

BLESSED

[*bles-id*]adj. A STUDY OF THE BEATITUDES

EBC Family Devotionals, vol. I

INTRODUCTION3

A note on family worship.....3

Craft kit3

Come behold the wondrous mystery.....5

Guide7

Matthew 5:37

Matthew 5:49

Matthew 5:511

Matthew 5:613

Matthew 5:715

Matthew 5:817

Matthew 5:919

Matthew 5:10-1221

INTRODUCTION

Jesus's first sermon in the gospel of Matthew is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. Mainly because Jesus is preaching a sermon...on a mount...clever, I know. The opening of the sermon on the mount, 5:3-12, is typically called "The Beatitudes." We get the word "Beatitude" from the Latin word *Beatus* which means "Blessed." In Jesus's opening to His sermon, you will notice all of the times He uses this word to talk about people that belong to God's kingdom – they are truly blessed indeed.

This devotional guide is, we hope, one of many. This is not meant to be a script of everything you say to your children as much as it is trying to give you the general idea of what you are trying to communicate. Feel free to take liberties with this guide. Change it up. Use different words. Answer the questions that arise during the reading of the word. Most of all, enjoy the time of reading the Bible with your family.

A NOTE ON FAMILY WORSHIP

These devotionals were produced with family worship in mind. What is family worship? Family worship is a brief, designated time where you and your family gather around and sing praises to the Lord, pray, and read and discuss the Bible. Family worship is designed to be 15 minutes or so, but for families with older children it may go for much longer depending on how the ensuing discussion about the scripture evolves. Family worship is a good time to teach your young children hymns of the faith. Many of these hymns reiterate sound doctrine to your children, and they can help reinforce the things that you are teaching them about God. We have included a modern hymn called, "Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery," in this guide that we think will help your family get started in this. Watch the accompanying video, sing along, and teach it to your kids.

These devotional guides are meant to be a catalyst toward a deeper and richer family time. They're meant to encourage your family to spend time in the word – a time guided by you, the parent. These are not exhaustive by any means. Feel free to explore other parts of the Bible with your children.

Above all, don't fear. Discipleship of your children is a tremendous honor and privilege that the Lord has entrusted to you. Do it wisely, but don't forget to do it! If we as parents don't take an active role in handing our faith to our children, no one will.

CRAFT KIT

We have produced a craft kit to accompany these devotions that are available for pickup in the church's children's building. The crafts are simple and require few materials, most of which are provided for you in the kit. These are meant to complement the devotions with hands-on activities that will help engage younger kids and appeal to a variety of learning styles.

-Michael Crosswhite

pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church

COME BEHOLD THE WONDROUS MYSTERY

by Matt Boswell and Matt Papa

(Verse 1)

Come behold the wondrous mystery
In the dawning of the King
He the theme of heaven's praises
Robed in frail humanity

In our longing, in our darkness
Now the light of life has come
Look to Christ, who condescended
Took on flesh to ransom us

(Verse 2)

Come behold the wondrous mystery
He the perfect Son of Man
In His living, in His suffering
Never trace nor stain of sin

See the true and better Adam
Come to save the hell-bound man
Christ the great and sure fulfillment
Of the law; in Him we stand

(Verse 3)

Come behold the wondrous mystery
Christ the Lord upon the tree
In the stead of ruined sinners
Hangs the Lamb in victory

See the price of our redemption
See the Father's plan unfold
Bringing many sons to glory
Grace unmeasured, love untold

(Verse 4)

Come behold the wondrous mystery
Slain by death the God of life
But no grave could e'er restrain Him
Praise the Lord; He is alive!

What a foretaste of deliverance
How unwavering our hope
Christ in power resurrected
As we will be when He comes

For a performance of this song, we would recommend listening to Matt Boswell's performance. It can be found at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-hD4VEoVQs>

GUIDE

MATTHEW 5:3

Say: This part of the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was teaching what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

We learn from the Sermon on the Mount how Christians are to be. The Bible teaches that all people are sinners and do not obey God's Word as He commands, but that Jesus, God's Son, lived a life that was perfectly and completely sinless. Jesus gave up His life by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and was raised to life. God promises to forgive the sins of all people who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus and He brings them into His Kingdom.

