

**intro**

**SMALL GROUPS**

**FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.**

**Sermon on the Mount**

Anything Jesus teaches is important, but this seems to hold a special status, even among His teaching.

**The Beatitudes**

Blessedness is not simply a nice wish from God; it is a pronouncement of what we actually are — *approved*.

**William Barclay on The Sermon on the Mount**

## An Introduction to The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus' ministry had just started. Publicly launched at His recent baptism by John the Baptist and anchored during His 40 days and nights in the desert, which concluded in a show-down with His enemy, Jesus was like the new kid on the block. The word was out that there was a new rabbi on the scene. He had been preaching and teaching and healing, and was drawing larger crowds each day.<sup>1</sup>

*"Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain and sat down. After His disciples had come to Him, He opened His mouth and began to teach them..." (Matthew 5:1-2)*

Did you notice that contrast between the disciples and the crowds? Jesus sees the crowds, but tries to get His newly named disciples away from them for some teaching. However, if you were to skip to the end of Matthew 5-7, you will find the crowds still there, roaring their approval of Jesus' teaching.

So who is this teaching for – the disciples or the crowds? I think it is for the

disciples, but Matthew reminds us that we shall always have to live out Jesus' teaching before the crowds. The Sermon on the Mount is instruction for Christian disciples, but however much we may want to do things in quiet isolation; the world will always be watching us. As we 'come apart from the crowds' on a Sunday morning, then, we are doing so to ready ourselves for living out the teaching of Jesus in full view of the world.

Next, I invite you to notice the mountain. Jesus goes up a mountainside – hence 'The Sermon on the Mount'. Whenever Jesus goes up a mountain in Matthew's Gospel, something important happens. There is a revelation of Jesus. The climax of the temptations is when the devil takes Jesus up a high mountain (4:8). On another occasion, He heals people (15:29). The Transfiguration happens on a mountain (17:1ff). And after the Resurrection, Jesus gives the Great Commission on a mountain (28:16ff). So when we read here that Jesus went up a mountainside, we should be ready for something important, something close to

the heart of Jesus. We are not about to learn something incidental or trivial here. What Jesus is about to teach is serious and important.

Don't forget too that Moses was known for receiving revelation on a mountain – Sinai. But here, Jesus gives revelation on a mountainside. This is one hint about the stature of Jesus, particularly that He is the 'one greater than Moses' who was prophesied in Deuteronomy to come. Another hint of this comes in the fact that The Sermon on the Mount is the first of five big blocks of Jesus' teaching in Matthew's Gospel. This is all building up Jesus' authority. He's more important than the person who shaped the Israelite nation. No wonder there will be passages in the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says, 'You have heard it said ... but I say to you.' He is outranking Moses and all the teachers of His day. He is claiming a higher authority than all of them.

And then He sits down to teach. This was the posture of an authoritative rabbi. In our culture, someone stands to deliver

**(CONTINUED)**

important teaching. Not in first century Judaism. Everything here is screaming that we had better take notice of this man and what He is going to teach.

So I invite you to embrace these coming weeks in this spirit. Anything Jesus teaches is important, but this seems to hold a special status, even among His teaching. He is telling us how to be disciples in the sight of a watching world.<sup>1</sup>

## An Introduction to the Beatitudes

**BLESSED ARE THE  
POOR IN SPIRIT  
MOURNERS  
MEEK  
HUNGRY  
MERCIFUL  
PEACEMAKERS  
PERSECUTED**

### THE BEATITUDES

Contrary to popular opinion, *blessed* does not mean “happy,” even though some translations have rendered it this way.

It is so essential that we get off to a good start with the first Beatitudes if we are to understand them all that I would like to encourage the following prayer.

*Dear Lord,*

*I long for Your smile upon my life, So please open my hearts to the meaning of the Beatitudes.*

*I open myself to their light. Shine their rays into the deepest part of my life. Sear my soul. Heal me.*

*Build the character of the kingdom in me, so that You can call me blessed.*

*Amen.*

We will begin with the Beatitudes, which someone has, not inaccurately, called the “Beautiful Attitudes” of the kingdom, for they give us the character of those who are true children of God. Many suggested titles say essentially the same thing: “The Character of the Kingdom,” “The Manifesto of the Kingdom,” “The Norms of the Kingdom.” The first four Beatitudes focus on our relationship to God, and the second four on our relationship to our fellowman. Each of the eight builds upon the others, so that there is an amazingly beautiful and compelling progression. At the same time there is a profound unity. The first Beatitudes (verse 3) and the last Beatitudes (verse 10) end with the same reward, “the kingdom of heaven,” which according to Hebrew style means that the Beatitudes between them all deal with that very same theme.

Each of the eight Beatitudes opens with the word “blessed.” So it is essential that we understand here in the beginning what this word means, because it bears on everything that will be said in the remainder of this book.

Contrary to popular opinion, *blessed* does not mean “happy,” even though some translations have rendered it this way. Happiness is a subjective state, a feeling. But Jesus is not declaring how people feel; rather, He is making an objective statement about what God thinks of them. *Blessed* is a positive judgment by God on the individual that means “to be approved” or “to find approval.” *So when God blesses us, He approves us.*

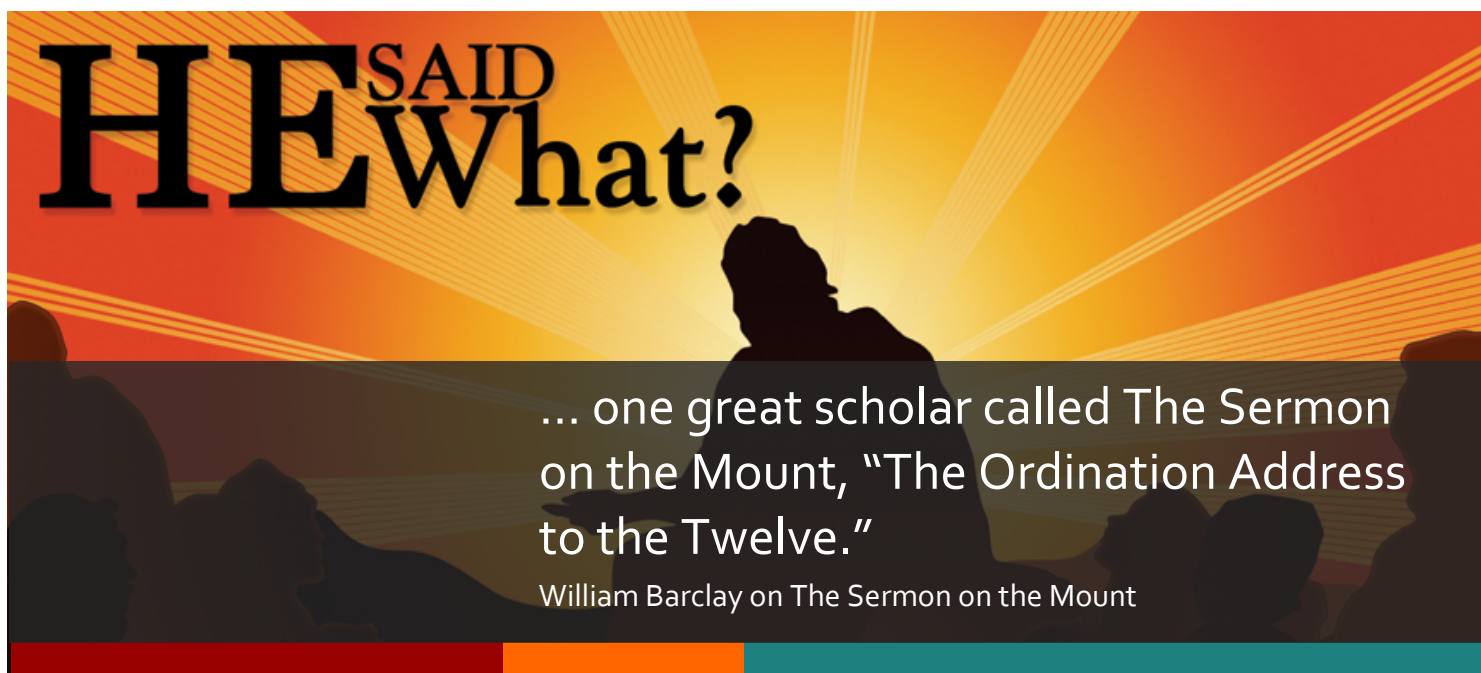
Of course, there is no doubt that such blessing will bring feelings of happiness and that blessed people are generally happy. But we must remember that the root idea of “blessed” is an awareness of approval by God. Blessedness is not simply a nice wish from God; it is a pronouncement of what we actually are — *approved*. Blessedness indicates the smile of God or, as Max Lucado has so beautifully put it, *The Applause of Heaven*.

As we begin this study of the Beatitudes, let us realize that if God’s blessing/approval means more to us than anything else — even the approval of our friends, business acquaintances, and colleagues — then the Beatitudes are going to penetrate our hearts, speaking to us in the deepest ways.

The question is, do we really want His approval more than anything else? Not, do we want to be happy (as proper as that desire is) but, do we truly want God’s approval above all else?

If so, then we must heed every word of the first Beatitudes, for it gives us the condition of blessing in just three words: “poor in spirit.” “Blessed/approved are the poor in spirit.”

We will discuss how the Beatitudes turn the world’s values upside down. We will explore and understand how God truly wants to bless and enhance our lives, and how these blessings can help us become people who change the world!



## William Barclay on The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew has a careful pattern in his gospel. In his story of the Baptism of Jesus he shows us Jesus realizing that the hour has struck, that the call to action has come, and that He must go forth on His crusade. In his story of the temptations he shows us Jesus deliberately choosing the method He will use to carry out His task, and deliberately rejecting methods which He knew to be against the will of God. If a man sets his hand to a great task, he needs his helpers, his assistants, his staff. So Matthew goes on to show us Jesus selecting the men who will be His fellow-workers and His fellow-laborers. But if helpers and assistants are to do their work intelligently and effectively, they must first have instruction. And now, in The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew shows us Jesus instructing His disciples in the message which was His and which they were to take to men. In Luke's account of The Sermon on the Mount this becomes even clearer. In Luke The Sermon on the Mount follows immediately after what we might call the official choosing of the Twelve (Luke 6:13 ff). For that reason one great scholar called The Sermon on the Mount "The Ordination Address to the Twelve." Just as a young minister has his task set out before him, when he is called to his first charge, so the Twelve received from Jesus their ordination address before they went out to their task. It is for that reason that other scholars have given other titles to The Sermon on the Mount. It has been called "The Compendium of Christ's Doctrine," "The Magna Charta of the Kingdom," "The Manifesto of the King." All are agreed that in The Sermon on the Mount we have the core and the essence and the distillation of the

teaching of Jesus to the inner circle of His chosen men.

### The Summary of the Faith

In actual fact this is even truer than at first sight appears. We speak of The Sermon on the Mount as if it was one single sermon preached on one single occasion. But it is far more than that. There are good and compelling and convincing reasons for thinking that The Sermon on the Mount is far more than one sermon, that it is, in fact, a kind of epitome of all the sermons that Jesus ever preached.

Anyone who heard it in its present form would be exhausted long before the end. There is far too much in it for one hearing. It is one thing to sit and read it, and to pause and linger as we read; it would be entirely another thing to listen to it for the first time in spoken words. We can read at our own pace and with a certain familiarity with the words; but to hear it in its present form for the first time would be to be dazzled with excess of light long before the end.

There are certain sections of The Sermon on the Mount which emerge, as it were, without warning; they have no connection with what goes before and no connection with what comes after. For instance, Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 7:7-11 are quite detached from their context. They neither emerge from what went before nor lead up to what comes after. There is a



week  
#2

SMALL GROUPS

FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

The  
UPSIDE DOWN  
KINGDOM

The Poor in Spirit	Coram Deo	Study
<p>“...to be poor in spirit, is to have humble thoughts of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do”.</p>	<p>To live coram deo is to live one’s entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.</p>	<p>Open It</p> <p>Explore It</p> <p>Get It</p>

## “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (v. 3). Matthew 5:1–3

### The Poor in Spirit

Throughout history, the church has treasured Matthew’s gospel as a primary teaching tool, mainly due to his incorporation of large blocks of Jesus’ instruction - including The Sermon on the Mount. Today begins our study of this famous sermon.

