

“What’s going on?”

- + On May 27th the LifePoint offices will be closed to observe memorial day.
- + Save the date for the next Women’s Prayer and Praise night: June 10th from 6:30-8:00.
- + Baby Bottle Blitz: Grab your baby bottle and fill it with change to support the local Christian organization, CareNet. CareNet supports women and men faced with difficult pregnancy decisions. Please return your bottle on Father’s Day, June 16th.

MATTHEW 5 : 2 – 5

ICE BREAKER

Question: Who was one of your favorite teachers? What about them made them stand out?

Question: What are some things in your life that make you feel blessed or happy? Be as specific as possible.

CENTERING FOCUS

Spend 5 minutes in silence, breathing out the worries and burdens that you brought in with you.

During this time of silence, ask God to clear your mind and give you a fresh desire for Him and His Word. At the end of the time in silence, have someone close in a prayer of gratitude for God’s new mercies.

LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE

Last week we started practicing the discipline of gratitude. Our first challenge was to write down 10 different things we are grateful for, and then go back and thank God for them.

Question: Did you participate in this rhythm of intimacy? If so, can you share your experience? If you didn’t, what makes it difficult to make time for pursuing further intimacy with Jesus? What are some things you can change to make more time for the rhythms of intimacy?

THOUGHT PROVOKING QUESTION

Question: When you interact with or see someone who is homeless, jobless, or asking for food or money, what is your initial reaction? How do you usually respond? (There is no judgment in your answers).

Question: In your opinion, what does it mean to be blessed by God?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Matthew 5:2-5 (ESV)

“And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

Question: Who is Jesus teaching? (look back at 5:1 one for help)

Question: Why do you think it is significant or unique that Jesus first taught this to his closest friends and followers, rather than the crowds or masses?

Question: Name those who are “blessed” in this passage. What stands out to you as odd or interesting about who he calls blessed?

The word “*poor*” can also be translated as “*lowly, sorry, person of low condition.*”

Question: While this can refer to someone who is physically poor, how else might we describe someone who is “*poor*” in spirit? What are some characteristics of someone who is not poor in spirit?

Question: Do you consider yourself poor in spirit? What are some areas of pride in your life that hinder you from deeper intimacy with Jesus?

Question: What is blessing is promised to those who are poor in spirit? How does this challenge you?

“...*those who mourn*” can refer to those who have lost a loved one, but also refers to one who grieves and laments over their sin and are led to repentance. (Read 2 Corinthians 7:10 for further reference).

Question: What does it look like to mourn or grieve over your sin and rebellion from God? What areas of your life do you need to mourn, repent of, or need healing?

Question: What is the blessing given to those who mourn? How does this challenge you?

Meek is a difficult word to describe. Read the passage below to see a perfect picture of meekness.

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

Question: What are the characteristics of someone who is meek?

Question: Would you consider yourself a meek person? In what areas of life do you struggle to submit your agendas for the sake of others? What agendas in your life often come before God’s agenda?

Question: What blessing is promised to those who are meek? How does this challenge you?

...Near the end of Jesus' ministry he shares a parable with his disciples, relating himself to the King in the story.

Matthew 25:34-40 (ESV)

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁴⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

Question: Who is the King (Jesus) talking to in this story? (Look at verse 34 and 37 for help).

Question: Name those in this passage that the King relates to? (Hint: there are six). What are some common similarities between them?

Question: How do these people relate to those who are blessed in Matthew 5:2-5?

Jesus loves the *"least of these"* and finds the greatest intimacy with those who recognize their need for help, for others, and ultimately for Him.

Question: How does this challenge you to see and love those around you differently? How does this challenge the way you approach Jesus? How does this influence the way you view being blessed by God?

NEW CHALLENGE

Each one of us experiences frustration or disappointment in our day-to-day lives. And, it is so much easier to turn to grumbling or complaining than gratitude.

As you reflect on your day and the common areas of frustration, take a moment and thank God that even then he is faithful and uses all of life's frustrations to draw us closer to Jesus.

This doesn't mean that our frustrations and disappointments aren't important, but it's a reminder that, because of Christ, there is always a reason to be grateful.