

SERMON ON THE MOUNT



SESSION 1

**Blessed
Are You**



SESSION 2

**Salt and
Light**



SESSION 3

**Prayer and
Fasting**



SESSION 4

**Do Not
Worry**



SESSION 5

**Judge
Not**



SESSION 6

**Build
on Rock**



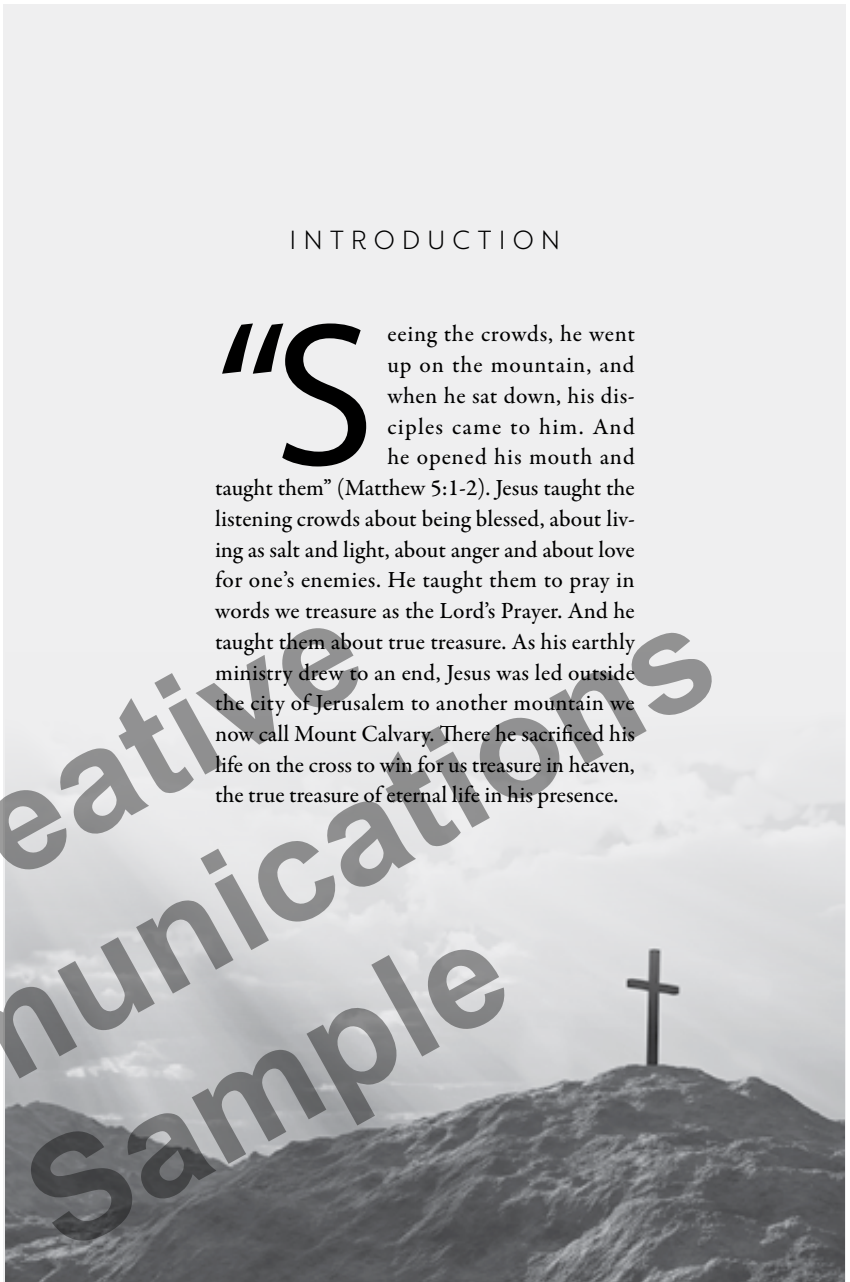
A 6 SESSION **BIBLE STUDY**
FOR LENT

leader's guide

INTRODUCTION

"Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them" (Matthew 5:1-2). Jesus taught the listening crowds about being blessed, about living as salt and light, about anger and about love for one's enemies. He taught them to pray in words we treasure as the Lord's Prayer. And he taught them about true treasure. As his earthly ministry drew to an end, Jesus was led outside the city of Jerusalem to another mountain we now call Mount Calvary. There he sacrificed his life on the cross to win for us treasure in heaven, the true treasure of eternal life in his presence.

