



## PART 1: WHO IS BLESSED?

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### Sermon Notes

**Text: Matthew 5:1-12**

#### Introduction:

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' inaugural address as he announces the coming of the Kingdom of God.

"[The Sermon on the Mount] describes what human life and human community look like when they come under the gracious rule of God."  
~John Stott

Moses preached the first sermon on the mount. He came from the presence of God, and announced the Law of God from Mount Sinai.

God's desire is that his people who live differently from those around him (see Leviticus 18:1-4).

#### The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

The beatitudes answer the question, "Which life is the good life?" or "Which life is the happy life?"

Greek: Makarios - can be translated "blessed", "fortunate", "happy", "well off", "congratulations". It refers to a blessedness that transcends circumstantial happiness, and is available to all believers at all times.

### 1. No one is beyond Beatitude

v. 3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Poverty is a state which forces us to depend on others for material support. Spiritual poverty is a state that requires us to rely on God.

The beatitudes show us that there is no human situation that excludes one from being blessed by Jesus.

Luke 4:18-19

"The beatitudes are not teachings on *how* to be blessed. They are not instructions to do anything. They do not indicate conditions that are especially pleasing to God or good for human beings... They single out cases that provide proof that, in [Jesus], the rule of God from the heavens truly is available in life circumstances that are beyond human hope." ~Dallas Willard

The point of the beatitudes is not to show us how we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is to show us how the kingdom of heaven has been opened to all. Not by merit, but by God's grace

### 2. The Characteristics of Kingdom Citizens

Beatitudes present in the believer are signs of the spiritual life Jesus promised to give his followers.

The eight characteristics, coupled with the eight blessings, are not eight options, or eight groups of people. These are eight characteristics that will develop over time in every kingdom citizen.

1 Samuel 16:17

### 3. Blessings come *through us*, not just *to us*

Genesis 12:2-3

“Blessing is not primarily about what God promises to do *to* someone. It is primarily about what God is going to do *through* someone... ~N.T. Wright

#### **Application:**

- i. Live as though the kingdom of God truly is available to all.
- ii. Make a New Year’s resolution about character, not just behaviour.
- iii. Commit to being a blessings; don’t just seek to be blessed.

### **Life Group Discussion**

#### **Warm up:**

1. Warm up: Are you a part of any sort of sub-culture, club or community (i.e. runner, gamer, dancer, musician, ethnic, etc)? What are some of the unique features of this sub-culture (i.e. dress, language, customs)?
2. What do you think are some unique features of Christian culture? How do non-Christians react to those?

#### **Study & Discussion:**

1. Read Leviticus 18:1-4. What is God saying to Israel? What is the reason for this command? From what you know, how well did Israel follow this command? What was the result? Do you think contemporary Christians struggle with keeping this command? How so? What is the result of our struggle? In your opinion, how can we do better?
2. Read the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12). These blessings are an announcement that God’s sovereign rule is beginning to be established on earth as it is in heaven, that all are welcome to enter his kingdom, and that we can begin to practice his kingdom ethics today. What does it mean to be blessed? In what ways does God bless us? How are mourners blessed? Does that happen today or just in the future?

3. What is the difference between heart transformation and behavioural modification? How is the heart transformed? What’s God role in that? What’s ours?

#### **4. Application:**

Take some time to individually come up with a New Year’s resolution about character. You may want to use the language of the beatitudes (i.e. “I will learn what it means to be poor in spirit”). Do your best to come up with some practical steps that will help you.

#### **Prayer:**

1. Pray for Jesus to transform your heart, so you will develop the characteristics of God’s Kingdom citizens.
2. Pray for discipline and encouragement to succeed in your New Year’s resolution.
3. Other requests
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