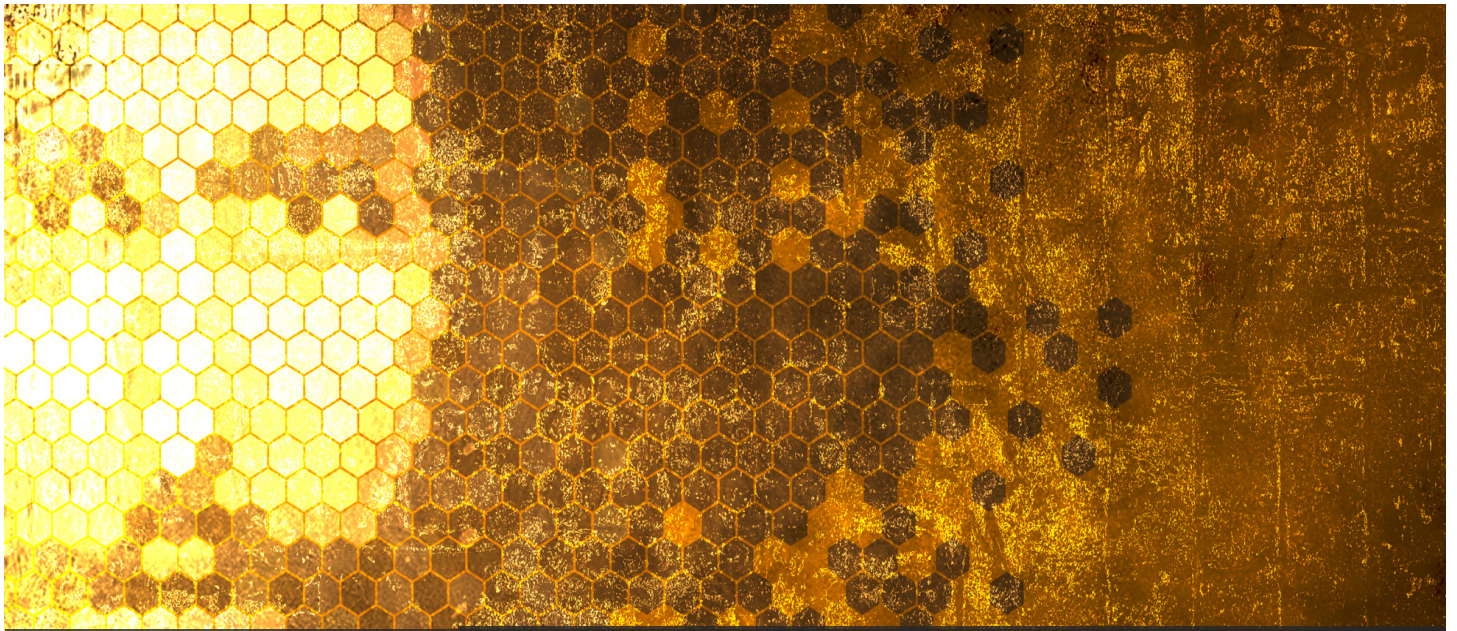
Some preachers try to separate The Sermon on the Mount from the person who preached it. They then try to apply it to all people — non-believers as much as believers. But it is not a treatise on social ethics. Certainly, the sermon has bearing on our relationship to society, but it cannot be divorced

from allegiance to Christ (Matt. 5:11). Above all, the sermon describes life in God’s kingdom, that place where God’s people embrace His rule. It is given to Jesus’ disciples (v. 1), making it a guide for life in the believing community — the church. John Calvin alludes to this truth, commenting that The Sermon on The Mount collects “the leading points of the doctrine of Christ” relating “to a devout and holy life.”

Jesus does not present the material in this sermon only on this one occasion, for as an itinerant preacher He repeats the same basic content in many different situations. Christ may

also take several days to deliver this instruction, since He sometimes teaches a crowd over a long span of time (15:32).

The sermon opens with the Beatitudes, the first of which tells us “the poor in spirit” are blessed, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (5:3). In this context, **Jesus is basically saying that only those who do not rely on their own goodness will be granted entrance into God’s kingdom.** It is not an appeal to deny our worth as human beings, but to recognize our sin and desperate need for salvation. Matthew Henry comments that “to be poor in spirit, is



TO LIVE CORAM DEO IS TO LIVE ONE'S ENTIRE LIFE IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF GOD, TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

to have humble thoughts of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do. ...[It is] to shun all confidence in our own righteousness and strength, that we may depend only on the merit of Christ and the spirit and grace of Christ. ...The kingdom of grace is composed of such, the kingdom of glory is prepared for them.”

### Coram Deo (before the face of God)

Elsewhere, Jesus speaks these same words to the poor (Luke 6:20), because those who have nothing are often able to see their need for salvation most clearly. Still, one does not need to lack possessions to see the kingdom of God. John Calvin writes that “he only who is reduced to nothing in himself, and

relies on the mercy of God, is poor in spirit.” Rich or poor, if we fail to see our need for salvation, we will fail to enter the kingdom<sup>1</sup>.

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#### Passages for Further Study

Psalms 34; 68:20

Isaiah 57:15

Luke 18:9–14

Romans 4:1–8

# Open It!

1) Describe a time when you were able to meet someone famous. Did anything surprise you? Did your impressions of that person change after meeting them?



2) Share with your group when you have been happiest. What made that time such a season of

## Read It | Matthew 4:23- 5:3

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

## Explore It

1. According to verse 1 what caused Jesus to go up to the mountain?
2. What posture did Jesus employ while teaching?
3. What did His disciples do when they saw Jesus?

## Get It

1. According to our text what caused the crowds to follow Jesus?
2. Discuss as a group what your reaction to Jesus might have been had you lived in those days and seen and heard such things?
3. If you haven't already done so, please read through the introduction section of this study guide and then spend some time thinking through the scene of our text. What do the following descriptions tell us about what might have been under the surface?
  - **The people:** Who might have been a part of the crowd and what might they have been thinking?
  - **The place:** Is there any significance to where this message was preached?
  - **The posture:** Can we learn anything from the position that Jesus took to share this message?
  - **The process:** What type of picture do we get from the phrase "He taught them"?
4. The Sermon on the Mount has been labeled the greatest message of all time. What makes this message so special?
5. What characteristics are needed today to make a sermon great?



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Preceding each of the beatitudes Jesus shares the word “Blessed” which comes from the Greek word makarios.

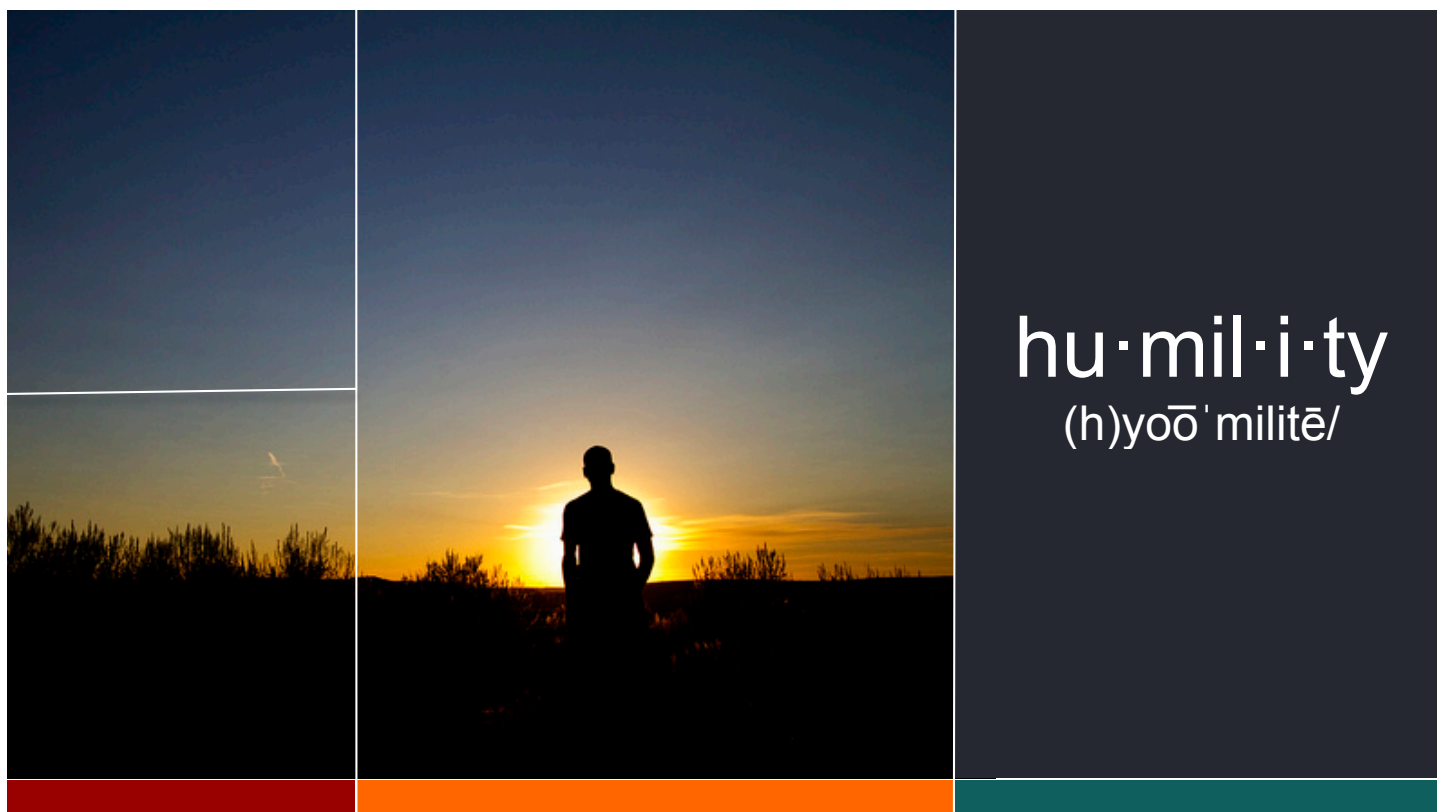
Many people think the word means “happy,” but that view is inadequate. It can mean happy or blissful but it is most often used in the Bible to signify an inner bliss not based on circumstances but a joy that is able to rise above difficult times and situations. Happiness, in an ultimate sense, is certainly a part of being blessed by God, but divine blessing goes far beyond mere happiness. It involves God’s favor, His willingness to come near and dwell among His people.

The hope of Israel was that God would shine His face on the people, that there would be close, intimate fellowship between the Creator and His creatures. The New Testament expands on this, revealing that our ultimate hope is an ongoing communion and fellowship with God. How then do we enjoy the Lord’s favor, blessing and experience a taste of His presence now as well as all eternity? The answer is found in living a life characterized by the beatitudes.

6. At the beginning of this sermon Jesus begins with a series of kingdom attitudes that He demanded of His followers. Why would Jesus start
7. In what ways does the world define happiness? Where and how do they try to attain it?
8. How does this definition and pursuit line up with the biblical understanding of being blessed?

Jesus tells us that only the “poor in Spirit” will receive the kingdom of heaven ([Matt. 5:3](#)). Poverty in spirit is an emptying of our self-reliance and any claim we (falsely) believe to have on God. It is recognition that we are utterly dependent on divine grace and undeserving of His favor. It is repentance for setting ourselves up as “gods” and then a resting in the Lord’s promise of salvation.<sup>1</sup>





14. Read Luke 18:13-14a. What significance is there to the fact that Jesus starts His sermon with this as the number one attitude as well as its result being an inheritance into the kingdom of heaven?