Creative
Communications
Sample



Leader's Guide For Session 1

BEFORE CLASS:

Read through this session yourself.
Examine the Bible readings listed
and become acquainted with them.

READ: Have a member of the
group read the Introduction on
page 4 aloud.

READ: Have someone read the
Opening Prayer or read the prayer
in unison.

DISCUSS: Discuss blessings in
your life.

SESSION 1



Blessed Are You

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied. MATTHEW 5:6*

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, you sent Jesus our Lord to us, who willingly climbed Mount Calvary and laid down his life on the cross for us. Through him you have blessed us with the gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. We pray that you would bless us now through the study of your holy Word. Lead us by your Spirit to put what we will learn into practice so that we might be a blessing to others, in our families, in our church and in our community. Hear our prayer in the name of Jesus our Savior, who died and rose that we might live in your presence, now and forever. Amen.

DISCUSSION

What are some of the greatest blessings of your life?

READ: Read aloud or have someone read aloud the Introduction.

Mourning, Meek and Hungry

1. The Israelites complained about their hunger and thirst. They thought they had been well fed and satisfied in Egypt (apparently forgetting about the suffering they endured as slaves). Their complaints were a test of the Lord because they were doubting his ability and willingness to provide for them in the wilderness. He had saved them and he would continue to care for them (see Romans 8:31-32).
2. We are invited to return to the Lord in heartfelt repentance. We can approach him without fear because he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Joel argues that God would not want the nations to speak badly of his people and his love for them. Nations would mock Israel and their God if the Israelites were destroyed. Answers will vary.
3. Those who are rich, full, rejoicing and well-thought of now, in this earthly life, already have their reward. They may be putting

INTRODUCTION

“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Psalm 32:1). During the season of Lent we follow our Lord Jesus as he takes up his final path to the cross, to the mount we call Calvary, where he laid down his life to save us. Though we are undeserving, through God’s grace in the death and resurrection of his Son, we are blessed, now and for all eternity. We are blessed because the blood of our Savior, shed on Calvary, “cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). Now we, in turn, can be a blessing to others, serving them in love and sharing with them the blessing of knowing their Savior.

MOURNING, MEEK AND HUNGRY

1. **Read Exodus 16:1-5, 13-18 and Exodus 17:1-7.** Although the people of Israel were blessed with freedom from slavery in Egypt and the hope of a new home, they were not satisfied. What were their complaints? Why were their complaints a “test of the LORD”? In both situations, how does the Lord satisfy their needs? Share, if you wish, a time when you wondered, as Israel did, “Is the LORD among us or not?” How did the Lord satisfy your needs?
2. We are very aware of our hunger and thirst and other physical needs, and we often cry out to God for his help in satisfying these needs. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, at work in the Law of God, we are brought to an awareness of our spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness, of our desperate need for forgiveness for our sins. **Read Joel 2:12-19.** God is aware of our needs. What is his invitation for us? Why can we approach God without fear? God said to the Israelite exiles, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name” (Ezekiel 36:22). What argument does the prophet Joel present before God as he argues for mercy for God’s people? How does the blessing of God’s forgiveness for us in Christ bring honor to his holy name?
3. There are those who reject God’s mercy and the blessings he wants to shower on them. They refuse to acknowledge their spiritual poverty and hunger. They reject the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and refuse

their faith in earthly pleasures and wealth instead of trusting God. • Answers will vary, but Mary speaks of the scattering of the proud and how the mighty are brought down and the rich sent away empty. In the kingdom of God, those who were last will be first.

