

# The Beatitudes

Being the followers Jesus longs for



## Session 1

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*  
Matthew 5:3

### A Few Notes for Understanding the Beatitudes

**Audience:**

The primary audience is the disciples. There are crowds listening in, but Jesus is directing his teaching to his committed followers.

**Format:**

The declarations in Matthew 5:3-10 follow an established literary form called “beatitudes”. A beatitude has two parts, a statement of blessing and the condition for receiving the blessing. Jesus uses this literary form to teach his disciples what a disciple of his will look like and the blessings that they can count on.

**Purpose:**

It doesn’t come through clearly in English translations, but the phrase “and he began to teach them” in the original language means that this was an intentional and formal time of teaching. Jesus is holding a class and purposefully teaching His disciples the essentials of what it means to follow Him.

This is information Jesus wants us to know and put into practice as His followers so that we can experience the blessings He wants to share with us. If we fail to understand and practice what Jesus is teaching in these few verses we will be building lives on a foundation of sand rather than solid rock (Matthew 7:24-27).



### BIBLE STUDY

Read Matthew 5:1-10.

1. How do these beatitudes compare or contrast to how people typically understand blessings and who is blessed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. In verse 3, Jesus says that the “poor in spirit” are blessed. The phrase “poor in spirit” comes from the Old Testament. To get a better idea of its meaning read all of Psalm 34, then fill out the table on the next page. In the left column, write all of God’s blessings. In the right column, write down who receives the blessings and why we receive them.

BLESSINGS	WHO / WHY

4. Given what you have learned from Psalm 34, how would you define what it means to be “poor in spirit” and why does Jesus say the poor in spirit are “blessed”?

5. Jesus said that the reason the “poor in spirit” are blessed is because they belong to the kingdom of heaven. Read Matthew 4:17 and Luke 17:20-21 (Note: The terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are interchangeable).

Keep in mind that Jesus is speaking to Jews who have been waiting for generations for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. So, when Jesus says the kingdom of heaven has arrived and is in their midst, what would his audience take that to mean? What is Jesus saying about himself and the kingdom of heaven?

6. Jesus’ primary audience was the disciples. How would you summarize what Jesus is teaching His disciples about what it means to be disciples? According to this verse, what will characterize a disciple?

## **APPLY**

Read Matthew 6:22-24, and 31-33.

1. These Scriptures give examples of how the poor in spirit will live. What will it look like?
2. In what specific area of your life, or in what specific situation, do you need more reliance on God? Do you have any thoughts on how you can do this?

## **PRAY!**