

Anglican Church Noosa
COMMISSIONING of MINISTRIES - COMBINED SERVICE
1st February 2026
BEATITUDES ~ Deeply Transformed Hearts, Lives, Community
Matthew 5:1-6, 13-16 & Romans 12:1-8
Rev'd Chris Johnson

This is a very special service today for the Commissioning of Ministry in the Anglican Church of Noosa for 2026. We enter this New Year seeking to live out our vision of Loving and Proclaiming Jesus, and we're doing it with a special focus on being "Deeply Transformed - Serving Together".

This morning is also the start of our three week series looking at the Beatitudes in Matthew Chapter 5. Each week there will be different Beatitudes to look at but we will also use versus 13 to 16 every week to give the Beatitudes a focus. V's 13 to 16 are about being the 'Salt of the Earth' and the 'Light of the World'. If we are living the Beatitudes, we will certainly be salt and light for our world.

Now you may be wondering, as I did when I started preparing this sermon,
what have the Beatitudes got to do with being commissioned for ministry?

- Being poor in spirit – surely you have to be lively, and full of energy to do ministry.
- Those who mourn – ministry should be done with a happy face not a sad face; shouldn't it?
- And what about the meek? You have to have self-confidence and be outgoing to do ministry don't you?

So we might well ask, "Why should we look at the Beatitudes on a Sunday when we are going to commission ourselves for ministry?

In our Romans' reading, Chapter 12:2, we read this, "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*" The pattern of this world is to write a CV that tells everyone how brilliant you are and the person for the job. Now there's nothing wrong with that in its place; but there is everything wrong with it if we bring it to the place of Christian ministry. The Beatitudes are a much better place to start when thinking about Christian ministry. We are not to be conformed to the pattern of this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds.

If you approached your average 21st century Australian on the street and showed them the Beatitudes; what do you think they would say? I suspect they would turn their nose up at them very quickly. The message of our society is:

- You have to have high self-esteem, don't be poor in spirit.
- Be happy, look at all the experiences and products you can buy to make you happy, so don't mourn.
- The meek just get trampled on; you have to be assertive.
- To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to be boring; you've gotta be a little bit naughty and do some way out things to be interesting.

So we need transformed minds to look at life differently.

This morning, I want to look at the Beatitudes under three headings which point us to their application for ministry.

1. Poverty
2. Pathos
3. Passion

POVERTY

The first Beatitude says, “**Blessed are the poor in spirit**”. This is the starting point and it is so important. The only basis for us relating to God is spiritual poverty.

-It is the spiritually poor who come to Jesus and trust him as their Saviour.

-It is the spiritually poor who look only to the cross for their salvation.

-It is a spiritually poor who trust Jesus as Lord over their lives and want to follow his teaching.

God befriends people who are prepared to admit they are spiritually bankrupt, not those who think they have a credit balance in the Bank of Heaven. It was the prostitutes, the tax collectors and the working class fisherman who responded to Jesus ahead of the religious people and social elites who already thought they were good enough.

Admitting spiritual poverty is what gets you to the starting line in the walk with Christ. Without this you haven’t even begun.

It is possible to be a member of the church, to be very active doing all sorts of jobs in the church, to serve on half a dozen rosters, and to be very proud of all you’ve done for the church. But if you haven’t first realised your spiritual poverty and put your trust in Christ as your Saviour and Lord, then your good works cannot please God.

The truth is none of us have a credit balance in the Bank of heaven; we all have an enormous debt. The more you recognise the debt,

-the more you will love Jesus and

-the more the cross will mean to you and

-the more you will be deeply transformed and serve in ministry from the right motivation.

And it only begins when you recognise your spiritual poverty. So blessed indeed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

PATHOS

There are two Beatitudes especially to do with Pathos. “*Blessed those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*” “*And blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*”

People don’t like to linger on these Beatitudes for too long, do they? Grieving isn’t fun. And we don’t especially want to be meek, we want to be successful.

Being **mournful**, we especially think of bereavement. It is only right to mourn when a loved one dies. But there are a lot of other reasons we might mourn as well.

It maybe we regret a mistake we’ve made and the people we’ve hurt. We need to take time to mourn. It is not good to be in denial about the mistakes we’ve made and pretend we have no regrets. It is good to admit failure and mourn.

Another reason to mourn might be when we see a family member or friend going through a hard time. It is not good to slap them on the back and tell them they should just get over it. The appropriate response is to mourn with them.

