The background of the slide is a photograph of an orange tree. The tree is on the left side, with its branches and green leaves extending towards the center. Several bright orange fruits are visible, hanging from the branches. The sky is a clear, bright blue, occupying the right half of the image. The title text is overlaid on the blue sky area.

Finding a Fulfilled Life

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Forward

God's kingdom is organized differently from worldly kingdoms. In the kingdom of heaven, wealth and power and authority are unimportant. Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and they have different attitudes.

Christian believers who listen to the voice of God through the Holy Spirit shall receive from God. To Jesus, "blessed" means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

Christ did not come to take away challenges, but to change us on the inside and to empower us to deal with problems from God's perspective.

Some individuals who have great riches, power or fame are not living in a state of emotional fulfillment, but are sometimes miserable, and dissatisfied with life.

Only through serving God with love for him and for others will bring us to a place of satisfaction and fulfillment.

David's list gives us plenty for which to praise God—

He forgives our sins,
heals our diseases,
redeems us from death,
crowns us with love and compassion,
satisfies our desires, and
Gives righteousness and justice.

Chapter 1



Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be blessed.

Matthew 5:6

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

Jesus began his sermon with words that seem to contradict each other. But God's way of living usually contradicts the worlds. If you want to live for God you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world.

You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others abuse. By giving up your own rights in order to serve others, you will one day receive everything God has in store for you.

There are at least four ways to understand the Beatitudes.

- (1) They are a code of ethics for the disciples and a standard of conduct for all believers.
- (2) They contrast kingdom values (what is eternal) with worldly values (what is temporary).
- (3) They contrast the superficial “faith” of the Pharisees with the real faith Christ wants.
- (4) They show how the Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in the new kingdom.

These beatitudes are not multiple choices—pick what you like and leave the rest. They must be taken as a whole. They describe what we should be like as Christ’s followers.

Each beatitude tells how to be *blessed*. “Blessed” means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate or enviable state of those who are in God’s kingdom.

The Beatitudes don’t promise laughter, pleasure, or earthly prosperity. To Jesus, “blessed” means the experience of hope and joy, independent of outward circumstances. To find hope and joy, the deepest form of happiness, follow Jesus no matter what the cost.

With Jesus’ announcement that the kingdom was near (Matthew 4:17), people were naturally asking, “How do I qualify to be in God’s kingdom?”

Jesus said that God’s kingdom is organized differently from worldly kingdoms. In the kingdom of heaven, wealth and power and authority are unimportant. Kingdom people seek different blessings and benefits, and they have different attitudes.

If your attitudes is a carbon copy of the world's selfishness, pride, and lust for power, or do they reflect the humility and self-sacrifice of Jesus, your King, then an attitude change is in order.

Jesus said to rejoice when we're persecuted. Persecution can be good because

- (1) it takes our eyes off earthly rewards,
- (2) it strips away superficial belief,
- (3) it strengthens the faith of those who endure, and
- (4) Our attitude through it serves as an example to others who follow.

We can be comforted to know that God's greatest prophets were persecuted (Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel).

The fact that we are being persecuted proves that we have been faithful; faithless people would be unnoticed. In the future God will reward the faithful by receiving them into his eternal kingdom where there is no more persecution.

Delight yourself in the Lord

Psalms 37:4

Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

David calls us to take delight in the Lord and to commit everything we have and do (our "way") to him. But how do we do this?

To *delight* in someone means to experience great pleasure and joy in his or her presence.

This happens only when we know that person well. Thus, to delight in the Lord, we must know him better. Knowledge of God's great

love for us will indeed give us delight.

To *commit* ourselves to the Lord means entrusting everything—our lives, families, jobs, possessions—to his control and guidance.

To commit ourselves to the Lord means to trust in him (Psalm 37:5), believing that he can care for us better than we can ourselves. We should be willing to wait patiently (Psalm 37:7) for him to work out what is best for us.

God satisfies the longing of your heart.

Psalms 107:9

For he satisfies the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Lost, hungry, thirsty, and exhausted, these wanderers typify the Israelites in exile. But they also typify anyone who has not found the satisfaction that comes from knowing God. Anyone who recognizes his or her own lostness can receive the offer of Jesus to satisfy these needs. Jesus is the way (John 14:6), the bread from heaven (John 6:33, 35), the living water (John 4:10-14), and the giver of rest (Matthew 11:28-30). Have you received his life-giving offer?

He satisfied your mouth with good things.

Psalms 103:5

Who satisfies thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.

