



11th November 2009

Matthew 5, 1 – 12 The Beattitudes

On a hillside near Capernaum, this 'Sermon on the Mount' may have lasted several days. In it, Jesus proclaims his position in relation to the law, authority, money and obedience. He challenges the proud and the legalistic religious leaders. He sets out his kingdom manifesto.

Read the whole passage. There are different ways of understanding the Beatitudes. Work with a partner/in a small group and discuss the Beatitudes in relation to the following headings, what is important to you? How does this relate to you? Why?

1. As a code of ethics
2. Showing the contrast between earthly and Kingdom values
3. Highlighting the difference between superficial faith and the real faith Jesus wants

What does 'blessed' mean in this context?

What would our society expect to see when someone is blessed and fortunate?

BUT Jesus doesn't promise this – what *does* he promise?

The Beatitudes show how Old Testament expectations will be fulfilled in God's new kingdom. Today is a day of Remembrance so we will focus on two that relate to peace.

Look up Isaiah 57: 18 - 19, also Isaiah 60: 17. What Beatitude do these texts relate to?

How can we develop this attitude? Compare Romans 12.17-21 and Matt 5.43-48.

Look up Psalm 41.1, Micah 6.8, What Beatitude do these texts relate to?

How did Jesus and the Apostles demonstrate this attitude?

How can we develop this attitude? See Ephesians 5.1-2, Luke 10.36-37.

Discussion Point: 'In power politics you gain your ends of power with any means at your disposal. But the uniqueness of Gandhi was in this: he was more concerned with means than ends' (Jones, 1948)

1. In our society, are people more concerned with the ends rather than the means?
2. As Christians, should we be following Gandhi's example? Can you give examples of how we can do this in our own lives?