



# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Through the Bible*

*August 4-10*

*Matthew 5:1-12*

## *Things to Know*

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1<sup>st</sup> Grade - August 3, 2025, 4 PM - [Click Here to Register!](#)

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### **Gospel Connections and Conversations**

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## **Studying God's Word *In Community***

*Reminder: Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

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# Sermon Recap

1. Kingdom blessing begins with spiritual bankruptcy.
  2. Heaven honors what the world overlooks.
  3. The Beatitudes describe the heart Jesus died to create.
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## Discussion Questions

1. Which Beatitude feels most natural to you—and which feels most difficult? Why?
  2. How does Jesus' definition of "blessed" challenge our culture's version of the good life?
  3. In what ways do the Beatitudes reveal our need for grace rather than moral effort?
  4. How can we practice being "peacemakers" in our families, workplaces, or church?
  5. Have you ever experienced rejection or hardship because of your faith? How does Jesus' promise in verses 10–12 encourage you?
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## Read

**Read Matthew 5:1-12 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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## Scripture

### Matthew 5:1-12

#### The Sermon on the Mount

**1** Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

#### The Beatitudes

**2** And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

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

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

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## Matthew 5:1-12

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

**6** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

**7** "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

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

**9** "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons[a] of God.

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

**11** "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. **12** Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

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Matthew 5:1-12

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## Living on Mission In Community

The Beatitudes call us to a life that runs counter to everything the world praises. In a culture that celebrates self-sufficiency, Jesus blesses the poor in spirit. Where the world exalts comfort, Jesus honors those who mourn. Instead of applauding power, He lifts up the meek. This isn't a list of spiritual elites—it's a portrait of those who belong to Him. And the only way to live this way is by being transformed by His grace. These blessings flow not from trying harder, but from being with Jesus and becoming like Him. So the question isn't, "Am I doing enough?" but rather, "Am I letting Jesus shape who I am?" Which Beatitude is He calling you to live out this week?

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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# Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# ***Leader Resources - August 3-10***

## **Small Group Curriculum: "The Upside-Down Kingdom: Blessed Are the Poor"**

### **1. Session Overview**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus begins with a list of blessings that turn worldly values upside down. These “Beatitudes” are not a checklist to earn salvation, but a description of the heart and character of those who belong to the Kingdom of God. In this session, we’ll explore what true blessedness looks like, how it contrasts with cultural definitions of success, and how it leads us to Christ.

### **2. Opening (Prayer & Icebreaker)**

Icebreaker:

If someone asked you what a “blessed” life looks like, what would you say?

Allow group members to reflect personally, then share.

Prayer Time (in 2–3s):

Break into small groups and ask:

- “How can we pray for your personal walk with God this week?”
- Pray specifically for each other to hunger for the heart of Jesus.

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Matthew 5:1–12 (Invite different members to read 2–3 verses each.)

## **4. Teaching Points**

### **A. The Context: A New King, A New Kingdom (v.1–2)**

- Jesus sits down like a Rabbi, speaking with authority.
- The “mountain” setting echoes Moses receiving the Law—Jesus is the greater Moses, giving the ethics of the Kingdom.

“Jesus is not giving requirements for entrance into the kingdom, but describing what life looks like inside it.” – D.A. Carson

### **B. The Characteristics of the Blessed (v.3–10)**

Each Beatitude reflects the spiritual posture of a disciple:

1. Poor in spirit – Acknowledging our need for God (v.3)
2. Those who mourn – Grieving sin and brokenness (v.4)
3. The meek – Humbly trusting God instead of asserting power (v.5)
4. Hunger & thirst for righteousness – Longing for God’s justice and holiness (v.6)
5. The merciful – Extending the grace we’ve received (v.7)
6. Pure in heart – Desiring God without divided loyalty (v.8)
7. Peacemakers – Bringing God’s peace into conflict (v.9)
8. Persecuted for righteousness – Suffering for following Jesus (v.10)

“The Beatitudes are a self-portrait of Jesus—and an invitation to be remade in His image.” – Sinclair Ferguson

### **C. The Result: Rejoicing in Reversal (v.11–12)**

- The world despises the humble and weak, but heaven celebrates them.
- Suffering for Christ is not a curse—it’s a crown.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. Which Beatitude challenges you the most right now, and why?
2. How do these “blessed” qualities differ from the world’s view of success or happiness?
3. In what ways do we resist being “poor in spirit” or “meek” in our everyday lives?
4. Have you ever experienced ridicule or rejection for following Jesus (v.11–12)?
5. How do the Beatitudes point us to our need for Jesus, not just moral effort?

## 6. Application Points

- The Beatitudes aren’t about what we do to get God’s approval—they’re about the kind of people we become when Jesus reigns in our hearts.
- Following Jesus will make us look strange to the world, but it will make us blessed in the eyes of heaven.
- We don’t embody the Beatitudes perfectly—but Jesus did. He was poor, mournful, meek, righteous, merciful, pure, and persecuted—for us.

Challenge: Pick one Beatitude and ask the Lord to shape that quality in you this week. What might obedience look like?

## 7. Closing Reflection & Prayer

Reflect:

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

Ask the group to silently consider:

- Where am I spiritually needy?
- What would it look like to come to Jesus empty-handed?

Prayer Prompt:

Pray together as a group, thanking God for His grace and asking Him to shape the heart of Christ in each person.

## **8. Memory Verse**

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

## **9. Leader’s Notes**

- Be sure to model vulnerability as a leader—share your own weakness and how Jesus is working in you.
- Don’t rush through the Beatitudes; they are deep and often counterintuitive.
- Encourage discussion that moves from abstract ideas to personal transformation.
- The goal is not to merely understand the Beatitudes, but to desire the kind of life that only Jesus can produce in us.