

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?



8-WEEK STUDY

on the challenging teachings of Jesus
in the Sermon on the Mount

WEEK 2

Discussion Guide

**If Jesus was serious,
then maybe “being blessed”
doesn’t look like we think.**

Matthew 5:1-12

WHAT IF JESUS WAS SERIOUS?



WEEKLY READING

Primary text from this week: Matthew 5:1-12

Secondary texts from this week: Luke 6:20-26, Isaiah 61

GETTING STARTED

Goals for this session: To better understand the *Beatitudes* in the Sermon on the Mount

Missed the sermon? Watch it at www.youtube.com/venturamissionary

Break the Ice: Before Sunday's sermon on the Beatitudes, what was your experience with this section of Scripture?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On Sunday, Pastor Doug introduced a way of understanding the Beatitudes that is different from the way many people understand them. Was there anything that stood out to you or confused you about Sunday's sermon? Explain.
2. Pastor Doug said that the Beatitudes are not a list of "to-dos," but a list of Good News. Why do you think that distinction is important to understanding the Beatitudes?
3. In the Beatitudes, Jesus pronounces blessing over unlikely categories of people. How do we typically use the word "blessed" or "blessing" in our context? How do you think Jesus was using the word "blessed" in the Beatitudes? What is different about the way Jesus uses the word and the way we do?
4. In Luke 6, Jesus preaches a sermon that contains some similar content to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. Have someone the group read **Matthew 5:2-12** and **Luke 6:20-26** and discuss the similarities and differences between the two passages. What do you make of the similarities and the differences?
5. (a) Have the group read **Isaiah 61** and look for words or phrases that match words or phrases from the Beatitudes. (b) Isaiah 61 is an ancient prophecy about God's favor towards His people. What do you think is the significance of Jesus alluding to this particular prophecy in the first words of His first sermon?
6. Skye Jethani describes the Beatitudes this way: "Jesus is describing the people who have the most to gain through the arrival of His kingdom. He is not prescribing what you must do to enter it." Why is this important to our understanding of the Beatitudes?

PRAYER

Pray for each other: Have the group pray for each other that they would each respond with gratitude for the fact that the kingdom of heaven includes people who don't deserve it (people like us).

Pray for yourself: Pray a prayer of thankfulness that you are blessed simply because you have been invited to participate in the kingdom of God.

Pray for your four: Identify four people who don't know Jesus (friends, family, neighbors, or co-workers/classmates), and commit to pray for them consistently. Pray that **(1)** God would reveal Jesus to them, **(2)** that God would turn their hearts towards Him, **(3)** that God would put Christians in their path to represent Christ, and **(4)** that God would give you an opportunity to share what Christ has done in your life.

ACTION STEPS

Do the following this week: This week, when something goes wrong, you get frustrated, or someone upsets you (basically, when anything “bad” happens), say the words, “I’m still blessed” out loud as a reminder to yourself that even when it doesn’t feel like it, you’re still blessed because you share in the kingdom of God.

NOTES

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