

Conversation Starters

- What are some powerful and memorable speeches you’ve heard in your life?
- How did it stir you and impact you?

Discuss

Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount rocked the culture during that time. Opening with what has become known as “The Beatitudes” Jesus talks about happiness in a way that seemed counterintuitive, especially in today’s culture. He asked us to be “poor” and “mourn” and “meek” (v3-5). Jesus was asking for us to recognize our need for God, to come to Him as our forgiver, and to be secure and content with a life in Him.

- Where do you stand with Christianity? What next step can you take to be closer to a decision?
- Do you recognize that you need to be filled daily by God?
- How do you respond to conviction of sin in your life?
- Are you content with wherever you are at in life? What’s keeping you from it?

Jesus also wanted us to allow God to impact our life in every way imaginable. For us to be filled by Him with purpose (v6), moved to deeper levels of compassion for others (v7), and intentional about working for peace (v9). To allow who we are in Him to flesh itself out (v8).

- What is the driving force in your life? Where do you find your purpose?
- Are you letting something or someone other than God fill you?
- Do you ever quietly celebrate when someone else fails?
- How do you think your everyday actions reflect to the world?

Jesus challenged his culture to a radically new way of living. His message is as true for us now as it was for the people living during that time. It was not exactly what they wanted to hear, and likely not exactly what we want to hear today either, but what they needed to hear – and what we need as well. Jesus died in one of the most horrific ways possible – by crucifixion. It wasn’t the easy life or the good life, but it was the right life and the best way to really live.

- Do you ever let the circumstances in your life dictate how you live?
- What are some ways you know would immediately change your life if you chose to follow the teaching of Jesus?

Next Steps

Write down a couple of things that you think could be what you rely on for happiness other than God. Pick one (or two) of the beatitudes to try to implement in your life throughout this week. At the end of the week, look back and compare to how you were living in reliance on other things instead of what Jesus instructed.

Further Reflection

*"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 5:3-12)*

Pray

God, thank you for Jesus and wisdom on how to truly live. For teaching us the way to true happiness. It is not always what we expect or would like to hear and we fail to follow these ways more than we would like to admit. Thank you for still wanting to know us and us to know you and for being unchanging when we are. We are thankful that your truth still holds true across time. Help us to identify areas in our life we know go against your teaching and, instead, apply your instructions.