the door for God's truth to come in!

## Matthew 5:12 - for great is your reward in heaven

What is our disposition like when we find ourselves under persecution? Do we break down, give up, give in, or do we question God for allowing this to happen to us? How should our disposition be when under persecution? I am not the only person who raises an eyebrow when I see what is expected of me when afflicted by persecution. It is like we have to do the exact opposite of what our first mind used to do (remember that, used to!), and a lot of times it makes absolutely no sense to us whatsoever. How we respond testifies to what power is at work within us. If our disposition

remains one of victory, no matter what happens to us, then the power of the Holy Spirit is at work mightily in us. Today, we will wrap up our study on The Beatitudes with Matthew 5:12, rejoicing under the trials of persecution.

"Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

The word "rejoice" means "be cheerful or happy". In every part of this complete study, I have described the word "blessed" as meaning "happy, fortunate, favored regardless of circumstance". I purposely drove this point home because I want us to understand that these are the words of Christ, declaring that we are blessed, not because of our circumstance, but because of the presence of the Lord in us. Now, Christ tells us to "rejoice", which is another way of telling us to live, think, and move as blessed people. In Luke 6:46-48, Christ says, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock." When we receive instruction from the Lord, and we carry it out, we build upon a firm foundation that won't allow our structures to be shaken in any storm that comes our way. That firm foundation is Christ! Christ establishes our state of spirit as "blessed", and now by telling us to rejoice, He is encouraging us to live out His word. In Acts 5:40-41, the Bible says, "And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." The apostles were confined and beaten for teaching in the name of Jesus Christ, and they walked away rejoicing, blessed to be chosen as worthy to suffer for His name. How many of us see persecution as a privilege to suffer for His name?

"be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven:"

The phrase "exceeding glad" means "jump for joy, to leap out of happiness". People jump for joy when something amazing happens, when it is a cause for celebration. Persecution is a cause for celebration? Ouch! In Philippians 2:5, the Bible says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus". This means we have to think the way God thinks, and approach matters the way God intends for us to approach them. Christ is spurring us to live from victory, but we must understand that God's thoughts are on a level that is beyond our comprehension. The word "reward" means "payment for service". In Matthew 25:21, Christ says, "His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." We want to be believers who get to experience a proud Father, who gives us heavenly rewards, not only in heaven, but on earth as well. Will He find us faithful under persecution, though?

"for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"

The word "prophets" means "foretellers, or inspired speakers". Christ is telling us that we are not alone in our sufferings, that this has also happened to the prophets before us. A lot of their accounts are in the Bible! In Hebrews 12:1, the Bible says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us". We have examples from the prophets, from the apostles, and from Christ on how to endure the sufferings of persecution, which gives us a clear example of how we must respond and perceive persecution for Christ's sake, and that is from a stance of victory!!! Sometimes, knowing we are not alone makes a world of difference!

May our rejoicing in the Lord become a shining example of how believers respond to all things in our lives!

## Marshall's Bio, Poems, and History

### Marshall's Bio

Marshall Jones is a 38 year old man on a lifelong journey of bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. The author of "A Raven's Meal" (RoseDog Books), a poetry collection, he aspires to target the grey areas, and the people who are terribly misunderstood by society. Believing that everyone deserves a voice, he not only shares his testimony, but he also tries to use his gifting to share other people's experiences as well. He writes from the prison system that has housed his body for 17 years, but also from the place that has been the catalyst to his freedom.



### Marshall's Poems

You can view Marshall's poems at <https://www.redthreadpoets.com/category/100-poets/marshall-jones/>

### History

Red Granite Daily Devotions commenced on Red Thread Poets Facebook page on November 1, 2020. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> in his Daily Devotion Series. The Daily Devotions are recapped by date at [www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/](http://www.redthreadpoets.com/daily-devotions/)

Marshall uses these resources in his Bible Study: AMG Hebrew Greek Keyword Study Bible (KJV), Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, The MacArthur Study Bible (NASB), Webster's New World College Dictionary.