

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12

MEMORY VERSE

MATTHEW 5:12a

“Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven...”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A clear glass, water, food coloring, vegetable oil and something to stir with.

Strips of paper with the words "Air," "Jobs," "Cars," "Food," etc. or magazine pictures or illustrations of the same.

Two masking tape circles on the floor.

Two empty soda cans.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Clashing Values

Do a demonstration with water and vegetable oil to demonstrate how that the two do not mix, just like the world's values can never mix with the Lord's values. You will need a clear glass, some water, food coloring and some vegetable oil. Put the water and food coloring (any color) into the glass and stir. Next pour some vegetable oil into the glass. Stir it up, at first it will appear that the two can mix, just like the world may try to convince us that we can live by it's standards as well as God's standards. But after a few minutes, the oil and water will separate. They can never mix together.

After the demonstration, illustrate that this shows us that we can never be a Christian and at the same time do what the world tells us to do. Jesus said that we are to be “in” the world, but never “of” the world.

Explain that today we will see how the things that Jesus taught us on His Sermon on the Mount clash with what the world tries to tell us.

LESSON TIME!

What do you think about when you hear the word happiness? Are you really happy? What does it mean to you? Many people have different ideas about happiness. Some may think that true happiness is found when we have no problems in life or when we get whatever we want. But Jesus has a different idea than the world on what true happiness is all about. We are going to be looking at that in today's lesson.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus described the traits of a person who is “blessed.” The world looks for happiness in many different places—in relationships, in money, in things, and in popularity. But these things do not really bring us happiness. Real happiness is found only in having a relationship with Him and following His teachings.

The word "blessed" can also be read “happy” and refers to the well being and spiritual joy of those who have a relationship with Jesus. When we become a part of God’s kingdom (through faith in Jesus), then we too can share in the blessings that Jesus is talking about here (Psalm 1:1 and Revelation 1:3). We will learn in our lesson today that **real happiness is found in Jesus.**

Matthew 5:1-2

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

Enormous crowds were following Jesus, some to hear Him teach and others for healing. Seeing the opportunity to teach His disciples while the multitude could listen, Jesus made His way up on a hillside where everyone could hear. This is such an awesome picture of the relationship that Jesus offers.

In the Old Testament God came down with thunder and lightening and gave Moses the Law on a mountain, while the people were told to keep their distance. Now Jesus went up a mountain with a still small voice to teach the people the glory and grace of the gospel, inviting people to draw near.

Everyone is invited to come to Jesus; His greatest desire for us is to follow Him. Many people come to Jesus with the wrong motives; maybe out of curiosity or just plain selfishness (to get what they want). Jesus wanted His disciples and others who would follow Him to have the right motives; so He gave us the Beatitudes (blessings of a godly attitude).

With Jesus, we can experience true joy and happiness in good times and bad because of His love for us. The greatest need in our lives is Jesus; so if we are going to experience real blessing as He desires us to have, then we need to remember **Real happiness is found in Jesus.**

Matthew 5:3

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

The world tells us to be prideful and not to let anyone tell us what to do or how to live our lives. It tells us that we need to look out for ourselves and that pleasing ourselves is the most important thing in life. This kind of a prideful attitude goes completely against what Jesus teaches. Pride will destroy our relationship with God, because it makes us the center of everything, not the Lord. It

creates greedy appetites for more than we need which means we will never be satisfied.

Real happiness and “blessedness” is having an attitude of humility before the Lord, a humble dependence upon God to forgive us of our sins and to meet our every need in life. To be “poor in spirit” means that we see ourselves as the Lord sees us. We are completely hopeless and dead apart from Him, but in Him there is nothing we can’t do. When the Holy Spirit fills us, we realize that the values of this world are only cheap substitutes for what God has to offer us. So we must give ourselves humbly to God (James 4:10). We need to humble ourselves, or place ourselves under the Lord. It is when we take ourselves off of the throne of our hearts and place Jesus in that place that we will find real happiness. **Real happiness is found in Jesus.**

Where Did It Come From?

On strips of paper write down several different things like "Air," "Cars," "Food," "Houses," "Water," "Jobs," etc. (for younger children you could use magazine pictures for illustrations).

Have the children work together to sort them into two piles; one pile of the things that God gives us, and the other the things we give ourselves.

