

# 23 Strong February – The Beatitudes, Matthew 5:3-12



## February Day 1 Blessing...

*"How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart..."* Psalm 119:2



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Day 1! Before you start, make sure to watch the video titled 23 Strong Food and Fitness Aims Intro. This month our focus will be on Matthew 5:3-12, often known as the Beatitudes. The first thing, we want to see is Jesus' heart. Keep in mind that for centuries Jesus has seen His creation live in sin, reject His Word and wander from His ways. And now He is face to face with them, and ready to speak.

READ Matthew 5:1-12 & journal about the following:

- What is the first word out of Jesus' mouth? Is that surprising? Why/why not? What does it reveal about His heart for the people He created?
- *"Blessed"* ... how many times does Jesus say it?
- Copy this definition of the word "blessed" as understood from the original language...

*"makarios"*

blessed, happy, supremely blest, fortunate, well off

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Living in a place of Divine blessing is an extremely privileged way to live, and Jesus is totally offering us that privilege. We will dig into the deep meanings of each blessing in the coming days, but for starters let's posture ourselves before the Lord and let Him know that we want to receive His blessings.

So pray:

- EXPRESS thanksgiving for Jesus' heart to bless you.
- READ through each blessing and express your desire to live in each one.
- READ through each blessing and express your desire to see someone you care about live in each one.



## February Day 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes

*"Your word I have treasured in my heart..."* Psalm 119:11



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

As we begin the Beatitudes, it is beneficial to take in the big view, before we look closer at each one.

In my own meditation of the Beatitudes, the Holy Spirit revealed that as a whole, the Beatitudes are "pictures" of our salvation in Christ, and also of daily living in Christ. I want you to see this too so that you will be aware of these pictures when you meditate upon the Beatitudes in the coming days. So:

- READ Matthew 5:3-12.
- Gain understanding of these "pictures" by READING through the chart called 2 Pictures in The Beatitudes. I also encourage you to print or screenshot this chart to save for future use as we will refer to it often this month.

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

This month we are going to move in this word by memorizing it. Now don't let that scare you... even if you think you cannot memorize, I still encourage you to try. The main goal is getting Jesus' words hidden in our hearts. So, I will pace you through, and I encourage you to give it your best effort.

There are many ways to PRACTICE memorizing. To help us get ready, here are some suggestions:

- Memorizing from the same copy is visually helpful.
- Screenshooting the text, or making copies so you can have it available in various places is also helpful.
- Work in small sections.
- As you add in sections, review!
- Practice saying it out loud.
- Write it down.
- Review, review, review!

GET STARTED today with the first part of verse 3.

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## February Day 3 Poor in Spirit

*"My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times..."* Psalm 119:20



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we will begin to dig into the rich Truth of each Beatitude. We will spend two days on each one, **READING** today in verse 3 where Jesus says, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."* We all know what it means to be poor... it means to be in lack, in poverty, under-resourced. No one aspires to this posture of living, and yet Jesus begins by saying it is a blessed way to live. Whaaaat?

Now no doubt, Jesus was talking that day to many who were physically poor, but notice He distinctly says, *"poor in spirit"* ... referencing a poverty of the spirit. Why would that be a blessed way to live?

Answer that question by watching the the brief teaching video titled, Poor in Spirit. Take notes as you do.

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Three ways to move today in response to this word from Matthew 5:3:

1. **JOURNAL** your answers to the questions at the end of the video you just watched.
2. After you journal, **PRAY** about what you wrote.
3. **PRACTICE MEMORIZING** Matthew 5:3, remembering the suggestions we shared yesterday. Here they are again for reference.
  - Memorizing from the same copy is visually helpful.
  - Screenshooting the text, or making copies so you can have it available in various places is also helpful.
  - Work in small sections.
  - As you add in sections, review!
  - Practice saying it out loud.
  - Write it down.
  - Review, review, review!

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## February Day 4 Poor in Spirit / Kingdom of Heaven

*"My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times..."* Psalm 119:20



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Yesterday we began **READING** in verse 3 where Jesus said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."* Today we will see what the reality of that blessing is, as Jesus says, *"for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

So we come, *"poor in spirit"*... meaning completely needy, lacking, under-resourced... and Jesus gives us the blessing of His kingdom. Amazing! Meditate on that blessing by doing the following:

- **REVIEW** your January 23<sup>rd</sup> descriptive notes on the Kingdom. (from video titled Kingdom Invitation)
- **MAKE A LIST** of ways people display spiritual poverty... in other words, how they display they are spiritually needy, lacking, under-resourced.
- Beside each description of spiritual poverty, **WRITE DOWN** one of the kingdom descriptions that provides rescue from that poverty.

