

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

SESSION 2

The Beatitudes: Leader Guide

WELCOME

Tonight, we're going to be in Matthew 5:2-12 – better known as the Beatitudes. We're going to make connections from one beatitude to the next that will us define what it is to be a Christian. And, second – we're going to develop an understanding of the Christian life as it is reflected to the world around us. Unfortunately, it seems that many Christians today overlook the significance of the Beatitudes in their lives – this is often evidenced by their public debates on social media [*Christian Twitter/X is the worst!*]. So, we are in the Beatitudes and we've got a lot to cover in just a little bit of time.

BACKSTORY

The Beatitudes only cover a portion of the Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, but they are often the portion remembered the most because they all start with "Blessed..." But, if we sat down and really read through the Beatitudes we would discover something. We would discover that the Beatitudes – as Jesus taught them – belong to a different world than the one we live in! I mean think about it, there is nothing "blessed" about being "poor in Spirit," or "mourning," or being "meek," or showing "mercy." These are not words that fit into our typical vocabulary as being "blessed."

The world we live in actually asserts the opposite – "blessed are those who are strong and show no weakness...they will receive the 'spoils of war!'" Our world and our culture operate with other ethics that completely contradict Jesus' teachings and the Kingdom of God. So, in this section of Scripture, Jesus is challenging His disciples [and us – His future disciples] to realize that His way is NOT the way of the world and His kingdom does not look like any earthly kingdom.

QUESTION

From what you read this past week in the Beatitudes, how are the values of the world radically different than Jesus' teachings in the Beatitudes?

BEATITUDES IN THE OT?

So, the natural question becomes, is Matthew the only place where we find Beatitudes?

- The answer of course is - no...the Beatitudes are listed in other places in the Gospels!

But, did you know that the Psalms contain many "beatitudes" that discuss the blessings of God.

- **Psalm 1:1** opens with a beatitude.
- and, **Psalm 2** ends with a beatitude.

Now if you read the context of Psalms 1 the Hebrew word used is – **esher** and has the meaning of receiving **happiness** & **blessedness**.

In **Psalms 2**, the Psalmist uses the same word - **esher** - the meaning seems to change. Chapter 2 is all about the wicked kings and kingdoms of this world. In addition, this Psalm states that God has set His King on Zion. In a kingdom that is strong and will possess “the ends of the earth.” Basically, the whole chapter contrasts the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God. But, in the end – the last line – uses the word “blessed,” and states those who are blessed “take refuge in Him.” So, this use of **esher** seems to have a meaning of **protection**.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 5:2-5**

POOR IN SPIRIT

For the first beatitude, if we would be happy and blessed in the Kingdom of God, we must first lose everything – including ourselves and our self-centeredness – and as a result, we will become poor in spirit.

This is very similar to the lyrics of the hymn we sing, **Rock of Ages**:

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the mountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.*

THOSE WHO MOURN

The mourning that Jesus is referring to here involves mourning over our own sinfulness. This is a true mark of a Christian/ Disciple of Jesus Christ – that we do not excuse our sin, or ignore it. We recognize our sin, and repent of our sin. Whenever the Christian is conscious of their own sin – they will be grieved by it. This fits directly with our first beatitude because we cannot understand that we should mourn for your sin if we have not first learned that we are “poor in spirit.”

THE MEEK

When we know what we are before God, and look to Him for grace and salvation, then we become poor in spirit; then we mourn for our sins. And as we experience the gentleness of His grace, we become spiritually meek and gentle with others.

QUESTION

How are the characteristics described in the first 3 Beatitudes the natural “outworking” of our conversion through Christ?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 5:6-9**

HUNGER & THIRST

We are not simply to seek righteousness or have righteousness as a goal – we are to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Those whose do are truly blessed by God and have a consuming passion for His righteousness! He affirmed that this would not be a fruitless endeavor, for He promised, “They will be satisfied.”

THE MERCIFUL

Jesus is telling us, be merciful to others. Be quick to forget and forgive. As a result, you will receive mercy. To say it another way, those who have been forgiven much, should love much. Those who know they have received mercy, should show mercy to others. And those who show mercy to others will be blessed because they will receive mercy from God through Jesus Christ!

PURE IN HEART

Through Christ, we are declared holy, and our ongoing pursuit of personal holiness confirms this status. Ultimately, through Christ, we receive the assurance of seeing God as He is, when we are perfected and free from all sin in glory. As we pursue purity of heart, we will ultimately draw closer to being in the eternal presence of God.

THE PEACEMAKERS

If someone were to ask for a one-word description of what the gospel brings us when we repent and believe, there is little doubt that most people would answer with the word salvation. But there is another answer to the question, and that is the word **peace**. Jesus brings us peace through His work on the cross. In this Beatitude, Jesus is teaching us that we can follow God's work of peacemaking in our lives – by imitating and showing true and godly peace among those around us.

QUESTION

How are the last four Beatitudes we covered exemplified in Jesus Christ?

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 5:10-12**

THE PEACEMAKERS

As we end the beatitudes we start to see more of the reality of our faith – receiving persecution and insults. The promise set in this promise is weighty: ***enduring persecution and insults for righteousness' sake, leads to the ultimate reward of eternity in heaven with God.*** The suffering Jesus is talking about is facing opposition while constantly adhering to the will of God. Persecution serves as a testimony to our connection with Jesus Christ. Our connection with Him embraces – not only His glory – His rejection and persecution. By having a share in Him, we truly inherit the kingdom of heaven.

CONCLUSION

Outline for how we will study of the Sermon on the Mount:

- **March 3rd:** Matthew 5:13-32
- **March 10th:** Matthew 5:33-48
- **March 17th:** Hangout Night
- **April 7th:** Matthew 6:1-18
- **April 14th:** Matthew 6:19-34
- **April 21st:** Matthew 7:1-12
- **April 28th:** Matthew 7:13-29
- **May 5th:** Hangout Night or Content Make-Up