

## Handout 1: The Beatitudes Lesson 2

The Beatitudes in Context: In St. Matthew's Gospel the Apostle builds his account of the mission of the Messiah through five "books," centered on Jesus' five major discourses. The Beatitudes are part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the first of the five major homilies by the Master that appears in St. Matthew's Gospel:

1. The Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 5:1-7:29
2. The Missionary Discourse	Matthew 10:5-11:1
3. Parables Discourse	Matthew 13:1-53
4. Homily to the Church	Matthew 18:1-19:1
5. Eschatological* Discourse	Matthew 24:1-26:1

\*The Last Judgment at the end of time

In St. Matthew's Gospel the Sermon on the Mount is revealed in three chapters (chapters 5-7). The sermon can be divided into ten major sections:

1. The Beatitudes	Matthew 5:3-12
2. The Salt and Light teaching	Matthew 5:13-16
3. Definition of true righteousness	Matthew 5:17-48
4. Practice of righteousness	Matthew 6:1-18
5. Seeking the kingdom of heaven	Matthew 6:19-34
6. Warnings of judging others	Matthew 7:1-6
7. Invitation to prayer	Matthew 7:7-12
8. The narrow gate	Matthew 7:13-14
9. Warning against false prophets	Matthew 7:15-20
10. The importance of good works	Matthew 7:21-29
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St. Luke's Gospel also records a Beatitude teaching in Luke 6:12-23. There are three major theories that Bible scholars have developed to account for the differences between the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's Gospel and the Sermon on the Plain in St. Luke's Gospel:

1. Both Gospels give accounts of the same discourse.
2. The Gospels reflect two different homilies spoken at different times during Jesus' teaching ministry.
3. The Gospels present two homilies delivered in close succession: one on the summit of the mountain to the disciples and then a second homily on the plain to the multitude.

### Questions for group discussion:

**Question:** In each discourse, on the mountain and on the plain, Jesus centers His teaching on the giving of "blessings." Look up the word "happiness" in the dictionary. What is the general meaning of this word and how does it differ from the way in which the word "blessing" is used in the Old and New Testaments? For some examples of the use of the word "blessing" in Scripture see Genesis 1:22, 28; 2:3; 12:2-3; Numbers 6:24-26; Psalm 5:12, 29:11; Proverbs 10:6; Isaiah 65:16-19; Jeremiah 17:7-8; Daniel 2:19-20; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 7:7; 1 Peter 3:8-9.

**Question:** How does a blessing express the basic movement of Christian prayer in an encounter between man and God? See CCC # 2626-27.