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

In response to this word from Matthew 5:3, move in the following three ways:

1. **Acknowledge** your poverty of spirit by **WRITING DOWN** at least 5 ways your spirit is lacking and in need today. Also do this for someone else you are close to.
2. **PRAY** for yourself and for this other person in regard to both of Jesus' statements in this beatitude. Feel free to write out your prayer.
3. **PRACTICE MEMORIZING** Matthew 5:3, by saying it out loud and then also writing it down.

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## February Day 5 Those Who Mourn

*"O may Thy lovingkindness comfort me, according to Thy word to Thy servant..."* Psalm 119:76



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we will READ verse 4 where Jesus says, *"Blessed are those who mourn..."* And again, at face value, *"mourning"* sounds anything but a blessed way to live. And yet, Jesus says it is.

There are many reasons we may mourn in this life...

- When we first become aware of our need for salvation, we mourn our sin before God, and its destruction in our lives and the lives of others.
- And then even after salvation, life struggles can continue to bring grief... sin that is still having its way in us, the sin of others that is burdening us, or just the broken and fallen dynamics we live in daily.

JOURNAL about your own experiences of mourning, specifically related to each of the underlined descriptions.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Let's move in response to this word from Matthew 5:4 today in 3 ways:

1. CONFESSING any sin that is still having its way in your life.
2. EXPRESSING any mourning in your heart to Jesus in prayer and asking for His comfort.
3. PRACTICE MEMORIZING the first part of Matthew 5:4 by saying it aloud and writing it down. Then add it to Matthew 5:3... and review!



## February Day 6 Those Who Mourn / Shall Be Comforted

*"O may Thy lovingkindness comfort me, according to Thy word to Thy servant..."* Psalm 119:76



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we add on the second part of verse 4, seeing that the blessing Jesus gives to *"those who mourn"...* is that *"they shall be comforted..."*

So READ it, and let's specifically focus on the Divine comfort we experience in Christ when we mourn:

- Go back to the chart from Day 2 that we called **2 Pictures in the Beatitudes**, and READ and MEDITATE upon the picture descriptions for Matthew 5:4. After reading, specifically COPY the descriptions of Christ's comfort from each one. Leave space beside each one.
- WRITE OUT your own personal experience with Christ's comfort alongside each description.
- CONSIDER why He is the only One who can truly comfort you when you mourn.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Let's move in Matthew 5:4 today by:

1. EXPRESSING thanksgiving to God for the comforts only He can provide.
2. DISTINGUISHING His comfort above all others... write down other ways/sources from which you sometimes seek comfort. Then word a personal declaration to Jesus that His comfort is better.
3. ASKING the Lord for His comfort today in any place that you are grieving.
4. PRACTICING your memorization of all of Matthew 5:4 by saying it aloud and writing it down. Then ADD it to Matthew 5:3... and review!



## February Day 7 The Meek

*"My soul keeps Thy testimonies and I love them exceedingly..."* Psalm 119:167



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

In verse 5, Jesus says, *"Blessed are the meek"* ... some versions say *"gentle"* or *"humble"* .... Let's ponder all 3 words and hopefully wrap our minds around living *"meekly"* in day to day life. READ verse 5 and make notes about the following in your journal:

- **Meekness** is strength... but not displayed in ways we typically see strength. Instead, meekness is a disposition of strength that manifests itself in our attitude in a gentle and humble way.
- Jesus is speaking of how strength is meekly displayed in the kingdom of God, because in His kingdom strength is seen not in the person who rises up in control, but in the one who humbly, and gently leans into God's powerful strength.

WATCH the first half of the video titled Meek = Rest Not Wrestle and continue your notes.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Based on things we just considered about "meekness" let's exercise our understanding of it in a personal way by journaling about the following:

- **MAKE A LIST** of areas in your life where you need strength... (example – I am prone to laziness so I need the strength of self-control)
- **Alongside your list, MAKE TWO MORE LISTS...**
  1. A list of ways you would seek to find your own strength for your need
  2. A list of strengths God possesses that He would gladly share with you
- **WRITE A PRAYER** expressing your desire to meekly rest in God's strength for all you need.
- **PRACTICE MEMORIZING** the first part of Matthew 5:5 by saying it aloud and writing it down. Then **ADD** to Matthew 5:3-4 & **REVIEW**.



