



Sermon Discussion Guide

08.20.23 Message | Ryan Wiemelt | Matthew 5:1-12

Key Scripture:

"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up to a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

- Matthew 5:1-12

"One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek." Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help. Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me in. Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence. I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"

- Psalm 27:4-14



Message Highlights:

- Jesus took his disciples to the mountaintop to teach them what it means to dwell in the presence of the Lord.
 - David, a man after God's own heart, made it his top request to "dwell in the presence of the Lord, all the days of his life."
 - Rather than viewing the Beatitudes or Sermon on the Mount as a checklist of Christian behaviors to complete, we should consider them an invitation to dwell in God's presence and yield to his guidance as we live our lives for him.
 - This isn't a message advocating passivity; rather, it's about being receptive to a profound truth – embracing the rule and reign of Jesus in our lives and living with that in mind.
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CONVERSATION STARTER

Identify a situation where you like to be in control, and if you were to lose control, it would create inner turmoil. Have you experienced this before? How do you cope?

DISCUSS THE MESSAGE

- How has the Spirit spoken to you through this passage of God's Word?
- Have you ever thought about how the Sermon on the Mount teachings challenge our conventional understanding of success and happiness? What are your thoughts?

THINK DEEPER (Does your group understand the passage?)

Read: Matthew 5:1-12 and Psalm 27:4-14

Jesus leads his disciples to the Mount of Beatitudes to impart the essence of being part of the Kingdom. During the sermon, Ryan highlighted that Jesus doesn't require the disciples to attain each blessing by their own efforts. Instead, the Sermon on the Mount reveals Jesus' desire for his followers to intimately understand dwelling in God's presence, which then guides them to embody the Beatitudes.



- How do these two texts tie into the concept that a relationship with the Lord is first about dwelling before it is about obedience?
- What do these texts reveal about the nature of our allegiance to Jesus? How could you apply this in everyday life?
- How can we effectively balance the pressures of worldly achievement through our own efforts with the biblical call to surrender ourselves completely to the Lord's leading? What obstacles or difficulties could/have you encountered while striving to cultivate this kind of connection with the Lord?
- What was David's posture toward the Lord in Psalm 27?
- What does this passage tell us about our approach to a relationship with God?
- Why do you think David would seek to "dwell in the house of the Lord" as his most desired request? How would this request have helped him through life? In what ways could this request be beneficial to you and me?

THINK LIFE CHANGE (Does your group recognize the personal implications for them as individuals?)

One of the indicators that the Sermon on the Mount is not a list to be checked off comes from Matthew 7:21-23 where Jesus states that:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

This passage Jesus communicates to his listeners indicates that it isn't our actions that lead us to the heart of God, but rather, something more is required. A few verses before in Matthew 7:7-12, Jesus tells his disciples that if they ask, seek and knock, they will find what they are looking for, indicating that this is a matter of pursuit and desire from within.

- Do you accept that the Lord is more interested in the surrender of your heart than he is in your actions? How does this impact your pursuit of him?



THINK ENGAGE (Does your group recognize the communal implications for us as a Gospel-centered community?)

Ryan points out in his message that priority is key to understanding our pursuit of the Lord. David writes in the Psalms that “he delights in the law of the Lord,” which is a product of his dwelling in the presence of the Lord. It isn't as if obedience is unnecessary, but rather, if we learn to dwell in the presence of the Lord, obedience becomes more natural and a “delight” rather than something to be checked off a list.

- How does this truth speak to the church's need for dependence upon the Lord?
- In what ways has God provided for our church to draw nearer to Him?
- How would life be different if you were able to delight in the laws of the Lord (the life Jesus calls us to live in the New Testament)? How would this impact your relationship with those around you?

THINK EXPAND (Does your group recognize the missional implications for those we want to reach for Christ?)

- In a world overwhelmed with crises and a global church that has often portrayed our faith as if God reacts harshly to every misstep, how can we help others apply these texts of Scripture and the idea of dwelling in God's presence to reshape their pursuit of the Lord?

THINK KINGDOM (Does your group understand the overarching Kingdom, that the work we do is bigger than ourselves?)

The Sermon on the Mount ends by telling us to build up our treasures in heaven and not on Earth. Jesus calls us to continually look heavenward.

- How would it impact your life if you could continually pursue the Lord in such a way that you are thinking heavenward?
- What are some practical ways you could begin to make God's Kingdom your main pursuit rather than the treasures of this life?