David's praise focused on God's glorious deeds.

It is easy to complain about life, but David's list gives us plenty for which to praise God—

He forgives our sins,
heals our diseases,
redeems us from death,
crowns us with love and compassion,
satisfies our desires, and
Gives righteousness and justice.

We receive all of these without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings—past, present, and future. When you feel as though you have nothing for which to praise God, read David's list.

Chapter 2



God will satisfy those who praise his name.

Joel 2:26

And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.

If the Jews would never again experience a disaster like this locust plague (“never again will my people be shamed”), how do we explain the captivity in Babylon, the Jews’ slavery under the Greeks and Romans, and their persecution under Hitler?

It is important not to take these verses out of context. This is still part of the “blessings” section of Joel’s prophecy. Only if the people truly repented would they avoid a disaster like the one Joel had described.

God’s blessings are promised only to those who sincerely and consistently follow him. God does promise that after the final day of judgment, his people will never again experience this kind of disaster (Zech. 14:9-11; Rev. 21).

Jesus is the bread of life.

John 6:35

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. We can satisfy spiritual hunger and sustain spiritual life only by a right relationship with Jesus Christ. No wonder he called himself the bread of life. But bread must be eaten to sustain life, and Christ must be invited into our daily walk to sustain spiritual life.

The heart of the meek will live forever

Psalms 22:26

The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek him: your heart shall live forever.

David would praise God in the congregation because his private deliverance deserved a public testimony. God wonderfully delivers us in the quiet moments when we are hurting, and we must be prepared to offer public praise for his care.

Living water brings everlasting life

John 4:13-14

Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Any spiritual functions parallel physical functions. As our bodies hunger and thirst, so do our souls. But our souls need *spiritual* food and water.

The woman confused the two kinds of water, perhaps because no one had ever talked with her about her spiritual hunger and thirst before. We would not think of depriving our bodies of food and water when they hunger or thirst.

Why then should we deprive our souls? The living Word, Jesus Christ, and the written Word, the Bible, can satisfy our hungry and thirsty souls.

The woman mistakenly believed that if she received the water Jesus offered, she would not have to return to the well each day.

She was interested in Jesus' message because she thought it could make her life easier. But if that were always the case, people would accept Christ's message for the wrong reasons.

Christ did not come to take away challenges, but to change us on the inside and to empower us to deal with problems from God's perspective.

The woman did not immediately understand what Jesus was talking about. It takes time to accept something that changes the very foundations of your life.

Jesus allowed the woman time to ask questions and put pieces together for herself.

Sharing the gospel will not always have immediate results. When you ask people to let Jesus change their lives, give them time to weigh the matter.

Your thirst will be filled through Christ

John 7:37-39

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet {given}; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus' words, "come to me and drink," alluded to the theme of many Bible passages that talk about the Messiah's life-giving blessings (Isaiah 12:2-3; Isaiah 44:3-4; Isaiah 58:11). In promising to give the Holy Spirit to all who believed, Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, for that was something only the Messiah could do.

Jesus used the term *living water* in John 4:10 to indicate eternal life. Here he uses the term to refer to the Holy Spirit. The two go together: wherever the Holy Spirit is accepted, he brings eternal life. Jesus teaches more about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16.

The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus' followers at Pentecost (Acts 2) and has since been available to all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

The Lord will cause you to be satisfied

Joel 2:19

Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen:

Joel reached a turning point in his prophecy, moving from prophesying about an outpouring of God's judgment to prophesying about an outpouring of God's forgiveness and blessing.

But this would come only if the people began to live as God wanted them to, giving up their sins. Where there is repentance, there is hope. This section of the book feeds that hope.

Without it, Joel's prophecy could bring only despair. This promise of forgiveness should have encouraged the people to repent.

Chapter 3



Spiritual hunger will turn darkness into noonday.

Isaiah 58:10-11

And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.

We cannot be saved by deeds of service without faith in Christ, but our faith lacks sincerity if it doesn't reach out to others.

Fasting can be beneficial spiritually and physically, but at its best fasting helps only the person doing it. God says he wants our service to go beyond our own personal growth to acts of kindness, charity, justice, and generosity. True fasting is more than what we don't eat; it is pleasing God by applying his Word to our society.

God gives meat in due season

Psalms 145:15-16

The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou gives them their meat in due season.

Thou opens thine hand, and satisfies the desire of every living thing.

