

# The Beatitudes

Being the followers Jesus longs for



## Session 1

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*  
Matthew 5:3

### OPENING

1. How have you experienced a blessing in the last 24 hours? If there are new people joining the group take time to do introductions.



### A Few Notes for Understanding the Beatitudes

#### **Audience:**

The primary audience is the disciples. There are crowds listening in, but Jesus is directing his teaching to his committed followers.

#### **Format:**

The declarations in Matthew 5:3-10 follow an established literary form called “beatitudes”. A beatitude has two parts, a statement of blessing and the condition for receiving the blessing. Jesus uses this literary form to teach his disciples what a disciple of his will look like and the blessings that they can count on.

#### **Purpose:**

It doesn’t come through clearly in English translations, but the phrase “and he began to teach them” in the original language means that this was an intentional and formal time of teaching. Jesus is holding a class and purposefully teaching His disciples the essentials of what it means to follow Him.

This is information Jesus wants us to know and put into practice as His followers so that we can experience the blessings He wants to share with us. If we fail to understand and practice what Jesus is teaching in these few verses we will be building lives on a foundation of sand rather than solid rock (Matthew 7:24-27).



### BIBLE STUDY

Read Matthew 5:1-10.

1. As you read, try to imagine yourself as one of the disciples. Imagine you are hearing this for the very first time. What catches your attention? What surprises you? What appeals to you? What doesn’t appeal to you? Are you excited by what you are hearing or confused?

2. How do these beatitudes compare or contrast to how people typically understand blessings and who is blessed?
  
3. In verse 3, Jesus says that the “poor in spirit” are blessed. The phrase “poor in spirit” comes from the Old Testament. To get a better idea of its meaning read all of Psalm 34, then fill out the list below. In the left column, write all of God’s blessings. In the right column, write down who receives the blessings and why we receive them.

BLESSINGS	WHO / WHY

4. Given what you have learned from Psalm 34, how would you define what it means to be “poor in spirit” and why does Jesus say the poor in spirit are “blessed”?
5. Jesus said that the reason the “poor in spirit” are blessed is because they belong to the kingdom of heaven. Read Matthew 4:17 and Luke 17:20-21 (Note: The terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are interchangeable).  
  
Keep in mind that Jesus is speaking to Jews who have been waiting for generations for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. So, when Jesus says the kingdom of heaven has arrived and is in their midst, what would his audience take that to mean? What is Jesus saying about himself and the kingdom of heaven?
6. Jesus’ primary audience was the disciples. How would you summarize what Jesus is teaching His disciples about what it means to be disciples? According to this verse, what will characterize a disciple?

## **APPLY**

1. Do you consider the kingdom of heaven a blessing? Explain.

Read Matthew 6:22-24, and 31-33.

2. These Scriptures give examples of how the poor in spirit will live. What will it look like?
3. What can hinder us from being poor in spirit and fully reliant on God?
4. In what specific area of your life, or in what specific situation, do you need more reliance on God? Do you have any thoughts on how you can do this?

## **PRAYER**

Praying for each other is a way in which we express our desperate need for God. So we encourage you to pray for one another. Take a minute to pray for the person on your left about the area or situation in their life where they need to rely more on God.

**Your prayer does not need to be an oratory masterpiece.** “Perfect” prayers are not the ones that are eloquent, they are the ones that are authentic and come from your heart.

## **PERSONAL GROWTH**

This is a suggested daily Bible study to help you stay reliant on God. Use it if you don’t already have a daily study routine.

To help you study and apply the scriptures you will be reading, you can use the “4 C” questions on the next page.

## The 4 C Questions

**CELEBRATE:** What can you praise God for from this passage?

**CONFESS:** Does this passage convict you of something you need to confess to God?

**COMMIT:** What commitment does this passage challenge you to make?

**COMMUNICATE:** What did you learn that you could share with someone else?

Day 1: Read Psalm 18:1-19. In what ways was David being poor in spirit? What was the result? Think about your upcoming week, in what area do you need to experience God in the ways described in these verses? What is God saying to you (use the “4 C” questions)?

Day 2: Read Psalm 40:1-8. What descriptions of being poor in spirit can you identify in these verses? What reasons do you find in these verses to be poor in spirit? What is God saying to you (use the “4 C” questions)?

Day 3: Read Proverbs 3:5-6. This is a short passage, but loaded with meaning. Put it to memory and repeat it several times each day. If you do this, the message will sink in and make a difference. You will find yourself to begin to naturally practice this life-changing instruction. What is God saying to you (use the “4 C” questions)?

Day 4: Read 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10. What do you learn about being poor in spirit from these verses? Why is Paul so excited about his frailty? Do you see your frailties as God's opportunities? What is God saying to you (use the “4 C” questions)?

Day 5: Read Luke 22:39-44 and Luke 23:44-46. How are these events an example of being poor in spirit? Does this appear to be a blessing? What is the blessing? What can you learn about God's blessings from this? What is God saying to you (use the “4 C” questions)?