

# Study Guide



**Matthew 5:3-6— August 27, 2017**

## **Characteristics of True Disciples (Part One)**

**Welcome (40 Minutes)**

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

**Worship (5 Minutes)**

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

**Word (45 Minutes)**

As we look at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, we see Matthew and the other disciples "at the feet of Jesus." These teachings are in the context of Jesus' calling and equipping the twelve apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. In our nine months of studying Jesus' five discourses of Matthew we will be sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the ins-and-outs of being disciple-makers ourselves. Our prayer is that we will be challenged to understand that we were saved in order to be disciple-makers and that we will be inspired to sit at the feet of Jesus to be equipped for our calling to be disciple-makers.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

## **Action Step**

Ask at least one person to use three words to characterize the Christians they know. Record their answer in your "Disciple's Journal".

## **Calendar**

September 17th— Connection Group

September 17th— Kid's Shine

October 7th— [Parenting Conference](#)

## Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

## Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[O Come To The Altar](#)":

Are you hurting and broken within?  
Overwhelmed by the weight of your sin?  
Jesus is calling  
Have you come to the end of yourself  
Do you thirst for a drink from the well?  
Jesus is calling

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Leave behind your regrets and mistakes  
Come today there's no reason to wait  
Jesus is calling  
Bring your sorrows and trade them for joy  
From the ashes a new life is born  
Jesus is calling

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Oh what a savior  
Isn't He wonderful?  
Sing hallelujah, Christ is risen

Bow down before Him  
For He is Lord of all  
Sing Hallelujah, Christ is risen

Oh what a savior  
Isn't He wonderful?  
Sing hallelujah, Christ is risen

Bow down before Him  
For He is Lord of all  
Sing Hallelujah, Christ is risen

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

O come to the altar  
The Father's arms are open wide  
Forgiveness was bought with  
The precious blood of Jesus Christ

Bear your cross as you wait for the crown  
Tell the world of the treasure you found

**Commentary: Read Matthew 5:1-6**

The Sermon on the Mount begins with eight beatitudes, or statements of blessing. The eight beatitudes can be broken into two sections, the first four deal with our relationship with God, and the second four deal with our relationship with others. The beatitudes show the blessings which God bestows (as a gift of grace) upon His disciples. Before we take a deeper look at the first four beatitudes (5:3-6), let's first define the word "blessed."

In the sermon this week we learned, the Greek word for "blessed" is *makarios* and is best translated as "happy". Many translations use the word "blessed" because the word happy has come to mean a mental, psychological feeling, contingent upon circumstances. When things go well we feel happy when things don't go well we don't feel happy. The word "blessed" in these passages go so much deeper than that. **When properly understood, happiness is a deep, inner, divine joy given by God that transcends our circumstances, it is only understood and experienced in relation to God, it is a gift of God imparted by His Spirit.** "Blessed" is a joy or happiness that can be experienced in the midst of grieving, mourning and persecution as we will see in these verses.

**Blessed are the poor in spirit (vs. 3).**

To be "poor in spirit" is to acknowledge our spiritual poverty before God. We are all sinners, under the holy wrath of God, and we only deserve God's judgement. We have nothing to offer God, nothing that will buy us favor with Him. All we can do is cry out to God for mercy. The "poor in spirit" are the ones the kingdom of God is given. For God's rule which brings salvation is a free gift that is undeserved by us. This gift must be received with a dependent humility on God. In Jesus's day, it was not the Pharisees who entered the kingdom but the rejects of human society, who knew they were so poor they could offer nothing and achieve nothing. All they could do was cry to God for mercy and he heard their cry.

**Blessed are those who mourn (vs. 4).**

It is one thing to be spiritually poor and acknowledge it, it is another to mourn and to grieve over it. The comfort promised here is not primarily for those who mourn the loss of a loved one, but those who mourn their spiritual nature without God. **Such mourners, who grieve their own sinfulness, will be comforted by the only comfort which can relieve their suffering, namely the free forgiveness of God.** It is only in the final stage of glory will Christ's comfort be complete, it is then all sin will be no more and every tear will be wiped from our eyes.

**Blessed are the meek (vs. 5).**

It is the meek, the gentle, the humble, the considerate, the courteous that will inherit the kingdom of heaven because they understand how undeserving they are of any goodness or blessing from God. The world expects the opposite. They think it is not the meek that will inherit the earth but the strong because they can overcome the weak. But the condition on which we enter our spiritual inheritance in Christ is not strength or might but meekness, for everything is ours if we are Christ's. **The meek, knowing what it is to live and reign with Christ, can enjoy and even "posses" the earth, which belongs to Christ.** Then on the final day there will be "new heavens and a new earth" for them to inherit. Every Christian even if he is like Paul in "having nothing" can describe himself as "possessing everything."

