

# Small Group Discussion Questions

## Sermon 1: "A Life Worth Living" (Matthew 4:23-5:2)

1. The Corrie Ten Boom story powerfully illustrates forgiveness as "an act of the will" rather than an emotion. Can you share a time when you had to choose forgiveness mechanically, before your heart was ready? What happened as a result?
  2. The sermon describes the Sermon on the Mount as "a beginner's guide to the Kingdom of Heaven" rather than an impossible ideal. How does viewing it as practical wisdom for flourishing change the way you approach Jesus' teachings?
  3. The concept of *makarios* (flourishing/thriving) and *telios* (wholeness/completeness) are central to the sermon. In what areas of your life do you feel most fragmented—where your inner person and outer actions don't match up? What would wholeness look like for you?
  4. Martin Lloyd Jones suggested that "the world today is looking for, and desperately needs, true Christians...who begin to live the Christian life." Where do you see the greatest gap between what the world sees in Christians and what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount?
  5. Jesus modeled truth not just with words but with action—teaching about the kingdom while healing the sick. How can you make your faith more than just words in your daily life? What practical needs around you could you address?
  6. The sermon mentions that Jesus' teachings will include "ideas and ways of being that our flesh and mind will push back against." What teaching of Jesus do you find yourself most wanting to explain away or not take literally? Why do you think that is?
  7. Thinking about the framework of Wisdom Literature (like Proverbs and Psalm 1), how have you experienced blessing or consequences based on aligning or not aligning with God's ways? Share a specific example.
  8. The sermon asks: "How can we experience a beautiful world and community when the world around us is going to hell in a handbasket?" What does it look like practically to live out kingdom values in your specific community or workplace right now?
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## Sermon 2: "Unexpected Blessings in Hard Places" (Matthew 5:3-5)

1. The sermon describes the five steps to giving a blessing (touch, affirmation, calling out a great future, declaring God's use, commitment to support). Who in your life has blessed you in this way? How did it impact you? Who in your life needs you to bless them?
2. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" speaks to those who are powerless and put their whole trust in God. Describe a season when you felt utterly powerless. How did that experience either draw you toward God or push you away? What did you learn?
3. The sermon says, "when you have power, you can ignore loss—you have distractions that allow you to skip over grieving." How does our culture encourage us to avoid grief? In what ways have you been guilty of this? What might it look like to embrace grief as a pathway to God's comfort?
4. Jesus wept at Lazarus's tomb even though He knew He would raise him from the dead. What does this teach you about the relationship between faith/hope and the permission to fully feel grief and loss?
5. The beatitudes aren't commands to become poor, sad, or meek—they're declarations of blessing to those already in these states. How does this shift your understanding of who the Kingdom of Heaven is for? How does it challenge or comfort you?
6. William Barclay defines meekness as being "always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time...who has every instinct, impulse, and passion under control." When was the last time you were angry? Was it at the right time or wrong time? How do you know the difference?
7. The meek "may even have some power to respond to injustice but they choose to wait for God's timing and God's solution." This is incredibly countercultural. Where in your life are you tempted to take matters into your own hands rather than waiting for God? What makes waiting so difficult?
8. The sermon concludes: "Are you powerless? Are you grieving? Are you unimportant? Well those who are at the bottom of society are actually better prepared to receive the Kingdom of heaven." How does this upside-down kingdom challenge your assumptions about success, happiness, or the "good life"? What needs to change in your perspective or priorities?