

What matters is living the good life



CITY BIBLE FORUM

What matters in life – The Sermon on the Mount -
Session 1^{i 1}

Matthew 5:1-16 ¹ Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them, saying:

³ **“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

⁴ **Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.**

⁵ **Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.**

⁶ **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.**

⁷ **Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.**

⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**

⁹ **Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.**

¹⁰ **Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

¹¹ **“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

¹³ **“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.**

¹⁴ **“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**

Jesus’ most famous speech

Referred to as “The Sermon on the Mount”, it’s 2300 words long, and takes 12 minutes to read out loud.

At the time Jesus was a little known itinerant teacher, in Palestine, a backwater of the Roman Empire, speaking to a crowd of unimportant people, 2000 years ago.

There was no media coverage and yet it’s a speech that has changed the world. Countless millions have read it, and had their lives changed by it.

¹ Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV, Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

Even our language today in the West has been shaped by it: sayings like “love your neighbour”, “treat others like you would like to be treated”, “eye for an eye”, “turn the other cheek”, “blessed are the peacemakers”.

The delivery

The location was the banks of the Sea of Galilee in Israel. The slope of the land created a natural amphitheatre so that the 12 disciples and the crowds could hear Jesus.



Q1. What's wrong with the image on the right?

The Beatitudes

The beginning of Jesus' speech is called the “Beatitudes”. The word “beatitude” is Latin for “blessed”. Being “blessed” is more than just being happy. Someone is blessed by God if they enjoy God's favour – it means they are living the good life.

Modern day “beatitudes”

- 1) Happy are the successful, for they control their own lives.
- 2) Happy are those without much of a conscience, for they're enjoying life.
- 3) Happy are the assertive, for they get what they want.
- 4) Happy are the morally indifferent, for they live how they want,
- 5) Happy are those who take revenge, for they always get even
- 6) Happy are those who are comfortable with their own moral failures, for they won't worry about God.
- 7) Happy are the trouble-makers, for they give the spectators what they want.
- 8) Happy are those who don't believe in anything too much, for they will have a nice easy life.

Q2. These modern day “beatitudes” – do you think many people today would think they make for the good life?

Matthew 5:1-12 ¹ Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them, saying:

³ **“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

⁴ **Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.**

⁵ **Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.**

⁶ **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.**

⁷ **Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.**

⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**

⁹ **Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.**

¹⁰ **Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

¹¹ **“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Q3. How are Jesus “beatitudes” different from today’s “beatitudes”? [think big picture, rather than the detail]

The beatitudes can really be broken up into 2 parts:

1. Attitude towards God
2. Attitude towards others

Verse 7 is where they switch from attitude to God to attitude to others.

Q4. What does it mean to have this kind of attitude towards God?

1. “poor in spirit”? [Hint: If wealth breeds independence, poverty breeds...
So being poor in spirit means....]

2. “mourn”? [Hint: In earlier parts of the Bible, people mourned over their sin (their’s or others)]

3. “meek”? [Hint: Meek has more to do with being gentle, than being weak. So how can the meek inherit the earth?]

4. "hunger and thirst for righteousness?"

Q5. Why will this lead to these kinds of attitudes to others?

1. "merciful"

2. "pure in heart"

3. "peace maker"

4. not fear "persecution"

Matthew 5:13 ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men."

Q6. If you want to live the good life, God's way, then why is it important to have a certain type of character? [hint: think about the relationship that salt has to food]

Matthew 5:14-16 ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Q7. If you live that way, what's going to happen?

The Beatitudes are really an identikit picture of what it means to be a disciple or follower of God.

Q8. What if you're not yet a follower of God?

Q9. What if you're thinking about becoming a follower of God?

ⁱ COPYRIGHT City Bible Forum (www.citybibleforum.org) a ministry of Evangelising Commerce Inc (NSW), 2013. This material may be reproduced free-of-charge for non-profit use only as long as this copyright notice appears, and the study is not modified in any way. For any other use, or to modify the material, please contact us to arrange copyright permission, which may involve a small fee to help finance the production of such resources by the staff of City Bible Forum. Contact info@citybibleforum.org or tel: (02) 9251 1166 or GPO Box 3266, Sydney NSW 2001.