Sometimes our burdens seem more than we can bear, and we wonder how we can go on. David stands at this bleak intersection of life's road and points toward the Lord, the great burden-bearer.

God is able to lift us up because:

- (1) his greatness is unfathomable (Psalm 145:3);
- (2) he does mighty acts across many generations (Psalm 145:4);
- (3) he is full of glorious splendor and majesty (Psalm 145:5);
- (4) he does wonderful and awesome works (Psalm 145:5-6);
- (5) he is righteous (Psalm 145:7);
- (6) he is gracious, compassionate, patient, and loving (Psalm 145:8-9);
- (7) he rules over an everlasting kingdom (Psalm 145:13);

(8) he is our source of all our daily needs (Psalm 145:15-16);

(9) he is righteous and loving in all his dealings (Psalm 145:17);

(10) he remains near to those who call on him (Psalm 145:18);

(11) He hears our cries and saves us (Psalm 145:19-20).

If you are bending under a burden and feel that you are about to fall, turn to God for help. He is ready to lift you up and bear your burden.

Let your soul delight itself in fatness

Isaiah 55:2

Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfies not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

Food costs money, lasts only a short time, and meets only physical needs. But God offers us *free* nourishment that feeds our soul. How do we get it? We come (Isaiah 55:1), listen (Isaiah 55:2), seek, and call on God (Isaiah 55:6).

God's salvation is freely offered, but to nourish our souls we must eagerly receive it. We will starve spiritually without this food as surely as we will starve physically without our daily bread.

God's covenant with David promised a permanent homeland for the Israelites, no threat from pagan nations, and no wars (2 Samuel 7:10-11).

But Israel did not fulfill its part of the covenant by obeying God and staying away from idols. Even so, God was ready to renew his covenant again. He is a forgiving God!

Isaiah tells us to call on the Lord while he is near. God is not planning to move away from us, but we often move far from him or erect a barrier between ourselves and him.

Don't wait until you have drifted far away from God to seek him. Later in life turning to him may be far more difficult. Or God may come to judge the earth before you decide to turn to him. Seek God now, while you can, before it is too late.

God's people shall be satisfied.

Jeremiah 31:14

And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord.

This means that many sacrifices will be made at the temple so that the priests will have a feast with their portion. It is also a symbol of life and prosperity (Psalm 36:8; Psalm 63:5; Isaiah 55:2)

Praise God with joyful lips

Psalms 63:5-6

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise {thee} with joyful lips: When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the watches.

Hiding from his enemies in the barren Desert of Judah, David was intensely lonely. He longed for a friend he could trust to ease his loneliness. No wonder he cried out, “O God, . . . my soul thirsts for you . . . in a dry and weary land.” If you are lonely or thirsty for something lasting in your life, remember David’s prayer.

God alone can satisfy our deepest longings!

The night was divided into three watches. Someone aware of all three would be having a sleepless night.

A cure for sleepless nights is to turn our thoughts to God. There are many reasons we can’t sleep—illness, stress, worry—but sleepless nights can be turned into quiet times of reflection and worship.

Use them to review how God has guided and helped you.

God freely gives us all things

Romans 8:32

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Do you ever think that because you aren’t good enough for God, he will not save you? Do you ever feel as if salvation is for everyone else but you?

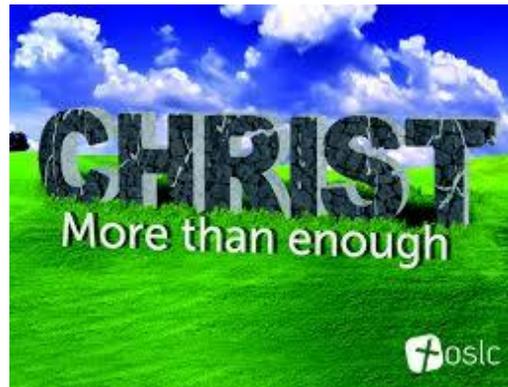
Then these verses are especially for you. If God gave his Son for you, he isn’t going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave his life for you, he isn’t going to turn around and condemn you!

He will not withhold anything you need to live for him. The book of Romans is more than a theological explanation of God's redeeming grace—it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed to you.

Paul says that Jesus is interceding for us in heaven. God has acquitted us and has removed our sin and guilt, so it is Satan, not God, who accuses us.

When he does, Jesus, the advocate for our defense, stands at God's right hand to present our case. For more on the concept of Christ as our advocate.

