

GLENKIRK CHURCH



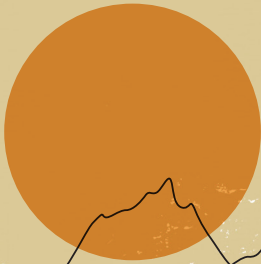
WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

AUG 28 - SEP 1, 2023

Re-Formed:

Sermon on the Mount



Sermon Series 9/3 - 11/26

MONDAY

Read **Matthew 5:1-12**

This week we will look at the Beatitudes. The first beatitude says, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (v. 3). The *“poor in spirit”* is one who realizes his absolute spiritual poverty. This is one who knows he is totally lost in his sin and is able to say, “I am a sinner and cannot save myself.” Then, he will trust in Christ for his salvation. This person is able to experience God’s kingdom in the present.

Unsaved people do not say, “I am a sinner and cannot save myself,” because they compare themselves with the worst criminals and say, “I am not like them; I am a good, moral person.” They do not see sin from God’s point of view. God’s standard is not relative; it is absolute. *“Be perfect, ... as your heavenly Father is perfect”* (Matthew 5:48). Man is primarily aware of sins of commission. However, God, besides sins of commission, sees sins of omission, sins in thought, in judging others, in violating conscience, sins embedded in the culture, sin-tainted good works, and not worshipping God. Therefore, *“There is no one righteous; not even one”* (Romans 3:10).

Only when a person realizes that he needs help, can he be helped. The alcoholic has to say, “I am an alcoholic” before he can be helped. A person must realize his absolute spiritual poverty—that he is totally

a captive of his sin—then he can turn to Christ. A person has to have all human props stripped away before he can trust in Christ as the Only Way.

Turning to Christ happened among some Vietnamese refugees after the Vietnam War. Before the war, they were comfortable in Vietnam. During the war, they lost everything. It was then that some recognized their sins and turned to Christ.

Several years after the war, I was in a meeting with Vietnamese pastors. Among the group of fifteen pastors, five of them were saved in refugee camps following the war. They saw their spiritual poverty and turned to Christ.

QUESTIONS

Are you able to say, “I am a sinner and cannot save myself?”
How does this impact you?

PRAYERS

For Young Life Capernaum—Greater Glendora Area

Praise the Lord for the great close to the semester with a talent show where family members and alumni were in attendance. Capernaum Ministry is grateful also for the volunteer celebration at the beach where the volunteers reflected on special moments in ministry.

TUESDAY

Read **Matthew 5:1-12**

The second beatitude, *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted”* (v. 4), is closely connected to the first beatitude. When a person sees his extreme spiritual poverty, he will mourn at the sight of his lost condition and turn to Christ. Then he will experience the unconditional comfort of the Lord. *“Your sorrow led you to repentance. ... Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation”* (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

“One of the great functions of the Cross is to open our eyes to the horror of sin. And when we see sin in all its horror, we cannot do anything else but experience intense sorrow for our sin. ... Blessed is the man who is intensely sorry for his sin, the man who is heart-broken for what his sin has done to God and to Jesus Christ, the man who sees the Cross and is appalled by the havoc wrought by sin. ... The way to forgiveness is through the desperate sorrow of the broken heart.” (William Barclay)

The third beatitude, *“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth”* (v. 5), is closely connected to the second beatitude. The word meek can also mean humility. As we realize the dreadfulness of our sin and our desperate need for God, we see clearly that we are no better than anyone else. We become humble in our relationships with others.

We can only come to God with a broken spirit: *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise”* (Psalm 51:17). In one of Jesus’ parables, the tax collector said, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” And Jesus explained, *“... everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted”* (Luke 18:13-14). In 1 Corinthians 1:31 Paul says, *“Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

The forgiven sinner has no grounds for boasting. Therefore, he will relate in a humble manner with others. His humility, grounded in trusting in Christ, will be richly rewarded.

QUESTIONS

How do you feel when you see the heinousness of your sin? Is it difficult for you to relate humbly with people? Why?

PRAYERS

For Young Life Capernaum—Greater Glendora Area

Praise the Lord for the biggest group of campers at the July summer camp in the Great Glendora Area since the start of Capernaum locally. Pray that the experience at camp results in kids’ understanding God’s love for them and the relationship that Jesus wants with them.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Matthew 5:1-12**

Notice how the Beatitudes flow together in a logical order. As we see the dire poverty of our sinfulness, we are moved to mourn over the cost of our sin paid by Christ on the Cross. This in turn leads us to act humbly. We have no grounds for boasting because we are saved purely by grace. Therefore, we can only react with humility in our relationships with others. The fourth beatitude is the next step in our progress in salvation: *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled”* (v. 6). When we realize the gravity of our spiritual poverty, we have an intense hunger for righteousness.

God has given us many promises that when we seek Him with all our hearts, we shall find Him, such as: *“But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him if you look for Him with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deuteronomy 4:29). Therefore, we should not hesitate to seek Him.

As we become aware of our deep sinful condition, our heart’s desire is to be righteous before God. Therefore, we have this intense hunger and thirst for righteousness. In His grace God pours out His righteousness on us: *“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God”* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will have their hearts’ desires granted.