In the passage we just read, Jesus gave us something called the Beatitudes. These are descriptions of people who follow Him and are a part of His Kingdom. They show us what the lives of Christians are supposed to look like. Each Beatitude begins with Jesus saying "blessed are" and is followed with a statement describing people in His Kingdom.

Discuss: What does "poor" mean? What do you think it means to be "poor in spirit"?

Illustrate: Ask your children to think about what it would be like if they didn't have their own money. Talk about how they would be/are completely dependent on you as parents for things and how this helps us understand being completely dependent on God for righteousness.

Say: The first Beatitude is in verse 3 where Jesus says "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To be poor in spirit means to be entirely dependent on God for righteousness. It means that a person recognizes that they are unworthy before God and don't have the right to be in His Kingdom. The good news of the gospel is that by God's grace through faith in Jesus, our sin is removed and we receive Jesus' perfect righteousness. Because these things are true, we should confess and repent of our sins and trust in Jesus alone to save us.

Gospel Connection: Though we could never be perfectly dependent on God, Jesus Christ was poor in Spirit on our behalf. He humbled himself to the point of death, even death on a cross, in order to bless us with all the riches of His righteousness.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. We do not have the right to be in Your Kingdom. We thank You that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us into Your Kingdom. Give us the grace to repent of our sin and trust in Jesus alone to be saved. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:4

Say: This part of the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was teaching what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

We learn from the Sermon on the Mount how Christians are to live and act. The Bible teaches that all people are sinners and do not obey God's Word as He commands, but that Jesus, God's Son, lived a life that was perfectly and completely sinless. Jesus gave up His life by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and was raised to life. God promises to forgive the sins of all people who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus and He brings them into His Kingdom.

In the passage we just read, Jesus gave us something called the Beatitudes. These are descriptions of people who follow Him and are a part of His Kingdom. They show us what the lives of Christians are supposed to look like. Each Beatitude begins with Jesus saying "blessed are" and is followed with a statement describing people in His Kingdom.

Discuss: What does it mean to mourn?

[Depending on the age of your child, they may not know this answer. Let them think for a moment before supplying them with the answer. "To mourn means to be very sad about something, usually for a long time."]

What causes us to mourn?

Illustrate: Show items from a first-aid kit to talk about how we have sources of comfort when we are sick or hurt. Likewise, God comforts people who mourn over sin with the righteousness of Christ and the promise of eternal life.

[You may have to remind your child what "mourning" means since you've only just told them ("Remember, it means to be very sad about something, usually for a long time"). Then give them an example of a time when you mourned: "I mourned when Grandma died." Remember, if your child supplies an answer, it is most likely going to be very simple, and perhaps even things that shouldn't be mourned over. That's ok! We just want them to connect "mourning" to grief or sadness. If they supply an answer that is related to their sadness about something, that's a win. Affirm them in that.]

Say: Jesus says in verse 4, "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." The mourner that Jesus is talking about is someone who is very sad about their own sins and the sins of the world around them.

Ask: Can you think of things you see in the world that are sinful? What about you, have you ever sinned? [Give them an opportunity to explain]

Ask: How is Jesus going to comfort people that are very sad about their own sin?

The Bible tells us that God is also grieved by sin. It not only makes Him sad, but it makes Him angry. And because we sin, we deserve to be punished. The good news of the gospel is that God sent His own son into the world so that He could be punished for our sin. By trusting in Christ for salvation, we not only have forgiveness for our sins, but we also have the promise of eternal life with God. This is the comfort promised to the mourners. Even though I trust in Jesus for salvation, I still sin sometimes. I think bad things. I get angry. I do things God tells me not to. These things still make me very sad, but Jesus is promising that not only will God forgive me if I trust in Jesus for salvation, but that He will also recreate our world so that it is sinless, and He will let me live there! Isn't that good news? Then we should mourn over our sin. We should confess our sin to God. We should trust that He will forgive us. And we should be comforted that one day we won't want to sin anymore.

