

**SERMON ON MOUNT STUDY GUIDE
WEEK ONE**

The Setting...Jesus, perched on a hill, reminiscent of Moses on Sinai giving God's law, addresses a crowd with BLESSINGS, giving PROVERBS, and reinterpreting the Torah. We call it, "The Sermon of Mount", one of his most profound teaching.

The Shock...from start to finish, he talks of qualities that should define us. He begins with the Beatitudes-a common form of speech-what was uncommon was his content. Eight straight times he blesses the most unlikely people...

**BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, THOSE WHO MOURN, THE MEEK,
THOSE WHO HUNGER/THIRST FOR WHAT IS RIGHT; THE MERCIFUL, THE
PURE IN HEART, PEACEMAKERS, THOSE PERSECUTED FOR THEIR FAITH**

His words sound IDEALISTIC, a list of VIRTUES only a SAINT keeps, the PARAGRAPH of a JOB DESCRIPTION meant for someone else.

Would we dare SIGN UP/VOLUNTEER for such a life?

HAPPINESS IS AN INSIDE JOB... Jesus never spoke of personal happiness; the word he used was "blessed". It is like our word "congratulations". It appears in the passive tense, "BEING BLESSED" Blessedness is not something we create. It is a GIFT. Jesus redefines HAPPINESS. It was not found in external things out there. Happiness is an INSIDE JOB, the result of serving God and his purposes.

STAND ON YOUR HEADS...Beatitudes give a topsy-turvy view of life. Jesus is asking us to STAND ON OUR HEADS, see the world UPSIDE DOWN. To be blessed is to be caught up in what God is doing in the world. Living the Christian life can be demanding. Do Jesus' words make sense? No! Do they describe WHO WE ARE? No! But they do describe WHO JESUS WAS and WHO HE EXPECTS US TO BE

JOY-FILLED PEOPLE... Our goal as Christians isn't to pursue happiness but to "glorify God/enjoy Him forever". Our lack of joy is out of character with God's character. Joy puts God into the equation. Jesus linked joy to knowing/serving him...

I CAME THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE IN ME, YOUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE.

Our JOY IN CHRIST isn't dictated by moods or life changes. The most unlikely people can be the most joyful. The poor, sick, grieving, meek, persecuted. What they have in common: they depend on GOD, not EXTERNAL THINGS.