

**Belmont Exeter House Group Notes**  
**w/c 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024**  
**Matthew 5: 1 - 12 Those who are blessed**

The Sermon on the Mount contains probably the most well-known words of Jesus'. It has influenced our culture whether or not people are followers and believers in the Lord Jesus. We've recently looked at the book of Malachi where the Lord calls the people to repent and be renewed. The patterns of life to which we are called are given vivid reality here in the Sermon on the Mount.

This year we've had a focus on living a life of true worship. Romans 12:1 describes the right response to the gospel as offering our bodies as living sacrifices. This is our true worship. The Sermon on the Mount gives us plenty of details what a righteous, fulfilled life looks like and how to go about living it. This contrasts with false worship of idols such as power, identity, ambition, status, wealth, control.

If people were not able to be at the service, then do encourage them to catch up online ahead of the study via the talks page on the Belmont Exeter website. <https://belmontexeter.church/talks/>

This outline gives plenty of questions for studying the text, as well as exploring the outworking of these ideas in our everyday lives. There's more than you'll need for a single study so please do edit to a focus that is helpful to your group / study.

### **Resources**

This year, the Bible Project has produced a wealth of resources for studying the Sermon on the Mount. You may find it helpful to use this overview at the start of the series.

<https://bibleproject.com/guides/introduction-to-the-sermon-on-the-mount/> This video gives one helpful structure of the sermon <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/matthew-5-7-sermon-overview/> and then follow links for many other resources.

The following books are thorough and accessible commentaries.

The Message of the Sermon on the Mount – John Stott

Sermon on the Mount - Scot McKnight

**BIG IDEA:** Being blessed has nothing to do with our situation in life. In God's kingdom those who are blessed are those who in the world's eyes do not normally get blessed.

**WAY IN:** How would you define the word 'blessed'? Who do you normally consider to be blessed?

**READ:** Matthew 5:1 - 12

### **DIG IN:**

- 1) Which part of the text (or sermon if you were able to listen to it) had the greatest impact on you? What puzzled you? Did you learn anything new about God? Jesus? You?
  
- 2) Spend some time thinking about how the word 'blessed' is used through the Old Testament. This will have been the reference point of the original hearers. Share out the following readings and discuss what it means to be blessed.  
Deuteronomy 28:1-12; Psalm 1, Psalm 32:1-2, Prov 3:13, 8:32, 20:7,28:20, Isaiah 61:1-7  
How is Jesus' view in the beatitudes different or similar to this?

*Blessed seems to describe a state of being in a good or flourishing situation, especially in relationship to God. Scott McKnight offers a translation of 'blessed' as 'God's favour is upon...'. This is also a helpful way of seeing the current ('God with us') and future ('God renewing all things') aspects of being blessed.*

- 3) Divide the group into 3 groups and each group take 3 of the beatitudes under the headings peace (v 3 – 5), justice (v6 – 8), peace (v 9 – 11). What are the various characteristics and circumstances of those Jesus describes as blessed in each beatitude? And what is the promised reward?
  
- 4) Is living by the standards of the Sermon on the Mount something we (or others) should be doing? Is it possible? Some commentators suggest this is a message of law and works, not of grace. How would you respond to the person who says 'I'm a Christian because I live by the standards of the Sermon on the Mount'? How does being 'poor in spirit'?

*The standards in the beatitudes (and the rest of Sermon on the Mount) are impossible to attain. In fact, these standards show us our need for a saviour. It's only as we come to the Lord Jesus for forgiveness, and we receive the Spirit who gives us power can we even consider living this way. The Sermon on the Mount is not a way to salvation rather it is the practical outworking of accepting the invitation to join in God's kingdom*

#### **LIVE IT OUT:**

- 5) The beatitudes (v3 – 11) describe those who are in the kingdom of heaven, those who find "favour with God". What do you notice about God's standards for belonging? Are they different to our own standards? How can we align our encouragements for each other's spiritual growth with those of Jesus?
  
- 6) Return to work in smaller groups. Share with each other one or two of the beatitudes that have challenged you to be different, and how you might like to go about making that change.

#### **PRAY IT THROUGH**

- 7) At Belmont we often talk about living out our Christian faith on our frontline (the situation where you spend most time with non-Christians). Thinking about your own frontline, pray about particular characteristics that we've seen in the beatitudes which you would like to grow in or work towards.