Gospel Connection: The reality of our sin is that it not only should grieve us, it does grieve God. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus took the punishment of our sin. Now, we don't have to be stuck in our mourning, but the scriptures remind us, **“if we confess our sins He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”**

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. Help us to mourn over our sin and the effects of sin we see in the world around us. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us into Your Kingdom. Thank You that You will bring about perfect justice and make all things new. Give us the grace to repent of our sin and trust in Jesus alone to be saved. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:5

Say: This part of the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was teaching what it means to be citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

We learn from the Sermon on the Mount how Christians are to live and act. The Bible teaches that all people are sinners and do not obey God's Word as He commands, but that Jesus, God's Son, lived a life that was perfectly and completely sinless. Jesus gave up His life by dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and was raised to life. God promises to forgive the sins of all people who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus and He brings them into His Kingdom.

In the passage we just read, Jesus gave us something called the Beatitudes. These are descriptions of people who follow Him and are a part of His Kingdom. They show us what the lives of Christians are supposed to look like. Each Beatitude begins with Jesus saying "blessed are" and is followed with a statement describing people in His Kingdom.

Discuss: What does it mean to be meek? Describe what you think meekness looks like.

Say: The third Beatitude is in verse 5 where Jesus says "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Meekness is an attitude toward all people that isn't mean or nasty, but is gentle and kind and forgiving.

Ask: Do you know anyone that you think is meek? What do they do that shows meekness?

Meek people are humble, gentle, and if they are treated unfairly, they wait for God to fix it.

Ask: How do you think Jesus showed us meekness?

Jesus was crucified even though He was innocent. Jesus forgave us, even though we were His enemies. It's impossible for us to do this perfectly. I have recently not been meek. This is sin, because it is disobeying how God has told me to live. However, by God's grace through faith in Jesus, our sin is removed and we receive Jesus' perfect righteousness. We receive the reward of His meekness, which is eternal life. Because these things are true, we should confess and repent of our sins, and trust in Jesus alone to save us.

Illustrate: Talk about personal examples of where you struggle to be patient, humble, and gentle. How do the difficult situations and people in our lives compare to the things Jesus endured for us?

Gospel Connection: Jesus offers the promise to the meek that “they will inherit the earth.” The good news of the gospel is that, although we deserved an eternity in hell, Jesus Christ lived a perfectly righteous life. As a result, He merited rewards for His righteousness. Instead of taking those rewards for himself, He shares those with us through faith. Our inheritance of the earth is due to Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for modeling perfect meekness in Your life. Help us to be humble, gentle, and patient before You and others. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us into Your Kingdom. Thank You for the promise of a New Heavens and New Earth for Your people. Give us the grace to repent of our sin and trust in Jesus alone to be saved. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:6

Illustrate: This would be a good devotion to do over a meal or with a snack. Talk about how food satisfies a basic need we have as people and how Jesus wants us to understand how we should think about desiring to live a life that honors God.

Ask: This part of the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. What is Jesus teaching us about?

Answer: What it means to be a citizen of God's kingdom.

Ask: What is the kingdom of God?

Say: The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

Discuss: What does hunger feel like? ::Wait for responses::

What does Jesus mean when He says, "hunger and thirst for righteousness?"

Say: Jesus is talking about the kind of person who longs to live the kind of life that God desires. Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven desire to live in a way that pleases God so much that it can be compared to the desire to satisfy our hunger and thirst.