15. How might your witness be different if you were to continually live out a “poor in spirit” lifestyle?

16. How can we help each other in our pursuit of humility?

**week #3**

**SMALL GROUPS**

**The UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM**

**FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.**

Those Who Mourn	Coram Deo	Study
"...to be poor in spirit, is to have humble thoughts of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do".	"Though Jesus was a man of sorrows, He was able to endure suffering and pain..."	Open It Explore It

## "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4

### Those Who Mourn

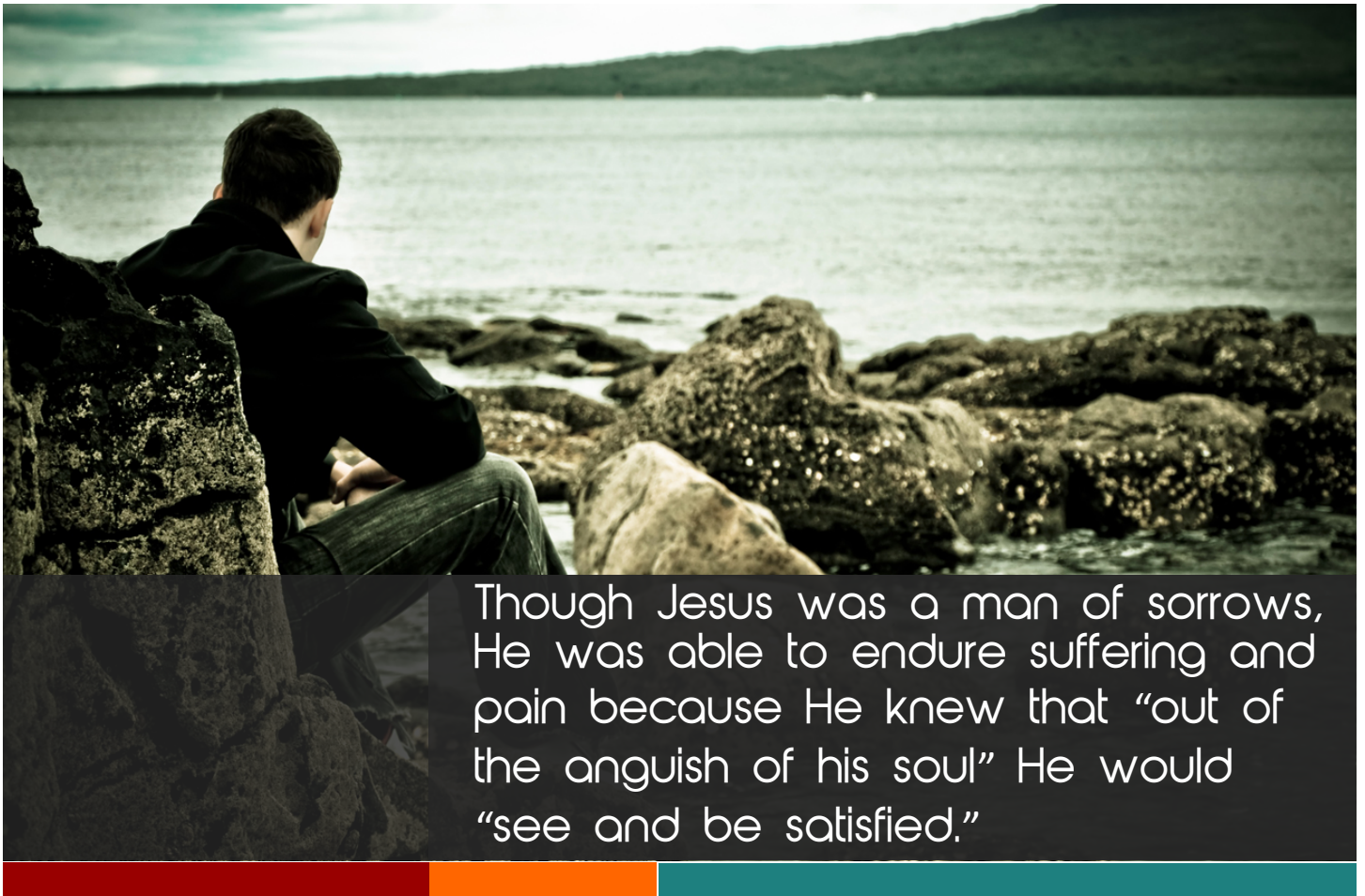
Understanding that Christ begins the Beatitudes with a promise that the kingdom of heaven belongs only to those who recognize their poverty of spirit and thus repent and believe the gospel (Matt. 5:3) helps us avoid a fundamental error often made regarding the teaching of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount is well known outside the church, and the Beatitudes are often embraced as promises of God to all people, regardless of their religious convictions. But if the blessing of the kingdom of heaven belongs only to those who repent and trust Jesus, **the Beatitudes are not promises for everyone. They are promises for Christians, for those**

**who daily take up their crosses and follow Christ (Luke 9:23).**

It is particularly important to remember this when we consider the second beatitude: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4). Reading this, we might immediately think it refers to God comforting us when we mourn a loved one's death. Of course, as believers we do experience God's consolation in times of loss, but this is just one way the promise of the second beatitude is fulfilled. There are other reasons that the Lord's people mourn in Scripture, and His promise to comfort our mourning applies to these situations as well.

**First, we may experience the deep conviction of the Holy Spirit and mourn for our sin and its offense against our holy Creator.** We see biblical examples of this in David's repentance for his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:1–23; Ps. 51) and the response of the Jewish pilgrims to Peter's Pentecost sermon, when they were "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:1–41). This experience of mourning over sin is part of what it means to be "poor in Spirit," tying the second beatitude nicely to the first one.

We may also mourn in the midst of suffering for the kingdom. Although we have a certain kind of joy in such trouble, Scripture is honest that this



Though Jesus was a man of sorrows, He was able to endure suffering and pain because He knew that “out of the anguish of his soul” He would “see and be satisfied.”

pain is real. Jeremiah mourned over the prosperity of the wicked and the afflictions of the righteous remnant of Israel (Jer. 12:1–4). Even Jesus was a “man of sorrows” who mourned the wickedness of the Israelites and suffered for His people (Isa. 53; Luke 13:34–35; 22:39–46). God’s comfort of His mourning people means that those who suffer for righteousness’ sake will receive an eternal reward (Matt. 5:12).

## Corem Deo

Though Jesus was a man of sorrows, He was able to endure suffering and pain because He knew that “out of the anguish of his soul” He would “see and be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11). We will never have to go through what Christ did, but we can look to God’s promise of comfort as a similar guarantee that we will one day see our mourning is not in vain. This, in

turn, will help us to suffer for the sake of the kingdom of heaven in the here and now<sup>1</sup>.

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### Passages for Further Study

Genesis 45  
 Ecclesiastes 7:3–4  
 Joel 2:12–27  
 Luke 8:40–56

# Open It!

1) Describe a time where you experienced great mourning in your life. What was it like?



How were you able to be comforted?

2) When you hear the word “comfort” what type of image or picture comes to mind?

## A Stunning Paradox

As we look to the 2<sup>nd</sup> beatitude we come to a stunning paradox of terms. Happy are the sad. In order to understand this mourning we must explore what Jesus means. As one studies the implications of this command we see that this mourning would involve three areas:

**Mourning over earthly sorrows.** There is no doubt that there will be times in our lives that will cause us heartbreak. Even for the most mature believer sorrow comes in the form of difficult moments and circumstances. Even Jesus would shed tears over the loss of his friend Lazarus.

**Mourning over societal ills and sins.** The believer who finds himself living in a world overrun by sin should lament the rampant disobedience and the resulting horrors that come to men living in the flesh and not by the spirit.

**Mourning over our sin.** This seems to be the main thrust of the beatitude. As believers who have experienced God’s grace and mercy and yet still attracted to temptation and sin are called to hate their sin and display contrition for choosing it over Christ.



(Continued)

1. Take some time reflecting on the above statements and make a list of things that bring about sorrow in our lives.
  
2. Why are we so quick to push away any sorrow as it comes into our lives?

How do we do it?

3. Why is it that corporate sorrow and mourning are nearly nonexistent in our corporate times of worship?

Is this a good thing or are we missing a blessing?

## Read It | 2 Corinthians 7:5-12

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

### Explore It

1. According to verse 5 what caused Paul and his companions sorrow?
  
2. What was the antidote for Paul's sorrow in verse 6-7?
  
3. What caused the church in Corinth to be filled with sorrow?
  
4. What was the result of the church's sorrow in verse 9?

(Continued)



“God’s comfort of His mourning people means that those who suffer for righteousness’ sake will receive an eternal reward.”

- R.C. Sproul

5. What is godly grief and how does it compare with the world’s grief?
6. How does our sorrow lead to a spirit of repentance?
7. When has a difficult situation or circumstances led you to pursue greater holiness and faithfulness?

## Read It | Psalm 32:1-7

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.


### Explore It

1. Who is the author of this Psalm?

According to 2 Samuel 11, what sin brought about this sorrow into his life?

2. What are some of the consequences to hiding our sin from God and others?
3. Have you ever experienced these types of consequences in your own life? Explain.



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4. What is the antidote for dealing with our sorrow over sin according to verse 5?
  
  5. When was the last time you took time to do a spiritual inventory and confess sins to God?
  
  6. What are some things that you should be mourning over? Be brave and share some of them with your group.
  
  7. What does God promise to do when we confess our sins to him?

## Read It | Isaiah 61:1-3

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

## Explore It

1. What is the general theme of this passage?
  
2. What was one of the purposes of the Messiah when He would come?
  
3. What would the Messiah give in exchange for their
  - Ashes?
  - Mourning?
  - Spirit of heaviness?



4. What does this passage say about God's desire to comfort us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. In what ways does God comfort those who mourn?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. When have you experienced the comfort of God in your time of sorrow?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. What was it like to experience it and what did it produce in you?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
8. Where could you use some comfort this week?

<sup>1</sup> R.C. Sproul, Blessed Are Those Who Mourn *From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: www.ligonier.org*

week  
#4

## SMALL GROUPS

FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.



The Meek	Coram Deo	Study
"...to be poor in spirit, is to have humble thoughts of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do".	"No matter the degree of authority we possess, the arrogant, selfish exercise of such authority for our own benefit alone is the antithesis of meekness..."	Open It Explore It Get It

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5

### The Meek

Consequences inevitably flow from every worldview, and few worldviews have had an influence as negative as the nihilism found in Friedrich Nietzsche's thought. His concept of the *Übermensch*, the superman who creates his own values and lives by his own rules in the exercise of his "will to power," was a driving force behind Nazism's rise in Germany and the attempted eradication of "unfit" individuals in Adolf Hitler's concentration camps. Even today, postmodernism's tendency to see everything as driven by a desire for power reflects Nietzsche's shadow.

Nietzsche was especially critical of Christianity because he believed that it inhibits the emergence of the *Übermensch* and prevents the full evolution of humanity. He saw Christ's emphasis on meekness as crippling to the human heart and mind. Yet, if we are not careful, we can adopt a similar understanding. In fact, **many of us are likely to see meekness as weakness, as a quality that produces men and women who have no backbone and courage. This represents a false view of meekness**, however, for the two individuals most associated with meekness in Scripture were anything but weak or cowardly. We are referring, of course, to Moses and

Jesus, both of whom are called meek but whose strength of leadership and courage are plainly evident in the Bible (Num. 12:3; 16; Matt. 11:29; 21:12–17, KJV).

Actually, the concept of meekness has no meaning unless we remember that it takes strength to display meekness and humility. The cowardly, insecure person is not really meek if he defers to others or is consistently self-deprecating, for it is in his nature to avoid conflict and remain a background player. On the other hand, the more power and courage that one has, the greater the need for that person to temper these qualities



“...the concept of meekness has no meaning unless we remember that it takes strength to display meekness and humility”.

with grace and humility. We see this par excellence in the Son of God, who, though being in the form of God, did not count equality with God as something to be grasped for His own advantage at the expense of others. Instead, He walked the earth with meekness, exercising His power with sensitivity (Phil 2:5–11). Thus, He was invested with all authority on heaven and earth, an authority by which He promises that His meek followers will likewise inherit the earth and reign with Him over creation (Matt. 5:5; 28:18; 2 Tim. 2:12).

### Coram Deo (before the face of God)

Dr. Sproul notes that all of us, no matter our position, have some kind of authority over other creatures — even if it is just over a pet. No matter

the degree of authority we possess, the arrogant, selfish exercise of such authority for our own benefit alone is the antithesis of meekness, and it is unbecoming to Christ’s followers. Let us reject all such uses of our power and authority and lead with meekness even when it is costly to us.<sup>1</sup>

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#### Passages for Further Study

Psalms 37:10–11

Isaiah 29:19–21

Colossians 3:12–15

James 3:13–18

# Open It!

1. Describe a time when you witnessed or heard about someone who exhibited great poise and control amid a volatile or difficult situation.