## February Day 8 The Meek / Inherit the Earth

*"My soul keeps Thy testimonies and I love them exceedingly..."* Psalm 119:167



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today READ verse 5 again and focus on the blessing attached to being *"meek"* that Jesus speaks of... that blessing being, *"for they shall inherit the earth."* This is a crazy good blessing and I can't wait to tell you more about it!

So first, watch the second half of the video titled, "Meek = Rest Not Wrestle" taking notes as you do.

Now meditate on the Truth of Matthew 5:5 by:

- **THANKING** God for the inheritance He planned for you to have.
- **CONSIDERING** specific ways that people tend to fight for...
  - A **PLACE** in the earth
  - **PLEASURE** in the earth
  - **PROVISION** in the earth...instead of receiving it from God.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Matthew 5:5... wow, what an invitation to live in God's blessings He originally created for you. So the question is, are you? Take a moment today to personally consider your own posture of heart by **JOURNALING** about the following:

- What is one or more area(s) of your life that you believe God is calling you to meekly lean in and trust Him? Are you meekly resting or wrestling? How? Why?
- What blessings might you inherit if you rest, or said in a different way... what blessings might you miss if you continue to wrestle?

**PRAY** meekly today, humbly, gently leaning into God's strong arm, and His inheritance for you.

**PRACTICE** all of Matthew 5:5 out loud and write it down. Then **ADD** it to Matthew 5:3-4 and **REVIEW!**





## February Day 9 Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

"The Lord is my portion..." Psalm 119:57



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

It may seem that the postures of heart Jesus is calling "blessed" are postures that we tend to think of as NOT "blessed"... poor, mourning, meek, and now READ verse 6... hungry. At face value, none of these thus far mentioned in the Beatitudes seem to be a place of blessing. But we must remember, we are not looking at face value, but at Jesus' value... and Jesus does call these things "blessed."

So as we get started on this one, let's consider the following to help us understand more... and feel free to use the reference sheet from Day 2 titled, 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes.

- DEFINE righteousness.
- CONSIDER the signs of physical hunger/thirst and the signs of spiritual hunger/thirst.
- CONSIDER various ways people try to satisfy spiritual hunger and thirst.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Let's personally move in this word from Jesus in Matthew 5:6 by JOURNALING about these prompts:

- Go back to your thoughts about the signs of physical and spiritual hunger/thirst. Do you see some of those signs in your own life and in the lives of others? If so, what are they?
- What are you reaching for to satisfy those desires? Is it working?
- What do you see others reaching for to satisfy their spiritual hunger and thirst? Is it working?

PRAY into the blessing of Matthew 5:6 and the thoughts you just journaled.

We will come back to Matthew 5:6 tomorrow... but for now, PRACTICE memorizing the first part of it, and then REVIEW it along with Matthew 5:3-5.



## February Day 10 Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness / Filled!

"The Lord is my portion..." Psalm 119:57



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Jesus is always speaking to the heart. No doubt each one of the Beatitudes deals with heart issues, but this one in Matthew 5:6 especially. READ it. Jesus' words here shine a light on our hearts desires, the hunger and thirsts deep within us. But He makes it totally clear... if those desires are for righteousness, He will fill them!

Using the reference sheet from Day 2 called 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes review the pictures of:

- What this filling looks like in salvation
- What this filling looks like in daily life in Christ

Now in light of that, CONSIDER your own heart and its desire for righteousness before you knew Christ... and now that you do know Him, in your day to day of life. Journal about how He has filled your desires for righteousness then and now.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

So let's come humbly before Jesus today...

- First, thanking Him for the filling of righteousness He gives... at salvation... and in day to day living. Thank Him for His generosity of righteousness!
- Second... let's express the desires of our hearts for righteousness to Jesus... here are some prompts to help you get started, but express others too...
  - Your desire for sin strongholds to be broken
  - Your desire for peace
  - Your desire for a pure heart
  - Your desire to grow strong in Christ
  - Your desire for family and friends to be saved
  - Your desire to seek Christ first

PRACTICE all of Matthew 5:6 out loud and write it down. Then ADD it to Matthew 5:3-5, and REVIEW!



