

Sample Study from Matthew Part 1 Study

Day 1 Read Matthew 5:1-6

1. To whom did Jesus give his teaching on the mountainside?
2. What does it mean to be:
 - (a) “the poor in spirit”? (see also Isaiah 66:2.)
 - (b) “those who mourn”? Psalm 119: 133-136
 - (c) “Put one’s light under a bowl”?
 - (d) “Place one’s light on a stand”?
 - (e) “The meek”? (Zephaniah 3:11-12)
 - (f) “Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”? (Psalm 42:1-2)

Day 2 Matthew 5:3-12

3. What kind of attitude towards others would you expect from a disciple whose character is described as “merciful”? (vv 7-9)
4. Jesus here calls his disciples *peace makers*, not *peace keepers* (v 9) What do you think is the difference?
5. Why can disciples of Jesus who suffer persecution “rejoice”? (v12)
6. Look at what disciples of Jesus receive when they live as his kingdom people (vv 3-20). In what ways are these ‘blessings’ more precious than anything the world could give us?

Day 3: Matthew 5: 13-16

7. Salt was rubbed into meat as a preservative and used to give flavour. What, then, do you think Jesus meant when he said disciples are “the salt of the earth”?
8. What is it that makes us “the light of the world”? (see John 8: 12.)
9. In terms of our everyday lives as disciples of Jesus, what do you think it means to:

Review

Matthew 5: 1-48

It may seem strange that, in the midst of his extraordinary Galilean ministry (4:23-25), Jesus would suddenly withdraw. Matthew says it was because he saw the crowds. Jesus' response was to teach his disciples – so that they might bear distinctive witness to him among the crowds.

The sermon on the mount does not contain ideals to be merely admired. Nor is it a selection from which Christ's disciples may pick and choose. It is meant to be taken seriously. It is radical, discomfiting teaching. It is kingdom lifestyle for citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

Kingdom 'being' for disciples (5: 3-12)

Jesus began with a summary of kingdom values that stand in stark contrast to the life values of our world. These values should characterise every disciple. These, then, are the "blessed":

The *poor in spirit* are humble in relationship with God because they realise their spiritual helplessness. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Those *who mourn* grieve over their own sin and when God and his words are not honoured. Disciples who mourn will be comforted. This is what Jesus has come to do (Isaiah 61:1-2).

The meek are not weak, nor are they haughty or proud. Rather, they trust in God and submit to his rule. Such meekness requires spiritual strength. The meek walk carefully, gently in the world so that others might see Jesus. They – not the powerful – will inherit the earth.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness long to be more like Jesus. They will indeed be filled.

The *merciful* are keenly aware that they have received God's mercy. Those who value God's mercy give mercy freely. In turn, they will experience mercy. Are we committed to mercy?

The *pure in heart* are transparent before God. It has been said, "Only the pure in heart will see God because only the pure in heart want to."

The *peacemakers* describes the role of Jesus' disciples in the world. Peace making is not appeasement. Disciples will live at peace where possible. (Hebrews 12:14); they will also be willing to act as mediators to build peace. Because true peace is peace with God, peacemakers will, above all, want to introduce others to a faith relationship with Jesus. Peacemakers are called "sons of God" (v9) because they bear the likeness of God's Son, who died so we might have peace with God.

Those who are persecuted because of righteousness. Persecution can come from many directions and in defending many causes, but only those who are persecuted "because of righteousness" (in serving God's cause, v 10) are blessed. This kind of suffering is neither meaningless nor accidental. It is the cost of discipleship. Those who are persecuted for loyalty to God can be overjoyed because they have an eternal home that cannot be taken away. They stand in good company with all the faithful servants of God who have preceded them.

Kingdom witness for disciples (5: 13-16)

Is it any wonder, then, that disciples stand out from the crowd like a lit-up city on a hilltop? Jesus disciples alone are the world's salt and light. In verses 13-14 "you" is emphatic – you, and no others, are *the* salt and *the* light. In Biblical times salt was used as a preservative, and without that witness society will decay.

Disciples of Jesus testify to him who is "the light of the world" (John 8:12). Without this light the world would be in darkness, with no way of knowing truth from lies, fact from fantasy. Are we committed to being different from our culture to show Jesus to it?

Prepared from notes written by Narelle Gatenby