2. Science, engineering and ingenuity has allowed us to harness energy from a variety of sources and to use it for our own purposes. What kinds of things have you used this past week that are a result of our ability to harness energy?

## Read It | Definitions

Read the following definitions of meekness from the dictionary.

- *Enduring injury with patience and without resentment*
- *Deficient in spirit and courage*
- *Not violent or strong*

## Explore It

1. Which one seems to be most prevalent in our society? Why?

2. Why is there such a difference between the world's definition of meekness and the Bible's?

*Meekness is translated from the Greek word "praus" which is not weakness at all, but meekness does not use its power for its own defense or selfish purposes. Meekness is controlled strength or power completely surrendered to God's control. It is an attitude of heart in which all energies are brought into the perfect control of the Holy Spirit.*

## Read the following statements about the many facets and attributes surrounding this beatitude.

**Meekness** is the opposite of violence and vengeance. The **meek person**, for example, accepts joyfully the seizing of his property, knowing that he has infinitely better and more permanent possessions awaiting him in heaven (Heb. 10:34).

The **meek person** has died to self, and he therefore does not worry about injury to himself, or about

loss, insult, or abuse. The **meek person** does not defend himself, first of all because that is His Lord's command and example, and second because he knows that he does not deserve defending. Being poor in spirit and having mourned over his great sinfulness, the gentle person stands humbly before God, knowing he has nothing to commend himself.<sup>2</sup>

The Greeks characterized meekness as power under control and in the case of the Spirit-filled believer this means that he or she is under the control of God's Spirit. From a practical standpoint, the individual who is "**praus**" exhibits a freedom from malice, bitterness, or any desire for revenge. The only way to truly define meekness is in the **context of relationships** because it refers to **how we treat others**. A **gentle spirit** should characterize our relationship with both man and God.


Meekness/gentleness also implies self-control. Aristotle explained that it is the mean between excessive anger and excessive angerlessness. So the man who is meek is able to balance his anger. It is strength under control. The meek person is strong! He is gentle, meek, and mild, but he is in control. He is as strong as steel.

**Meekness** is not cowardice, emotional flabbiness, lack of conviction, complacency, timidity or the willingness to have peace at any cost.

Neither does **meekness** suggest indecisiveness, wishy-washiness, or a lack of confidence. The meek person is gentle and mild in his own cause, though he may be a lion in God's cause or in defending others.

**Meekness** is not shyness or a withdrawn personality, as contrasted with that of an extrovert. Nor can **meekness** be reduced to mere niceness.<sup>3</sup>



- 
4. Of course there is no greater example of meekness than Jesus Himself. Read Philippians 2:1-11. How did Christ demonstrate meekness, and how are we called to do the same?
  5. Who in your life today displays a spirit of meekness? How has their meekness been received by both Christians and non-Christians?

Jesus quotes Psalm 37:11 as the third beatitude. Read Psalm 37:1-11 and answer the following questions.

6. What is the overall theme of this Psalm?
7. According to verse 1 what two emotions might cause us to take life into our own hands?
8. Instead of pursuing them, what two things should we do according to verse 3?
9. What aspects of meekness are seen in verses 7 & 8?
10. Three times in this passage we are told not to “fret”. How does fretting contradict an attitude of meekness?
11. Look for all the verbs in the Psalm. How do they express what meekness involves?





The godless may boast and throw their weight around yet true contentment and joy and even possessions will elude them. Yet the meek will experience peace amidst trouble and the promise of living and reigning with Christ not only in this life but in the world to come.

12. Using the words you listed under question 6. How meek are you? What areas need some improvement this week?
  
13. What will happen to the evildoers according to this Psalm?
  
14. What two promises were given to the “Old Testament meek”?
  
15. What ways can we enjoy the blessings of meekness in our world today?
  
16. In light of this study what ways can you begin to exhibit meekness in the following areas:
  - In your family...
  
  - At work...
  
  - In our church...
  
  - In your neighborhood...


<sup>1</sup> R.C. Sproul, Blessed Are The Meek From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)

<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, John: *Matthew 1-7 Macarthur New Testament Commentary*, Chicago: Moody Press

<sup>3</sup> Precept Austin, [www.preceptaustin.org/matthew\\_55.htm](http://www.preceptaustin.org/matthew_55.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Hughes, Kent, *Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, Crossway Books, Wheaton

week  
#5



SMALL  
GROUPS

FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH  
FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.

Righteousness	Coram Deo	Study
Without the passionate pursuit of righteousness before God, we cannot hope to inherit eternal life. But when we pursue it rightly, Jesus tells us that we will be satisfied.	For Christ, His very survival depended on obeying His Father. The same is true for us.	Open It Explore It Get It

## “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.” Matthew 5:6

### A Hunger for Righteousness

Anyone with even a passing interest in American culture would undoubtedly agree that our society is driven in large measure by competition. Although there are always forces in power that want to eliminate competition and merit-based economic achievement, academic success, and so forth, the fact remains that competition has been a net positive for our country. The greater the competition, the harder companies work to produce well-crafted goods and services. The stronger the opponent on the playing field, the greater the achievement when one's favorite team wins the game.

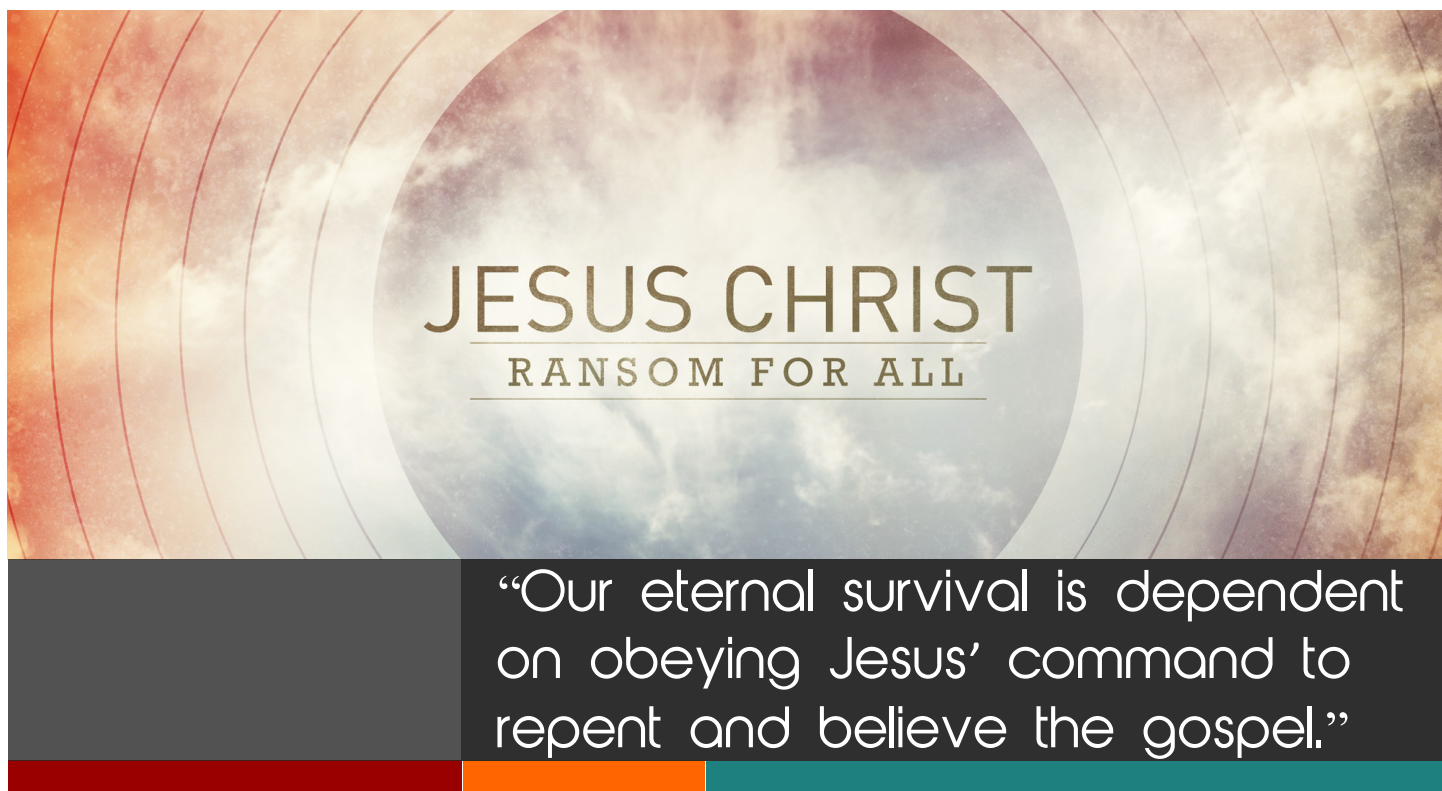
But competition is evident not only in America, it is present in every society and culture. The setting of goals and striving for quality seem

to be inherently human endeavors. We might even say the pursuit of excellence is evidence we are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Being made to reflect what is excellent, we develop a passion for noble ends. In fact, this passion — this hunger — is so vital that we see those who lack passion as not living up to their human potential.

Today's passage is one of many places where Scripture speaks positively of hungering after something. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is specifically commended (Matt. 5:6). Jesus chooses His words carefully. Hunger and thirst are powerful physical impulses. They drive us to attain that which is necessary for our survival, namely, food and drink. Christ wants us to understand that righteousness is likewise necessary for

our ultimate survival. **Without the passionate pursuit of righteousness before God, we cannot hope to inherit eternal life. But when we pursue it rightly, Jesus tells us that we will be satisfied.**

Hunger and thirst for righteousness result in two things. First, in striving after righteousness, we see how far short of the mark we fall and despair of our ability to be pleasing in God's sight. As the elect, we then rest in Christ's perfect righteousness alone for salvation (Gal. 2:15–16; 2 Cor. 5:21). Yet having been justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, we are also given the desire to follow God's law. With our new love for Jesus, we begin to follow His commandments and seek to put our sin to death (John 14:15; Rom. 8:13).



## Coram Deo (before the face of God)

Jesus’ life illustrates the kind of passion for righteousness that all the people of God are to emulate. He said that His food was “to do the will of [God]” (John 4:34). For Christ, His very survival depended on obeying His Father. The same is true for us. Our eternal survival is dependent on obeying Jesus’ command to repent and believe the gospel. And we live out this command by repenting and believing the gospel all the days of our lives.<sup>1</sup>

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### Passages for Further Study

Proverbs 10:2; 21:3, 21

Isaiah 51:1–8

John 6:35

2 Timothy 2:22

# Open It!

1. What is your favorite meal or food? Take some time and ask yourself “what is it about that food or meal that makes me crave it?”

2. If you had to miss a meal in a day which would you choose to go without? Why?

3. What are some things that people hunger for in this world? Why is it that these things fail to fulfill our deepest needs?



*Blaise Pascal said that we all have a “God-shaped void” in our lives. All men are hungry and thirsty; the problem is that we try to fill that emptiness - that hunger - with things other than the righteousness of God.*

## Explore It | Read Psalm 63: 1-11

1. Where was David when he penned this Psalm?
2. According to verse 1 what does David use as an illustration for his life without God?

1. What does David say in verse 5 about his life when he has experienced the presence of God?
2. According to David what does he think is better than life?
3. What did it mean for David when he says in verse five “my soul will be satisfied? What things brought about this satisfaction? (Find your answers within the Psalm)
4. David declares that he will rejoice in God and respond in praise. Why does being well fed and satisfied lead to praising God?

## Get It

The fourth beatitude is a turning point in the series. The first three speak directly to our desperate need because of sin. “Blessed are the poor in spirit...” This first beatitude helps me to remember that before God, I do not have what it takes!

“Blessed are those who mourn...” This second beatitude reminds me that I should live in a constant state of mourning. Why should I mourn? Because I see my sins as many, I recognize that they have been costly to me as well as countless others and above all that my sins were unspeakably costly to Jesus Christ.

“Blessed are the meek...” Our study regarding the third attribute reminds us that we are called to meekness. I see that God has not treated me as my sins deserve, but has shown grace and kindness; therefore I will do likewise in all my dealings and relationships.

