

STUDY 4



The transforming touch of Heaven

Sunday 13th May 2018

Reading – Matthew 5.1-11

4. THE STYLE OF THE KINGDOM.

Jesus came with 'breaking news' – *'Repent for the kingdom of heaven (God) is near.'* Matt 4.17. It was a radical clarion call that stirred the hearts of many people.

The **Sermon on the Mount** is regarded as the greatest section of teaching that we have from Jesus in Matthew 5-7. There are many parallels with Moses - who delivered a people from slavery and led them into freedom. When the Israelites were on the edge of the Promised Land they entered into a covenant with God that had countless blessings attached to faithful obedience.

The 8 beatitudes are all about God's people in God's place, under God's rule enjoying God's blessing.

- Each statement begins with 'blessed'. How would you define 'blessed'? Write down in your group a list of some of the different meanings.
- Who would your work colleagues consider to be blessed or fortunate? How is that different from your understanding?

Within your group there will not be time to consider all the beatitudes – choose a few and dig a little deeper in seeking to understand what Jesus is saying regarding the style of the kingdom that is to be expressed.

1. POOR IN SPIRIT v.3

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

What does it really mean to be 'poor in spirit'? In what way is this the key beatitude from which all the others flow? Why is it so indispensable to entering and enjoying the kingdom of God?

In Luke 5.8 Peter expresses his poverty of spirit. Who are some of the others we read of in scripture who had a similar experience? Look at the message to the Church in Laodicea, Rev 3.17. How is poverty of spirit to be expressed?

2. MOURNING v.4

'blessed at those who mourn, for they will be comforted.'

What is to be central in this expression of mourning?

In what way do you see a progression in the beatitudes, particularly the first four as our relationship with God develops? What is this specific call to mourn for those who are poor in spirit? What outcome is experienced?

3. MEEKNESS v.5

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.'

There are some verses that help us grasp what meekness is all about. Gal 6.1; Phil 4.5; 1 Peter 2.23; Matt 11.28-30.

In what ways do you struggle to express a real sense of meekness?

How do we go about cultivating a spirit of meekness? What is to be the outcome of blessing?

4. HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS v.6

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

Has there been a time in your spiritual life when a very real hunger and thirst for God has brought about a deep encounter of personal filling?

What can really help you cultivate a spiritual hungriness?

5. MERCIFUL v.7

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

What is the role of mercy in kingdom life? In what ways can you celebrate the God of all mercy?

Lamentations 3.22-23; Ephesians 2.4-5

6. PURE IN HEART v.8

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

What is the purity of heart all about? Ponder Psalm 24.3-6

How can we gain and maintain a pure heart?

7. PEACEMAKERS v.9

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

Are you known as a peacemaker? What challenges do you face in exercising a peace making spirit?

1 Cor 7.15; 1 Peter 3.11; Rom 12.18 are a few other peace making verses

Find illustrations of peace making in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount.

8. PERSECUTED v.10-11

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

Why do you think Jesus refers to being blessed when we are persecuted?

Why is there such extensive persecution around the world of Christian believers?

What is implied in the phrase *because of righteousness*?

The world and the kingdom of God are opposed. John 1.10-11; Jn 7.7; Phil 2.15; Col 1.13.

FOR YOUR NOTES