

Groups.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus gives a blueprint for a countercultural life: as salt and light we live with holy difference - Standing for life, justice, compassion, and truth - and trust God to use even persecution for good. Walking this path - Poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry for righteousness, merciful, pure, and peacemaking - We speak truth with love, endure with eternal hope, and surrender again for His kingdom and glory.

REFLECTION

Share something that stood out from the Sunday message 'Living the Counter-Culture Way'.

MESSAGE POINTS

One: Living the Countercultural Way: The Beatitudes and True Blessing

Jesus calls His followers to a radically different way of living, one that stands in stark contrast to the values of the world. The Beatitudes, as taught by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, reveal a higher way—a life marked by humility, mercy, purity, and a hunger for righteousness. This upside-down kingdom is not about power or self-promotion, but about surrender, service, and seeking God's heart above all else. As you read these words, remember that you are called to be salt and light, to bring out the God-flavors in the world, and to let your life shine so others may see God's goodness through you.

Matthew 5:1-16 (ESV)

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a

lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Discussion

Which Beatitude is the Spirit highlighting for you, and why?

- How does this Beatitude confront common cultural values around you?

Where are you called to be “salt and light” this week - home, work, school, neighbourhood, online?

- Where do you notice “blandness” (need for God-flavours) or darkness (need for light) in that space?
- What tends to put your light “under a basket” (people-pleasing, fear, busyness, compromise)?

How do we respond to pressure or misunderstanding for following Jesus with both conviction and compassion?

- Describe a real situation (past or likely) where faith brought pushback. What emotions surfaced?
- Which Beatitudes shape a Christlike response in that moment?

Two: Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit: Dependence on God

True blessing begins with recognising our deep need for God. To be “poor in spirit” is to come before God in humility, acknowledging that we cannot do life on our own and desperately need His grace and strength. This posture of dependence is not weakness, but the very place where God’s power meets us. Even when we feel inadequate or afraid to stand out for our faith, God promises that His grace will meet us in our weakness, and His Spirit will give us the words and courage we need as we step out in faith.

Philippians 4:13 (ESV)
I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Discussion

What does “poor in spirit” look like in real life?

- *How would you describe the difference between humility and insecurity?*
- *What are signs you’re living self-reliant (e.g., prayerlessness, hurry, defensiveness) versus God-dependent (ask for help, quick to repent, grateful)?*

Where do you currently feel inadequate or afraid to stand out for your faith?

- *What fears or internal narratives show up, and what might the Spirit be saying instead?*
- *How can Philippians 4:13 be applied faithfully here (Christ’s strength for obedience), not as self-empowerment for anything we want?*

How can we cultivate daily dependence on God together?

- Which practices help you stay low before God - confession, prayer, Scripture, fasting, asking others to pray?
- What practical rhythms guard against drifting back to self-sufficiency?
- When you fail, how do you return to grace rather than shame?

Three: Mourning Over Brokenness: Letting God's Heart Move Us

Jesus teaches that those who mourn are blessed, not just in times of personal loss, but when our hearts break over the sin and brokenness in the world. This kind of mourning draws us out of self-focus and into God's compassion for others. It moves us to see people as God sees them, to reach out with love, and to be present with those who are hurting. When we allow God to break our hearts for what breaks His, we become vessels of His comfort and hope to a world in need.

Romans 12:15 (ESV)

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.

Discussion

What does godly mourning look like - and what doesn't it look like?

- How is biblical lament different from despair, cynicism, or performative outrage?
- What fruit shows mourning is Spirit-led (e.g., compassion, intercession, hope) rather than self-focused?
- What keeps your heart numb or distracted from what breaks God's heart?

Where do you sense God inviting you to "weep with those who weep" right now?

- If you saw them as God sees them, what would you notice about their pain?
- What might faithful presence look like there - listening, prayer, practical care?
- What unhelpful phrases should we avoid, and what simple words of comfort help?

How do we carry grief with hope and move toward redemptive action?

- Which practices form a healthy rhythm of lament (Psalms, fasting, journaling, intercession, communal prayer)?
- How can we act without "saviorism" - setting wise boundaries, partnering with others, and serving sustainably?
- Share a time God's comfort met you; how could that shape how you comfort others?

Key Takeaways

- **1. True Transformation Begins with Need and Dependence** Recognising our poverty of spirit- our utter need for God- is the foundation of a countercultural life. God's grace meets us in our weakness, not our strength, and it is in our dependence on Him that we find the power to stand out and make a difference. This posture of humility and need is not just for new believers, but for every follower of Jesus, every day.
- **2. Let Your Heart Break for What Breaks God's Heart** A countercultural life is marked by mourning over sin and the brokenness it causes, both in ourselves and in the world. Rather than retreating into a Christian bubble, we are called to be present,

to see people as God sees them, and to let compassion move us to action. When our hearts are aligned with God's, we become agents of His love and healing in a hurting world.

