

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

WEEK: JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 6, 2026

SERIES INFO

Upside Down Series

Most of us already know what the good life looks like in our culture... success, comfort, confidence, control. We don't have to be taught what to chase; we're already running. In the opening lines of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus disrupts all of it. He blesses weakness, grief, humility, mercy, purity, peacemaking, and faithfulness under pressure... qualities we usually avoid, ignore, or see as setbacks. This series slows us down long enough to notice the gap between what we chase and what Jesus calls blessed. Not to pressure people. Not to shame people. But to help people see clearly. Each week, we'll unpack one of Jesus' statements and let it confront our assumptions about the good life... one attitude at a time.

PERSONAL FUN FACTS

- If you had to choose one area of life where you feel totally confident and one where you feel completely clueless, what would they be?
 - What's something you once thought you were great at before reality humbled you?

TAKEAWAYS

What were the greatest "takeaways" you had from the message this week on being "poor in spirit?"

DISCUSSION

1. What are "The Beatitudes?"

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12; Matthew 11:30

When we read this text at a glance, we might read it in such a way thinking we have to become proficient in each one of these "attitudes" to make God happy with us; or attempt to be perfect in each of these so we can check them off as having mastered them in some way ... that this must be THE list ... if only we could get these right, we would be right with God. Some come easily to us while others we cannot rate as highly. We have been trained that these beatitudes form a list of characteristics we should possess to be able to measure up in being a Christian. But is that what this text is all about?

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DISCUSSION CONTINUED

- 1) How do these beatitudes square up with Jesus' words, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light? (Matthew 11:30)
- 2) The kingdom of God can be described as "God's rule and His reign". Explain how these values of "the kingdom" are counter-cultural to the world in which we live.
- 3) Why does Jesus set the bar so high in the Sermon on the Mount? Skeptics might say that we are being set up for failure. Others would indicate that Jesus just wanted to show how wretchedly sinful we really are so we would realize our need for a Savior. What is really happening here? Why the bar so high?

2. How are Those Who are Poor in Spirit Blessed?

Scripture: Matthew 5:3; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15

Have you ever noticed that the people closest to God in the Bible are the ones who are broken, needy, repentant, dependent ... including the ones who know they cannot save themselves? It's not the impressive, not those who have it all together, and especially not the "religious achiever" types who appear to have God's utmost attention. If you want to know where God hangs out, it is with those who are dependent upon Him.

- 1) What is the difference between being “poor” and being “poor in spirit?” When you read the words, “poor in spirit,” what image or posture comes to mind?
- 2) Why do you think Jesus begins His entire sermon (on the mount) with this statement? In other words, why is this “beatitude” first?

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3. The Kingdom of Heaven Received

Scripture: Mark 10:14-15; Colossians 1:13; Matthew 25:34

The entire sermon of Jesus is about how we are to be as kingdom people, living our lives in community with others as believers of Christ. The kingdom—God's active rule and reign—is not something that we achieve, but it is like a gift that is received. When we are “poor in spirit” we realize that we are needy and dependent upon God in every facet of our lives. We receive the gift of entrance into God's kingdom ... God's rule and His way of life. Jesus speaks of the kingdom being “inherited.” When we depend upon our Heavenly Father, we inherit the gift of His kingdom. As we take the 30,000 feet view of God's kingdom, it is something that we receive like a child, we enter it through humility and inherit it as a gift.

1) How does it make you feel to know that the kingdom of God isn't something you can do or perform to receive it? What would it feel like to stop trying to impress God?

2) Is it easier for you to earn things or to receive gifts? Why? How does this shape or form of your understanding of God's good gifts given to you?

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT

- Where are you still trying to pay for something Jesus already gave you?
- How would you finish this sentence: “God, I need you most in _____.”
- How might your neediness before God become freedom in your life?

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PRAYER

Empty Hands Prayer

Take the posture of your hands open to God.

Spend a few moments in silence.

Begin to pray:

- Lord, reveal to me where I am pretending that I'm doing well in my life.
- Speak to me where I do need You the most.

Heavenly Father,

We confess how easily we pretend that we are strong, capable, and self-sufficient. Teach us that freedom is available to us when we express our needing You. Strip away our pride, our illusions of control, and our self-reliance. Help us to be people with open hands and soft hearts. Thank you that your Kingdom isn't for the impressive, but for the dependent. Help us to live this week aware of our need and confident in Your presence and grace.

In Jesus' name, Amen.