

Because I'm happy?

By [Dennis Sanders](#)

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*Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like a room without a roof  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like happiness is the truth  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you know what happiness is to you  
Because I'm happy  
Clap along if you feel like that's what you wanna do*

— "Happy," by Pharrell Williams

If you happen to read the *Message* translation of Matthew's beatitudes, you'll notice that instead of saying "blessed" the word is "happy." That leads me to think about the song with the same name, the one penned by singer-producer Pharell Williams that became a worldwide hit. The song, written for the movie *Despicable Me 2*, is one of the most joyous songs I've ever heard. [I can picture the Minions](#), the movie's little yellow scene stealers, jumping around to the song with a look of pure joy.

But is there anything actually happy about this Gospel text? Happy are the poor? Happy are those who grieve? Happy are the hopeless? Why would these people be happy?

And then I remember another song, a David Haas song based on the beatitudes. The verses follow the text closely; the chorus is this:

Rejoice and be glad!  
Blessed are you, holy are you!  
Rejoice and be glad!  
Yours is the kingdom of God!

The reason that the poor, the hopeless, the mourners, and others can be happy is that the kingdom of God belongs to them. The kingdom of God is a kingdom where the “losers” are honored by God. The kingdom is a place where we can find welcome even when life doesn’t seem hopeful. But we can take heart that we belong to God, that we are honored by God—not because our lives are successful, but in spite of our lives not being perfect.

For the down and out: yours is the kingdom of God. That’s something to get happy about.