

Beatitudes Sunday School Study
Week 4: February 27, 2022



Opening Prayer

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Read the Beatitudes from the Message Bible, Matthew's gospel

This is what he said: **3** "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule. **4** "You're blessed when you feel you've lost what is most dear to you. Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you. **5** "You're blessed when you're content with just who you are - no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought. **6** "You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat. **7** "You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being 'carefull,' you find yourselves cared for. **8** "You're blessed when you get your inside

world - your mind and heart - put right. Then you can see God in the outside world. 9 "You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family. 10 "You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom. 11 "Not only that - count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. 12 You can be glad when that happens - give a cheer, even! - for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

VIDEO on Amplify (Access Code Information is in this week's email)

Pastor Judy's Notes

Today is Transfiguration Sunday. In our gospel we meet Jesus, Peter, James, and John on the Mountain top. Definitely they have a mountaintop experience par excellence. Jesus is transfigured before their very eyes, and God says *This is my son whom I have chosen; Listen to him.*

Soon they leave the mountaintop and return to the plain, to real life. Jesus will begin his journey to Jerusalem. As we leave the mountaintop, you and I go home and back into our community and world. We have seen and heard Jesus is God, the messiah, and the question is: are we going to listen to him?

For four weeks we have been hearing Jesus teach the disciples and us how Jesus envisions his community, his disciples, their actions, and their behaviors. So again, are we going to listen to Jesus?

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What if God's primary values are not ours?
- ❖ Think of a time you have had a mountaintop experience of God. What was it like coming back to the plain, i.e. the real world? How can we keep the clarity, focus, and dedication we had on the mountaintop in our daily lives?

- ❖ What is our mission? Your own? Shepherd of the Sea's? Does it follow God's mission statement as stated in Luke 4?

In Closing

I would like to read the epilogue from *The Beatitudes*, a book written by Dr Hugh Martin. The book was published in 1953, yet like the Bible the words are timeless.

“PORTRAIT of a CHRISTIAN”

He stands before God in humble gratitude, making no claims, knowing he owes everything to the divine bounty. He is moved with compassion for the grief and suffering of his fellow men. His life is devoted to the service of God's Kingdom, not to seeking his own ends. He can be determined and aggressive and angry when the weak are oppressed, but he is never self-assertive or angry at slights to himself. He longs with intensity for the triumph of goodness in his own life and in the life of the world, with a longing as strong and as much a part of his spiritual life as hunger and thirst are in the life of his body. But he is not censorious or critical of those who fail, knowing his own weakness. He will not break the bruised reed, but seeks to mend it. He is moved to mercy. He is single minded in devotion to God and the things of God. A lover of peace, he takes the spirit of reconciliation with him wherever he goes. Some respond to him but some resent his presence, as a rebuke to their way of life or a threat to their selfish interests. If persecution comes he finds cause for gladness even in that, because he remembers that Jesus trod that way and that he can fill up something of what is lacking in His sufferings. And he knows he marches with a great and noble company. Such a man is truly blessed. He has learned the secret of true living. He is a citizen of God's Kingdom, counted by Him as a true son. He lives in the conscious presence of God. Though poor he possesses all things and savours all the beauty and worth of his Father's world. A strength not his own sustains him. The divine love and forgiveness are his. He grows in goodness and is heartened by the knowledge that in God's own time the cause of good will triumph. He belongs to the company of the prophets and martyrs and for him the trumpets of welcome shall sound at the gates of heaven. We have never seen this man, but some we have known have reminded us of him. Only once has such as he walked among us, full of grace and truth: Jesus himself, the originator and perfect example of our Faith, the Christian man.