

Study Guide



Matthew 5:7-12— September 3, 2017

Characteristics of True Disciples (Part Two)

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

This week share with your group the three characteristics you heard and pray for the person by name in your community group.

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 "[Jesus Paid it All](#)":

I hear the savior say, thy strength indeed is
small
Child of weakness, watch and pray, find in me
thine all in all

'Cause Jesus paid it all
All to him I owe

Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it
white as snow

Lord, now indeed I find thy power and thine
alone

Can change the leper's spots and melt the
heart of stone

'Cause Jesus paid it all
All to him I owe

My sin had left this crimson stain, he washed
it white as snow

It's washed away, all my sin
And all my shame

And when before the throne I stand in him
complete

"Jesus died my soul to save" my lips shall still
repeat

Jesus paid it all
All to him I owe

(Sin had left a crimson stain, he washed it
white as snow)

(He washed it white as snow)

(O praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead)
(O praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead)
(O praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead)
(O praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead)
(O praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead)
Well praise the one who paid my debt and
raised this life up from the dead

Jesus
You are the one
The son of god
Conqueror of death
King of kings
The sacrificial lamb

(O praise the one who paid my debt
And raised this life up from the dead)
Well praise the one who paid my debt and
raised this life up from the dead
Jesus

Commentary: Read Matthew 5:1-12

In the second half of the beatitudes (verses 7-12) we turn from our attitude to God to our attitude toward others. This week Pastor Tracy looked at characteristics of how Jesus' disciples relate to other people. In these verses the contrast between Jesus' disciples and the world becomes even more stark than ever. Jesus' description of his true disciples provides us with a vision of who we are to become by the transforming grace and power of the Holy Spirit as we follow Jesus.

Blessed are the merciful (vs. 7).

Mercy embraces both forgiveness for the guilty and compassion for the suffering and needy. Mercy deals with the results of sin. It deals with pain, misery, and distress. Mercy extends relief and helps cure and heal. Disciples of Jesus are to show mercy continuously just as our God is a merciful God and shows mercy continuously. As Pastor Tracy mentioned, by faith in Christ, we receive the mercy of God and on the judgement day we will receive mercy. Because of God's mercy towards us, we as citizens of his kingdom are to be merciful. We cannot receive mercy and forgiveness of God unless we repent, and we cannot claim to have repented of our sins if we are unmerciful towards the sins of others. To be merciful is to have compassion on others because they are sinners too.

Blessed are the pure in heart (vs. 8).

The primary reference to the pure in heart is sincerity. A person with a pure heart is free from falsehood in their relationship with both God and man. Their life, public and private, is transparent before God and others. Their heart, including their thoughts and actions, are pure and not devious. Deceit and hypocrisy disgust them, they are open and honest, and they are free to live sincere lives because of the cleansing blood of Jesus. The pure in heart are not tempted to wear a different mask and play a different role according to each occasion in their lives. It is the sincere who will see God, they see Him now with the eye of faith and will see His glory at the end of days.

Blessed are the peacemakers (vs. 9).

The sequence of thought from purity of heart to peacemaking is natural, because one of the most frequent causes of conflict is intrigue, while openness and sincerity are essential to reconciliation. Christians are called to peace, we are to "pursue" peace (Ps. 34:14), we are to "strive for peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14), and we are to "live peaceable with all" (Rom. 12:18). According to this beatitude, Christians are meant to be peacemakers both in the community and in the church. Christians are to seek reconciliation. For peace means reconciliation and God is the author of peace and reconciliation. Jesus has reconciled us to God giving us a divine peace with God. Those reconciled with God are called "sons of God" and they shall be peacemakers like God who brought peace through Jesus Christ.

Blessed are those who are persecuted (vs. 10-12).