It is as we sit with the pain of our own failings and the struggles of others that we are in touch with the cross and will find the comfort of the cross.

And this is the right mindset for ministry. This is the mindset which will give us pathos and by that I mean an emotional connection with the people we're ministering to. People with pathos have empathy. A hurting person loves connecting with them because they immediately sense they care. This is a great foundation for ministry.

Blessed are those who mourn. Perhaps no other Beatitude on first glance seems to offer so little but on deeper examination gives so much.

What about **the meek** who are going to inherit the earth. This one is very unfashionable. It is the meek who get trampled on. It is the meek who don't have any influence. Try being meek in politics see how far it gets you.

In the ancient world being meek was a disgrace. To the Romans and the Greeks to be meek was to be a slave. Honour and power were the most important virtues. It was the powerful who inherited the earth.

But meekness carries with it the idea of humility, and it can be very attractive.

Aussies hate people who big note themselves. We cut tall poppies down to size very quickly. We like people who are aware of their weaknesses and are able to take a joke about them. Meekness displayed in humility can be very attractive.

The best definition of humility I have heard is from John Dixon who says humility is about 'using your power for the good of others'. Humility is other centred.

- It involves having a pathos for others.
- It means wanting to see others prosper.

This is a great foundation for all Christian ministry. We all have gifts, we all have influence, we all have the power to make an impact somewhere. Will you use that power for your own ego, to only prosper yourself. Or will you use that power, that influence for the good of others? Christian Ministry is about seeking the welfare of the other person.

Doing Christian ministry with meekness/ humility naturally flows out of being poor in spirit and mourning. All of it involves pathos – having empathy for the other person and putting their needs first. These first three Beatitudes are absolutely essential for good Christian ministry.

PASSION

Mt5:6 "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*"

This one has a more active feel to it. We are to hunger and thirst.

When you are hungry, you go looking for food, it might be in the refrigerator. It might be in a nearby restaurant. But when you are hungry, you get active.

When you are thirsty, you go looking for drink. We can't last more than a few days without water. Thirst is a very motivating physical need.

Well, in similar fashion we are to hunger and thirst for righteousness. That is, we want God's right way of living to happen on earth. The 10 Commandments are a pretty good summary of God's right way of living.

The first four commandments are about having a right relationship with God –

1. Love God supremely.

2. Don't worship substitutes.
3. Don't take God's name in vain.
4. Keep the Sabbath holy.

All this means loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and doing it with a passion.

We are also to live in right relationship with our neighbour –

5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not bear false witness.
10. Do not covet.

It's because these commandments are being broken all the time that lives are broken. Hence the need for the gospel - The gospel that calls people to repentance and the gospel that offers the compassion of Christ.

And this is all about ministry.

Let the passion for righteousness drive you into ministry. What is the particular issue in our world today, where things are not right, that stirs your heart? Discover that and then engage in passionate ministry to make a difference.

And I might add that the Network Course starting on Wednesday has a whole section helping you to discover your spiritual passion, that is discovering where you will serve, where you might make a difference.

CONCLUSION

So I hope you can see that the Beatitudes are a great foundation for ministry. They describe a state of being that promotes ministry with

- greater integrity,
- deeper perception and
- Christ honouring humility.

-If you are living the Beatitudes, then you will be the salt of the earth. You will add flavour and help preserve our society.

-If you are living the Beatitudes you will be the light of the world.

You will shine a light in dark places and bring the restoring power of the gospel.

If you are living the Beatitudes, ministry will look different.

Here are some possible examples.

- Because you are poor in spirit you won't always be talking about yourself; you will be focused on the other person.
- Because you mourn over the human condition, you'll be slow to criticise when other people stuff up.
- Because you are meek, you'll take blows for the kingdom knowing you are walking with your Lord.
- You will persevere because you hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Remember the Apostle Paul said, “*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*”. The Beatitudes renew our minds and give us a whole new way of being and a new way of doing ministry.

This new way is at the heart of our theme for 2026.

Being deeply transformed serving together.

What better basis for this vision of ministry than the Beatitudes!

Today we have been commissioned for ministry.

We believe in Every Member Ministry.

- Every member living the Beatitudes.
- Every member deeply transformed serving together.
- Every member living to love and proclaim Jesus.

And all to the Glory of God. Amen