Ask: What are some ways we fail to hunger and thirst for righteousness? (This would be a good time for mom and dad to share some examples from their day/week)

Ask: How does God plan to satisfy those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

In eternity, citizens of God's kingdom will be satisfied with Christ's perfect righteousness forever and will no longer face the temptation to sin. We will love each other perfectly! We will love God perfectly! But even now, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can begin to love God through worship and daily obedience to all His commands.

Gospel Connection: The good news of Jesus Christ reminds us that although we fall short of hungering and thirsting for righteousness like God commands, Jesus came and did so perfectly. He lived in perfect submission to the Father's will and never sinned. By believing in His sacrifice for our sins, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit who gives to us a hunger and thirst for righteousness that we would otherwise be without.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. We have many examples that we've just mentioned of where we've failed to hunger and thirst

for righteousness, and these are among the reasons why we're in such need of Christ's righteousness. Thank You for the perfectly righteous life of Jesus on our behalf. Give us by Your Spirit a hunger and thirst to live a life that pleases You and turns from sin. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us into Your Kingdom. Thank You that in Christ, we will be satisfied with and by His righteousness forever. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:7

Ask: This part of the Gospel of Matthew is called the Sermon on the Mount. What is Jesus teaching us about?

Answer: What it means to be a citizen of God's kingdom.

Ask: What is the kingdom of God?

Say: The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

Discuss: What is mercy? ::Wait for Responses::

What does it mean to be merciful to someone?

Say: The fifth Beatitude is in verse 7 where Jesus says "blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." Citizens of God's kingdom have been shown mercy by God

Ask: How have we been shown mercy by God?

Answer: He spared us from the punishment our sins by punishing Jesus instead. In His mercy and love, Jesus bore God's wrath for our sins by dying on the cross to justify us.

Ask: Have you ever failed to be merciful to others?

Say: Because we have been shown mercy, we must show others mercy. This means relieving the suffering that people are undergoing and offering forgiveness to people who sin against us. Reminding ourselves of what God has done for us in Christ helps us to be merciful, kind, generous, and gracious to all people.

Illustrate: You can explain mercy and grace using a coin. Mercy and grace are like two sides of the same coin. Grace means receiving things from God we don't deserve and mercy means being spared from things we do deserve. God mercifully spares us from His wrath and punishment for sins, so likewise we must extend mercy to others.

Gospel Connection: The good news of Jesus is a perfect demonstration of God's mercy toward us. Even though we have sinned against Him and He is rightly angered by our sin, He took our His anger on the sinless son of God. Those who place their trust in Christ have been shown a great mercy in God no longer counting their sins against them.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. All we

have and all we are is a result of Your mercy and grace to us in Christ. As we have received mercy from You, help us to extend mercy and forgiveness to all people. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us into Your Kingdom. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:8

Ask: What is this part of the Gospel of Matthew called?

Answer: The Sermon on the Mount.

Ask: What is Jesus teaching us about?

Answer: He is teaching us what it means to be a citizen of God's kingdom.

Ask: What is the kingdom of God?

Say: The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

Discuss: What does "pure" mean? ::wait for responses::

What does it mean to be pure in heart?

Say: The sixth Beatitude is in verse 8 where Jesus says "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Being pure in heart means that our reasons for doing things are right and God-honoring. It means that we are not hypocrites, but that our inner desires are to please God instead of other people.

Illustrate: Talk to your kids about playing dress up. You can contrast purity in heart (being the same on the inside and the outside with right) with hypocrisy (dressing up on the outside to hide what is on the inside). When we confess and repent of our sin, it's like taking off a costume and not pretending to be righteous when we are not.

Ask: Can you think of a time where you did the right thing for the wrong reasons? OR Can you think of a time where you did the right thing with a bad attitude? (This is a good time for mom and dad to demonstrate where they fail in purity of heart)

Gospel Connection: Because of sin, our hearts are desperately wicked and impure. The good news is that Jesus never had an impure thought or motivation. He did the right things for all the right reasons. The Bible tells us that He submitted to the Father's will to death, even death on the cross. By faith in His death for me, He gives to me a new heart through the Holy Spirit. My new heart has a desire to please Him, which without the Holy Spirit, I wouldn't have.

