

Session 1 Kingdom Come: Be-Attitudes Matthew 5:1-12

Jan. 4, 2026

Leader notes:

- The first three Gospels cover many of the same events in Jesus' life in the same way. For that reason, they are often called the "synoptic Gospels" meaning that they are "able to be seen together". It is generally assumed that Matthew and Luke used Mark as their prime source in compiling their writings.
- In Matthew, nearly 90% of the material in Mark is reproduced. These similarities, however, do not mean that the Gospels are merely a restatement of each other. Matthew adds many teaching sections. Matthew slants his material to a Jewish reader as he cites numerous Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled in Jesus' life and ministry. His purpose was to show that Jesus is the promised Son of David, the Messiah, come to establish the kingdom of God.

Open:

- When you want to get away from people, where do you go and what do you do?
- What saying or bumper sticker do you keep on your desk or car?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 5:1-12
- What is the connection between 4:23-25 and 5:1-2? How do the eight qualities that describe kingdom people relate to the promises that follow them? How do they relate to each other?
- How would you describe the opposite of each quality?
- Are the promises separate or really one? Why?
- Is Jesus describing who his followers are? Or prescribing what they must do? Why do you think?
- How does this "sermonette" explain the nature of the kingdom?

Reflect:

- How do these promised blessings compare with what most people in the world prize? Would kingdom people be admired in your society? Why or why not?
- Of these eight qualities, which two do you desire most in your life? Why?
- How can Jesus enable you to shine brighter?

Session 2 Kingdom Come: Salt and Light Matthew 5:13-16

Jan. 11, 2026

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Open:

- When you were a kid, how did people describe your character? What type of person were you know to be in high school?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 5:13-16
- Why do you think Jesus used salt and light as metaphors for his followers?
- What does it mean to be "salt of the earth" in practical terms?
- What does Jesus suggest is the purpose of good works in verse 16?
- How do verses 13-16 connect to the beatitudes in verses 3-12?

Reflect:

- In what areas of your life do you feel you are clearly being "salt" and "light" right now?
- Where do you struggle to live this out (work, school, neighborhood...)?
- How can we balance doing good works without seeking attention or praise?
- How can this group help each other live out being salt and light each week?

Session 3 Kingdom Come: Be Perfect? Matthew 5:43-48

Jan. 18, 2026

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Open:

- What trade, skill or hobby do you feel you've mastered fairly well?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 5:43-48
- What strikes you about this section?
- Notice "Love your neighbor" is in quotes in the text but "hate your enemy" is not.

It's a reminder the discussion is about tradition, not what Scripture says. What are some things we may be using in our Christian Walk that are not in Scripture.

- In this context, what does the type of love Jesus calls for involve?
- How do the themes in verses 21-48 illustrate what Jesus meant by verses 19-20?

How does verse 48 sum it up?

Reflect:

- We all have people who have hurt us in our life. How have you discovered personally to love your "enemies"? How do you pray for those who persecute you?
- As humans, we are attracted to those who look like us. How are you kind to others who have a different cultural background, skin color, religion, accent, etc.?
- How does the phrase, "be perfect", create struggle within you? What are ways you have found that help you overcome that struggle?

Session 4 Kingdom Come: Teach us to Pray Matthew 6:5-15

Jan. 25, 2026

Leader notes:

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Open:

- Were you taught any rote prayers as a child? What was one of the earliest ones you can recall?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 6:5-15
- What differences does Jesus point out between how the hypocrites pray and how his followers should pray?
- What does Jesus seem to be most concerned about when it comes to prayer (words, location, length, or the heart)? Why?
- Why do you think Jesus mentioned that God already knows what you need before you ask?
- What does each part of the Lord's prayer teach us about:
 - o Our relationship with God
 - o Our priorities
- Why do you think forgiveness is the only part of the prayer Jesus explains further in verses 14-15?

Reflect:

- How would you describe your prayer life (hurried, honest, consistent, growing)?
- Which line of the Lord's prayer do you find easiest to pray? Hardest to pray?
- What does forgiving others reveal about our understanding of God's forgiveness?