When the children are done, take the things that they have placed in the "things we give ourselves" category and show them that even these things come from God. (I.e. "God gives us good health and minds to work at our jobs" or "God provides us the means to purchase our houses, cars, etc."). Explain that everything we have comes from the Lord; we have no reason at all to be prideful.

Matthew 5:4

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

How could those who mourn be blessed and happy? A person who mourns is filled with sadness and sorrow over the loss through death of someone they love. If we look in the Old Testament again, we see that Jesus came to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted and to comfort the brokenhearted and all who mourn (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-21).

The world tells us we should find happiness at any cost, even if those we love will be hurt by our actions. We are told that we need to make ourselves happy, because "I am first and everyone else is last." We all suffer for many reasons: our mistakes, or someone else's mistakes or even injustices. God in His mercy says that we can find comfort despite our afflictions (2 Corinthians 1:4).

We must understand that though our hardships might not go away, we will receive strength, encouragement, and hope to deal with our hardships. Perhaps someone we have loved very much has died, we can find our strength in the Lord. Those who mourn can be blessed and happy because Jesus promises to comfort them as they look to Him for strength. If you are feeling overwhelmed, allow God to comfort you as only He can; and you in turn can help others who face similar hardships. Again, we see **real happiness is found in Jesus**.

Wants or Needs?

Make two small circles with masking tape next to each other on the floor; one representing wants, the other representing needs.

Ask for a volunteer to jump into the appropriate circle depending on whether the things you call out are "wants" or "needs." Then call out several items giving the child enough time to jump. Call out things like "Food," "Carpeting," "Water," "Shelter," "TVs," "toys," etc.

Explain that many people spend their lives striving after the things they want, when they should be happy with their needs being met.

Matthew 5:5

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

We see from the life and character of Jesus that He was a man who was totally submissive to His heavenly Father. The meek and gentle are those who quietly submit themselves to God, to His word and His will (Psalm 37:5-11). Some might think that a meek person is a weak person. But the opposite is true. You would never think of Jesus as a "weak" person. His strength was spiritual, not physical. And it is spiritual strength that will last.

The world would tell us that we should take everything into our own hands, because we are in control. We need to have power over others to get them to do what we want them to do. This will make us feel proud and important. But forcing your will on others won't make you happy. Jesus says that it is a blessing to be meek. "But all who trust in the Lord shall be given every blessing and the wicked will be destroyed," (Psalm 37:9).

A person who is gentle and meek will not speak evil of others, nor quarrel, but be gentle and truly courteous to all (Titus 3:2). Jesus said the meek shall inherit the earth. If we want to get ahead in life then we need to be humble and meek. This will elevate us more in life than trying to make ourselves out to be important (Matthew 11:27-39).

Power under Control

Take two empty aluminum soda cans.

Show the children that the cans are fragile and if it weren't for the control of your power, the can would be crushed. Take the other can in the other hand and crush it to demonstrate.

Explain that meekness is power under control, just like Jesus demonstrated for us when He was here on earth.

NOTE: A fun variation of this is to show “power under control” by stepping onto the aluminum can. Step onto the can (don’t crush it). The can should be able to hold up under your weight. Then using your two index fingers just tap the can on two sides. As soon as you tap the can it will crush. There was a lot of power resting on the can, but it was under your control until you tapped it. Be careful with this though, we don’t want anyone hurt (practice at home first).

Matthew 5:6

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."

In the Old Testament we see that Jesus is clothed in righteousness (Isaiah 11:5). What is righteousness? It is having right actions, right attitudes, and right relationships all based on our right standing with God. We cannot be righteous in our own strength, but when we come to Jesus, He makes us righteous in Him. When we thirst and hunger for more of Jesus in our lives then we will be truly blessed and thoroughly filled.

The world tells us to do whatever we want to do. It tells us that there really are not any rules except for the ones we “feel” like doing and that what is right and wrong is based on what we think, not on God’s standard--the Bible. But true happiness is found in

doing what God says is right. To follow the world's path will only lead to pain, sadness, and death. But following God's path leads to happiness, blessing and eternal life.

When Jesus forgives us and saves us, He not only gives us His righteousness, but He also empowers us to demonstrate it to others. Happy are we when we hunger and thirst to live as Jesus did, in righteousness (John 16:5-11).

