

Sunday, January 29, 2023 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

Bible Study
Matthew 5:1-12
“Blessed Are: Glimpses of the Kin-dom”

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes)

In groups of two or three, have participants respond to the question, “What does it look like to be ‘blessed’?”

Matthew 5:1-12, Context. The evangelist Matthew gathered the sayings of Jesus into five principal collections, mirroring the five books of Moses. (Matthew also portrays Jesus as the “new Moses” throughout his account.) The first and best known is the Sermon on the Mount, chapters 5-7, where Jesus sets out the principal rules for living for those who would follow him. The sermon opens with the Beatitudes which describe the fundamental characteristics of life in the Jesus community – living in the present, but with “eyes on the prize.” Each one of these pronouncements, not just the first, has God’s coming kingdom in view: the kingdom belongs to the humble (poor in spirit); to those who weep over the fact that God’s kingdom has not yet come in its fullness and that its reverse holds sway over the world; to those who yearn for God’s justice (righteousness) for the poor and weak, not their own; to those who give comfort, physical and spiritual, to those who have none; to those who have a single-minded devotion to God (pure in spirit) who will be blessed with a vision of God when the kingdom finally does come; to those who actively seek God’s peace and reconciliation in this world in the meantime; and to those who suffer for following Jesus here and now.

Read Matthew 5:1-12

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn’t make sense to you in the text?

Read 1 Matthew 5:1-12 again -

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Some reflection questions –

- How do the “blessed” statements in the first half of verses three through twelve relate to the promises in the second half of the verses?
- How are verses three and ten related? What do they speak of?

- How are Jesus' words in this section describing what disciples already do? How are Jesus' words saying what disciples should do? More of the former or the latter?
- Glance through the rest of the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7). How does this passage introduce and prepare for the rest of what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount?
- How do the qualities described in this passage compare with qualities that are often prized in our society?
- Whom do you know that best exemplifies the qualities of the Beatitudes?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, end by praying the following or a similar prayer:

Gracious God, enliven us to see those who suffer and thirst for righteousness; open us to meekness; teach us to be humble and gentle; guide us in valuing the qualities of your kingdom, so that the church of Jesus Christ may be a light to the world and others may know of your love. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

Our Father who art in Heaven
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.