



Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Matthew 5.1-12 | January 3, 2021
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we begin a new series for a new year that we're calling "Out With the Old." Of course, this series isn't just about moving on from 2020, but rather about our old ways of living that linger on too long, in light of the new life offered to us in Jesus, as communicated through his Sermon on the Mount. In this first study (of a total thirteen), we engage God's idea of blessing.

II. Connecting with One Another

What do you think of when you hear the word "bless"? "Blessed"? "Blessing"?
What do you think God thinks of "blessing"? Who is blessed in God's eyes? Why?

III. Study the Text

- a. The Sermon on the Mount is recorded in **Matthew 5-7**. Before turning there, however, recall that first Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in **Matthew 3.13-17**, led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil in **4.1-11**, began to preach in **4.12-17**, called his first disciples in **4.8-22**, then began healing people – and, as a result, drawing a crowd! – in **4.23-25**.

What do these passages reveal about the nature and focus of Jesus' ministry?

- b. **Read Matthew 5.1-2.**

What prompts Jesus to begin teaching? Who does he teach?

- c. These first two verses in Matthew 5 envision Jesus as a "new Moses" (see **Digging Deeper** for more on this). Why do you think Matthew, who wrote for a Jewish audience, makes connections between Jesus and Moses?

- d. **Read Matthew 5.3-12.**

How do you understand Jesus' words here? What do you think he is saying? Why?

- e. Both Hebrew (the language of the Old Testament) and Greek (used in the New Testament) have two words for "blessed." *Eulogeō* is used when asking God for a blessing (for instance, "O Lord, bless the sick"). *Makarios*, on the other hand, is used "not part of a wish and not to invoke a blessing. Rather, as an existing state of happiness or good fortune." In his Beatitudes (as these verses are called, meaning "blessings," "happy," or "fortunate"), Jesus uses *makarios*.



Why is that an important distinction to make? How does that “toss out” old ideas? How do the differences between the two words affect the meaning of Jesus’ statements? Try to think of an example (see **Digging Deeper** if you need help).

- f. With that important background information, let’s reengage Jesus’ beatitudes, as originally taught to his disciples. Look up the corresponding passages to fill out the meaning of what Jesus was saying. (Remember, the second lines are *not* a reward for the first line. It is *already* the case!)

“Poor in spirit” – **Isaiah 6.5, Isaiah 61.1-3, 66.1-2**

“Those that mourn” – **Psalms 119.36, 2nd Corinthians 1.3-11, Philippians 3.18**

“The meek” – **Psalms 37.9-11, Zechariah 9.9, Matthew 11.29**

“Hunger and thirst for righteousness” – **Micah 6.8, Matthew 6.33, 13.45-46**

“The merciful” – **Matthew 6.12, 18.23-35, Luke 10.25-37, 1st John 4.19**

“The pure in heart” – **Psalms 24.1-4, 51.10, John 1.18**

“The peacemakers” – **Ephesians 2.15, Philippians 4.7, Colossians 1.20**

“Those persecuted for righteousness” – **John 15.18, 16.33, 2nd Timothy 3.12**

- g. Each of these beatitudes is exemplified in the life of Christ.

What passages or events come to mind as you engage the list?

- h. What does it mean for you to live out each of these characteristics of Christlikeness (remember: not in order to receive blessing, but because you already have received blessing in Him)?

- i. The beatitudes can be read as a progression of living life in God’s family, that one characteristic builds upon the next.

What do you think? Does that make sense?

- j. These eight qualities of Jesus’ disciples are not options from which we are to pick and choose. Rather, they are qualities of the same group, true of those who have been with Jesus and received the good news of the inbreaking Kingdom.

Which of these characteristics could become stronger in your life by spending more time with Jesus?

IV. **Pray**

- a. Thank God for his “preemptive blessing” – that we are already blessed in Him by being called to Jesus.
- b. Ask God to increasingly instill these characteristics of Christlikeness in you.
- c. Lift up those suffering from COVID-19 – and all those serving in hospitals and on the front lines of this pandemic.



V. Digging Deeper

- a. **Matthew 5.1-2** quotes Moses' action in **Exodus 19.3**, reading, "He went up on the mountain" (note especially use of the definite article *the*, referencing Mount Sinai). In addition, many Jewish interpreters render **Deuteronomy 9.9** to mean Moses sat (a position of authority). Matthew intended his readers to see Jesus as the fulfillment of **Deuteronomy 18.15-19**.
- b. The first word for blessing, *eulogeō*, would mean "Blessed are the people who do X, because they will receive Y." The second word, *makarios* (the one Jesus uses), means, "Look at the authentic spirituality and joy of these people who have or will be given X." For example, "Blessed is the happy daughter of Mr. Jones because she will inherit his business." Notice: She is not *working to receive* the business. Her happy state already exists and knowledge of her future aids in that present day happiness.

