

**WHITFIELD PARISH**  
St James' Church † St Luke's Church

**LIFE Group Notes w/b Sunday 6 April 2008**  
(or whenever your group uses them)

**The Good Life – The Beatitudes**  
Matthew 5.1 – 12

**Comment:**

This week we start a series on 'The Sermon on the Mount', of which 'The Beatitudes' are a part. Before looking more specifically at 'The Beatitudes', let's look more generally at the whole 'Sermon on the Mount'.

This was a 'mega' teaching session from Jesus given on the hills around Galilee at the start of his ministry. This teaching probably went on for several days and Matthew presents to us a summary.

The 'religious' / social / political context is important to our understanding: Israel was at a very low ebb as a nation. They had a history of rebelling against God; had been taken into exile; they returned and then were invaded by the Greeks and then the Romans.

They were humiliated and downtrodden yet they kept alive the hope that a new King David would appear (the Messiah), and God would re-establish his kingdom.

Jesus has come and proclaimed, "...the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4 v.17). However, the true Messiah (Jesus) looked very different to the Messiah they expected, and so did the values of his kingdom!

1. Who is the Sermon on the Mount for? (Matthew 5 v.1-2) What is the significance of this?
2. R.T. Kendall has described the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit.
  - i) What do you think he means?

- ii) In which ways would you say the Sermon on the Mount is connected with the Holy Spirit?
- iii) How does the Sermon on the Mount relate to Galatians 5 v.25?
- iv) What is the significance of Matthew 3 v.11 in this?

**Now read Matthew 5 v.1-12** and spend a few minutes thinking about this passage.

**Comment:**

This passage is commonly called 'The Beatitudes'. This is not actually a Biblical word. It comes from a Latin word meaning 'blessed'.

3. Jesus' kingdom has been called an 'upside-down' kingdom. If The Beatitudes are its value system, how might this be said to be true?
4. Look specifically at each Beatitude and compare them with the values of the world we live in.
5. Is it possible for people who are not yet Christian to live by the Beatitudes?  
Is it possible for people who are Christian to live by the Beatitudes?
6. One commentator (Philip Jensen) said the Beatitudes describe the kind of person God esteems.
  - i) How does that relate to being 'blessed'?
  - ii) Do the Beatitudes describe a reward system or a state of being?
7. In Matthew 4 v.17, Jesus says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven (God) is near".
  - i) What do the Beatitudes say to us about the need for repentance?
  - ii) How do they help us to repent?
8. In your prayer time, use the Beatitudes to 'fuel' your prayers.