

YOU+ | Week 3 - The Guide to a Flourishing Life**Message Big Idea**

Disciples of Jesus adopt his upside-down way of thinking as they follow him in the ways of his Kingdom.

Scripture

Matthew 5:1-12

Points to Keep In Mind

1. One mistake often made when reading and interpreting the beatitudes is treating the conditions Jesus describes as virtues or something the reader is now supposed to pursue to be blessed by God. Instead, we can see Jesus' statements as good news announcements to those in these conditions.
2. In Jesus' day, it was common for people to see those with power, influence, and wealth as "blessed by God." Still, Jesus is announcing to the crowd that the Kingdom has arrived, which means those that have been left behind, according to the common calculus of the day, are now at the head of the line in the Kingdom arriving in Jesus. It's like Jesus was saying, God's Kingdom is here in me, and if you are a part of these groups of people, I'm here to tell you that "God is with you."
3. "Too often those characteristics [of the Beatitudes] are turned into ideals we must strive to attain. As ideals, they can become formulas for power rather than descriptions of the kind of people characteristic of the new age brought by Christ ... Jesus does not tell us that we should try to become poor in spirit, or meek, or peacemakers. He simply says that many who are called into the Kingdom will find themselves so constituted." - Stanley Hauerwas, Matthew
4. The beatitudes can be difficult for some to understand. How do group members feel that the list of beatitudes applies to them? Are they frustrated by the list? Does it make them feel as if they've been striving for the wrong things in life?
5. A way that may be helpful for group members is going back to the contrast between the characteristics of a person of the Kingdom of Heaven vs. a person of the Kingdom of Earth. Try and get group members to focus on how very different Jesus' description of someone who is blessed is from our culture's thinking of who is blessed.
6. Just because someone might have power and money doesn't mean they can't be a part of God's Kingdom. Those who find themselves in high places and want to follow Jesus' Way will want to think about how they can join Jesus in living out these same announcements to those who are often overlooked and left behind.

Next Steps

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism
4. Have you read the Community Daily recently? How is it encouraging you and challenging you? You can sign up at communitychristian.org/daily
5. See fasting resources here: communitychristian.org/21days
6. If anyone in your small group is seeking professional counseling, you can always refer them to our resource page: communitychristian.org/mentalhealth
7. Start your pre-work and sign up to have a YOU+ Conversation by visiting: youplus.info