## February Day 11 Review

*"Give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments."* Psalm 119:73b



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we're going to take a breath to review our journey through the Beatitudes thus far.

As we do, let's pray and ask the Lord to, *"give us understanding that we may learn His commandments."* (Psalm 119:73b)

Then:

- READ Matthew 5:1-6
- READ it again... this time stopping at each Beatitude to review the corresponding notes on the reference sheet from Day 2 called 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes. As you do so, also CONSIDER how you see yourself in each Beatitude. JOURNAL your thoughts.

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

We will use our time here for review today too:

- First MEMORIZATION... Practice saying Matthew 5:3-6 out loud. If you have a voice recorder app on your phone, record it and then listen to it several times.
- Second, as the Beatitudes are a picture of our day to day life in Christ, praying into these postures of heart is such a good practice. Use the reference sheet titled Praying through the Beatitudes for Yourself to prompt yourself to PRAY THROUGH THE BEATITUDES found in verses 3, 4, 5, and 6.

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## February Day 12 Merciful

*"May I not be ashamed when I look upon all Thy commandments."* Psalm 119:6



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we land in Matthew 5:7 where Jesus says, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."* Mercy was likely lacking in the crowd that day, because the people lived under an oppressive Roman rule, and in that environment, mercy fades. See for mercy to flow, there must be a source.

We now know, Jesus is that source! Remember, His sermon was an invitation into His kingdom... and His invite was a total act of mercy to anyone listening! In this sermon, He is showing a better way to live... not in a flow of offense/bitterness, but in the flow of His mercy... to receive it... and to give it.

- READ Matthew 5:7.
- DEFINE "mercy"... journal the definition.
- READ vs. 7 notes in 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes to see how mercy should flow to us and through us as we live in His kingdom.

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

So let's move in the Word we partook of today... all about mercy. Let's focus on Jesus' mercy toward us by journaling about the following:

- PRAY and ask the Holy Spirit to bring at least 10 ways to mind that Jesus has been merciful to you, both in salvation and in day to day living since He saved you.
- WRITE them in your journal.
- PRAY through the list, thanking Jesus for His mercy to you.
- Let's also make sure we give attention to MEMORIZATION today...
- PRACTICE saying Matthew 5:7 out loud several times.
- Then ADD it to Matthew 5:3-6, and REVIEW!

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## February Day 13 Merciful / Will Receive Mercy

*"May I not be ashamed when I look upon all Thy commandments."* Psalm 119:6



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we will continue in Matthew 5:7 where Jesus says, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."* The more we get to know Jesus, the more we see how mercy defines His character... and for all who will dwell in His kingdom, He calls us to allow it to define our character too. Mercy is a choice.

Today in conjunction with Matthew 5:7, we'll look at several other things Jesus also said about mercy, in this same sermon, but also later in His ministry too.

- READ Matthew 5:7. Set it as a backdrop for also READING Matthew 5:38-48 & Matthew 18:21-35.
- After reading, MAKE NOTES about what you see in Jesus' heart regarding the importance of living in the flow of mercy...

#### Flow of Mercy

*you receive mercy... you give mercy...*

*and you receive it again* [establishedfootsteps.com](http://establishedfootsteps.com)

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

So let's move in the flow of mercy today. Yesterday you made a list of many ways that Jesus has been merciful to you... so now, let's consider how that mercy is also flowing out of you to others...

Answer the following questions:

- How does mercy flow in your thoughts about others? Where might it be clogged up?
- How does mercy flow in your emotions towards others? Where might it be clogged up?
- How does mercy flow in your actions towards others? Where might it be clogged up?
- When the flow of mercy is evident in our character, it is a blessed way to live. Why?

Now, MEMORIZATION... Practice saying Matthew 5:3-7 out loud. If you have a voice recorder app on your phone, record it and then listen to it several times. Review as needed.



## February Day 14 Pure in Heart

*"Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity."* Psalm 119:37a



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

*"Blessed are the pure in heart..."*

What a thing for Jesus to say in verse 8... to a people whose hearts were filthy. And what a thing for Him to say to us, whose hearts are also so in need of cleansing.