Session 5 Kingdom Come: Life in God's Presence Matthew 6:16-24

Feb. 1, 2026

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Open:

- When you hear the word 'treasure', what comes to mind first—something material, relational, or spiritual?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 6:16-24
- In verses 16-18, what contrasts does Jesus make about fasting?
- Why do you think Jesus emphasizes motivation rather than the outward act of fasting?
- What images does Jesus use to describe earthly treasure versus heavenly treasure (vv. 19–20)?
- What does it practically mean to "store up treasures in heaven"?
- How does Jesus connect the heart and treasure in verse 21?
- How do verses 19–23 help explain why serving both God and money is impossible?
- What do you think Jesus means by the "eye" being the lamp of the body (vv. 22–23)?

Reflect:

- What are some modern examples of "treasures on earth" that compete for our hearts?
- How can we tell where our treasure truly is—not just where we say it is?
- What does having a "healthy eye" look like in daily decisions, habits, or priorities?

Session 6 Kingdom Come: Seek First the Kingdom Matthew 6:25-34

Feb. 8, 2026

Leader notes:

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Open:

- When you hear the word worry, what everyday things come to mind most quickly?
- What's one thing people commonly worry about today that might not have existed in Jesus' time?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 6:25-34
- What reasons does Jesus give for telling His listeners not to worry?
- Why do you think Jesus connects worry with faith and trust in God?
- What does Jesus mean when He says, "Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?" (v. 25)
- How does Jesus contrast the way pagans (or Gentiles) worry versus the way His followers should live?
- What does it mean to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (v. 33)?

Reflect:

- What worries tend to consume your thoughts or energy right now?
- How does worry affect your relationship with God, others, or yourself?
- What would it look like practically to trust God with your needs this week?
- How can we distinguish between responsible planning and unhealthy worry?
- What is one worry you feel God may be asking you to surrender to Him?

Session 7 Kingdom Come: Judge Not Matthew 7:1-6

Feb. 15, 2026

Leader notes:

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Open:

- When you hear the phrase "Don't judge," what do you think people usually mean by it?
- Why do you think this is one of the most quoted (and misunderstood) teachings of Jesus?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 7:1-6
- What commands or warnings does Jesus give in these verses?
- How does Jesus describe the consequences of judging others?
- What kind of judging do you think Jesus is warning against here?
- How do verses 1–2 relate to verses 3–5?
- Why does Jesus use such an exaggerated image (a plank and a speck)?
- What does verse 6 add to the conversation about judgment and discernment?

Reflect:

- Are there situations where you've felt unfairly judged? How did that affect you?
- What makes self-examination difficult or uncomfortable?
- What does healthy, humble self-examination look like in practice?
- How can we address sin or concerns in others without becoming judgmental?
- How do we balance grace and truth in relationships?

Session 8 Kingdom Come: Ask, Seek, Knock Matthew 7:7-11

Feb. 22, 2026

Leader notes:

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Open:

- When you really want something, what's your natural response—wait, work harder, or ask for help?
- What makes it hard for people to ask God for what they need?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 7:7-11
- What three actions does Jesus repeat in this passage? What promises are connected to each action?
- What do you think Jesus means by "ask," "seek," and "knock"? How are they

similar or different?

- Why do you think Jesus emphasizes persistence in prayer here?
- How does Jesus describe God's character in verses 9–11?
- What does this passage teach us about the relationship between prayer and trust?

Reflect:

- Which of the three—asking, seeking, or knocking—do you find most challenging right now?
- Have you ever struggled with disappointment when God didn't answer a prayer the way you expected?
- How does seeing God as a good Father shape the way you pray?
- What might it look like to seek God's will, not just His gifts?

Session 9 Kingdom Come: Solid Building Ground Matthew 7:24-29

March 1, 2026

Leader notes:

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Open:

- Have you ever seen something collapse or fail because it wasn't built well? What happened?
- What qualities do people usually look for in a "strong foundation" in life?

Dig:

- Read Matthew 7:24-29
- What two kinds of builders does Jesus describe? What is the same for both builders, and what is different?
- What does Jesus say distinguishes the wise builder from the foolish one?
- What do the rain, floods, and winds represent in real life?
- Why do you think Jesus emphasizes hearing and doing His words?
- How does the crowd respond to Jesus' teaching, and why is that significant (vv. 28–29)?

Reflect:

- In what ways might someone hear Jesus' words but not actually put them into practice?
- How do you typically respond when life's "storms" hit?
- What is one teaching of Jesus you feel called to obey more intentionally?
- What practical habits help build a strong spiritual foundation?
- How can obedience flow from love rather than obligation?