

# The Beatitudes (Matt. 5:1-12)

## A Small Group Outline



1. **Praise** (*Purpose: To worship God*)
  - What are you thankful for this week? (*let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook*)
  - Song Service
    - Sing a few songs of praise to God
2. **Pray** (*Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord*)
  - What challenges did you have this week? (*write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook*)
  - Go into a season of prayer
3. **Review** (*Purpose: To learn accountability*)
  - Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? (*e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?*)
  - *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*
4. **Give** (*Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies*)
  - Our best option in the lockdown is to return tithes and offerings electronically. Ensure you get the bank details from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.
5. **Discover** (*Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word*)
  - **Notes for the facilitator**
    - Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 6-34
    - Poor in spirit is a reference to those who are humble. "Pride closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give" (MB 7). Jesus values humility and penitence.
    - The mourning referred to in Matt. 5:4 is heartfelt sorrow for sin (MB 9). You either mourn now for your sins and get future comfort, or have present comfort and future mourning. Jesus' words in this verse also speak comfort to those who are afflicted, bereaved and have a burden for the salvation of others.
    - Meekness is when a person is emptied of self, pride and the love for supremacy (MB 15)
    - The person who has experienced Christ's loves wants more and more of Him (Matt. 5:6). This will be reflected in their priorities – how they spend their time, money, talents, etc.
    - Those who are merciful show "compassion to the poor, suffering and oppressed" (Job 29:12-16) – MB 22
    - Purity of **heart** is not just a heart that is free from lust or sensuality, but one that is free from pride and self-seeking, humble, unselfish and child-like (MB 25). The **heart** is central to the Christian life for it is the seat of a person's motives, attitudes and personality.
    - Peace-making can be seen from 2 perspectives: 1) Giving up a life of sin is making peace with heaven, 2) Being an agent of reconciliation between fellow brothers and sisters
    - "Persecution and reproach await all who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ" (MB 29). Christians will rejoice when sharing the humiliation and reproach of their Master (MB 30)

- Part of peace-making is learning to be quiet – learning how to control one’s tongues, as well as one’s temper
- There is a blessing for those who are persecuted for **righteousness sake**. There can be persecution that we bring on ourselves because of our obnoxious behaviour, or through disobedience to God’s will. This is not the persecution spoken of here.
- Persecution and trials build character, it has a refining effect on the life
- Persecution can take many forms: A scornful look, a word of ridicule, opposition to one’s ideas/plans, physical violence, etc.
- To be reviled is to be slandered, to have your reputation damaged. “While slander may blacken the reputation, it cannot stain the character” (MB 32)
- *Read Matt. 5:1-12. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
  - What do you think being poor in spirit means?
  - Why do you think Jesus blesses those who mourn?
  - What does it mean to be meek?
  - How would a person behave if he or she were hungry and thirsting after righteousness?
  - Illustrate ways that people can practically show mercy?
  - How can one maintain purity of heart amid a world that loves and encourages impurity?
  - In what ways can we be persecuted for righteousness sake?
  - How can we relieve tensions among people?
  - How do you handle it when people blacken your name?
  - How do the virtues in the Beatitudes differ from those of society?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
  - In what ways can you show mercy to someone this week?
  - Are you experiencing persecution or slander for your faith? Elaborate.
  - On a scale of 1-10 how would you characterise your hunger and thirst for righteousness? Explain (*Be honest in your response. If you feel uncomfortable you can pass*)
  - What peace-making responses work well for you when you are faced with hostility?
  - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group’s secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “I would like to show mercy to a friend who is in dire financial need by buying the family some groceries this week.”

6. **Share** (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today’s lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. **Closing prayer**