Chapter 4



God will make all grace abound toward you

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

People may hesitate to give generously to God if they worry about having enough money left over to meet their own needs. Paul assured the Corinthians that God was able to meet their needs.

The person who gives only a little will receive only a little in return. Don't let a lack of faith keep you from giving freely and generously.

Our attitude when we give is more important than the amount we give. We don't have to be embarrassed if we can give only a small gift.

God is concerned about *how* we give from the resources we have (see Mark 12:41-44). According to that standard, the giving of the Macedonian churches would be difficult to match (2 Cor. 8:3).

God will supply all your needs

Philippians 4:19

But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We can trust that God will always meet our needs. Whatever we need on earth he will always supply, even if it is the courage to face death as Paul did. Whatever we need in heaven he will supply.

We must remember, however, the difference between our wants and our needs. Most people want to feel good and avoid discomfort or pain. We may not get all that we want. By trusting in Christ, our attitudes and appetites can change from wanting everything to accepting his provision and power to live for him.

Believe in prayer and you shall receive.

Mark 11:24

Therefore I say unto you, What things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive {them}, and ye shall have them.

The kind of prayer that moves mountains is prayer for the fruitfulness of God's kingdom. It would seem impossible to move a mountain into the sea, so Jesus used that picture to say that God can do anything.

God will answer your prayers, but not as a result of your positive mental attitude. Other conditions must be met:

- (1) you must be a believer;
- (2) you must not hold a grudge against another person;
- (3) you must not pray with selfish motives;
- (4) Your request must be for the good of God's kingdom.

To pray effectively, you need faith in God, not faith in the object of your request. If you focus only on your request, you will be left with nothing if your request is refused.

Jesus, our example for prayer, prayed, "Everything is possible for you. . . Yet not what I will, but what you will" (Mark 14:36).

Our prayers are often motivated by our own interests and desires. We like to hear that we can have anything. But Jesus prayed with *God's* interests in mind.

When we pray, we should express our desires, but want his will above ours. Check yourself to see if your prayers focus on your interests or God's.

Our sufficiency is of God

2 Corinthians 3:5

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;

Paul was not boasting; he gave God the credit for all his accomplishments. While the false teachers boasted of their own power and prestige, Paul expressed his humility before God. No one can claim to be adequate without God's help.

No one is competent to carry out the responsibilities of God's calling in his or her own strength. Without the Holy Spirit's enabling, our natural talent can carry us only so far. As Christ's witnesses, we need the character and special strength that only God gives.

I can do all things through Christ.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Paul did not warn the Philippian church of doctrinal errors, but he did address some relational problems. These two women had been workers for Christ in the church.

Their broken relationship was no small matter, because many had become believers through their efforts.

It is possible to believe in Christ, work hard for his kingdom, and yet have broken relationships with others who are committed to the same cause.

But there is no excuse for remaining unreconciled. Do you need to be reconciled to someone today?

The identity of this "loyal yokefellow" remains a mystery. It could be Epaphroditus, the bearer of this letter, or a comrade of Paul in prison. It could also be someone named Syzygus, another way to understand the word for yokefellow.

Those "whose names are in the book of life" are all who are marked for salvation through their faith in Christ.

Ephesians 1:18-23

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him {to be} the head over all {things} to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The hope we have is not a vague feeling that the future will be positive, but it is complete assurance of certain victory through God. This complete certainty comes to us through the Holy Spirit who is working in us.

The world fears the power of the atom, yet we belong to the God of the universe who not only created that atomic power but also raised Jesus Christ from the dead. God's incomparably great power is available to help you. There is nothing too difficult for him.

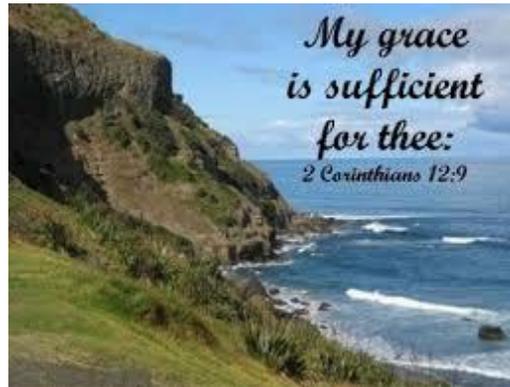
Having been raised from the dead, Christ is now the head of the church, the ultimate authority over the world. Jesus is the Messiah, God's Anointed One, the One Israel longed for, the One who would set their broken world right. As Christians we can be confident that God has won the final victory and is in control of everything. We need not fear any dictator or nation, or even death or Satan himself. The contract has been signed and sealed; we are waiting just a short

while for delivery. Paul says, in Romans 8:37-39, that nothing can separate us from God and his love.

