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*Hey leaders! We are in week 2 of our series, “**Sermon on the Mount**”! In Matthew 5–7, Jesus flips the script on what it means to be blessed, how to treat others, and where true security is found. This series will walk our church family through Jesus’ words with clarity and relevance, challenging us to build our lives on something unshakable—His Kingdom.*

*As we prepare for Coram Deo in 2026, consider using the prayer below as you get ready to lead your gathering each week or together at the beginning of each gathering!*  
*“Holy Spirit, be the decisive and dominant presence in my life and that of our church!”*

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?  
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or [discipleship@rockbridge.cc](mailto:discipleship@rockbridge.cc)

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**“The most holy and necessary practice in our spiritual life is the presence of God.  
That means finding constant joy in His company.”**  
[Brother Lawrence]

LEADER RESOURCES || **Leader Note** We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!

- **Passage Summary**
  - The sermon begins with statements about happiness (blessedness) that come from God’s Kingdom. These are not conditions, but counterintuitive proclamations that depend upon nearness to Jesus. They are only fulfilled in devotion to Jesus and are not burdensome, but rather happiness. The Beatitudes are part of Jesus’ introduction to His manifesto and introduce a countercultural, radical way to live in the inbreaking reality of His Kingdom.
- **Matthew Ch. 5 Commentary & The Counterintuitive Beauty of the Beatitudes**
  - Use the commentary and short article/video for background and encouragement. These would be good resources to share before you gather.
- **The Beatitudes Overview**
  - To help your group members get a fuller picture of the Beatitudes, this video would be a good resource to share with your group after you gather.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || **Leader Note** The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another’s hearts and building joy together.

If you had a “happiness emergency kit”, what 2-3 items would you keep in it?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || **Leader Note** Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

*"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!"*

[Psalm 34:8]

**BIG IDEA || Leader Note** Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.

We often misuse the Beatitudes because we see them as conditions instead of the results of devoted nearness to Jesus!

**PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note** Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered ... go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud ... they're for guidance!

1. In the sermon we heard, *"The happiness God offers us is unlike the kind of happiness the world offers, and that we often seek."* Before deciding to follow Jesus, what did you often seek that you thought would give you true happiness?

Have someone read aloud Matthew 5:1-12.

2. How does Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes present a "counter-cultural" vision of the good life? *In the Beatitudes, blessing is promised to the poor in spirit, the meek, the mourning—qualities that seem like weaknesses in the world's eyes. Jesus redefines who is "well-off" by Kingdom standards, overturning cultural norms that equate happiness with wealth, status, or comfort.*
3. Why might living out the Beatitudes lead to persecution? How should we as Christians respond? *Answers will vary: kingdom values challenge worldly systems and personal pride, provoking opposition. Jesus calls believers to rejoice when persecuted because their reward in heaven outweighs earthly loss.*
4. Which Beatitude is most challenging for you personally? Why? *Answers will vary: each Beatitude confronts a different heart posture—humility, mercy, purity, peacemaking—and the Spirit may highlight one that requires intentional growth.*
5. How does hungering and thirsting for righteousness differ from simply wanting to be a "good person"? How are you challenged or encouraged by this? *Answers will vary: Hunger for righteousness seeks God's way and His standards, not self-made morality. It flows from a deep longing for God's presence and justice rather than self-improvement for reputation's sake.*
6. How have you experienced God's mercy shaping your ability to show mercy to others? *Answers will vary: our capacity to extend mercy grows as we remember our own need for it. Awareness of God's mercy makes forgiveness and compassion a natural overflow.*
7. How can you cultivate purity of heart in a world full of distractions and mixed motives? *Answers will vary: purity is about single-minded devotion to God. It can be cultivated through Scripture meditation, honest confession, intentional boundaries, and focusing on pleasing God over others.*
8. In the sermon we heard, *"We must consider our response to the Sermon on the Mount: to AWAKEN us and to ALERT us (inviting us to draw near and warning us to not drift away)."* What response is the Holy Spirit inviting you to embrace today?

**STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note** *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

The Beatitudes are not a checklist of virtues to earn God's favor, but **a portrait of the life that naturally flows from nearness to Jesus**. They reveal God's joyful desire to bless His people, invite us into a countercultural way of life, and call for a deep reorientation of values. Living them out requires faith, humility, and trust that God's approval is the highest blessing we can receive.

*As you consider your next step, reflect on:* 1) Do I truly believe God is eager to bless me? 2) Which Beatitude is God inviting me to embrace more fully right now?

*Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 3-4 for this question. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.*

### Step of Faith Ideas

1. Spend the week meditating on one Beatitude each day, asking God to shape your heart around it.
2. Choose one concrete act of mercy, peacemaking, or service to live out this teaching in your community.

**PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note** *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another's personal requests!*

### Near to Jesus, Living His Way

Let's prayerfully move from *hearing* the Beatitudes to *owning* them as a lifestyle born from intimacy with Christ.

- Have one person slowly read Matthew 5:3–10 aloud. Encourage everyone to listen **as if Jesus is speaking directly to them** on the hillside.
- Say: **"From what Jesus just said, choose the Beatitude that most draws your heart right now. It may be because you need it ... or because you want to live it out."** Give your group about 30–60 seconds for silent reflection.
- Invite each person to pray a short, personal prayer using this format: "Jesus, as I stay close to you, help me \_\_\_\_." (insert chosen Beatitude). Here are a few examples:
  - "Jesus, as I stay close to you, help me be pure in heart."
  - "Jesus, as I stay close to you, help me be merciful."
- Close your prayer time by reading this prayer together:
  - **"Jesus, you are our life.  
The closer we are to you,  
the more we live your way.  
Let your Kingdom character shape us,  
and let others see you in us. Amen."**