

CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

Deeply Transformed

**Hearts
Lives
Community**

THE BEATITUDES
Matthew 5:1-16

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February 1

Matthew 5:1-6, 13-16

February 8

Matthew 5:7-9, 13-16

February 15

Matthew 5:10-12, 13-16

INTRO

Jesus announces a new way of being human — a community shaped by heaven's values, not the world's.

In the Beatitudes, he flips the controls of life, declaring that God's blessing rests not on the powerful, but on the humble.

In calling his followers "salt and light," Jesus invites us to live out that transformation publicly — together for the sake of the world.

This series will help us rediscover what "blessing" looks like in the Kingdom of God. It's not success, comfort, or reputation — it's being deeply transformed by grace and living that transformation out in community and mission.

Each week connects one aspect of inner transformation with the outward witness of being salt and light.

Some guidelines for Connect Group ...

- Come to the study prepared; preparation will greatly enrich your time together; it is recommended to take notes during the Sunday sermon, and to write down your thoughts as you prepare
- As part of your preparation, why not listen to the sermon again during the week (most sermons are recorded and available on Apple Podcasts, and also on the website)
- As you prepare, pray that God will speak to you through his word
- Be willing to participate in your group. Your sharing will greatly encourage all the other members as you grow together
- Stick to the topic - this allows everyone to participate on level ground and to go deeper into the Bible
- Be sensitive to others and listen attentively; affirm others, especially those who may feel timid or don't often share
- Your leader won't be lecturing, but helping members to think through the questions. Some of the questions don't have a 'right' answer, especially those that apply the Bible to our lives
- Be careful not to dominate, as it could inhibit others from sharing
- Expect God to teach you through the passage and through other members, and always pray that it will be a profitable time together

INTRO

Share together your understanding of 'blessedness', and see if it reflects what Jesus says about 'blessedness'.

1. What significance does the mountain setting have? (Think about other times mountains are in the biblical story). How does it enhance our understanding of Jesus' authority?
2. How does recognising our spiritual poverty lead us into a relationship with God?
3. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit," in the ongoing Christian walk? How can we cultivate this in our lives?

Sermon Notes

4. What does it mean to mourn in v.4, and how is this different from worldly sorrow?

5. In what ways can mourning over sin have a positive effect in our lives and lead to spiritual growth?

6. How does the biblical definition of meekness differ from the world's understanding of weakness?

7. How is our ministry of proclaiming Jesus enhanced by meekness?

8. What does it mean to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" in your life, and how can you cultivate this more?

9. How can we be the 'salt of the earth' in a secular world

- Give thanks for Jesus and his teaching, and pray that our hearts will be open to hear
- Pray that we will all know what it is to be poor in spirit, to mourn, to be meek and to hunger and thirst for righteousness, and let this shape our ministry for Christ
- Pray for opportunities to be light and salt this week



Sermon Notes

INTRO

What is one act of kindness or mercy you have experienced recently that made an impact on you?

1. What does God promise to those who are merciful? What do you think is meant by this? (5:7)
2. What distinction do you see between being “pure in heart” and being pure in outward behaviour? (5:8)
3. When do your actions fail to reflect what is really going on in your heart—both when your heart is in the right place and when it isn’t?

Sermon Notes

4. How does Jesus' grace meet us in those moments when our heart and actions don't align?

5. Why are peacemakers blessed? Why do you think Jesus addresses peacemakers in this way? (5:9)

6. Consider the relationships in your life – family, church, community, world. Where do you see the need for reconciliation, and what steps can you take to be a peacemaker in those situations?

7. Jesus says his followers are the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (5:13–16). How do mercy, purity of heart, and peacemaking shape the way we live visibly for others? Where might God be calling you to live your faith more openly this week?

Extension Question

8. Jesus' focus is on the heart rather than outward performance. What practices, rhythms, or relationships help you stay honest before God rather than simply "looking Christian" to others?

- Give thanks for God's mercy to us in Christ – that we are loved and welcomed before we ever live this out perfectly
- Ask God to purify our hearts, that our desires, motives, and lives would be shaped by his Spirit, not just our outward behaviour
- Pray for peace in our relationships – in our families, friendships, church, and community – and for courage and wisdom to take small steps toward reconciliation



Sermon Notes

INTRO

***What is the difference
between belonging to a
group and being part of a
community?***

1. In vv.10-12 who is Jesus speaking to, and why will they face opposition?
2. How communal or individual are these Beatitudes? Are they aimed at individuals or a group of people?
3. In vv.13-16 the word Jesus uses for 'you' is in the plural. He also declares that we are salt and light (not try to be). Why might that matter for our mission?

Sermon Notes

4. How does opposition and persecution shape a community differently to comfort and ease?

5. Is there a connection between the suffering of vv.10-12 and the public witness of vv.13-16?
What could it be?

6. Bonhoeffer said, "The Church is the Church only when it exists for others." (Letters and Papers from Prison) How are you, "the church", being salt and light in ways that point beyond yourselves to the glory of the Father?

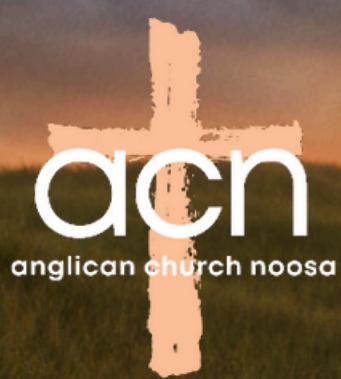
7. How might being salt and light together differ from being salt and light alone?

8. If someone observed our church for a month, what evidence might they see of a deeply transformed community?

- Thank you God, that we are called to follow Jesus together in community
- We confess ways we've chosen comfort, approval or safety over faithfulness
- Spirit come, shine brightly through us and flavour the community around us powerfully to point others to Jesus. Help us to rejoice and trust our Father even when following Jesus is costly



Sermon Notes



*Living to Love and
Proclaim Jesus*
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