Jesus could say this because He knew that by His coming sacrifice, He could purify any heart who turned to Him. That is what happens when He saves us! And then a continual cleansing takes place as we follow Him and submit our hearts to Him over and over again. Meditate on this further by:

- LOOKING again at the chart, 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes to see the two pictures related to verse 8.
- TAKING NOTES in your journal about what you read in regard to purity of heart.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

It is easy for us as believers to make effort to purify our own hearts, thoughts and wills. That never works because we are not capable of purifying ourselves. Purity is the work of Christ in us through His death/resurrection, and our cooperation with His purifying work. So:

- ASK the Holy Spirit to reveal 5 things in your life that need a purifying touch from Jesus.
- JOURNAL what He shows you.
- WRITE out a prayer asking God to purify you in these areas.

We are still MEMORIZING... so let's

- PRACTICE today, saying Matthew 5:8 out loud several times.
- Then ADD it to Matthew 5:3-7, and REVIEW!



## February Day 15 Pure in Heart / Shall See God!

"Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity." Psalm 119:37a



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Have you ever had blurry vision? It can be so frustrating to not be able to see with clarity. Well apparently, according to what Jesus says in verse 8, the purity of our hearts directly affects how well we can see God with our spiritual eyes.

We must remember that Jesus is still just in the beginning thoughts of this sermon, and with each Beatitude He is revealing a picture of our salvation, and also our day to day life in His kingdom. Being able to see God is obviously very important to both... and having a pure heart is what clears our vision so we can see Him. So...

- COMPARE what Jesus said in Matthew 5:8 with His later thoughts in Matthew 6:22-23.
- ANSWER this question... why is "seeing God" so important for salvation and for day to day life in His kingdom?

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

**MEDITATE...** In response to Matthew 5:8, let's meditate by journaling about the following:

- Have you experienced moments where your spiritual eyes were opened and you were able to "see God" clearly? If so, what did you see?
- What are some things you would like to see clearly about God?
- What things/dynamics most often cause your heart to get dirty? Why?

**PRAY...** about the things you journaled

**MEMORIZATION...** let's continue

- REVIEW Matthew 5:3-7 out loud.
- PRACTICE all of Matthew 5:8.
- REVIEW Matthew 5:3-8 all together out loud several times.



## February Day 16 Peacemakers

"Revive me in Thy ways." Psalm 119:37b



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

In Matthew 5:9, Jesus continues the Beatitudes by speaking blessing over people who choose to be "peacemakers" as they live their lives.

Interesting to note... the word Jesus used in the original language which is translated "peacemakers" is only used 1x in the whole New Testament. That tells us this word was not common... which probably means the practice of peacemaking was not common either. In other words, in this Beatitude, Jesus was calling His followers to come up into a practice of living that was elevated far above the norm. And He knew He would set the example. Looking further:

- REVIEW the chart, 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes to see the two pictures related to verse 9.
- TAKE NOTES in your journal about what you read in regard to peacemaking.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

**MEDITATE** further in response to Jesus' first words in Matthew 5:9 by journaling about these verses which speak to how Jesus made peace with us.

Isaiah 9:6      Luke 2:14  
John 14:26-27    Ephesians 2:13-19  
Colossians 1:19-20

**PRAY...** and thank Jesus for being The Peacemaker in relationship with you.

**MEMORIZATION...**

- PRACTICE the first part of Matthew 5:9
- REVIEW Matthew 5:3-8... adding in the first part of verse 9 too...

We are getting there!





## February Day 17 Peacemakers / Shall Be Called Sons of God

"Revive me in Thy ways." Psalm 119:37b



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

In Matthew 5:9, the blessing Jesus speaks over "peacemakers" is rich... to be "called the sons of God."

Interesting to note... it was not common in that day to think of God as Father... so to even think in terms of being a "son of God" would have been a new thought for those listening. And this new thought would've been full of promise, because it was common in that day for sons to receive the identity and inheritance of their Father. So, this blessing from Jesus opened up a whole new realm of possibility for the listeners. What about you?

JOURNAL about the following:

- What does it mean to you to be identified as a "son (daughter) of God?"
- Review the chart to see the connection of this Beatitude to blessing in verse 9.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

In response to Jesus' words in Matthew 5:9, consider the following as you JOURNAL your thoughts...

- What character qualities would one need to put into practice to be a peacemaker? Why?
- Are there any relationships in your life that need you to step into this role? What would it specifically look like? Are you willing?
- How would peacemaking in your relationships represent your Father?

PRAY about your responses...

MEMORIZATION...

- PRACTICE all of Matthew 5:9.
- REVIEW Matthew 5:3-9.
- If you have a voice recorder app on your phone, RECORD yourself quoting it, and then REVIEW some more by listening to your recording.



