

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

episode 1: the Beatitudes

Key Points:

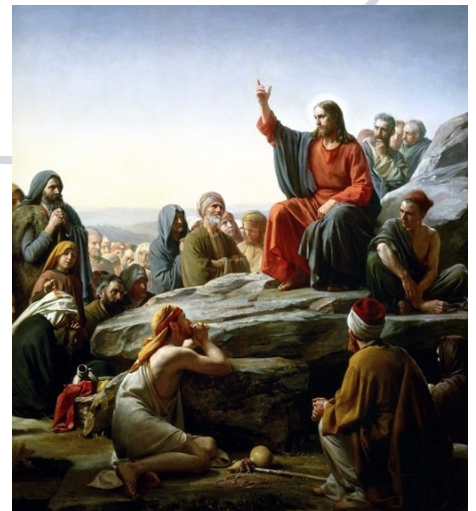
- The Gospel of Matthew was written to a Jewish Greek-speaking audience who were rebuilding after persecution. Matthew writes this Gospel to comfort those who are experiencing the effects of persecution.
- Matthew works to demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah promised to the Jewish people. He is the new Moses and the fulfillment of the prophets.
- Matthew's Gospel attempts to bridge the Law and the Prophets with the Gospel. The Beatitudes are the new Law given by Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' first major discourse.
- Matthew's Gospel is often referred to as the "Gospel of the Church." One of the reasons Matthew writes his Gospel is to provide guidance on how to live and conduct oneself as a member of the Christian community and how following the life and teachings of Jesus is an authentic way to follow the law of Moses.

Discussion Questions for Understanding:

1. What are some of the purposes for Matthew writing his Gospel? Why would these purposes help the intended audience that he was writing?
2. What are some ways in which Matthew shows Jesus to be the New Moses? Why would Matthew wish to show Jesus as a continuation or fulfillment of the Old Law found in the Hebrew Scriptures?
3. Pope Francis states, "The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card." How do the eight Beatitudes provide an autobiographical portrait of Jesus and exemplify the attitudes and ways of living an authentic Christian manner?
4. Based on the video, which description of a Beatitude helped me discover something new or deepen my appreciation for that Beatitude?

Discussion Questions for Living:

1. In what ways can we, as individuals and as a Christian community, better exemplify the Beatitudes in our everyday life?
2. How can I apply the teaching on one of the Beatitudes to my life in the next month? To what person or group will I direct my efforts?
3. In the Beatitudes, Jesus warns that His followers will experience suspicion and ridicule for practicing the Gospel. In what ways am I ready to embrace persecution for living an authentically Christian way of life that is countercultural to modern society?



Sermon on the Mount by Carl Bloch (1877).

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Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

You have shown an example of love and faithfulness to your people.

Through the proclamation of the Beatitudes,

Your Son has revealed the way of life

in which we are called to respond in thanksgiving.

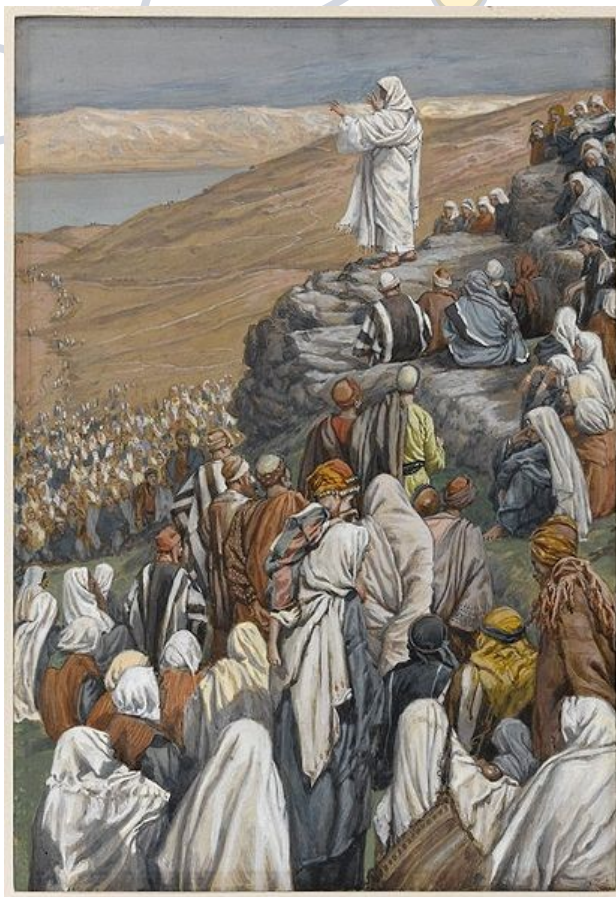
Open our minds and hearts so that we might be better witnesses

and help build Your Kingdom on earth through our living out the Beatitudes

in our words, attitudes, and actions

with the help of Your Holy Spirit.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



The Sermon on the Beatitudes by James Tissot (1886-1894).

Brooklyn Museum. Public Domain.