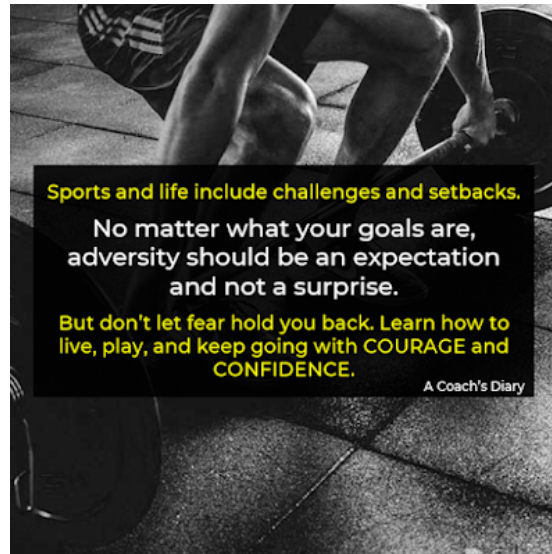


WEEK 14 | THE BEATITUDES

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great (Matthew 5:12)



Sports and life include challenges and setbacks. No matter what your goals are, adversity should be an expectation and not a surprise. Some of those struggles and challenges are the people who we play with and compete against. It would be great if everyone we play with and against were great to us, supportive, and displayed amazing sportsmanship, but opponents, and even some teammates, can be mean, rude, cruel, and ugly. It is important to learn how to deal with difficult people in a positive way, and it is equally important to have enough courage and confidence to keep going when adversity comes. As followers of Jesus, we have even more challenges because we have higher standards that we are called to live up to.

Early in the book of Matthew, Jesus taught his disciples a series of blessings called *The Beatitudes* during his famous Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount was given early in his ministry. Jesus began preaching when he heard that John the Baptist, the preacher in the wilderness of Judea who prepared the way for him, was arrested. From that time, it was written that Jesus began to preach, saying, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand** (Matthew 4:17)."

Jesus went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and great crowds began to follow him. Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on a mountain, sat down, and his disciples came to him. That is when Jesus taught them the Beatitudes:

"**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst**

for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way, they persecuted the prophets who were before you." ([Matthew 5:3–12](#))

The Beatitudes are a vision for how we can keep living as Jesus calls us even when life is hard, and they remind us that our rewards will be worth the struggles when we live and work with faith.

Life can be hard. People can be hard on us and hard to work with. Adversity is a part of everyone's journey. But each of *The Beatitudes* explains the blessings of following the teachings of Jesus.

THIS WEEK

- 1 – Which Beatitude do you like the most?
- 2 – How can you serve or bless someone this week by being a living example of the Beatitude you like the most?
- 3 – Which Beatitude do you need the most work on?
- 4 – What is something you can do this week to do a better job of fulfilling the Beatitude you need the most work on?