

The Beatitudes

1. To begin our study today, read the entire passage aloud (1-16). What do you think were the first impressions of Jesus' disciples as they listened to these words for the very first time? How do you think you would have reacted if you had heard Jesus say these things on the mountain? Why?
2. The beatitudes (3-12) may be the most perfect picture of the character of our Lord Jesus that we have in Scripture. Choose one beatitude, and describe from a story in the gospels how He perfectly exemplified the character trait you selected.
3. The character traits described in the beatitudes were also demonstrated (to an extent) by the godly men and women of the Old Testament. Choose one beatitude, and reference a story where an Old Testament saint (even if only briefly) displayed that character trait.
4. Which beatitude do you think is the most difficult to live out on a daily basis, and why? In what ways might believers grow to be more pleasing to our King in living out this beatitude?
5. If an earthly king could choose the type of citizens who would inhabit his kingdom, what character traits do you think he would want them to have, and why? In what ways are these traits different from the ways that our King expects the citizens of His kingdom to live? How are they similar?
6. There are three verses that talk about being persecuted for following Jesus (10-12). What can we learn from these verses about how to respond to people who oppose us for our faith in Christ?
7. In what ways do you think the followers of Jesus can be "the salt of the earth"? (13) In what ways do you think we can be "the light of the world," like a city on a hill and a lamp in a house? (14-15) How do you think being light is different from being salt?
8. The purpose of shining our light before others is to bring glory to God (16). How can our lives clearly demonstrate good works, and yet direct the glory away from ourselves and toward God instead?
9. We have discussed some of the most challenging verses in Scripture here. Remember that the Lord is changing us "from glory to glory" by His Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18), and that He has promised to complete the good work begun in us when we first trusted Him (Phil. 1:6). As we walk by His Spirit, these character traits will be shown in our lives more and more clearly. From this study, in which area of your life do you think the Lord is calling you to more clearly reflect His character? What do you think might be the impact both in your life and in others' lives if you follow our Lord in this area?