- **3. Humility and Unity Over Personal Glory or Arguments** Biblical humility is not self-deprecation but lowering ourselves so that God can be revealed through us. It means serving others, building His church, and refusing to be distracted by petty arguments or prideful pursuits. Unity flows from humility, keeping us focused on God's greater purpose rather than being sidetracked by division or self-interest.
- **4. Passion for Righteousness and the Power of Being Different** Hungering and thirsting for righteousness means passionately pursuing God's ways in our own lives and setting a new standard in the world around us. We are called to stand out, not fit in - sometimes by simply being different, and other times by speaking up with wisdom and love. Our tone matters: we must communicate truth with respect and compassion, not anger or self-righteousness.
- **5. Overcoming Evil with Good and Embracing Eternal Perspective** Jesus calls us to be peacemakers, to respond to evil with blessing, and to forgive even in the face of deep pain. This is not weakness, but the power of the kingdom at work. Persecution and hardship test the depth of our faith and remind us that our true reward is eternal. Living for Christ means living for something far greater than this world can offer, with courage and hope that transcends every trial.

WATCH

<https://www.youtube.com/@LIFEMelbourne/videos>

GROUPS PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other's personal journey as a disciple and discipleship in our church

- Being in the presence of Jesus, becoming more like Jesus and continuing the work He did.

Pray for the Holy Spirit's presence

- That we would be led, filled and empowered to live surrendered, love God and serve others.

Pray for Decade of Destiny

- **Debt Free on Sims and Stage One** Believe that we could be debt free on the purchase of Sims St and the stage one fit-out costs.
- **Launch Two New LIFE Campuses** That we would pioneer two additional LIFE campuses across Melbourne and continue to make room for more people to discover the wonder of Jesus, find their family and step into all that God leads.
- **LIFE Homes** To have short-, medium- and long-term accommodation navigable to enable emergency support, crisis help and essential care to key areas of vulnerability.
- **Education Services Engaged** It is our vision that we will have multiple pathways that we will be able to bring lasting transformation to our communities through learning and education and reverse the cycle of poverty.
- **Sims Street Revival** God is entrusting us to first and foremost lift up the names of Jesus and see many thousands upon thousands discover His eternal life.

GET INVOLVED!

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Our amazing Kids Team launched the *Bite Sized Bible* this week - and we're so excited to share it with you!

This resource is designed to help families explore God's Word together, one bite at a time. With simple, easy-to-read portions of Scripture, it's a fun and meaningful way to spark faith conversations and build lasting habits of engaging with the Bible as a family.

If you haven't picked one up yet, grab your copy from the Kids Connection desk or just outside the Base Camp room.

We believe this will be such a blessing to families, and we can't wait to hear the stories of how your child connects with God's big story - and how you grow together on the journey.

SISTAHOOD CONFERENCE

DIVINELY ASSIGNED

Within every woman stirs a sacred ache—a yearning for our lives to matter, for our worth to be woven into something far greater than ourselves.

We are called to live in tune with a melody that echoes through eternity — a song God Himself placed deep within us. He etched it on our souls, marking us for His divine purpose. This is the melody He invites us to awaken — one that carries His heart, transcends our weakness and releases heaven's purpose.

It is divinely written. Divinely assigned.
Ours to embrace.

We're honoured to have Ps Maree de Jong (Founding Pastor at LIFE) and Ps Jemima Varughese (Senior Leader at Kingdom city Church) with us for 2 powerful and destiny-defining days.

Schedule:

Fri 24 Oct
Night session

Sat 25 Oct
Full day from 9am till 6pm

Cost:
\$80

Location:
LIFE Melbourne (41-59 Sims St, West Melbourne)

We look forward to seeing you at the conference!

<https://lifeau.org/sistahoodconference/>

HELP & HOPE WEEK

Help & Hope Week is an opportunity to make a practical difference in our community, with a range of initiatives and projects across the week that bring help and hope to many people in our community. Discover the joy of making a difference in our community by joining one of our LIFE Community Initiatives and teams. Experience firsthand what it's like to be a part of one of our LIFE Community Kitchens or other community initiatives!

Register for a project - <https://www.lifecommunity.org.au/helpandhope>

UPCOMING DATES

29th September – Help & Hope week

9th October – Alpha

13th October – LIFE Business Night

19th October – Water Baptism