



Today, we begin a new series in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5-7, called The Best Summer Ever. These three chapters are commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus delivers some of his most profound teachings. Beginning with the Beatitudes, Jesus presents a radical redefinition of blessedness, challenging conventional ideas of success and happiness. Each beatitude offers a counter-cultural perspective, emphasizing humility, mercy, and righteousness as central markers of spiritual blessing, and through the imagery of salt and light, Jesus illustrates the transformative influence we're called to have in the world.

Key Passage: Matthew 5:1-14

Discussion Questions:

1. How do the Beatitudes (verses 3-12) redefine our concept of "blessedness"? What implications does this have for our understanding of success and happiness?
2. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit" (verse 3)? How can this attitude be seen as a path to inheriting the kingdom of heaven?
3. In verse 4, why are those who mourn considered blessed, and what kind of comfort is being referred to here? How does this contrast with typical responses to grief and suffering?
4. Verse 5 states that the meek will inherit the earth. How can meekness, often perceived as weakness, be viewed as a strength in the context of Jesus' teachings?
5. How can we cultivate a hunger and thirst for righteousness (verse 6) in our daily lives? What does it mean to be "filled" in this context?
6. In verse 7, Jesus says the merciful will obtain mercy. How does this principle of reciprocity play out in personal relationships?
7. What does it mean to be "pure in heart" (verse 8), and how can this purity enable us to "see God"? How might this concept challenge us to reflect on our inner motives and desires?
8. Verse 9 calls peacemakers the children of God. How does being a peacemaker relate to one's identity as a child of God? What are some practical ways we can act as peacemakers at home, work, etc.?
9. In verses 10-12, Jesus talks about being persecuted for righteousness' sake. How should we understand and respond to persecution or opposition when it comes as a result of living out our faith?

10. Verses 13-14 refer to salt and light. How do these images help us understand our role and influence as followers of Jesus? How can we ensure we are effective "salt" and "light" in the world?