

The Words, Ways, and Works of Jesus
Discussion Guide for LifeGroup leaders
Week 2: April 18, 2021

Blessing

Last week we talked about Jesus in history nonbiblical records.
Jesus claims to be God...

Which if true is a big deal in terms of the on-going significance of Jesus words, ways and works.

Biblical record (which is also historical text)

- Written with a bias
- Evidence for deity, resurrection and so on

The **gospel** records:

In laymen's terms, the **red letters**, words of Jesus.

Matthew... Jewish tax collector turned Jesus follower

Mark.... Peter's memoirs about Jesus

Luke... a physician at the time, chronicling the Jesus events for his Greek friend Theoploous

John... one of Jesus disciples giving a detailed record for people to have faith that Jesus was who He claimed to be.

Summary opener Sermon in the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

Jesus gave an interesting talk on '**Blessing.**'

"God blesses those who are **poor** and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who **mourn**, for they will be comforted.

God blesses those who are **humble**, for they will inherit the whole earth.

God blesses those who **hunger and thirst** for justice, for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

God blesses those who are **persecuted** for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

“God blesses you **when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you** because you are my followers.

Be happy about it! Be very glad!

For a great reward awaits you in heaven.

And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.'

Matthew 5:3-12

- Jesus words are upside down
- Oxymoron
- Counterintuitive
- Radical
- Unconventional

Classic 'Blessing' views:

- Fun
- Satisfying
- Gratifying to flesh
- Enjoyable
- Happy

God's definition on blessing is more in keeping with anything that makes me more like Jesus.

'My **suffering was good for me**, for it **taught me** to pay attention to your decrees. Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver.'

Psalms 119:71-72

'You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people.'

Genesis 50:20

Curses (according to normal thought):

- Bad things
- Sickness
- Pain
- Suffering
- Unenjoyable
- Tough
- Hard

Real life teaches us that many things we viewed as curses can actually be the things that result in the most growth in our lives.

The ongoing ways of Jesus suggest things like:

'Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them.
Romans 12:14

When we understand Gods agenda, we rethink what a blessing is....

"For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them **to become like his Son**, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters."

Romans 8:29

New way to think about blessing:

- is anything that ultimately helps us to be conformed to the image of God.
- difficult things

LifeGroup Discussion Guide Questions:

- 1) How would most people describe 'blessings' in your view?
- 2) How radical do Jesus words sound when he talks about this new way of understanding blessing in Matthew 5?
- 3) Can you share any experience when you went through something that seemed like a 'curse' but later turned out to be the source of some very positive developments in your life?
- 4) There is literally a TV series about people who have won the lottery and how it's destroyed their lives. Most people would consider winning the lottery as a blessing. Can you share an experience where something seemed so good in your life and turned out to be the source of something not so good?
- 5) Talk about some of the individual beatitudes and see if you can add some personal experience related to them in keeping with what Jesus taught.