Each of these three verses teaches us about seeing our own position. The beatitude in our study this week moves us forward. It speaks about the desire that arises out of the work of the Holy Spirit in the first three beatitudes.

1. Why would a robust understanding of the first three beatitudes cause the Christian to hunger and thirst for righteousness?

(Continued)

2. Jesus says that when we hunger and thirst for Him we will be satisfied. This tells us that those who pursue unrighteousness will be unsatisfied. How have you seen that unrighteousness leads to a lack of fulfillment?

3. Spend some time thinking about each of these signs. What implications do these facets of physical appetite have on our spiritual appetite?

To unpack the spiritual truths in this beatitude simply involves understanding the following facets of physical hunger and thirst.

#### **Hunger and thirst are signs of:**

**Life** - there is no buffet in the morgue. No meal plans among the dead. To hunger and thirst is to live.

**Our need** - every pang of hunger and thirst is a reminder that we don't have that which we need. Hunger and thirst are our indicators that something is missing.

**Health** - one symptom of health for each of us is a healthy appetite. When someone loses their appetite something is usually wrong.

Jesus speaks of a state of hunger and thirst without sharing the contributing circumstances to this condition. This hunger and thirst involves having a strong desire to attain something. The idea of this hunger is to long earnestly for or have a strong desire for divine righteousness. This speaks not of the initial imputation of His righteousness when one is saved, but of the Christian's desire for progressive growth in righteousness.

4. How hungry are you for the things of God? (Be honest.) Where are you getting your "spiritual meals"? Do you need to eat bigger portions and with greater frequency? What things would help you grow in your hunger for God?



## Righteousness

Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ.

### A Biblical Definition

The word interpreted righteousness is **Dikaioisune**: being proper or right in the sense of being fully justified, being in accordance with what God requires; it is the quality of being upright. In its simplest sense dikaioisune conveys the idea of conformity to a standard or norm. In this sense righteousness is the opposite of sin, which is defined as missing of the mark set by God. Dikaioisune is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ.

5. What do you think of the biblical definition of righteousness? Does it change the way you view righteousness and if so how?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How does the Christian know if they are hungering and thirsting for righteousness? What does it look like for you to hunger and thirst after righteousness?



When we begin to look like Jesus, and become righteous like Him, our heart slowly begins to beat in rhythm with Jesus' heart which leads us to care about the world around us. Righteousness, when spoken of in a corporate setting means that we pursue justice for all. Most people assume that righteousness means simple religious rigor, but if it means justice, it integrates personal uprightness with social concern; doing right to my neighbor, enemy, stranger, and so on. If we hunger only for right living for ourselves, if we make the gospel primarily about our own end and destination, and if it only becomes about our own spiritual lives and practices, then what we hunger after is not the righteousness of Jesus, but the righteousness of man which is not righteousness at all. True righteousness should drive us to not look only to our own spiritual lives but also to the needs of others - especially the poor, needy and oppressed. Righteousness means we become like Jesus not only in our spirit but that we become the hands and feet of Jesus to the world around us.

3. Discuss the preceding paragraph as a group. How does this idea of hungering for corporate righteousness impact the way you view your engagement with the world as you pursue holiness?
  
4. Psalm 34:8 calls us to "taste and see that the Lord is good..." Share a time when you were filled with the sweet things of God. How was this experience and time satisfying to you?
  
5. What "worldly junk foods" are taking away your appetite for the things of God? What practical steps can you take to replace those things with a more balanced diet geared toward spiritual fitness/wellness?

<sup>1</sup> R.C. Sproul, A Hunger for Righteousness From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)



The Merciful	Coram Deo	Study
"Thanks be to God, for He shows mercy to us when we are not merciful to others."	"Mercy does not deny that wrong has been done or make light of sin. Instead, mercy is forgiveness and patience extended to someone despite the fact that the person deserves only justice."	Open It Explore It Get It

**"Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy."**

Matthew 5:7

## The Merciful

God's Word greatly comforts those of us who believe in Christ. Simultaneously, we must admit that certain passages are frightening when we ponder their implications. Consider the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21–35, for example. In verse 35, Jesus says we will be condemned if we do not forgive those who sin against us and ask for mercy.

This passage is scary because we recognize how inconsistently we show mercy to others. We expect mercy from other people, but we

hold grudges against those who wrong us. We forget that willingness to forgive others their trespasses is a sure sign of a forgiven heart that rests in Jesus alone for salvation (6:14–15).

**Thanks be to God, for He shows mercy to us when we are not merciful to others. When we turn to Him in faith and repentance, He showers us with mercy. And when we are merciful to others in Jesus' name, He tells us in today's passage, we receive mercy from the Lord (5:7).**

But what does it mean to show mercy? We turn to John 7:53–8:11 for the

answer. In this passage, the scribes and the Pharisees test Jesus by using the woman caught in adultery. At first glance, our Lord appears to be in a no-win situation. If Christ explicitly agrees that the woman deserves death, the Pharisees can complain to the Roman authorities who prohibit first-century Judea from imposing the death penalty for such crimes. Essentially, they can accuse Jesus of sedition. But if He denies that death by stoning is the maximum penalty for adultery under the Mosaic law (Lev. 20:10), the Pharisees can charge Him with heresy for denying the Law.



Let us never ignore justice, but may we also be quick to show mercy to those who have sinned against us and ask for our forgiveness.

Jesus' response is fascinating. He agrees that execution is a proper sentence on the woman, for He never says, "You are wrong to think she deserves death." Agreeing with the would-be executioners that the woman deserves death, He appoints the executioners — those who are without sin (John 8:7–8). None of the other men meet this bar, and so they turn away one by one (v. 9).

There is one man there without sin, however — the God-man Christ Jesus. Yet He shows mercy. Though it would be right for Him to execute her, Jesus does not do so. Instead of giving her justice on the spot, He gives her mercy (vv. 10–11).

### Coram Deo (before the face of God)

Mercy does not deny that wrong has been done or make light of sin. Instead, mercy is forgiveness and patience extended to someone despite the fact that the person deserves only justice. This is an important principle in a day when many confuse mercy with winking at justice and righteousness. Let us never ignore justice, but may we also be quick to show mercy to those who have sinned against us and ask for our forgiveness.<sup>1</sup>

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#### Passages for Further Study

2 Samuel 22:21–26

Luke 6:36

# Open It!

1) Share with the group when as a child or teen you got into the most trouble. What was the punishment? What life lessons did you learn from this experience?



2) Share about a time where you experienced mercy for a wrong done. How did you feel when the offended party forgave you and released you from your guilt?

## Read It | Matthew 5:7; 18:21-35

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

### Explore It

1. What question does Peter ask Jesus in verse 21? What was Jesus' answer?
2. What story does Jesus share to reinforce the answer?



(Continued)

3. What amount of money was owed by the first servant?
4. How did the king plan to get back the money owed to him? What did he do when he was moved by mercy?
5. What did the forgiven servant do after being forgiven his debt?
6. What was the response of the onlooking servants to his actions with his fellow servant?

## Get It

1. What makes it so difficult to forgive people on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> offenses?
2. In what ways is an unmerciful spirit so deadly to relationships?
3. What strings do we usually attach to our granting of mercy?
4. What pressures or influences on us keep us from showing mercy?
5. How does being merciful depend on the other beatitudes we have studied so far?

Mercy (from the Greek word *eleemon*) refers to one who is actively compassionate or one who is benevolently merciful involving thought and action.

Mercy reflects being concerned about people in their need. One might say they are "mercy full"! The idea is that they possess a compassionate heart leading one to acts of mercy, the purpose of which is to relieve the suffering and misery of the object of that compassion. It sometimes meant giving money to a needy person. As referring to believers, *eleemon* (mercy) refers not merely to those who express acts of mercifulness, but who have this attribute as a result of the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Mercy is not simply feeling compassion but exists when something is done to alleviate distress.

*John Piper says "The proof of our faith is in the power to see distress, feel pity, and perform relief even toward the worst of our enemies."*

1. What is it about mercy that makes it so central to our lives as Christians?

2. When has God shown mercy to people in the scriptures? To what offenses was God willing to extend mercy? In what ways has God shown you mercy in the past? Be specific.

*Ray Pritchard explains that mercy includes three elements...*

- *The recognition: I see the need.*
- *The motivation: I am moved by the need.*
- *The action: I move to meet the need.*
- *Which of these three components to mercy comes easiest/hardest for you? Why?*

3. Read Numbers 14:18. How is it that God can show mercy to some and not mercy to all? Is there any criteria that leads us to know when God will show mercy and when he won't?

4. How do we know when we are called to show mercy and when we are called to punish wrongdoing?

5. At the end of this beatitude we are promised that those who are merciful will themselves receive mercy. In what ways and by whom does our mercy towards others get translated to us receiving mercy?

# Five Acts of Mercy

## 1 Forgive

In the same way that we are forgiven we will forgive others.

Are you bearing a grudge, maintaining bitterness, seeking revenge, or holding someone in emotional hostage? The call of Christ is to forgive. You must release them from your own sentence of condemnation or indebtedness toward you.

*Note that this does not mean that your emotions and hurt are immediately gone. Kent Hughes says "The fact that you have forgiven and continue to forgive is a sign of grace, despite the ambivalences and imperfections of your forgiveness"*

## 2 Show Compassion

Embrace the fallen and downtrodden. (See Gal 6:1). Rather than speaking about or acting vindictively toward the sinning brother in this passage we are to gently restore = mercy in action.

## 3 Give

God has made us stewards of all He has given us and we demonstrate the mercy of God to others by the way we give to meet pressing needs.

Mercy does not mean to throw your resources to the wind, but to use them wisely in meeting the needs of those in distress.

## 4 Speak Truth

Mercy is found in speaking the gospel of Christ—that gospel of forgiveness and mercy, to fellow sinners.

## 5 Pray

We show mercy when we pray for the conversion of unbelievers.

- Take an inventory of your life when it comes to mercy. Which of the above acts of mercy do you struggle with? Why? Discuss with your group practical ways you can improve at them.
- Based on this study on mercy, what practical steps can Village Bible Church take to become more merciful towards each other as well as the unbelieving world?
- To whom is God leading you to show mercy? Ask God to give you a spirit of mercy and forgiveness as you remember the mercy and forgiveness He has shown you.

<sup>1</sup> R.C. Sproul, *Blessed Are The Merciful From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: www.ligonier.org*

# week

# #7



SMALL GROUPS

The UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM

FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.

The Pure in Heart	Coram Deo	Study
<p>“...to be poor in spirit, is to have humble thoughts of ourselves, of what we are, and have, and do”.</p>	<p>“The greatest glory of heaven is not that we will be free of pain, as wonderful as that will be. Instead, [it’s] the ability to enjoy direct, face-to-face communion with God.”</p>	<p>Open It</p> <p>Explore It</p> <p>Get It</p>

## “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8

### The Pure in Heart

In our last study we saw that the connection of the mercy we receive with the mercy we show to others can be a scary prospect indeed apart from the mediation of Christ. If we were to consider the potential of Scripture to strike us with fear more fully, however, we would doubtless include the sixth beatitude as a frightening passage as well. Jesus promises that the “pure in heart” will “see God,” but who among us is pure in heart?

Again, our only confidence is in Christ, who has sanctified His people by His blood (1 Cor. 6:11). He has set us apart definitively as holy and pure, and we prove this status by striving after personal holiness until in glory we are

perfected and freed from all sin. This purity is guaranteed by the effectual work of our Savior, and so we who are in Christ Jesus know that we will one day experience the Beatific Vision — we know that we will one day see God as He is.

**In Exodus 33:20, the Lord tells us that no man can see His face and live, but this is not due to God making His image-bearers inherently unable to bear His presence. Before the fall, humanity experienced intimate, face-to-face communion with the Creator when He walked with us in the cool of the day (Gen. 3:8).** But this fellowship was lost when we fell into sin. The barrier that keeps us from seeing the Lord now is our fallen character. Once this fallenness is removed, there is no reason why we

would not be able to gaze on God’s incomparable beauty.

