



FAMILY PAGE: THE BEATITUDES

FAMILY QUESTION: WHERE IS OUR SACRED PLACE?

People followed Jesus up to the top of a mountain so they could hear him speak. This setting was intentional and important. There Jesus gave nine blessings and promises we call the "Beatitudes." In each one, Jesus blessed a group of people we wouldn't usually think of as happy or fortunate. He gave them a promise for healing and hope right now. This was very counter-cultural. It must have been very special to be there that day and hear those holy words. Some people feel blessed at the top of a mountain. Some feel blessed at the beach. Some feel blessed when they are tucked into bed by a parent. Discuss what places are most special for your family. Think of everyday places like a favorite park and extraordinary places where you have made memories. What makes those places special? Is it hard work to get there? Decide together to visit a special place as a family. While you are there, take a moment and remember that you are blessed to be a family!

BRIEF REFLECTION

Jesus had been spending a lot of time healing people. In addition to their physical hurts and pain, he saw people also had broken hearts and unsteady hope. After healing so many people, Jesus decided to care for them in another way. He led them to a mountain. Jesus knew mountains reminded people of God's presence with them, so he chose a mountain as a good place to give an important sermon. A sermon is a talk meant to teach and help people grow in their relationship with God. People were so committed to Jesus that they climbed the mountain to listen!

In the sermon on the mountain, Jesus listed nine ways people are "blessed." To be "blessed" meant to be happy or satisfied. People often thought being happy or content was a result of their situation (or how life was going for them). But as we know, Jesus likes to turn what we think we know upside down and show us a new way. Take a few moments and read Matthew 5:1-12.

The people listening to Jesus were astonished! Some were confused. Some were surprised. Some were relieved. People who were mourning and very sad were blessed (happy to the fullest)?! Meek, gentle people receive power over the earth?! This is the opposite of what their culture said. Their culture told them power and possessions were what made a person happy or blessed. Notice each beatitude includes two parts. First, Jesus makes a statement; then he gives a promise. For example, Jesus makes the statement: "Blessed are the poor in the spirit." Then Jesus gives the promise: "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In each of these verses, Jesus named a group of people we wouldn't usually think of as happy or content, then offered them a promise for healing and hope right now - not just in the future. The way Jesus promises these blessings is his way of bringing God's kingdom to us here and now.

PRAYER

God of hope, Thank you for encouraging our hearts and strengthening our spirits with your promises! Please help us live your way—as merciful, pure-in-heart peacemakers who bring your kingdom to earth here and now. Show us who needs your hope today, and lead us to share it. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What surprised you about Jesus' Sermon?

What do you think it means to be "blessed"?

How do you think the people hearing these promises from Jesus felt?

What are some modern beatitude ideas you have?

