

“Blessed are...”	What does this mean?	How is this counter-cultural?	What is the promise? Is it linked?
“... the poor in spirit...”	<i>Not talking about financial poverty but rather recognising our spiritual poverty, e.g. Luke 18:15-16.</i>	<i>We tend to think that any kind of poverty must be a bad thing.</i>	<i>Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom doesn't belong to those who think they are rich but to those who know they are poor.</i>
“... those who mourn...”	<i>Context shows it's not just mourning in general but mourning our spiritual poverty.</i>	<i>We wouldn't normally think this is something to get hung up on.</i>	<i>There's comfort for mourners. Again see Luke 18:16.</i>
“... the meek...”	<i>Humility. Again this is linked with the two previous. Mourning our spiritual poverty produces true humility.</i>	<i>You often hear meekness is weakness. It's not something we celebrate.</i>	<i>Normally we would say the meek get nothing and it's the pushy and proud who get all the good stuff but here it's the meek who inherit.</i>
“... those who hunger & thirst for righteousness...”	<i>Following on from the 1st 3 it's about longing to be made righteous and then to live righteously.</i>	<i>We're normally greedy for material things rather than righteousness.</i>	<i>God will give us the godly desires of our hearts see 7:7-8.</i>
“... the merciful...”	<i>Undeserved kindness reflecting God's kindness to us that we so desperately need.</i>	<i>Ruthlessness is often prized and rewarded. Mercy is seen as weak.</i>	<i>See the tricky bits section of the notes for how to understand this.</i>
“... the pure in heart...”	<i>God is pure and so his people are to be pure. True purity starts in our hearts. It's not just external.</i>	<i>Ours is an increasingly impure society.</i>	<i>See Psalm 24 where it's only the pure in heart who may stand in God's holy place.</i>
“... the peacemakers...”	<i>Having received peace from God our lives and relationships are then to be marked by peace.</i>	<i>Sadly so many families and work places are full of conflict and strife.</i>	<i>God is the God of peace and so as we see to make peace with others and help others to enjoy peace with God we show we're his kids.</i>
“... those who are persecuted...”	<i>This is suffering for Jesus rather than because we are particularly annoying.</i>	<i>We would never normally think that at any kind of suffering is a blessing.</i>	<i>Both v10&v12 speak of heaven. “Kingdom of heaven” links back to v3 & “reward in heaven” helps us to keep an eternal perspective.</i>

