

**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.
* Today’s RBQ (Relationship Building Question): “If you could invent a holiday, what would it celebrate?”

**INTRODUCTION**

When you look around at the world, it’s not unusual to see people celebrate or chase after things like wealth, popularity, success, or comfort. That’s what the world often tells us is most important. But in Matthew 5, Jesus introduces a completely different way of seeing life—the upside-down kingdom of God. In His kingdom, the things we usually overlook, like humility, mercy, and peacemaking, are actually the qualities that bring true blessing and life. Today we’ll discover how the Beatitudes invite us to rethink what really matters and where the real rewards are found.

**Can you think of a time when something didn’t seem like a blessing at first, but it actually turned out to be good? Or when something you thought would be good, turned out not to be?**

***READ MATTHEW 5:1-11***

1. What kind of person does Jesus describe as “blessed” in these verses? And how is Jesus’ idea of being blessed different from what most people today think of as “living the good life”?
2. Which one of the Beatitudes feels most encouraging or most challenging for you? Why?

***READ MATTHEW 5:12-16***

1. Salt makes food taste better and keeps it from going bad – why do you think Jesus compared His followers to salt?
2. What’s one way you could bring the “flavor” of Jesus into your school, team, or friend group?
3. Who in your life might need to see the light of Jesus through you this week, and how could you show it?

**WRAP UP**

**Put today's lesson into action:** How can we, as a group, shine our light together so that people see Jesus through us?

*Ask for any prayer requests, and pray for one another.*

**EXTENDED CUT**

1. **What kind of person does Jesus describe as “blessed” in these verses? And How is Jesus’ idea of being blessed different from what most people today think of as “living the good life”?** When Jesus describes the kind of person who is “blessed” in Matthew 5:1–12, it’s not the people we’d usually expect. It’s not the wealthy, powerful, or popular, but those who are poor in spirit, meek, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and even those who are treated badly because of following Him. In contrast, the way our culture usually defines the “good life,” is often with things like money, success, comfort, or fame. In this passage, Jesus is giving his followers a different kind of lens to view life, wanting us to understand that true blessing comes from being close to God and living for His kingdom rather than the things of this world. In Matthew 16:26, Jesus asks this question, “What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” The blessed life isn’t about having more stuff or more followers — it’s about being the kind of person who seeks after God and his kingdom above all else.
2. **Which one of the Beatitudes feels most encouraging or most challenging for you? Why?** The Beatitudes are someof Jesus’s most memorable teachings showing the kind of people His followers are called to be — humble, merciful, and aware of our need for God. They’re both encouraging and challenging. When Jesus tells us that “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted,” there is encouragement and hope in being reminded that the Lord shows up as our comforter. But some Beatitudes can feel really hard to live out. Jesus says, “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.” But no one enjoys being excluded, made fun of, or treated badly for our faith. And Jesus also says, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.” Yet meekness is often countercultural to the boldness, strength, and power applauded and sought after by the world. The challenges of the beatitudes ultimately serve as a reminder that following Jesus isn’t always easy and is actually impossible in our own strength. Only with God’s help can we truly grow in righteousness. But we can be encouraged by the Apostle Paul’s words in Philippians 1:6, “that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” He is the one who stirs our hearts to have a hunger and thirst for the things of God and continues the life-long work of sanctification in our lives.
3. **Salt makes food taste better and keeps it from going bad – why do you think Jesus compared His followers to salt?** When Jesus called His followers the salt of the earth, He was teaching them that their presence was meant to have purpose and impact others. Salt was valuable in the time of Jesus, not only for flavor but also for preserving food from spoiling. In the same way, we are called as Christians to have a similar effect on the world around us. Just as salt keeps food from decaying, our faith helps push back against the patterns of sin, selfishness, and injustice in the world. And just as salt adds flavor to food, we are called to carry the flavor of Jesus wherever we go, seeking to improve the places we live, go to school, work, play etc. Whether it’s through living with integrity, showing mercy, or modeling Christ-like humility, Christians are called to preserve what is good and reflect the heart of God in a world that desperately needs Him. It’s also an illustration that reminds us that our faith is meant to be active. Salt that stays in the shaker doesn’t fulfill the purpose it was created for. It has to be poured out to make a difference. Jesus wanted His followers to understand that their lives should stand out in such a way that others can see and feel the difference God makes.
4. **What’s one way you could bring the “flavor” of Jesus into your school, team, or friend group?** Bringing the “flavor” of Jesus into your world means living out your faith in a way that allows people around you to see and experience the difference that Jesus makes in your life. That could look like being intentional about encouraging your teammates when they’re down, reaching out to the person who’s sitting alone, choosing to forgive a friend who hurt you, or being willing to initiate a Gospel conversation. It could also mean paying attention to how your words and attitude affect others. Are your words tearing people down, or are they building people up? In Colossians 4:6, Paul says to let our conversations be “full of grace, seasoned with salt,” which reminds us that the way we talk should bring hope and encouragement. Every time you choose to speak life, share truth, show compassion, or do what’s right even when it’s unpopular, you’re adding the kind of “flavor” that points others to Jesus. Sometimes it might seem like just a small choice, but even small moments can make a big impact. Just like a little bit of salt changes the whole taste of a meal, your actions can shift the atmosphere in your friend group, classroom, or team.
5. **Who in your life might need to see the light of Jesus through you this week, and how could you show it?** When Jesus calls His followers the “light of the world” and compares us to a lamp (v14-15), He’s saying our faith is meant to be seen, not hidden. Isaiah 9:2 says, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.”Jesus is the light of the world, and he is reminding us that through Him, we get to carry His light into the places where people are lost in spiritual darkness and far from God. A lamp doesn’t do any good if it’s covered up. It has to shine in the open so it can give light to everyone around it. In the same way, Jesus wants us to live and share our faith in a way that helps people see who He is. This week, consider one person you could shine that light toward, and pray for courage to live your faith openly so that others can experience the hope and truth of Jesus through you!