

“Purity Through Humility: Our Relationship with God”
Matthew 5: 5

v1 - When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. v2 - He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

v3 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

v4 - "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

v5 - "Blessed are the humble, for they shall inherit the earth.

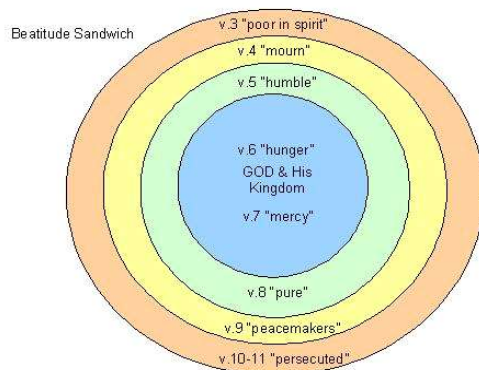
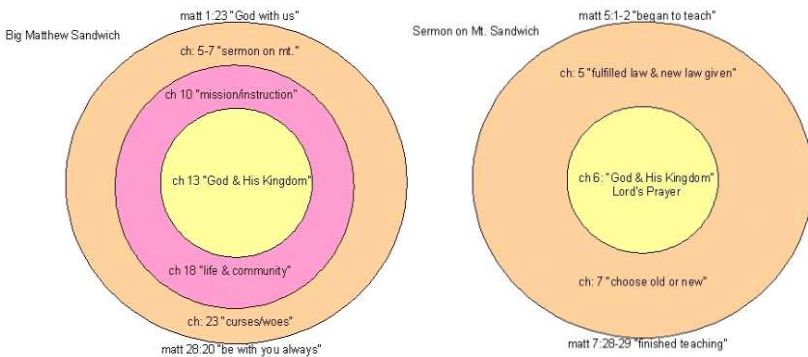
v6 - "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

v7 - "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

v8 - "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

v9 - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

V10 - "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. v11 - "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.



Questions for small group discussion:

1. Now that you know about the sandwiches, as a small group, try the sandwich method for the rest of the beatitudes. i.e. match vs.3 with vs.10-11; vs.4 with vs.9; vs.5 with vs.8; vs.6 with vs.7. Discuss in your group how the pairs of verses relate with each other and what lessons can be learned from them.
- 2) The word “blessed” in Greek is makarios i.e. happy. However, Jesus taught in Hebrew and therefore, blessed is much more than just “happy.” As a group, look for the word “blessed” throughout the first five books of the Old Testament i.e. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers & Deuteronomy. How is “blessed” being used? Who is usually doing the talking and who usually gives the blessing? Locate Jacob’s blessings on his 12 sons, is it all “happy?” Discuss why or why not. Define Jacob’s use of the word “blessing.”
- 3) You also know that throughout Matthew, there are “mini” sandwiches. As a group, try to identify other “mini” sandwiches. Look at the parables, the curses, Jesus’ miracles, prophecies, Jesus’ temptations, etc. What’s the central theme and how do the layers relate to the central theme? (Do not rely solely on the divisions created by the chapters. Remember: back then, there were no chapter divisions.)
- 4) Health & Wealth Gospel (HWG) heresy (i.e. if you have faith, Jesus will reward you with earthly riches,) is popular throughout denominations around the world. Can your group identify any such groups that they may have come across? e.g. Joel Osteen and his ministry at Lakewood Church, Houston, Texas. Discuss in your group why HWG can be misleading and dangerous. Discuss what ways you can protect yourselves from HWG.
- 5) Your group may realize that the “Beatitudes” can be misinterpreted into an HWG. Is Jesus really teaching HWG? NO! So, how does reading Matthew 5:1-11 as a sandwich prevent you from reading Jesus’ teaching as HWG? How will you explain this to a friend if she says that for example in v.5 that the humble will be given real estate?

Recommended Reading for Bible Studies:

Fee, Gordon D. *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors 3rd ed.* Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.

Myers, Ched. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative.* New York, NY: Basic Books, 1981.

Beale, G.K. and D.A. Carson. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.