

## Matthew 5:1-12

### The Challenge of Discipleship Study 8: *Blessed Living*

**Focus Question:** *What is one way God blessed you during the past week?*

#### Word of Life

**“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”**

#### Read [Matthew 5:1-12](#)

This text is part of the Sermon on the Mount and is the first of five lengthy speeches given by Jesus in the gospel of Matthew. Actually, this sermon is a compilation of many of the teachings of Jesus and includes the Lord’s Prayer. The Sermon on the Mount is sometimes referred to as the Christian Magna Carta. (If you have time, skim through the entire Sermon on the Mount found in [Matthew 5-7](#))

The first verses of the Sermon on the Mount focus on the *Beatitudes*, a type of blessing. Yet, these are not typical blessings as found in the psalms. Jesus adds a unique twist by lifting up attitudes not typically associated with *blessing*. This is one of many times Jesus adds new meaning to familiar teachings. A quick glance at the Beatitudes reveals that Jesus is not offering a blessing because of good fortune. Instead, Jesus flips everything upside down and blesses those who are emptied.

The timing of the blessing in these teachings is unclear. Will the blessings be known now or in the future eternal life? When will the meek inherit the earth? In the future? When will the pure in heart see God? All the blessings are written in the present tense, as in today.

1. *What pattern do you observe in the Beatitudes?*
2. *Are people who meet the description of the Beatitudes blessed today or the future?*

On the one hand, we could make a case for those who are poor in spirit seeing God in this lifetime. As these individuals acknowledge their dependence on God, they become open to the presence of God and God’s reign. They experience God’s reign this day.

Likewise, those who mourn the loss of a loved one, passing health, or tragedies faced by others, can know the present comfort provided by a loving God and a compassionate Christian community. This comfort can be experienced today – not just in the next life. Yet those who mourn still grieve, despite the comfort extended to them from others. They still anticipate a promised comfort yet to come.

3. *What has been your experience of being blessed as described in the Beatitudes?*

Like so many of the teachings of Jesus, the Beatitudes echo the paradox of the Christian faith. Blessings are experienced fully by those who, at first glance, do not seem blessed at all. It is to those who are emptied and who recognize a need for God that the true blessings are given. Our challenge as disciples of Jesus is to live in the reality of day-to-day hurts and pains, while trusting in his promises for the future. We experience a foretaste of the promises of the Beatitudes now while at the same time living with not-yet-here fulfillment of the promises yet to come. If that sounds like a paradox, it is. But that is the life of the disciple.

1. *How can you live a blessed life?*
2. *How can you be a blessing to others?*
3. *What makes the Beatitudes so challenging for modern-day disciples?*

#### Prayer

God of mercy, comfort the places in my life where I grieve.

#### Dig Deeper

[Romans 6: 4-11](#)

#### Last Word

This week,  
take time to extend comfort  
to another person in sorrow.