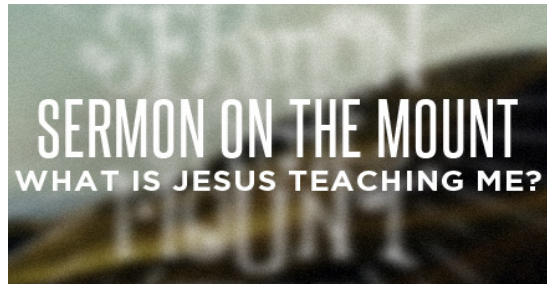


Lessons for Life



Week 1

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.



How to be Happy

Read Matthew 5:1-12

This is the first in a new series of studies based on the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5,6) entitled Lessons for Life. These chapters contain various sayings of Jesus that together form a coherent body of teaching, that are, considered to be, the blue-print for the Christian lifestyle. If we are to be true and authentic followers of Jesus we need to model our lives on what Jesus says here and allow it to shape, inform and define our identity. The requirements are challenging but not optional. We start with The Beatitudes or the 'happy attitudes'. These show us that true and lasting happiness is found in our connectedness to God and to others through Jesus Christ.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. What is your general reaction to The Beatitudes?
2. Which is the most meaningful Beatitude to you?
3. Which Beatitude do you struggle with most and why?
4. Is the word 'happy' a better word than the word 'blessed' to use of these verses? Is our level of 'happiness' something that should absorb the thoughts of a Christian?
5. What sort of characteristic do the three sets of people in verses 3-5 share? Why and how do they receive the things promised?
6. What does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness (v.6)? Do we hunger enough for these things? Read Psalm 42:1-5; Psalm 63:1-5; Jeremiah 29:12,13; God promises to satisfy our spiritual longings (read Luke 1:53; John 6:35; Psalm 103:1-5; Psalm 107:8,9). Do you feel satisfied in your walk with the Lord?
7. Why should the merciful be shown mercy, and by whom (v.7)? Read Micah 6:8 and Luke 6:36. What did Jesus mean in Matthew 9:12,13?
8. What is meant by 'pure in heart' (v. 8) and why should they see God? See Psalm 51:10-12; Psalm 139:23,24. Do you find honest self-appraisal easy or difficult? Do you think you are easy or hard on yourself? How does it affect your happiness?
9. What does it mean to be a 'peacemaker' (v.9)? Why is it important? See 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.
10. The Beatitudes have been described as a clear series of steps both into the Spirit-filled life (vs 3-6) and then the blessings that flow from the Spirit-filled life (vs 7-12). Discuss.
11. Would you describe yourself as a contented person? Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 and Philippians 4:11-13. What do you think you need to do to find a greater level of inner peace, joy and contentment?
12. Why should we consider ourselves fortunate to be persecuted (vs 10-12)? What should be our response, and why? Is this our natural reaction to persecution? Have you ever experienced persecution? In what ways are Christians persecuted today?
13. How will your discipleship develop as a result of this study?

*Deeper, deeper in the love of Jesus daily let me go;
Higher, higher in the school of wisdom, more of grace to know;
O deeper yet I pray, and higher every day,
And wiser, blessed Lord, in your most precious Word.*