This, indeed, is the Lord’s greatest promise to us: that we will be able to gaze upon Him, the most beautiful, awe-inspiring, worthy, holy, loving being that ever was, is, and will be. We will, as 1 John 3:1–3 tells us, see Him as He is. The Apostle is making reference to Christ: not the human nature of Christ alone but also the divine nature that is perfectly united with humanity in the person of our Savior. And to see the divine nature of the Son of God also means that we will see the other persons of the Trinity as well, for the Son dwells in the Father and the Father in the Son, just as the Holy Spirit mutually indwells the Father and the Son (John 10:37–38). What seeing God face to



“The greatest glory of heaven is not that we will be free of pain, as wonderful as that will be. Instead, [it’s] the ability to enjoy direct, face-to-face communion with God...”

face means precisely is not for us to know today, but we do know that seeing Him will fully satisfy our souls.

### Coram Deo (before the face of God)

The greatest glory of heaven is not that we will be free of pain, as wonderful as that will be. Instead, the ability to enjoy direct, face-to-face communion with God and see that for which our souls were created will be the highest joy we can imagine. We can scarcely contemplate the wonder of that day, but the beauty of Christ should make us long for it with the deepest longings of our souls and pursue the purity of heart that leads to this vision.<sup>1</sup>

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#### Passages for Further Study

Psalm 24  
 Daniel 7:9–10  
 1 Corinthians 13:12  
 Hebrews 10:19–23



# Open It!

1. What are some products that advertisers promote as being totally pure?
2. When and why is it difficult for you to live out in actions what you believe in your heart?



*How few of us live one life and live it in the open! We are tempted to wear a different mask and play a different role according to each occasion. This is not real, but play-acting, which is the essence of hypocrisy. Some people weave such a web of lies that they can no longer tell which part of them is real and which is make-believe. In this world of masks and charades stands Jesus, one who was totally honest and true, absolutely pure in heart. Now He is calling us to be like Him.*

## Read It | Matthew 5:8 & Psalm 24:1-10

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

## Explore It

1. What attributes of God are seen in this Psalm?
2. How does David describe a person who is pure in heart? What concepts and word pictures help us to know what it takes to be worthy before God?
3. How does the fact that everything belongs to God encourage us toward a pure heart?

4. What outcome is promised for those pursuing God in purity?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. While Jesus is the only one who is totally pure, what phrases in this Psalm give hope to a sinner that they can still be pure at heart?

The “pure in heart” are those who do not hold out on God. The word “pure” carries the idea of simplicity from the root meaning clean, unmixed, without alloy. The Greek used “pure” for corn sifted of chaff, carrying the idea of unmixed. A pure heart is unmixed, not holding anything contrary to God’s will. It operates with **singleness** of motive: a desire to do God’s will.

the  
pure  
in heart

## Get It

1. What are some of the things that most often divide our hearts? What things most often divide your heart specifically?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Read James 4:4–8. What happens when we allow the things of this world to take our focus off of God? What does James says will take place when we pursue those things instead of Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In what ways can we defend against having a heart divided between the things of God and other pursuits?

## Said the counselor . . .

A counselor said that he often tells his counsees, "You're only as sick as your secrets." The more you have to hide, the sicker you are. And if you've got a lot of secrets, you're really sick.



Ray Pritchard gives us an excellent practical definition of purity of heart explaining that pure gold is not clean gold but 100%. Pure bread is all bread and no leaven. Pure water means that all the harmful elements have been removed by filtration. Some of you will remember when Ivory Soap advertised itself as being "99 and 44/100ths percent pure." But in truth, anything less than 100% is not really pure! In this context being "pure in heart" means to have no double allegiance. Later on in The Sermon on the Mount Jesus warned against serving God and money (Matthew 6:24). No one can serve two masters at the same time. You will always love one and hate the other. And James 1:6-8 teaches us that the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

To be pure in heart means that you are sincere, transparent and without guile. What you see is what you get. No fakery, no trickery, no hypocrisy. I still remember hearing one of my Greek professors in seminary speak about Dr. John Walvoord, who was then the president of Dallas Seminary. He said, "You never have to wonder what Dr. Walvoord really means or if he's trying to send you a double message. He is man without guile." That statement has stayed with me across all these years because he's the only man I've ever heard described in those terms. That statement reminds me of something I heard many years ago. A counselor said that he often tells his counsees, "You're only as sick as your secrets." The more you have to hide, the sicker you are. And if you've got a lot of secrets, you're really sick.

Is your life an open book? Or do you have things that you hide from your best friends and from your loved ones? Is there anyone in your life who knows the truth about who you really are? **Blessed are the pure in heart, for they have nothing to hide.**

4. Read Psalm 86:11 and Ezekiel 11:19. What do these verses remind us about our pursuit of purity?
5. Read Matthew 23:25-28. What does this teach us about what purity is not?
6. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for outward purity while being rotten from within. Is it wrong to allow our purity to shine before others? When is it right and when does it cross the line?
7. What distinction is there between being pure in heart and being pure in outward behavior?

Pure in heart speaks of having a singular fidelity to the things of God. It also speaks about one who lives total sincerity. The pure in heart have their lives, public and private, totally transparent before all.

8. How real are you with others? Do they see the real you or something else? What are reasons that people give to wear masks in order to cover the real person?
9. Why is it that insincerity is so destructive to relationships?
10. What does sincerity do for relationships?
11. If sincerity can be so beneficial why do so few actually live that way?

Let me summarize this beatitude in two short statements:

- In this life a pure heart means a deep walk with God.
- In eternity a pure heart means a new experience with God.

**Seeing God here (Matthew 5:8) means fellowship with Him. If we commit to unadulterated devotion to knowing God, we will fellowship with Him.**

One who sees God is without a divided self, a person of singleness of heart. There is something in man that wants to see God; so Jesus' words touch a nerve deep in the human heart. Jesus promises what all men desire - to see God. The Bible tells us that God has put eternity in the heart of every man. Blasé Pascal speaks of "the God shaped vacuum" inside the human heart. Augustine said "our heart is restless until it finds rest in God." Seeing God is the goal in all religion, the end of all true science, the desire of every nation and the aim of all philosophy.

In this context "seeing God" also means to have a deep experience of God, to know Him intimately and personally. All successful marriages discover this truth on a human level. The longer you live with your spouse, the more you get to know them as they really are. Transparency begets intimacy. In a good marriage there is nothing hidden because there is nothing to hide.



This is what Psalm 24 means when it asks “who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place?” The answer is simple: “He who has clean hands and a pure heart.” He will receive a blessing from the Lord. He will be vindicated by God Himself.

(Continued)

12. What does it mean to see God and what are the primary ways that we are able to experience this up-close encounter with the Almighty?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
13. How will seeing God be different in heaven than it is on earth?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
14. Consider ways in which you’d like your relationships with God and others to be purer (that is, more single minded and sincere).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. What risks are involved? What reward makes those risks worthwhile?

<sup>1</sup> R.C. Sproul, Blessed Are The Pure in Heart From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)

week  
#8

## SMALL GROUPS

FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.



Peacemakers	Coram Deo	Study
"... In order to have peace we require a mediator — a person or persons who can represent both sides in the dispute and help effect reconciliation."	"...peacemaking that reveals our status as God's children is peacemaking concerned to promote an authentic, holy peace."	Open It Explore It Get It

## “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9

### 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. Certainly, this is an appropriate reply, for we are saved from the wrath of God when we put our faith in Christ Jesus (1 Thess. 1:9–10). But there is another answer to the question, and that is the word peace. After all, Paul refers to the gospel as the “gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15), and he also tells us that having been justified by faith alone in Christ alone, we have “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1).

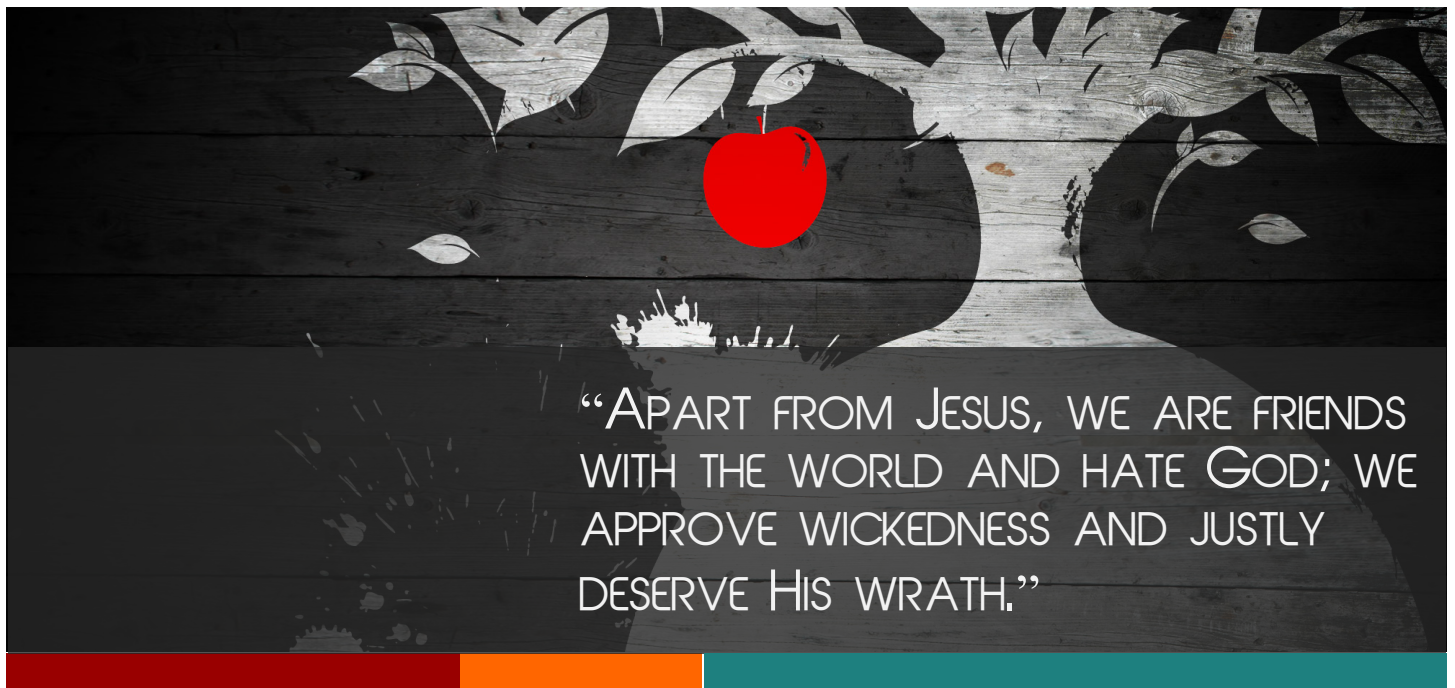
We know from Scripture and experience that unredeemed

sinners do not have peace now. Unregenerate people are estranged from God, and estrangement from our Creator is the lot of all of Adam’s natural-born descendants before they know the Savior. We are born in sin (Rom. 5:12–21), and thus we are not only estranged from God but also at enmity with Him until we trust His promise of salvation. Apart from Jesus, we are friends with the world and hate God; we approve wickedness and justly deserve His wrath (Rom. 1:18–32; James 4:4).

**In order to have peace we require a mediator — a person or persons who can represent both sides in the dispute and help effect reconciliation.** For human beings at enmity with God, there is but one mediator — the God-man Christ Jesus

(John 1:1, 14; 1 Tim. 2:5). He is the “mediator of a new covenant” who guarantees an inheritance to those who believe on His name (Heb. 9:11–28). Being fully human, our Savior is able to represent His people and their interests as the perfectly righteous One in whom His disciples are reckoned just before our holy Creator. Being fully God, Christ Jesus represents the interests of His Father as the supreme Emissary sent to reveal God’s wrath against the sins of His people on the cross and God’s great love in giving His Son to die in our place.

Unlike Jesus, we cannot be mediators in the sense of redeeming others from sin. What we can do is imitate, however faintly, our Creator’s work of peacemaking by helping to bring



“APART FROM JESUS, WE ARE FRIENDS WITH THE WORLD AND HATE GOD; WE APPROVE WICKEDNESS AND JUSTLY DESERVE HIS WRATH.”

(Continued)

about true and godly peace between warring parties who cross our paths. In so doing, we prove that we are children of God (Matt. 5:9).