4. Answers will vary. Jesus was “despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3). He was meek, not speaking in his own defense in his trial. He hungered for our righteousness. He was merciful to those who were ill and suffering, and merciful to us. He was a peacemaker, establishing peace between God and man. He was persecuted and reviled for the sake of our salvation.

Blessed Savior

1. God will guide Abraham to a new land. Abraham’s descendants will be a great nation and God will bless him and make his name great. Those who bless Abraham will be blessed and those who dishonor him will be cursed. In Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed.
2. The suffering servant of the Lord (Isaiah 52:13) will see his offspring and prolong his days—prophecies indicating that he lives. Through his suffering he will bear the iniquities of others and make them to be accounted as righteous.
3. Abraham believed the promises of God and that was counted before God as righteousness. The promise to Abraham, that all nations

to mourn over their sins. In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus announces the beatitudes, or blessings, as well as the “woes,” warnings for those who reject the gifts of God. **Read Luke 6:20-26.** What brings woe, that is, grief and distress, to the people described by Jesus? **Read Luke 1:46-55.** How does Mary’s song of praise reflect these “woes” in Jesus’ teaching?

4. **Read Matthew 5:1-11.** When we imagine a king and his kingdom, we may picture a king who surrounds himself with wealthy, important citizens, wise counselors and armed guards. But in the kingdom of God, Jesus our King surrounds himself with those who are poor in spirit, mourning, meek and hungry. These words describe the people of the kingdom because they also describe the King. In what ways do these blessings describe the Lord Jesus himself?

BLESSED SAVIOR

1. **Read Genesis 12:1-3.** What promises does God make to Abraham? How would the patriarch be blessed? To whom would Abraham be a blessing?
2. **Read Isaiah 53:10-12.** According to the Father’s will, Jesus endured suffering and death on the cross for the sake of our salvation. What promise of the resurrection is found in these verses from Isaiah? What would the Lord’s suffering servant accomplish through his suffering?
3. The Christians of Galatia were turning away from the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus and attempting instead to establish their righteousness before God through obedience to the Law. **Read Galatians 3:1-9.** What does the apostle Paul tell them about Abraham’s righteousness? Why does Paul refer to God’s promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) as “the gospel”? In what way are people of faith blessed along with Abraham?
4. **Read Romans 4:13-25.** What does it mean to call Abraham an “heir of the world”? Abraham believed the promise of God, that he and Sarah would have a son. What is meant by the phrase, “In hope he believed against hope”?

7

would be blessed through him, is the gospel because it refers to the blessings promised to the world through Abraham’s descendant Jesus. We, as people of faith, are blessed with Abraham, receiving salvation, as he did, by grace through faith in the promises of God.

4. The new world, the new creation that will be brought into existence by God when Jesus returns, is Abraham’s and ours as well (Revelation 21:1).

Satisfied

1. We were predestined for adoption as sons and daughters of God. We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. We have an inheritance of eternal life awaiting us. God chose us to be his own before he created the world. We have the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of the inheritance of life that will be ours. • Peter describes our inheritance of life and salvation, as Paul does. We are blessed and rejoice in suffering because God is testing and strengthening our faith so that our faith brings honor to Christ on the Last Day. Answers will vary.
2. Jesus also blesses those who are persecuted and tells them to rejoice and be glad. We are to rejoice when we suffer for the sake of Christ. • The apostles rejoiced that they had been allowed to suffer for the sake of Jesus.
3. Jesus invites those who are blessed by his Father to inherit the kingdom that was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. The blessing is inherited through the death of the King, not earned by good works.
4. In the blessed exchange, Jesus took our sin onto himself and gave us his righteousness.