Matthew 5:7

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Jesus wants us to be merciful to others. We can show mercy to others by not judging them, but instead, loving and encouraging them. Maybe you know someone who is struggling and needs encouragement. Jesus tells us that we will be shown mercy when we are merciful to others. King David spoke of God's mercy in Psalm 18:25 and 41:1. God's infinite mercy is demonstrated throughout the Bible, most perfectly seen in Jesus on the cross.

Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross to show His mercy and great love toward us. Our love for others should be that same kind of love. Our love should go beyond affection to self-sacrificial service (Ephesians 5:1-12). We are called to be like Jesus. If He showed us such awesome mercy, should we not also show mercy to each other?

Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Here we see one of the most important character traits of one who follows Jesus. True Christianity lies in the heart, in the purity of the heart, the washing of our hearts from wickedness (Jeremiah 4:14). We must lift up to God, not only clean hands, but a pure

heart (Psalm 24:4-5). A pure heart is undefiled from sin, without divided interests and loyalties towards God. But how do we get a pure heart? We allow the Lord to cleanse our heart when we come to Him.

The world would tell us that having a pure heart isn't important. Go ahead and do whatever you think is right. It's OK to do wrong things as long as you don't get caught. This kind of attitude is deceiving and we need to stay far away from it. Jesus said "that the pure in heart will see God."

The Christian life is a process of becoming more and more like Jesus (Romans 8:29). There is a difference between committing a sin and remaining in sin. A follower of Jesus who commits a sin repents, confesses, and is forgiven (1 John 1:9). Someone who remains in sin doesn't really care about repenting or turning from their sin. To truly be happy in this life and have eternal life we need to make sure our hearts are right with God. **Real happiness is found in Jesus.**

Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God".

Here we are told that those who make peace between others are blessed. We should desire to be at peace with others. We shouldn't try to fight with others in order to get our way. This will only lead to a life of misery and pain. We should look at how we can get along with others. And we should desire to be peacemakers when those around us have conflict. We can also look for ways to bring peace between those who don't know Jesus and the Lord by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with them (Romans 5:1).

The world would tell us that it is OK to fight for what is yours. Don't let anyone take advantage of you. If you have an enemy then

you need to see how you can get back at them and make their lives miserable. This will only produce misery and bitterness.

Peacemaking is God's way. We should carefully and prayerfully attempt to be peacemakers, and we will be called "sons of God." If we love someone the way Jesus loves us, we will be willing to love and forgive others (Romans. 12:9-21). The glory of peacemaking is that it may actually produce two winners instead of a winner and a loser because you cannot lose something when you are at peace. Again we see **real happiness is found in Jesus.**

Matthew 5:10

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus was prophetically described in the Old Testament as the Suffering Servant who was innocent and yet suffered much on behalf of our sins (Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:12). Jesus, in His faithfulness, was committed to lay down His life to save us.

The world would tell us that happiness is found in a lack of suffering or pain. But Jesus never denies that we will have pain, suffering or persecution. But He does promise joy in the midst of our suffering.

When we stand up for Jesus we will find that there are people in this world who don't like Jesus and what He stands for. So the same people who are against Jesus will also be against us. So, as Jesus told us, don't be surprised to find out that people don't like us because we love Jesus. So if we suffer for Jesus' sake then there will be a special blessing that will come with that, Jesus will allow us to share in His kingdom.

Matthew 5:11-12

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you,

and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Jesus said that we could be happy even when we are persecuted. Persecution can be good because it takes our eyes off earthly rewards and puts them on eternal rewards and it strengthens our faith. We can find joy even in the midst of people treating us badly.

We need to remember that God's greatest prophets such as Elijah, Jeremiah, and Daniel were persecuted also, but now they have received their reward in heaven.

We've learned that God's way of giving usually contradicts the world's. If you want to follow Jesus, you must be ready to say and do what seems strange to the world. You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate and to help when others abuse. In following Jesus, you will one day receive everything, while others who follow the world's values will end up with nothing.

Always remember in your life that **real happiness is ONLY found in following Jesus.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow Jesus' teaching and not follow the values of the world. Jesus' way will bring happiness and life, while the world's way will bring misery and destruction. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.