Jesus now transitions from peacemaking to persecution, from the work of reconciliation to the experience of hostility. Yet however hard we may try to make peace with people, they refuse to live at peace with us. Not all attempts at reconciliation succeed. It may be that they find distasteful the righteousness we hunger and thirst after or they reject the Christ we seek to follow. Persecution is the clash between two irreconcilable value-systems. Every Christian disciple will be despised and rejected, slandered and persecuted. However, our reaction to persecution as a disciple of Jesus should be to "rejoice and be glad" (Matt. 5:12). Jesus said, "our reward is great in heaven." We may not have anything on this earth, but we shall inherit everything in heaven as a free reward. We are to rejoice because we are suffering on God's account, on account of our loyalty to him and his righteousness.

The beatitudes paint a picture of a Christian disciple. In the first four verses we saw the disciple in relation to God but now we see them out in the community. Their relationship with God does not cause them to hide but to show mercy to those who are in sin and is transparent and sincere being a peacemaker in the community. However, they are persecuted for their desire of righteousness as they stand for Christ in all they do. This man or woman is the one who is “blessed,” the one who is a disciple of Jesus, a “son of God”, and “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Discussion

1. The first 4 beatitudes dealt mainly with our vertical relationship with God. These last 4 beatitudes deal mainly with horizontal relationships. All of them describe the character traits that should be evident in a person who is following Jesus—a person who is being changed by following Jesus. What do these verses say in a general way about the people who have these character traits?
2. How would you define mercy/merciful as used in verse 7? Is merciful the same as forgiving? Are they related? Look at Luke 10: 34-37 (Good Samaritan) and Matthew 18:23-35 (the unforgiving servant) to get some insight. What are some different contexts where mercy is needed?
3. Why do and how do giving mercy and receiving mercy go together as this verse 7 asserts? Talk about receiving mercy as a present blessing and a future blessing.
4. What does it mean to be pure in heart? Look at Psalm 24:3-4, Psalm 51:6, 10, and Matthew 23:25-26. Write out your own definition based on these passages.
5. What is the present blessing and future blessing of being pure in heart according to verse 8? What does “they shall see God” mean to you?
6. What does being pure in heart have to do with horizontal relationships with others? What are some ways that being pure in heart are manifested in relationships with others?
7. What is a good definition of a peacemaker? Is there a difference between a peace-loving person and a peacemaker?
8. Why will peacemakers be called sons of God (Matthew 5:43-45 and Colossians 1:19-20)?
9. How is being a peacemaker sometimes painful?

10. What are the reasons that cause the persecution described in verses 10-12?
11. How are we encouraged to react to persecution? What are some more common ways we are prone to react to persecution? For an example of what it looks like to react with joy and gladness look at Acts 5:40-41.
12. What reasons did Jesus give for reacting to persecution with joy and gladness (vs. 12)?
13. The other seven beatitudes describe character traits of true followers of Jesus. What about this one? Is being persecuted a character trait? Is it a normal mark of Christian discipleship? Is it inevitable for followers of Jesus to experience persecution? Is it very likely? Consider John 15:18-20 and Luke 6:26.
14. Why would people or why do people who exhibit the other qualities identified in the beatitudes—poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungering for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers—encounter opposition and active persecution?
15. Examine your own life in light of the beatitudes. Which of these qualities do you find particularly lacking in your life? Do you believe that God purposes for you to grow to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29) in all these areas? Please share with your community group how you would like them to pray for you about a specific lack in your life?
16. What action steps will you take to grow in these areas? Confession to God and others? Memorizing applicable scripture? Intentionally exercising mercy toward others, purity (authenticity/sincerity) with others, making peace with and among others?

Action Step

We must never forget that we have been sent by the Son of God to make disciples who make disciples. Each week we are giving you action steps to take. The first week, we asked you to get a notebook for notes and prayers. Second, we asked you to engage one person to describe Christians to you with three words. Did you do it? If not, do it. Jesus has sent you out to make disciples and it begins by engaging people. **This week share with your group the three characteristics you heard and pray for the person by name in your community group.**

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 or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

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