## February Day 18 Persecuted for Righteousness and for Jesus

"Deal with Thy servant according to Thy lovingkindness." Psalm 119:124



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

God's care for us is so deep, and we definitely see it as the Beatitude conversation continues to the last two in verses 10-12. You will notice that both are similar in nature, but each one also holds distinction.

In verse 10, Jesus speaks blessing over those who have been "persecuted for the sake of righteousness." In verse 11, He speaks blessing over those who've been "persecuted on account of Me."

For those who live in the Beatitudes, their hearts are so connected to Jesus' Gospel and His kingdom, that they are willing to endure persecution. So:

- READ Matthew 5:10-12 and MAKE NOTE of the distinctions/similarities of both Beatitudes.
- LIST different ways persecution may occur (vs. 11) and JOURNAL about varied forms it may take...
- CONSIDER Jesus' heart for His people as He speaks of these things. JOURNAL your thoughts.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

We have to be strong in faith to be willing to endure persecution for righteousness and for Jesus. So let's flex our faith muscles by making personal declarations in light of Jesus' words in verses 10-12.

COMPLETE the following sentences at least 3X each:

- In honor of righteousness... I am willing to live God's way in regard to \_\_\_\_\_, even if it brings me persecution.
- In honor of Jesus... I am willing to represent Him by \_\_\_\_\_, even if it brings me persecution.

MEMORIZATION

- REVIEW your memorization of Matthew 5:3-9.
- DECIDE if you will memorize verse 10 only\*, or 10-12. Whichever you decide, start today and begin adding it to verses 3-9.

\*verse 10 represents all of verses 10-12 in a simpler way



## February Day 19 Persecuted for Righteousness and for Jesus



*"Deal with Thy servant according to Thy lovingkindness."* Psalm 119:124

### SPIRITUAL FOOD

In verse 10, the blessing that accompanies being "*persecuted for righteousness*" is identical to the one in verse 3... it is the kingdom! And rightly so, as Jesus' focus for this whole sermon is His kingdom!

So for today, we want to take a moment to review things we've already shared about the kingdom, as these will be our working definitions throughout the study, so we want to be super familiar with them.

Make sure you've seen the video titled Kingdom Invitation. (we watched it on January 23<sup>rd</sup>)

Then from memory try to...

- WRITE OUT the 3 word simple definition of the Kingdom found in Romans 14:17.
- WRITE OUT the 7 "P" words that describe the Kingdom.

And then PRAY, personally expressing to God, why the blessing of His kingdom is worth persecution.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Even if we are not personally experiencing persecution at this time, one day we might. And, there are many Christians today all over the world who are currently suffering under intense oppression because of their commitment to righteousness and loyalty to Jesus.

Let's PRAY for them...

Using the 3 word definition, and the 7 descriptions of the Kingdom, Pray for persecuted believers all over the world, that they would experience each one of these things in great measure.

### MEMORIZATION

We are continuing...

- WORK ON memorizing verse 10 or verse 10-12.
- PRACTICE and REVIEW verses 3-10... or 3-12.



## February Day 20 Persecuted for Righteousness and for Jesus



*"Deal with Thy servant according to Thy lovingkindness."* Psalm 119:124

### SPIRITUAL FOOD

We will spend one more day in verses 10-12... today focusing on Jesus' words in verse 12, "*for your reward in heaven is great*". Obviously Jesus wants His followers to know that whoever is willing to suffer persecution for righteousness, and for Him, will be highly valued in His kingdom, in fact to those who suffer directly for Him, He'll grant a great reward!

Yesterday we reviewed many "*rewards*" of the Kingdom itself, but in verse 12 it sounds like Jesus is speaking of a more personal reward and that makes sense, as the original language of the word, "*reward*" in verse 12 referred to dues and wages.

Now we follow Jesus out of love and honor... not working for a reward. But Jesus seems to want us to know, as we do, He will personally reward us! So

- JOURNAL about what that "*reward*" could be.
- PRAY, asking God to guide your thoughts.

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

In Matthew 5:12, as Jesus says, "*for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you*," He is connecting those who will follow Him now, to those who have done so in the past.

It is humbling to think of ourselves as connected to the great prophets of old, and yet in doing so, we rise up in strength to see our part in the big picture of God's story. So, let's do that now by thinking of "*prophets*" from both the Bible, and also more recent years, who have endured persecution for Jesus.

