

Read Matthew 5:1–12

The beatitudes are well known. They refer to qualities that make for a happier life and that are part of everyone's experience.

Reflect: The Greek word translated "blessed" can also mean "happy." Jesus offers some helpful guides for happiness. The first three beatitudes and the final beatitude call for a person to be receptive in a time of need. The central beatitudes challenge the faithful to action. Think about the beatitudes you already practice.

Pray: Identify one beatitude that you need to have in your life. Pray that the Holy Spirit may help you with this.

Act: Beatitudes are meant to be lived. Act on the one you have prayed for.

Read Matthew 5:13–20

Jesus uses images common to ordinary life. People should practice what they preach. Jesus does not think the scribes and Pharisees practice what they preach.

Reflect: Think about the images that Jesus uses: salt, light, a city set on a mountain. The law and the prophets sum up the Old Testament. Now Jesus fulfills the Old Testament.

Pray: How can a Christian and the church be like salt and light? Pray that the church and its members may be like the city on a mountain, reflecting the glory of God to all.

Act: Giving light to others can cause problems. Act in a such a way that people may see your good deeds and give glory not to you, but to God.

The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus^a saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely^b on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³ "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵ No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,^c not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks^d one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

^a Gk *he*.

^b Other ancient authorities lack *falsely*.

^c Gk *one iota*.

^d Or *annuls*.