Fullness refers to Christ filling the church with gifts and blessings. The church should be the full expression of Christ, who himself fills everything (see Ephes. 3:19). When reading Ephesians, it is important to remember that it was written primarily to the entire church, not merely to an individual.

Christ is the head and we are the body of his church (Paul uses this metaphor in Romans 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; and Col. 3:15 as well as throughout the book of Ephesians). The image of the body shows the church's unity. Each member is involved with all the others as they go about doing Christ's work on earth. We should not attempt to work, serve, or worship merely on our own. We need the entire body.

Chapter 5



God's grace is sufficient for you.

2 Corinthians 12:9

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Although God did not remove Paul's physical affliction, he promised to demonstrate his power in Paul. The fact that God's power is displayed in weak people should give us courage.

Though we recognize our limitations, we will not congratulate ourselves and rest at that. Instead, we will turn to God to seek pathways for effectiveness.

We must rely on God for our effectiveness rather than simply on our own energy, effort, or talent.

Our weakness not only helps develop Christian character; it also deepens our worship, because in admitting our weakness, we affirm God's strength.

We are more than conquerors through Christ

Romans 8:37

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Blessed with all spiritual blessings

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Abiding in Christ brings the answer.

John 15:7

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Fruit is not limited to soul winning. In this chapter, answered prayer, joy, and love are mentioned as fruit (John 15:7, 11-12).

Galatians 5:22-24 and 2 Peter 1:5-8 describe additional fruit: qualities of Christian character.

Remaining in Christ means

(1) believing that he is God's Son (1 John 4:15),

(2) receiving him as Savior and Lord (John 1:12),

(3) doing what God says (1 John 3:24),

(4) continuing to believe the gospel (1 John 2:24), and

(5) Relating in love to the community of believers, Christ's body (John 15:12).

Many people try to be good, honest people who do what is right. But Jesus says that the only way to live a truly good life is to stay close to him, like a branch attached to the vine.

Apart from Christ our efforts are unfruitful. Are you receiving the nourishment and life offered by Christ, the vine? If not, you are missing a special gift he has for you.

When a vine bears "much fruit," God is glorified, for daily he sent the sunshine and rain to make the crops grow, and constantly he nurtured each tiny plant and prepared it to blossom.

What a moment of glory for the Lord of the harvest when the harvest is brought into the barns, mature and ready for use! He made it all happen! This farming analogy shows how God is glorified when people come into a right relationship with him and begin to "bear much fruit" in their lives.

Jesus has gone to prepare a place

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, {there} ye may be also.

Jesus' words show that the way to eternal life, though unseen, is secure—as secure as your trust in Jesus. He has already prepared the way to eternal life. The only issue that may still be unsettled is your willingness to believe.

There are few verses in Scripture that describe eternal life, but these few verses are rich with promises. Here Jesus says, “I am going there to prepare a place for you,” and “I will come back.”

We can look forward to eternal life because Jesus has promised it to all who believe in him. Although the details of eternity are unknown, we need not fear because Jesus is preparing for us and will spend eternity with us.

Ask in the Father's name

John 16:23-24

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

Jesus is talking about a new relationship between the believer and God. Previously, people approached God through priests. After Jesus' resurrection, any believer could approach God directly.

A new day has dawned and now all believers are priests, talking with

God personally and directly (see Hebrews 10:19-23). We approach God, not because of our own merit, but because Jesus, our great high priest, has made us acceptable to God.

Ask in prayer believing

Matthew 21:22

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

He freely gives us all things

Romans 8:32

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

He has called us to glory and virtue

2 Peter 1:3-4

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that {pertain} unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The power to grow doesn't come from within us, but from God.

Because we don't have the resources to be truly godly, God allows us to "participate in the divine nature" in order to keep us from sin and help us live for him.

When we are born again, God by his Spirit empowers us with his own moral goodness.

Forget not all his benefits

Psalms 103:2-4

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

**Who forgives all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemed thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with
lovingkindness and tender mercies;**

David's praise focused on God's glorious deeds. It is easy to complain about life, but David's list gives us plenty for which to praise God—he forgives our sins, heals our diseases, redeems us from death, crowns us with love and compassion, satisfies our desires, and gives righteousness and justice.

We receive all of these without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings—past, present, and future.

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