### Coram Deo (before the face of God)

It is important to note that the peacemaking that reveals our status as God’s children is peacemaking concerned to promote an authentic, holy peace. The false prophets of Israel promised a fake, ungodly peace, and many people today want to paper over real differences and make light of ungodliness in the interest of “peace.” Let us never attempt to make this type of false, temporary peace between others<sup>1</sup>.

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#### Passages for Further Study

Leviticus 3; 7:11–18

Isaiah 57:21

Acts 10:34–43

1 Peter 3:8–12

## Open It!

Will and Ariel Durant, in **The Lessons of History**, begin the chapter on "History and War" noting that:

*"War is one of the constants of history, and has not diminished with civilization and democracy. In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war."*

Clearly mankind is in need of a peacemaker. As we discuss below, the real need for peace is first between God and man. Man has been at perpetual war with God since Genesis 3, with no years in which there has not been war. This record therefore is even worse than the record between men!

1. What are some of the reasons for the rampant strife and war between people and nations?

(Continued)

## 2. What are some things that have caused you strife and conflict with others?

### Webster's Definition

Read the following definition of a peacemaker from the dictionary.

- Peacemaker: *a person who helps to prevent or stop an argument, a fight, or a war.*

### The Biblical Definition

“Peacemaker” comes from the Greek word **eirenopoiéo**, which means those who make peace not war. The root word **eirene** signifies a harmonious relationship and is not merely the absence of war or uneasy truce. **Eirene** signifies parties holding differences of opinion who are willing to turn toward each other and embrace one another in spite of their differences.

**Eirene** is derived from the verb **eiro**, which means to bind or join together that which is broken or divided. The idea is to set as one again. So we can expand the definition of "peacemaker" as those who facilitate the binding together of those who were divided, thus setting them as one.

Jesus is referring to those who actively intervene to bind together those that are divided. By making peace, kingdom citizens manifest themselves as sons of God.



While each of these above definitions speaks to the issue of peacemaking, what are some of the differences that can be seen between the two? How does the biblical definition seem to go farther in its application of peacemaking?

### Read It | Colossians 1:15-23



## Explore It

1. According to verses 15-19, Paul lists a set of attributes of Jesus who came to be our Prince of Peace. What are some of them that Paul shares with us?
2. What was necessary for reconciliation to be made between God and man according to verse 22?
3. What position were we in when God was reconciling us back to himself through Jesus Christ?
4. What are the results of Christ's peacemaking work on the cross for us?
5. Once we experience this peace from God what part do we play in ensuring that this peace continues in our lives?
6. Why is our peace with God so important to our functioning as peacemakers?

Before we can examine what it means to be peacemakers in this world of strife, we must understand what the ultimate peacemaker did for us.

## Get It

### The Gospel—The Key to Peace

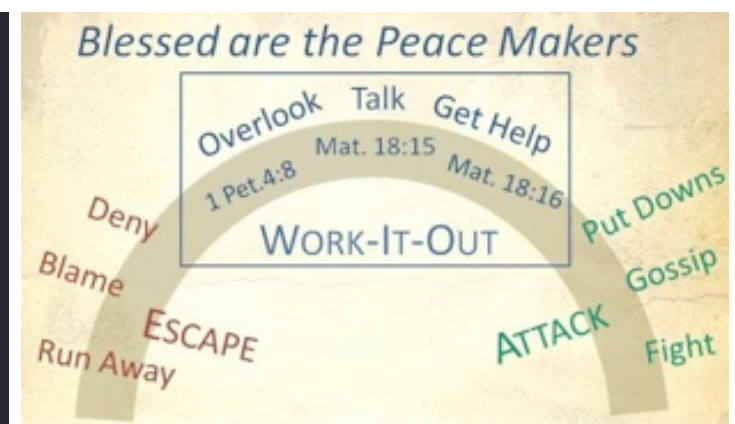
The key to changing the way we deal with conflict is the gospel—the good news is that God made peace with us and between us by sending His Son to die for our sins and give us new life through His resurrection (Col. 1:19-20; Eph. 2:14-16). When we believe in Jesus, we receive forgiveness and are united with Christ and one another (Acts 10:43; Phil. 2:1-2). God then begins to transform us into the likeness of His

Son, enabling us to break free from sinful escaping and attacking habits and mature into peacemakers who reflect the glory of God's reconciling love in the midst of conflict (2 Cor. 3:17-18; Col. 3:12-15).

1. Looking back at the previous beatitudes, how would the other beatitudes be helpful characteristics for a peacemaker?
  
2. If we attempt to be peacemakers does it mean that there will always be peace? What should we do when peace seems to elude even our most noble attempts? (See Romans 12:18) What does living at peace with all men look like?
  
3. When is it unwise to pursue peace? Is there ever a time for war to trump attempts at peace?
  
4. Why is it so difficult for us to take the initiative to make peace?
  
5. Why would those who pursue peace be recognized as the children of God?

## The Slippery Slope

Finding peace in this world of strife is a difficult balancing act. Peacemaker Ministries illustrates this with the slippery slope of conflict. Take a couple moments examine the graph<sup>2</sup> to help answer the questions below.



6. When conflict arises which side do you find yourself sliding towards? What causes you to slide that way?
  
7. What are some possible outcomes to each side when it is our answer to conflict?
  
8. Why do so few conflicts stay on the top of the arch? Why are the three responses at the top of the arch more preferable?
  
9. On the top of the slope we see the option of overlooking offenses, 1 Peter 4:8 tells us “love covers a multitude of sins.” When does your love reach its limits?
  
10. When love cannot overlook an offense Matthew 18:16 gives us guidelines for addressing the issue at hand. Why is it important to bring others into the conflict to try to resolve the issue?
  
11. What tangible steps can our church take to produce a culture of peace? What part can you play in making seeing that dream become a reality?

Take time to pray for peace in the following areas:

- Peace for the nations
- Peace within our own borders
- Peace in our church
- Peace in our homes



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<sup>2</sup> Reprinted or adapted from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, Ken Sande (Baker Books, 3d ed., 2003). © Peacemaker® Ministries. See more at: <http://www.peacemaker.net>

# week #9

## SMALL GROUPS



FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH  
FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.

### The Persecuted

"Sometimes we misinterpret our suffering as enduring pain for Christ when all we are really suffering is the pain of our own bad choices and misbehavior."

### Coram Deo

"...We should expect people to make fun of us or even beat and kill us when we faithfully proclaim the gospel."

### Study

Open It  
Explore It  
Get It

**"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (v. 10). Matthew 5:10-12**

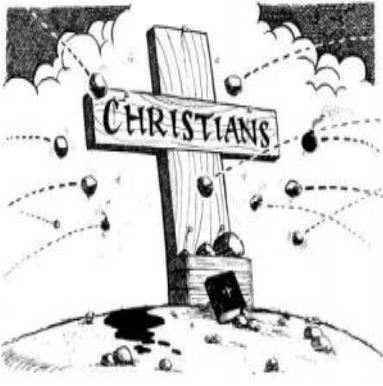
## The Persecuted

The last two beatitudes in Matthew 5 actually reveal God's blessing on the same kind of people, and, by including elements of the first beatitude, wrap up the entire list nicely, helping us to understand one of the basic truths of the Christian life. In sum, the last two beatitudes tell us the same thing — that those who are persecuted for the sake of Jesus and His righteousness receive a great blessing indeed (vv. 10–12). What is this blessing? It is the same one promised to the "poor in spirit" in verse 3, namely, the "Kingdom of Heaven." Living a life of repentance and faith in Christ alone and suffering trouble for the

sake of Jesus' name go hand in hand. Both suffering and humble faith bring about the same reward, which indicates that we cannot have true faith without worldly opposition.

This idea that true faith and persecution are inseparably linked should not be all that surprising to us, for it is the experience of the church throughout the ages. Martin Luther said that there is always opposition when the gospel is preached plainly and accurately. Yet he was not the first, nor the last, to suffer for the biblical gospel. Jesus Himself did not promise that we would have an

easy existence but that we would have trouble in this world. Our cause for rejoicing is the fact that He has overcome the world and will deliver an eternal reward to His people, not that we will never suffer pain for Christ's name (John 16:33). As we consider suffering for the sake of Jesus, it is important to remember that our Lord does not promise a blessing to every type of suffering; rather, it is suffering for the Kingdom that proves the Kingdom is ours (Matt. 5:10–12). **Sometimes we misinterpret our suffering as enduring pain for Christ when all we are really suffering is the pain of our own bad choices and**



## Coram Deo

Before the face of God

While we are certainly not called to seek out persecution, there is also a sense in which we should expect people to make fun of us or even beat and kill us when we faithfully proclaim the gospel. As in every generation, the temptation is to water down or change the gospel so that it will be more palatable to the world and less likely to get us into trouble. Today, let us encourage one another never to succumb to this temptation<sup>1</sup>.

(Continued)

**misbehavior.** So we must be careful that we do not count ourselves blessed until we are sure that our pain is on account of faithful service to Jesus. But once we see that we are suffering for our Lord, we should also take care that we do not water down the gospel. All of us are prone to avoid conflict, and it is all too easy to try and make the gospel's content less offensive to a fallen world. But if we do this, we deny our Savior and risk forfeiting our blessing (Luke 12:8–9).

## Open It!

1) Name a movie or book that contains a story about courage amidst difficult times.

2) When you hear the word persecution, what people group or nation comes to mind first? What is the cause of such harsh treatment?

The word "persecuted" comes from the Greek word "dioko" which means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for chasing down criminals.

## Read It | Matthew 5:10- 12

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

## Explore It

What ways does Jesus tell His listeners that the world will "chase them down?"

In what ways have you experienced persecution?

What causes the world to be so opposed to people who desire to live so peaceably?

Since the beginning of His sermon Jesus has described the character of the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven; we observe next the conflict that these citizens experience in this present world. At first glance, it may seem odd that peacemakers who are poor in spirit, who mourn, and who are meek would be persecuted. What we must remember however, lest we be discouraged when conflict comes, is that we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Light.

## Get It

So what are we to do as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven? We must live out the Christian life in the real world - manifesting the seven character qualities Jesus has outlined in the beatitudes. These present an indelible mark that you are a follower of Christ. Everyone will know. Not everyone will like it, but no one will be able to deny this mark.



Don't worry about seeking persecution. It will seek you! You won't have to "stir up trouble" to incite persecution. Living like Jesus will give you all the persecution you can handle and then some! There will be times when you as a good soldier of Christ Jesus will be called to stand up for what is right in opposition to that which is evil.

"The greatest criticism of the American church today is that no one wants to persecute it because there is nothing very much to persecute it about."

- George F. MacLeod

Jesus tells us that when we respond to persecution in a biblical way we can rest assured that we will rejoice and be glad in those times of greatest difficulty. If this is true then the desire of every Christ follower should be to follow the example of the early church when they faced persecution.

1. If non-believers who watch you on a daily basis were to speak about what they see in you every day, what would they say about your life as a Christian?
2. We live in a country where we suffer low levels of persecution. Is this a result of our lack of boldness or the country's acceptance of the gospel?
3. Do you agree with the quote by George F. MacLeod? Why or why not?
4. What are some of the differences between experiencing persecution as a Christian and simply experiencing a backlash for being obnoxious?



## Read It | Matthew 5:10- 12

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

1. What were Peter and John doing that caused the religious leaders to take notice?
2. When have you been noticed as a follower of Christ? What was your reaction to being found out?
3. In verse 2 we are told that the religious leaders were “annoyed.” What causes the world to be annoyed by Christians?
4. What did Peter and John do when they stood before the persecuting government of their day?
5. What was the reaction and response of the religious leaders?
6. What did Peter and John tell the Sanhedrin when the disciples were told to stay quiet?



7. What did Peter and John do after they were released from jail?
8. What attribute of God's allowed the disciples to speak with boldness in light of such opposition?
9. How does a robust belief in God's sovereignty enable us to stand against all levels of persecution?
10. Verse 31 tells us that the disciples were so filled by the Spirit that they went out and shared the gospel boldly. In what areas and with whom is God calling you to stand up and speak out for the gospel no matter the cost?
11. What types of anxiety and fear cause us to keep our Christianity as a private matter?
12. Jesus tells us that when we endure persecution for the sake of the gospel that we will "receive a great reward in Heaven." How does the prospect of an eternal reward motivate our willingness to step out more publicly for our faith?
13. Looking back at the previous Kingdom attitudes, which one would enable you to welcome with joy some of the troubles that persecution can bring?

