

#Blessed

The Good Life According to Jesus

A RbC Study Guide

#BLESSED

THE GOOD LIFE ACCORDING TO JESUS

A Rockbridge Church STUDY GUIDE

Fall 2021

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Introduction

What is “the blessed life”?

A loving marriage? Obedient children? A healthy body? A successful career? Trusted friends? Financial abundance? Do achieving these qualities mean we are #blessed?

What happens when we don’t experience these qualities in our lives?

How does this “blessed life” line up with how Jesus defines blessedness?

In Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus redefines what blessedness looks like in our lives. It turns out that it’s way better than we could ever dream of on our own.

As we go through this RbC Sermon Series, #Blessed, all the way up to thanksgiving, we will investigate one of the most recognized, least understood, and rarely followed teachings of Jesus.

At the end of each week’s discussion, there are THREE questions that will show up consistently. These questions will hit on three major themes: how the Beatitudes are at the core of God, how Jesus redefines blessedness, and how blessedness impacts the privilege of shared faith.

The Beatitudes at the Core of God

After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does _____ (fill in the Beatitude) have to do with God?

Jesus Redefines Blessedness

How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

The Privilege of Shared Faith

How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Matthew 5:1-12

"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them.

He said:

*³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.*

*⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.*

*⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

*⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

*⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.*

*¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of
righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and
falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice
and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the
same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."*

Week 1
Finding God's Kingdom at the End of a Rope
#POORinSPIRIT

BUT I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT: God wants me rich!

"Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on 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." - Matthew 5:1-3*

- 1) Why do you think Jesus chooses to begin the Sermon on the Mount with a list of "blesseds"?

- 2) How could we describe the world's view of "blessed"?

- 3) What do you think it means to be poor in spirit and why do you think we should desire to be poor in spirit?

- 4) In your own life how have you been blessed by acknowledging your spiritual poverty and bankruptcy?

5) Take a minute and assess: in what areas do you need to readily acknowledge your need of God?

6) Read Revelation 3:20. This verse is often quoted as an invitation for those without Jesus to believe in Him, but the words were originally spoken to a church. How would Christ's invitation apply to the people in the Church?

7) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does poor in spirit have to do with God?

8) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

9) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 2
Losing What's Dear and Gaining What's Most
#THOSEwhoMOURN

I should be a "champion for Christ"!

*"Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted." - Matthew 5:4*

1) What causes you to mourn?

2) When is the last time you mourned?

3) Read Joel 2:12-13, James 4:7-10 for the role of mourning in our lives. Based on this context, what kind of mourning is Jesus referring to in the Beatitudes?

4) What are some ways people evade mourning their sins?

5) What does this Beatitude tell us about the heart of God?

6) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does mourning have to do with God?

7) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

8) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 3
No More, No Less, Just Everything
#MEEK

I love my #CELEBRITYpastor!

*"Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth." - Matthew 5:5*

1) Who are people you have known that are gentle, humble, considerate, or courteous? What led you to think that of them?

2) What would you say are the world's synonyms for meek?

3) We shrink from Jesus and ourselves being meek because we picture someone mild and weak. Matthew 11:29 says Jesus is "gentle [meek] and humble in heart"; why do you think Jesus is described as a meek person? What does that mean for us as those who are being formed in the likeness of Christ?

4) Why do you think we tend to lift up humans in a way they were not meant to be lifted up (e.g. celebrity pastors)?

5) How did Christ perfectly demonstrate meekness?

6) Where are the places you need meekness in your life?

7) What do you think is the relationship between being meek and trusting Jesus?

8) In what area do you need to trust God and not fight for your own way?

9) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does meekness have to do with God?

10) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

11) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 4
Gaining a Full Appetite for God
#whoHUNGERSforRIGHTEOUSNESS

I should be demanding justice!

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled." - Matthew 5:6*

1) Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What is righteousness and how does one acquire that quality?

2) Why is self-righteousness unattractive? Why do you think the world finds it attractive?

3) Go back to Romans 9:30-10:4. What are the differences between righteousness by the law and righteousness of faith in Christ?

4) What do you think it means for a person to "hunger and thirst for righteousness"?

5) What are you hungering and thirsting for right now that cannot satisfy? In what ways are these things poor substitutes for Jesus?

6) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does hungering for righteousness have to do with God?

7) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be “blessed” this week?

8) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 5
Mercy Matters
#merciful

mercy in community is a recipe for cheap grace!

*"Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God." - Matthew 5:7*

- 1) What cause and effect is presented in this Beatitude?

- 2) How is mercy defined in God's economy?

- 3) What have been the effects of mercy in your life?

- 4) How do you think justice relates to mercy?

- 5) When have you been grateful for the mercy of God?

6) Who could you show mercy to this week?

7) Read Matthew 7:1-2. Towards whom and in what situations do you have trouble showing mercy?

8) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does mercy have to do with God?

9) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

10) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 6
Inside Out Heart
#heartPURE

if I look good, people will think I play good!

*"Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God." - Matthew 5:8*

1) When you hear "pure in heart", what picture comes to mind?

1) Read 1 John 1:18. If pure in heart does not mean sinless, then what does it mean?

3) Read Psalm 24. How did David describe a person who is pure in heart? What phrases in this Psalm give hope that a sinner can still be pure in heart?

4) Where is it cloudy for you to see God because you are getting in the way?

5) Why do you think the pure in heart will “see God”?

6) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does being pure of heart have to do with God?

7) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

8) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 7
Collaboration over Competition
#PEACEmaker

the real fight is with _____!

*"Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God." - Matthew 5:9*

- 1) What is a peacemaker?

- 2) When have you found yourself in the role of a peacemaker?

- 3) What were some times that Jesus was a peacemaker?

- 4) Read Ephesians 2:18-22. What are the benefits of Christ's peacemaking?

- 5) What is the difference between being a peacemaker and being conciliatory?

- 6) What do you think are some of the costs of being a peacemakers?

7) What do you think are some of the rewards of peacemaking?

8) Read Galatians 4:4-7. What are some practical ways to be a peacemaker...

In our home?

In our church?

In our community / workplace?

In our country / world?

9) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does peacemaking have to do with God?

10) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

11) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

Week 8
the Privilege in Persecution
#persecuted

but this is a christian nation!

*"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and
falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² 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 5:10-12

1) What does Jesus say we should do when we are persecuted?

2) In contrast to rejoicing (v. 12), what are our more natural reactions to persecution?

3) Read Acts 5:41-42. In this passage, how are those who are persecuted also blessed?

4) What are the differences between being persecuted for the sake of Christ and simply drawing fire for being obnoxious or a poor performer?

5) Have you ever been persecuted for righteousness' sake? How did that experience impact you? Did you feel "blessed"?

6) After the sermon and the LIFEgroup discussion, what does persecution have to do with God?

7) How has Jesus challenged your picture of what it means to be #blessed this week?

8) How does this redefined picture of blessedness impact how we communicate the love of Jesus to our community?

(Re)Sources

Loving the City: Doing Balanced Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City, Timothy Keller

Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers, Dane Ortlund

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The Sermon on the Mount - Bible Study Book, Jen Wilkin



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