

Jesus opens His ‘*Sermon on the Mount*’ with several beatitudes or blessings (the “*blessed are*” statements found in **Matt. 5:3-11**). How do you think most people would describe a “*blessed*” life? What does it involve and include?

Read **Matthew 5:1-4** and discuss the following.

Who is Jesus’ audience and how might this inform our interpretation?

Can you think of some other biblical events that happened on a mountain? Which stories come to mind?

Matthew 4:23 tells us that Jesus went through Galilee “*proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.*” What do the opening lines of this sermon (**v.3-4**) teach us about the kingdom of God?

Why do you think Jesus begins his sermon in this way? Specifically, why does He open with the beatitude: “*blessed are the poor in spirit*”?

What does it mean to be “*poor in spirit*”? How is it different from simply being “*poor*”? What’s the significance of understanding this contrast?

How do you understand the second beatitude (**v.4**)? What type of mourning is referenced here?

What does it mean to be “*blessed*”? In what ways have you experienced something of the blessings described here? Is Jesus referring to a benefit we receive now or to some sort of future reward? Or is there an element of both?

Consider the first part of each beatitude and the character traits Jesus calls people to, then examine your own heart and life. Where do you sense the most conviction and desire for growth? Explain.

Now consider the second part of each beatitude—the accompanying promises. How do these offer hope and encouragement to you in this particular season of life? Explain.

How can we tangibly pursue humility that leads to flourishing? What steps can be taken to develop and grow a longing for Christ’s kingdom here on earth?