

(1) Do you ever find yourself focusing on one particular aspect or characteristic of the life and ministry of Jesus to the exclusion of another? In the case of the Beatitudes, do you feel more comfortable hearing Jesus teach these truths than when he heals the sick or casts out demons? Or perhaps it is the other way around. If so, why?

(2) What do we mean when we speak of the kingdom of God/heaven as “already” but “not yet”? What aspects of the kingdom are already ours and which ones await the age to come? Why is it important to recognize this distinction? What happens when a person over-emphasizes one to the exclusion of the other?

(3) What does Jesus mean by the word “blessed”? What does he not mean?

(4) Is it difficult for you to believe that God wants you to be happy? Is it difficult for you when you are exhorted to pursue what will bring you the greatest joy, namely, satisfaction in God and all that he is for you in Jesus? Why do you think so many Christians are afraid of the happy and blessed life?

(5) What does it mean to say a person is poor in spirit? What does it not mean? Once you’ve defined it, how might poverty of spirit help you in coping with the many crises that we are facing today?