SATISFIED

1. **Read Ephesians 1:1-14.** God, in Christ, has blessed us “with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,” that is, we are blessed with all the blessings of heaven—and with heaven itself! What blessings does the apostle Paul list here? When did God choose us to be his own people? What do we have as the guarantee of our eternal inheritance? **Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.** How is the apostle Peter’s description of our blessings similar to that of the apostle Paul in the previous reading? We do not always feel “blessed” in the midst of suffering. What is the purpose of such suffering? If you wish, describe a time in your life in which God blessed you even through suffering.
 2. **Read 1 Peter 4:12-19.** How are these verses similar to Jesus’ words in the Beatitudes? When, according to these verses, are we “blessed,” even though we may not feel especially blessed at the time? **Read Acts 5:27-42.** How did the apostles experience the blessings of which Jesus speaks in the Beatitudes?
 3. **Read Matthew 25:31-34.** In this story of Judgment Day, what belongs to those whom Jesus calls “blessed by my Father”? When was this blessing prepared for all who believe in Jesus? Why is it important to note that the blessing is “inherited”?
 4. **Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.** The salvation won for us by Christ through his suffering and death has been called “the blessed exchange.” What did Jesus take from us and give us in exchange?
 5. Abraham’s nephew Lot is described as a righteous man who was distressed by the wickedness of the world around him. He hungered for righteousness (2 Peter 2:7-8). In what ways do you hunger for righteousness in our world today? **Read Revelation 7:9-17.** As Jesus says in the Beatitudes, we hunger for righteousness. When will we be finally and fully satisfied?
- 8
5. Answers will vary. We will be fully satisfied, and hunger and thirst no more, when we live for all eternity in the presence of the Lamb.

Foundation

1. Paul writes that no one can lay any other foundation than the one laid by the apostles—Jesus Christ. The building may be the teaching of others and the way of life that follows that teaching. Only that which is built on Jesus will endure.
2. The Israelites built on sand through their disobedience to God's commands and through their worship of the golden calf. These events were written down as examples for us so that we do not act as the Israelites did, giving in to immorality and idolatry or putting God to the test through their complaining against him. When we become proud, we fall to temptation more easily because we think we cannot be overcome. Answers will vary.
3. The hostility between Jew and Gentile was broken down through the death and resurrection of Jesus. By his death he abolished the demands of the law that neither Jew nor Gentile could fulfill. Now in Christ the Gentiles are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household. The foundation of God's household is the teaching of the prophets and apostles; the cornerstone is Christ. Answers will vary.

the master of the house? Who are the tenants (see verse 45)? Who were the servants sent to collect the fruit owed the master? Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23, referring to himself as the rejected stone. What will the Lord, the vinedresser, do with that stone? What "fruit" does God want his people, his vineyard, to produce? How does this parable serve to anger Jesus' enemies?

FOUNDATION

1. **Read Acts 4:10-12 and 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.** The apostles proclaimed the name of Jesus as the only name by which we are saved. How does the apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, express that same truth? What is the work built on that foundation, and who is building on it?
2. **Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13.** We do not always think that the Son of God was present for the Israelite exodus from Egypt, but he is God and he was there! Just as the Israelites had water to drink from the rock (Exodus 17:5-6), they also drank spiritually from the ever-present but unseen Rock that was Christ. Though they were refreshed in Christ, in what ways did the Israelites build on sand instead of on that Rock? Why, according to Paul, were these events written down? Why does the apostle, in connection with temptation, warn against pride? What examples can you think of that might be "ways of escape" from temptation?
3. **Read Ephesians 2:11-22.** The Gentiles were once "strangers to the covenant," without hope and without God. The Jews considered them unclean. How was the hostility between Jew and Gentile broken down? Apart from Christ, the Gentiles were "strangers and aliens." What is their status now? What is the foundation of this household of God into which we are built and growing? What does it mean to grow together into "a holy temple to the Lord"?