## Take some time to pray for the following

**Pray** for our fellow Christians in foreign lands suffering under the constant threat of persecution.


**Pray** for our missionaries who have left the comforts of America to share the good news in lands that are not so open to the gospel message.

**Pray** that the churches in our nation would be bolder in sharing the gospel.

**Pray** for the members of your group to trust in God's sovereignty as they contemplate the opportunities to be bold as Christians in their sphere of influence.

# week #10

SMALL  
GROUPS



## FIND CARE & DISCIPLESHIP WITH FRIENDS & WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY.

Salt and Light	Coram Deo	Study
<p>“Christians are to be like salt and have a positive impact on the culture far beyond what is expected from the powerless.”</p>	<p>Christ’s call for us to be salt and light is not an impossible one.</p>	<p>Open It Explore It Get It</p>

“Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (v. 16). Matthew 5:13–16

## Salt and Light

Jesus identifies Himself with Yahweh in the Sermon on the Mount when He compares His disciples to the persecuted prophets of old (Matt. 5:11–12; Jer. 37–38). The disciples who speak for Jesus are like the prophets who spoke for the Lord of the covenant; therefore, Christ implies His divine sovereignty.

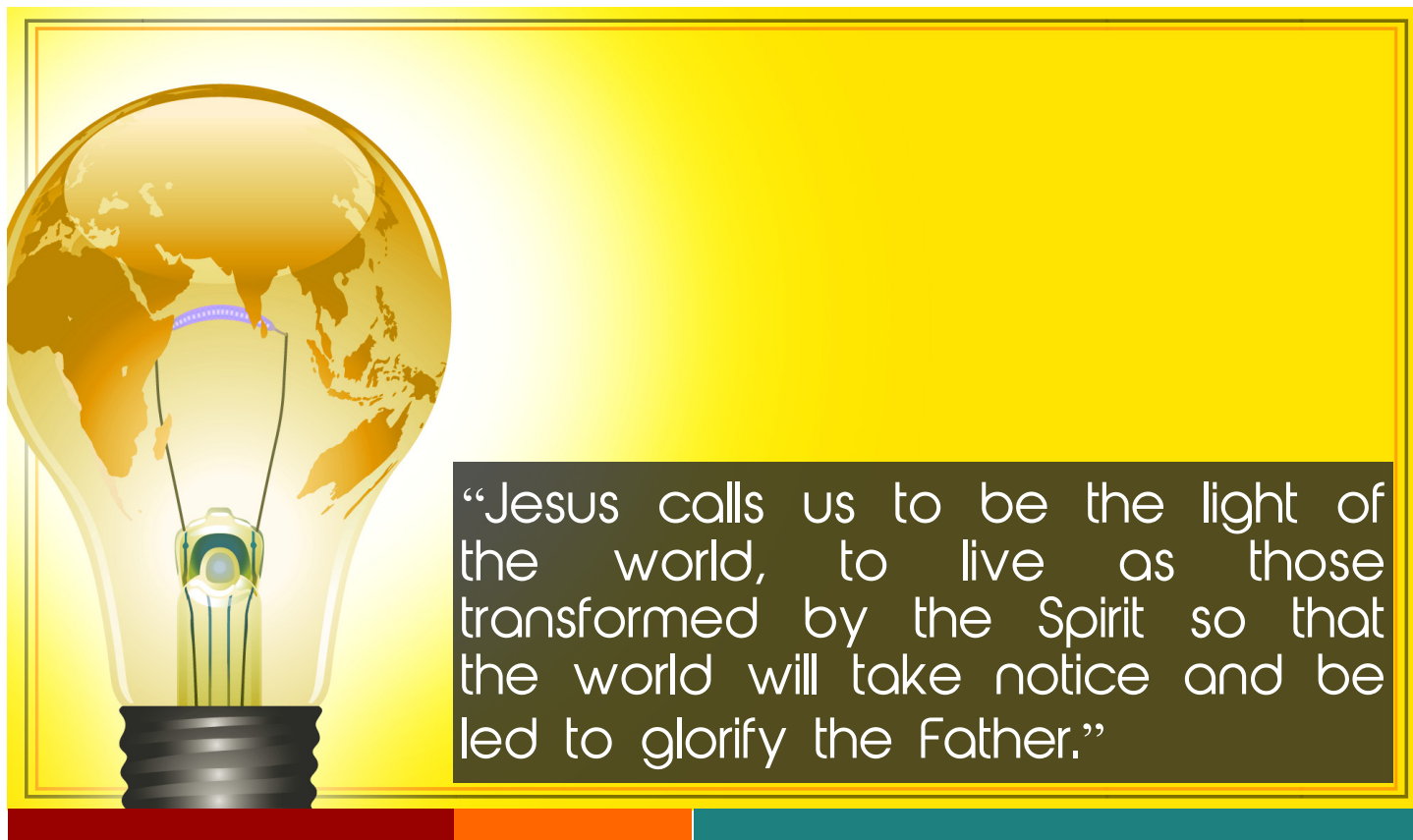
The prophets carried out their ministries in full view of the people of Israel, and so we are not surprised to see that their successors, the disciples of Jesus, do not build the kingdom of God in

secret. This is the point of today’s passage. Our Savior calls His disciples the “salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13) and the “light of the world” (v. 14), two substances that permeate and transform the food, or the darkness, in which they are found. Like salt and light, the church is to have a transformative effect on the surrounding society.

Salt is often produced as tiny grains and is not expensive given its prevalence. Yet its value far outweighs its apparent insignificance. Christians are to be like salt and have a positive

impact on the culture far beyond what is expected from the powerless.

The meaning of Jesus’ metaphor is probably not limited to any single benefit we get from salt, but we will highlight its preservative quality. The church must have a preserving effect on society and by its influence prevent the world from rushing headlong toward ungodliness. Christianity has fulfilled this role historically, leading the way in the advance of human rights. But take note that we are salt only if we maintain our difference from the world around us. In the Near East, salt can be found mixed with



gypsum or sand, diluting its “saltiness” and worth. The same fate can befall us if we bend over backward to show the world how much we are like them (v. 13; 1 Peter 1:14–16).

Rural communities like the one Jesus addresses in Matthew 5 well know how blinding darkness can be. Yet the glow of a city in the distance can give those living in the pitch black of night a sense of direction and bearing. Just as walking around the camp at night is dangerous without a lighted torch, Jesus calls us to be the light of the world, to live as those transformed by the Spirit so that the world will take notice and be led to glorify the Father (vv. 14–16).

### Coram Deo (before the face of God)

Christ’s call for us to be salt and light is not an impossible one. In keeping with New Testament

ethics, Jesus first tells us what we are and then calls us to live up to that standard. In Him we are salt and light (Matt. 5:13–16), and so we are to live out by faith what He has made us to be. If you are discouraged by your saltlessness or darkness, remember that Jesus declares you to be salt and light and press on, knowing that by the power of the Spirit you can obey His charge.<sup>1</sup>

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#### Passages for Further Study

Isaiah 42:1–9

Mark 9:50

Acts 13:44–49

Romans 12:1–2

# Open It!



1. What salty snack do you enjoy eating the most?

2. While eating that salty goodness what favorite drink do you enjoy with it?

## Read It | Matthew 5:13-16

Read the entire passage before proceeding to the questions below.

## Explore It

1. What two things does Jesus call us to be?

2. What is done with unsalty salt?

3. What does Jesus tell His followers to do with the light we have been given?

4. What two results come when we are “salt and light” in this world?

## Get It

1. After speaking about the eight kingdom attitudes that God demands of His followers, He speaks about our engagement with the world. What relationship do the Beatitudes and our being salt and light have with one another?
2. In our text this week Jesus uses two metaphors to illustrate the role that Christians play in the world. Why would Jesus use salt and light to describe His followers' engagement with the world?
3. In ancient Palestine salt was used to preserve meat and keep it from spoiling. What does this say about the role that the church and Christians play in society? How have you seen this preserving effect take place?
4. What are some current events and situations in our world that could use a heavy sprinkling of God's salt?
5. While saltiness is spoken about in a positive way to preserve and as a flavoring additive that makes things taste better, in what ways does salt cause trouble? Is there ever a time when a Christian can be too salty? Explain your answers.

## The unsalty salt...

At the end of verse 13 Jesus speaks about salt that has lost its taste. The idea of unsalty salt is summed up in the Greek word “moraine.” This word carries the idea of ‘playing the fool’ or ‘to become foolish.’ In a sense isn't that what Christians do when they lose their saltiness by playing the fool for the world, by ignoring Christian disciplines, by giving in to lusts or disregarding warnings about sin? In the present passage “moraine” is used more figuratively meaning to cause something to lose its taste or purpose for which it exists. For Christ followers to lose their saltiness was equivalent to becoming foolish. It would in effect be to lose their identity.



6. If losing our saltiness is the epitome of foolishness for the believer why then do so many Christians live such unsalted lives?

7. What does it mean that this type of salt is only good for throwing to the ground to be trampled on by men? How is this principle applied to our Christianity?

*Salt must be brought into close contact with whatever it is meant to affect if it is to do any good. Christians are the salt of the earth. We must be willing to be rubbed into the decaying carcass of an unregenerate society. Most of us are content to sit on Sunday in our little saltshakers, far removed from a needy and lost humanity<sup>2</sup>.*

8. Who are those people with whom you are close enough to “salt?” What are you doing to be the salt shaker God is calling you to be?

***You are the light of the world** - Jesus gives the Christian both a great compliment and a great responsibility when He says that we are the light of the world, because He claimed that title for Himself as He walked this earth<sup>3</sup>.*

9. Jesus turns from the metaphor of being salt in this world to being a shining light to this world. In what ways will the Christian's saltiness allow their light to shine more brightly?

10. Name some contemporary things that we hide our light with?

11. What temptations have a way of keeping us from shining as brightly as we could?

"YOU are the light of the world." The "you" is emphatic in the Greek text, so that we might translate it "You, and you alone are the light of the world." Jesus Christ intentionally singles out this group of peasants as so distinctly different from the world and so important for the world, that he calls them "the light of the world." We know that Jesus uses the same language of Himself in John 8:12, "I am the Light of the world." That passage speaks of light in an originative sense. He is the origin of such light so that He can add, "He who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life." Christians are light in a derivative sense in that the light we have comes as a result of relationship to Jesus Christ. We do not produce the light, but like the moon that reflects the light of the sun, we too reflect the light of His indwelling life<sup>4</sup>.

12. How is the Christian to reflect the light of Christ and not himself to the darkened world around us?

## His Lamps

God's lamps we are,  
 To shine where He shall say:  
 And lamps are not for sunny rooms,  
 Nor for the light of day;  
 But for the dark places of the earth,  
 Where shame and wrong and crime have birth,  
 Or for the murky twilight grey,  
 Where wandering sheep have gone astray,  
 Or where the Lamp of Faith grows dim,  
 And souls are groping after Him.  
 And as sometimes a flame we find,  
 Clear-shining through the night,  
 So dark we do not see the lamp  
 But only see the Light,  
 So may we shine, God's love the flame,  
 That men may glorify His Name  
 --Annie Johnson Flint





Reread this portion of the poem and complete the following questions:

And lamps are not for sunny rooms,  
Nor for the light of day;  
But for the dark places of the earth,  
Where shame and wrong and crime have birth

Or for the murky twilight grey,  
Where wandering sheep have gone astray,  
Or where the Lamp of Faith grows dim,  
And souls are groping after Him.

(Continued)

13. For many it is quite easy to shine brightly in Christian settings. Is this wrong to do, or is there a place to be light for other Christians? What purpose would this accomplish?
  
14. What are some practical ways that the church can allow the light of Christ to shine brighter? How can you?
  
15. How does our shining as bright lights cause the unbelieving world to glorify God?

<sup>1</sup> R.C. Sproul, Salt and Light From Ligonier Ministries, the teaching fellowship of R.C. Sproul. All rights reserved. Website: [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org)

<sup>2</sup> Vance Havner, "Pepper 'n' Salt."

<sup>3</sup> David Guzik, "Commentary on the Bible".

<sup>4</sup> Phil Newton, "The Power of Christians as light", South Woods Baptist Church)