



Group Guide

Upside Down Kingdom

October 5, 2025

Main Passage: Matthew 5:1-16

Theological Theme

In this portion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus outlined the characteristics His followers should have and taught them how to live using metaphor. Though our lives look very different than Jesus's initial disciples, His teachings still show us how to live rightly.

Introduction

- ? Why do you think some speeches throughout history are so memorable?
- ? What makes the Sermon on the Mount so important, even today?

1. The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

Just before this passage, Matthew described the work of Jesus's ministry (4:23). The impact of His teaching and healing drew large crowds to Him (4:25). Seeing the gathered crowds, Jesus gave His most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps the people flocked to Jesus because of His ability to heal them physically (Matthew recorded that the people brought many sick and afflicted to Him and Jesus healed them in Matthew 4:24), but in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus would offer spiritual healing.

- ? What type of character did Jesus describe in the people He identified as blessed?
- ? How do these characteristics differ from what the world sees as blessing?
- ? Application: Which Beatitude ("blessed are" statement) most resonates with or challenges you? Why?

2. The Salt of the Earth (Matthew 5:13)

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus taught in ways His followers could understand, connecting common fixtures in their lives with spiritual concepts. He does this here by comparing His followers to salt. This illustration teaches followers of Jesus how to live.

- ❓ What do you know about the characteristics of salt? Why might Jesus have chosen to compare His followers to salt?
- ❓ What does it mean for us to be the “salt of the earth”?
- ❓ Application: How are you seeking to live as the “salt of the earth” in your community?

3. A City on a Hill (Matthew 5:14-16)

Jesus continued His teaching around right-living by comparing His followers to light. Isaiah spoke of a similar light in Jesus, the Messiah: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness” (Isaiah 9:2). Before we know Jesus, we are still a slave to our sin and we are living in darkness, but when we follow Jesus, we move into the light.

- ❓ In what sense is the church “the light of the world” (v. 14)?
- ❓ Why is it important that we “let [our] light shine before others” (v. 16)?
- ❓ Application: How is our church seeking to shine our light and live as a city on a hill in our community?

Conclusion

- ❓ Where is Jesus calling you further into the blessing of life following Him?
- ❓ How can we seek to live as a city on a hill and a light for others as a group?
- ❓ Who is God calling you to shine your light before that they might come to know Him? How will you respond?