

Study 2

The Beatitudes
JESUS
commanded

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:

Matthew 5:1-2

Read Matthew 5 –7. These three chapters of the New Testament form the basis for what we refer to as the “Beatitudes”. It is probably the most quoted section of the entire Bible and the most well-known section of all that Christ taught.

This study will help you to understand the basis for being a Christ-follower and how this demands an inner change in us.



The Beatitudes is regarded as the most profound sermon ever preached. The gracious words uttered by Christ have amazed and awed some of the greatest minds that have ever lived. The beauty of the simple, yet profound, statements uttered by Christ have been quoted more than any other words ever written or spoken. Even people unfamiliar with Scripture, yet living in the remnants of a culture that had its laws and values shaped by the Bible are familiar with “the Golden Rule”, “the meek shall inherit the earth” and so on.

But at the time when Christ uttered these words many, if not most, of His hearers would have been outraged by what He said! They may well have considered Christ’s words out of place, insensitive, and totally inappropriate. It’s difficult today for us to imagine the passion with which these words were spoken and the highly charged emotional response in which they were received. Perhaps if we can understand the context in which they were given we may derive an higher respect for Christ and His teaching.



Historians tell us that shortly before Christ preached this sermon, the Romans had just massacred many in the surrounding villages. Philip Yancey discusses this in his book- "*The Jesus I Never Knew!*" and says that this sermon was perhaps the most courageous message ever given.

1. What do you think Yancey means?

(Knowing some of the context to this Sermon on the Mount, how does this change your understanding of what Christ said?)

The Blessings JESUS revealed

Christ introduced His sermon on the mount with a series of statements about the benefits of heeding His teaching. It's worth noting that Christ spoke blessings over His hearers before He commenced preaching. This in itself is a powerful lesson for how *we* should preach to others.

2. In order to receive the full blessing of following Christ's teaching, Jesus commences by stating the most necessary thing needed in order to begin to follow Him. What did Jesus say this was in Matthew 5:3?

3. What did Jesus say would be the benefit of such a humbling? (Matt. 5:3)

4. Each of the four Gospels are written to different audiences. Match the Gospel to its originally intended audience -

Matthew ___	___ Written to Romans who were impressed with power and action. This is why its opening chapter is crammed with many accounts of Christ's miracles and totally skips His genealogy since this didn't impress Romans. It also paints a very favourable picture of Roman centurions and their interaction with Christ
Mark ___	___ Written to Hebrews (Israelites) familiar with Old Testament language, especially the Prophecies about the coming Messiah. This is why it contains many phrases like, " <i>This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet</i> ". This Gospel's emphasis was Jesus as the Prophesied Messiah of the Jews.
Luke ___	___ Written to Greeks who were impressed with cleverness. This Gospel is organised around 7 miracles, 7 "I AM" statements, and 7 sermons of Christ. It emphasises the deity of Christ.
John ___	___ Written to Gentiles who were impressed with spirituality and mysticism. This is why this Gospel emphasises the prayerfulness of Christ and the mysticism surrounding Him such as fulfilled prophecies, miracles, supernatural wisdom, and prophetic insights.

One of the traits of Matthew's Gospel is his use of the word "heaven" instead of "God". While other Gospel writers refer to the *Kingdom of God*, Matthew refers to the same concept as the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

5. What type of “mourning” might Jesus have been referring to in Matthew 5:4?

6. Note Matthew 5:5. Select which words best define “meek”-
- (a) Weak and pathetic
 - (b) Humble and gentle
 - (c) Indecisive and uncertain

The promise of “*inherit the earth*” may better be rendered as “*inherit the Land*” (note Exodus 32:13). At the time Christ uttered these amazing words, there was a group of Hebrews know as *Zealots* who believed that Israel could only fully inherit the promise of possessing their Land once again by using bloodshed against their enemies.

7. How can we satisfy our hunger and thirst for righteousness? (Matt. 5:6)

8. Even though Matthew 5:7 is considered a global remedy for world-peace, how might it have originally angered many of its original audience?

9. Spoken originally to people who were used to conforming to external rules, how would what Christ said in Matthew 5:9 been so radical?

10. Is Jesus implying in Matthew 5:10 that His followers will probably be persecuted? Is it possible to follow Christ and never be persecuted?

11. What does Christ seem to imply will happen to all those who choose to follow Him based on Matthew 5:11-12?

Christ calls people to follow and obey Him. He commences this by talking about the blessings that result from doing so. We notice though, that He makes it clear that the purpose of following Him is not the blessings, but the desperate recognition of our true condition before God and our dire need to be made right with Him. But the blessings! Oh the wonder that God not only allows us to follow Him – but blesses us for doing so!

Amen.