## **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (vs. 6).**

This is a spiritual hunger that is a characteristic of all God's people, whose desire is not material but spiritual. Christians are to "seek first" God's kingdom and righteousness. They are to hunger and thirst for a right relationship with God, a righteous character, and a social righteousness which includes integrity in the home and business, justice, and liberation in oppression.

Looking at these four beatitudes we can see a spiritual progression. Each step leads to the next and presupposes the one that is before it. We are to be "poor in spirit", acknowledging our complete and utter spiritual poverty before God. Next we are to "mourn" over the cause of our spiritual poverty, our sins, the corruption of our fallen nature, and the reign of sin and death in the world. Thirdly, we are to be "meek", humble and gentle towards others, allowing our spiritual poverty to instruct our behavior toward them and God. Lastly, we are to "hunger and thirst for righteousness." We can't just confess and repent of our sin, acknowledging the truth about ourselves to both God and men and leave it there. Repentance and confession must lead us to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

As Pastor Tracy shared, Jesus is showing us, true disciples are those who have been humbled by God's holiness and come to God empty handed, seeking the righteousness of Christ. This is the truly blessed life. He is saying that true satisfaction, happiness, joy, contentment is found only by submitting to the loving, gracious, reign and rule of Jesus Christ.

## **Discussion**

1. Verses 3-11 are commonly called the Beatitudes or statements of blessing. In these verses Jesus talks about the character qualities and the blessings of his disciples. In verses 3-6 what character qualities of his disciples does Jesus identify?
2. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Do you think Luke 18:9-14 is an example of one who is poor in spirit? Was the tax collector's blessing the same as described in verse 3?
3. What does it mean to mourn? Mourn for what? What is the difference between confessing you are a sinner and mourning because of your sin?
4. What does it mean to be meek? Does it mean that you have low self-esteem? Does it mean that you have a true view of yourself that translates into ways that you think about God and others? How does meekness affect our sense of entitlement from God or others?
5. Does the world agree that the meek shall inherit the earth? What would the world say is the expected result of meekness? Look at Psalms 37:7-11 to see what the Psalmist says about the meek. Look at Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 6:10.
6. What does it mean to hunger and thirst after righteousness? How is this different from confessing sin (being poor in spirit) and from mourning for sin?

7. In verses 3-11 Jesus is talking about those who are “blessed” or “happy”. Most translations use the word “blessed”, but some use the word “happy”. What would be a common definition of the word “happy” as it is used in our culture? How is the word “blessed” related to the word “happy” and how is it different from the common perception of “happy”? How would you define the word, “blessed” as it is used in these verses?
8. How do we know that the word that Jesus is using—“blessed” --is more than just a positive mental or psychological feeling contingent upon circumstances (vs. 4 and vs. 10)?
9. Look at the tense of the verbs in these verses. When are the disciples who have these character traits blessed?
10. Look at verse 4. When are those who mourn blessed? When are they comforted?
11. Likewise in verse 5. When are the meek blessed? When will they inherit the earth?
12. The four character qualities that are focused upon in these verses—are they achieved at some point in the Christian life or are they an on-going permanent part of the way Christians relate to God in this life?
13. Which of these four character qualities do you think is a regular part of your Christian life? Which of them need to become more of a regular part of your life?
14. Before studying this passage how would you have answered our action step question for yourself? What are three words you would use to characterize your basic character qualities as a Christian?

## Action Step

**This week ask at least one person to use three words to characterize the Christians they know. Record their answer in your “Disciple’s Journal”.** The purpose of this exercise is to help you identify people that are already in your life patterns whom you can be more intentional to engage - especially those whom you suspect are not in church or are not Christians. To make disciples we must learn to identify who God has put into our lives.

## Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased  
Young life  
Heart of hope  
First priority  
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center  
Community renewal  
Grief counseling  
Celebrate recovery  
Samaritan counseling  
Last call ministries  
Golden age ministries  
Rescue mission  
Luke's lighthouse  
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

## Walk Prayer & Missions

For further information visit  
[norrisferrychurch.org](http://norrisferrychurch.org) or contact Jared  
Clary ([clary@norrisferrychurch.org](mailto:clary@norrisferrychurch.org))

## Calendar

September— Serve Shreveport  
October— South Sudan  
March— NOLA  
June— Serve Shreveport  
July— Central America