Cornelius was a man who strongly sought after God. God granted His earnest desires (Acts 10). The Ethiopian eunuch was hungry to know the Lord. The Lord met his need (Acts 8). The Philippian jailor was eager to be saved. The Lord answered his request (Acts 16).

My wife is a marriage-and-family therapist. On one occasion her client asked her, “I want to know God. Can you tell me how I can know Him?” Without any hesitation, she shared the Gospel with him.

The Lord is ready to answer our intense quest for righteousness. Don’t hesitate to ask Him.

QUESTIONS

How hungry are you for seeking God’s righteousness?

PRAYERS

For Young Life Capernaum—Greater Glendora Area

Pray that God would continue to guide and expand the ministry as He pleases. Pray that wise and committed individuals would join this Young Life Capernaum committee to steward the ministry in the Greater Glendora Area.

THURSDAY

Read **Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:27-36; Colossians 3:13**

The fifth beatitude, “*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy*” (v. 7), describes the results of knowing Christ. When one sees the depths of his own sinfulness and experiences full forgiveness from the Lord, he is so moved by the Lord’s love that he is stirred to love even those who are difficult to love. He is empowered to show mercy to others just as the Lord has shown mercy to him: “*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ... Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*” (Luke 6:27, 28, 36). Paul says, “*Forgive as the Lord forgave you*” (Colossians 3:13).

I was a guest speaker in a church where I spoke on the need to forgive those who have hurt us. As I stood at the door after the service greeting people who were exiting the sanctuary, a man said to me, “There is someone I can never forgive.” Unfortunately, I did not have the time at that moment to comment on his statement. Will he go throughout his lifetime harboring an unforgiving spirit? Or will he experience God’s unconditional love that will enable him to forgive the one who has hurt him?

A stirring example of loving one’s enemies is a Jewish Christian pastor and his wife, Richard and Sabina Wurmbrand, who lived in Romania during World War II. They were imprisoned several times by the Nazis.

A Nazi soldier called “The Butcher,” Borila, worked in a local prison where he had killed many Jews. He boasted, “I have killed more Jews than Rommel did. I’m home because we are out of Jews to kill.” He had killed Sabina’s mother, father, uncle, daughters, and son.

When Sabina first met Borila, she hugged and kissed him. Borila, who knew he had killed her family, was so moved by her forgiveness that he became one of their workers. Later, Sabina said that she had only kissed two people in her life—her husband and the one who murdered her family.

QUESTIONS

Is there someone you find difficult to forgive? Think of how much God has forgiven you.

PRAYERS

For Young Life Capernaum—Greater Glendora Area

Pray for all kids in the Greater Glendora Area. Pray that the lost kids would hear the good news of God’s grace and love for them—whether that’s through Young Life, local churches, or other local ministry organizations.

FRIDAY

Read **Matthew 5:1-12**

The sixth beatitude is *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”* (v. 8). After seeing our totally lost condition in sin, we mourn. We hang our heads in humbleness. We long to be clean, to be righteous before God. The blood of Christ has cleansed us from all sin. Now, since we are covered in the righteousness of Christ, we can boldly stand in the presence of God and see his face. The *“pure in heart”* will see God.

The seventh beatitude is *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God”* (v. 9). After our heavy burden of sin has been placed on Christ, we are stirred to help others remove their heavy load of sin. We become peacemakers, helping others gain peace with God. As peacemakers, we are also active in helping people mend broken relationships. We have become ministers of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). Are you reconciling people to God?

In the final beatitudes, Jesus says, *“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you”* (Matthew 5:10-12).

We read in the book of Acts that the apostles, after being flogged, left rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for Christ (Acts 5:40-41). Paul and Silas, after they had been stripped, beaten, severely flogged, thrown into prison, and had their feet fastened to the stocks, sang hymns (Acts 16:22-25). Persecution of the church caused the Gospel to spread outside of Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-4) and spread to the Gentiles (Acts 11:19-20).

God brings blessings through persecution. The church in Zhejiang Province, China, numbered about 200,000 believers when the Communist took control of China in 1949. All of the churches were closed and pastors were thrown into labor camps. In 2020 Zhejiang had 10,672,400 Christians. (Hattaway) The church has thrived under persecution!

QUESTIONS

Why may we come boldly before God? Why should we rejoice when persecuted for Christ? God brings blessings through persecution. How does this fact affect you personally?

PRAYERS

For Young Life Capernaum—Greater Glendora Area

Spencer Whelan, the coordinator, is transitioning to a full-time role with Young Life within the next 4-9 months. Pray that as Spencer looks to continue to grow personally, Young Life Capernaum in the Greater Glendora Area will select the right person for this coordinator position. Pray for God's guidance and that Young Life Capernaum will continue to be a healthy ministry.

Sources

- William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975).
- “Sabina: Tortured for Christ—The Nazi Years.” Movie produced by The Voice of the Martyrs, released March, 2022.
- Paul Hattaway, *Zhejiang—Inside the Greatest Christian Revival in History* (Littleton, Colorado: William Carey Publishers, 2022).



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