- RECALL their stories.
- IMAGINE what their reward in heaven might be.
- ASK God to help you follow their example.

MEMORIZATION continues...

- WORK ON memorizing verse 10 or verse 10-12.
- PRACTICE and REVIEW verses 3-10... or 3-12.





## February Day 21 A Picture of the Gospel

*"Revive me through Thy righteousness."* Psalm 119:40



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Now that we have worked through all 9 of the Beatitudes, we want to go back and look at them as a whole. Throughout this month, we continually have pointed to the 2 pictures of experience in Christ that we see in the Beatitudes. The first is the "Gospel," which will be our focus today.

The word "Gospel" means 'good news' so when we say "Gospel" we are referencing the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ! See in the Beatitudes, we literally can see a picture of how one can enter into and experience salvation in Jesus. To clearly see this picture... ASK the Holy Spirit for great understanding as you carefully REVIEW both:

- The Beatitudes (Matthew 1:3-12)
- 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes chart (middle column)

PRAY, thanking God that you have been saved and *"revived through the righteousness of Christ."*

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Now that you reviewed the picture of the Gospel in the Beatitudes, let's move personally in this picture by laying it alongside our own personal story of salvation. To do so:

- WORK through each Beatitude again, and with each one, pause to CONSIDER your own salvation experience in the Gospel of Jesus.
- JOURNAL the thoughts that come to mind as you do.

MEMORIZATION continues...

Wherever you are at in the memorization process, keep at it, adding on small bits at a time, and then review, review, review.



## February Day 22 A Picture of Ongoing Life in Christ

*"Teach me the way of Thy statutes."* Psalm 119:33



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Today we will focus on the second picture we see in the Beatitudes... the picture of Ongoing Life in Christ. See not only are the Beatitudes a picture of how we experience salvation through the Gospel, they also reveal Jesus' desire for how we would live day to day in His Kingdom. It's important for us to build understanding of both pictures as the Beatitudes give foundation to the whole Sermon on the Mount.

See once we experience salvation, there is abundant life to live in His kingdom! Ask the Holy Spirit for great understanding of what that life is to look like in the Kingdom as you REVIEW the following:

- The Beatitudes (Matthew 1:3-12)
- 2 Pictures in the Beatitudes chart (third column)

PRAY, thanking God that He has granted you the blessing of fullness of Life in His Kingdom!

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### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

Now that you reviewed the picture of Ongoing Life in Christ that is represented in the Beatitudes, let's move personally in this picture by laying it alongside our own personal experience of day to day life in Christ. To do so:

- WORK through each Beatitude one more time, and with each one, pause to CONSIDER your own day to day of life in Christ. How does it line up with what Jesus is speaking?
- JOURNAL the thoughts that come to mind.
- PRAY, asking God to make this picture more clear in your own life experience.

MEMORIZATION continues...

Wherever you are at in the memorization process, keep at it, adding on small bits at a time and then review, review, review.



## February Day 23 Praying the Beatitudes

*"Teach me the way of Thy statutes."* Psalm 119:33



### SPIRITUAL FOOD

Once we gain understanding of the Beatitudes, and have them stored in our hearts through memorization, the Holy Spirit can use them in multiplied ways of blessing in our lives.

I will always remember the morning when I was out on a prayer walk and the Holy Spirit led me to pray through the Beatitudes. His prompting opened up a whole new way of prayer for me that has been so rich and meaningful.

As we finish out this month of study, I want to share that experience with you and invite you into it as well. So take a moment now to WATCH the video titled Praying the Beatitudes. As you do, I pray you will feast on this one way the Beatitudes can richly nourish your life and the lives of others around you.

### SPIRITUAL FITNESS

We'll start with our MEMORIZATION today and then take it into PRAYING the Beatitudes.

#### MEMORIZATION

As we land on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day, hopefully you have hidden these rich blessings of Jesus in your heart. Remember that is the goal of memorizing... to hide His Word in our hearts so it builds strength within us. So:

- SPEAK Matthew 5:3-12 out loud from memory. REVIEW and CORRECT where needed.
- SPEAK it out loud one more time.

#### PRAYING the Beatitudes

Using the reference sheet titled Praying the Beatitudes to guide you, pray through them for yourself. May your prayer time be a wonderful way to conclude your 23 days of eating and moving in these words from Jesus.