This means that we can not only recognize our sins of impurity of heart, but we can confess those sins to Him, and God forgives us because Christ has paid the penalty for our sin.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. We are not pure in heart and we depend on You to transform us by Your Spirit. Thank You that Jesus died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us into Your Kingdom. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:9

Illustrate: This may be a good devotion to do before a family game night or meal. Often, the games we play pit us against one another. Play games or do activities where the object is to work together instead of against each other. Examples: work together to prepare a meal, play a game where the object is to keep a balloon bouncing without hitting the floor, or use building blocks to work together to create something.

Ask: What is this part of the Gospel of Matthew called?

Answer: The Sermon on the Mount.

Ask: What is Jesus teaching us about?

Answer: He is teaching us what it means to be a citizen of God's kingdom.

Ask: What is the kingdom of God?

Say: The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

Discuss: What is peace? ::wait for responses::

What does it mean to be a peacemaker?

Say: The seventh Beatitude is in verse 9 where Jesus says "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." A peacemaker is a person who wants to settle conflict between people. Peacemakers care about sin in their lives and the lives of others enough to graciously confront and deal with it so that people can be at peace with one another.

Ask: Can you think of instances where, instead of making peace, you created anger, hurt feelings, or sadness? (This is a good time for mom and dad to demonstrate where you fail in making peace or where you have created hurt feelings or anger in others)

Citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven are to be peacemakers and as sons of God, we will experience peace with God and each other forever.

Gospel Connection: Jesus, the Son of God, models peacemaking for us perfectly because His death and resurrection for sins reconciles people to God and each other and so makes real and lasting peace.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. Thank

You for sending Jesus while we were at war with You in our sin and that through His death and resurrection, You have made a way for us to have peace with You and each other. Help us to be peacemakers by being reconciled to others with whom we have conflict and to do so with gospel truth for Your glory. Amen.

MATTHEW 5:10-12

Ask: What is this part of the Gospel of Matthew called?

Answer: The Sermon on the Mount.

Ask: What is Jesus teaching us about?

Answer: He is teaching us what it means to be a citizen of God's kingdom.

Ask: What is the kingdom of God?

Say: The Kingdom of Heaven is God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.

Ask: What does "persecuted" mean?

Answer: Someone who is poorly treated because of his or her religious beliefs

Ask: Why do you think Jesus calls it blessed?

Say: The eighth and last Beatitude is in verses 10-12. In verse 10, Jesus says "blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This means that Christians should expect to be criticized, mocked, hated, and attacked by people because they value what God values, which is opposed to the world. Heaven's citizens, living lives that honor God, will come into conflict with people who are not and do not.

Watch (optional): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NF2Xr7HPJ54>

Illustrate: Take time to consider how you or those you know have experienced persecution for following Jesus. Pray for Christians who are facing persecution. Ask for examples of doing the right thing even when it is difficult and causes problems with people.

Gospel Connection: Jesus suffered at the hands of sinners who hated Him and sought to kill Him. He died and rose again for the forgiveness of our sins. He promises that citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven will be persecuted, but promises a great reward: the Kingdom will be ours! Jesus endured great suffering for our sins and serves as an example for how we are to respond to suffering and persecution that comes our way.

Pray: Heavenly Father, we praise You because You are perfect and righteous in all of Your ways. We confess that we are sinners and we are undeserving of Your love and grace. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for enduring persecution and giving Your life on the cross for our sins. Help us to live in such a way that honors You and causes the gospel to go forth from us, even

when it means that we will be persecuted for it. We also pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are being starved to death, being tortured, and being killed because of their resolve to maintain a confession of their faith in You. Give them endurance to make it to the end. We know that there is great reward in Your Kingdom for Your people, so we ask for grace to persevere. Amen.