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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]

ENGAGE & CONNECT

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

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

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

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

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

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?

Matthew 5:1-12

2. How does Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes present a "counter-cultural" vision of the good life?
3. Why might living out the Beatitudes lead to persecution? How should we as Christians respond?
4. Which Beatitude is most challenging for you personally? Why?
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?
6. How have you experienced God's mercy shaping your ability to show mercy to others?
7. How can you cultivate purity of heart in a world full of distractions and mixed motives?
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

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?

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

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."*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Matthew Ch. 5 Commentary](#) & [The Counterintuitive Beauty of the Beatitudes](#)
 - Use these for background and encouragement before your group gathers.
- [The Beatitudes Overview](#)
 - This would be a good resource to use after your group gathers.