

WEEK 3 | MATTHEW 5:10-12

A BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM

PRAY TO OPEN.

THEME.

As believers in Jesus Christ, and citizens of his kingdom, we have the unique responsibility to reflect the glory of God to a watching world. In our new series, *A Beautiful Kingdom*, we will study Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, considering what it means to flourish under his rule and reign, and live as his representatives where we work, live and play.

QUESTIONS.

Feel free use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of the week's Scriptures.

1. Did the Holy Spirit use last week's passage or sermon to convict, challenge, or encourage you in any way? Did he use it to confirm or answer a prayer in any way? If you're willing, share with the group?
2. Read vv. 10-12. Take a moment to pause for personal reflection. What is your initial heart response to this beatitude?

Hint: Remember the meaning of the word *blessed* "reflects God's estimate rather than human emotion."¹ A more precise translation may be *fortunate; to be congratulated*.

3. Note that Jesus is very clear in verse 10 that congratulations is offered to those who are being persecuted for "righteousness' sake," not for sin or stupidity. Who are some examples of men or women who have suffered for their faith or morality? Have you ever experienced persecution?

Note: The promise is that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." It may be a good idea to read Hebrews 10:32-34.

4. Take a moment for personal reflection. Is suffering for your faith worthwhile? Why? What gives you hope in times of great pain?
5. How does Jesus' example help you embrace the difficult life of being a disciple? What does it look like for you to look forward to the reward in heaven?

Note: It may be good to read and comment on Hebrews 12:1-4.

6. Does this passage answer questions you've wrestling with? What questions do you still have?
7. How can we pray for you? Is there a way you are suffering right now? How can we help?

PRAY TO CLOSE.

¹ Gundry, Robert H., *A Survey of the New Testament: 5th Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012, 200.