

## SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

SERMON ON THE MOUNT – Week 3 – *Beatitudes, Part 2* – Alex Walton

September 24, 2023

### DIGGING IN:

1. “Jesus welcomes outsiders into the Kingdom UP the mountain but prepares them for life DOWN the mountain.” Respond to this statement. What do you think Alex meant as he said this?
2. Read the final beatitude in Matthew 5:10-12 and the quote from R.T. France below; then answer the following:

“To live as subjects of the Kingdom of Heaven is to be set over against the rest of society which does not share its values, and the result...will be persecution.”

- Have you ever been in a situation that you would consider as “persecution because of righteousness” or persecution because of your faith in Jesus?
- Why might this beatitude be harder to understand in 21 Century America?
- If you are aware of modern-day examples of persecution of Christians, share those examples with the group.

### MAKING IT REAL:

3. Whether it is faith-based persecution or not, what are some of the emotions that might arise in you when someone opposes, criticizes, disagrees with you or sabotages you in some way?
4. How do you normally handle or respond to those emotions?
5. Read the following Psalms that demonstrate David’s expression of deep emotion before God.
  - Psalm 6:3-7
  - Psalm 13:1-2
  - Psalm 22:1-2
  - Psalm 31:9
  - Psalm 28:7

6. In the Psalms, David (and other authors) make clear that *every* emotion can be brought before God. Take a minute to think about your own emotions today. Name and write down something that you are feeling (can be a positive emotion or a tough one).
  
7. If we continue reading in the Psalms, we discover that God met David in the midst of his deep emotions. We are going to go through a guided prayer practice that will help us meet with God in the midst of *our* emotion. The responses to the prompts are all done silently, *not* shared aloud with the group.
  - First, settle yourself comfortably where you are sitting. Intentionally relax your body and take a couple of deep breaths.
  - Close your eyes. Think about the emotion you are feeling. Name it. Where in your *body* do you feel the emotion? Allow yourself to be present to the emotion, to truly feel it. (If it is challenging for you to connect the emotion with your body, you can also imagine yourself in a place or with a person connected with that emotion).
  - Now invite Jesus to join you in the space with that emotion. Notice *where* He is. (Close? Far away?).
  - Does Jesus say anything? Does He do something? How does He meet you in that space
  - Thank Jesus for meeting you where you are. Then take another deep breath and open your eyes.
  
8. Is there anything from that experience that you would like to share with the group?

## PRAYER IDEAS

Share prayer requests around the circle. If everyone in your group is comfortable praying out loud, go around the circle, each praying for the person on your right.

## WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

Another perspective on "Blessed."

- Read Ephesians 1:3-14 (A copy is provided on the last page of this study guide)
- As you read, circle or highlight every blessing that God has given His people.
- Note who is included.

- Go back through the blessings. Which one stands out to you? How does your awareness of these blessings impact your relationship with God? Your sense of worth?

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### *Red Couch Theology Podcast*

If you or group members have questions around parts of the sermon that are not included in the discussion guide, it's always helpful to listen to *Red Couch Theology*, where Alex and Aaron talk about the sermon and answer questions that come in from people in the congregation. <https://guysdrinkingtea.podbean.com/>

### *The Divine Conspiracy* by Dallas Willard

*What If Jesus Was Serious?: A Visual Guide to the Teachings of Jesus We Love to Ignore*, by Skye Jethani.

*Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* by Peter Scazzero

Ephesians 1:3-14

**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.** For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.