

# Beatitudes Lesson Plan

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW Volume I, Revised Edition, William Barclay

**Lesson One** (10 pgs, downloadable 8½ x11 pages 2 thru 9 and 62 thru 64)  
Printed book if you have it = Pages xiii-xiv, 1-11 and 96-101

## **Reading Topics**

GENERAL INTRODUCTION (pg 2)

THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS (pg 3)

THE EARLIEST GOSPEL (pg 4)

IMPROVEMENTS ON MARK (pg 4)

THE TEACHING OF JESUS (pg 5)

MATTHEW'S PLACE IN THE GOSPEL TRADITION (pg 6)

MATTHEW THE TAXGATHERER (pg 6)

THE GOSPEL OF THE JEWS (pg 7)

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (pg 62)

THE SUMMARY OF THE FAITH (pg 62)

MATTHEW'S INTRODUCTION (pg 63)

## **Lesson One Questions**

1. Why are Matthew, Mark and Luke called the Synoptic Gospels?
2. Why did the author of Matthew write this Bible account of Jesus' life? What purpose did he have in mind? What group was he or she writing for?
3. Why is Matthew called the teaching Gospel?
4. Why does Barclay suggest that this Gospel got the title "The Gospel According to Matthew"?
5. Why would one use The Gospel According to Matthew instead of one of the other Gospels to study the Beatitudes?
6. Why is the Sermon on the Mount referred to with titles such as "Summary of the Faith", "Christ's Doctrine" and "the standard of the Christian life"?
7. Matthew starts The Sermon on the Mount by stating that Jesus went up the mountain and sat down. What are your thoughts on this setting and Jesus' posture? Does Matthew give any other clues about the importance of what is to follow?

## **Lesson Two** (10 pgs, downloadable 8½ x11 pages 65 thru 74)

Printed book if you have it = Pages 102-118

### **Reading Topics**

THE SUPREME BLESSEDNESS (pg 65)

THE BLISS OF THE DESTITUTE (pg 66)

THE BLISS OF THE BROKEN HEART (pg 68)

THE BLISS OF THE GOD-CONTROLLED LIFE (pg 70)

THE BLISS OF THE STARVING SPIRIT (pg 72)

### **Lesson Two Questions**

1. The first Beatitude, “Blessed are the poor ...” is often sighted as the most challenging to comprehend. Does Barclay’s discussion on the Greek and Aramaic origins of the English words translated as “blessed” and “poor in spirit” add any new insights? If not, why not? If yes, what are those insights??
2. Barclay suggests that the words, “...for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” imply current membership or citizenship in God’s Kingdom on earth today. Why does he suggest that? What do you think of this interpretation?
3. The discussion offers three possible interpretations of the second Beatitude, “Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Which of the three helped you the most? Why?
4. The Greek word “praotes” is translated into the English word “meek” in the third Beatitude. The word has three meanings in Greek. Which of the three meanings do you think is most closely aligned with what Jesus intended?
5. In the book of Numbers (Num. 12:3), after Moses had led the Israelites out of Egypt, Moses was described as exceedingly meek. How does this use of the word meek help you understand the third Beatitude?
6. During his discussion of the fourth Beatitude, Barclay expands upon the intensity of the “hunger” and explains that the Greek grammar of the original specifies more than “righteousness” of the moment. What words would you use to communicate the instruction in the fourth Beatitude to fellow Christians?

## **Lesson Three** (11 ½ pgs, downloadable 8½ x11 pages 75 thru 86)

Printed book if you have it = Pages 118-136

### **Reading Topics**

THE BLISS OF PERFECT SYMPATHY (pg 75)

THE BLISS OF THE CLEAN HEART (pg 77)

THE BLISS OF BRINGING MEN TOGETHER (pg 79)

THE BLISS OF THE SUFFERER FOR CHRIST (pg 81)

THE BLISS OF THE BLOOD-STAINED WAY (pg 84)

### **Lesson Three Questions**

1. Barclay suggests that the original Hebrew word translated in the fifth Beatitude as “merciful” is untranslatable. After reading his explanation can you think of a time in your life when you felt this kind of mercy toward another?
2. The discussion gives three examples of how this kind of mercy could impact our lives. Which of the three is most meaningful to you? Why?
3. The sixth Beatitude concerning the pure or clean of heart seems to some an instruction of Jesus that is easier to deal with personally than those Beatitudes that deal with the poor or mourning. The discussion, however, says that the sixth Beatitude is very difficult to adhere to. Why is it so difficult?
4. Barclay’s discussion about the seventh Beatitude concerning peace-makers expands upon what is meant typically by the English word “peace.” What insights does this interpretation give you?
5. It is suggested that historically the seventh Beatitude has been thought of along three lines of thought. Which do you find most comforting to you?
6. Barclay explains that in Hebrew being referred to as a “son of a gun” isn’t a bad thing. Does this discussion help you understand our translation of the seventh beatitude better? Why?
7. The final Beatitude deals with the potentially difficult subject of persecution for one’s beliefs. Does the discussion help you:
  - a. in a historical sense?
  - b. from a current day perspective?