

Leader Guide

Simple Gospel

Fall 2025 | Week 2

Message Date 9/21/2025

THE GOAL

Welcome to week two of our study “*The Simple Gospel*”. This week, we’re focusing on the last three Beatitudes: pure in heart, peacemakers, and the persecuted. These are challenging, but powerful truths that remind us that being these things comes only from our relationship with Jesus. Our goal this week is that your group will see how purity, peace, and even perseverance under persecution are gifts that flow out of knowing Him.

MY STORY

- 1) What’s the best meal you’ve ever made where you knew you got it just right?
- 2) Have you ever left “meat on the bone” in life or faith — missing something God had for you because you stopped short?

QUICK REVIEW

- 3) What caught your attention from Sunday’s message?

DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

Read 1 John 1:9 (CSB)

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- 4) Why is confession so key for purity of heart?

Confession helps us choose humility and keeps us honest in our relationship with God. Furthermore, it allows God to do the purifying. Purity isn’t my achievement — it’s His cleansing work. Again, confession is about relationship and keeping my side of the street clear so that he can purify my heart.

- 5) One of the things that Pastor Justin talked about was the things that we watch and listen to can contaminate our hearts. What are the types of things that this

would include? Are there things that you call guilty pleasures that land on this list? How does it impact your heart?

There's so much TV, social media, radio, news, podcasts, books, magazines, etc. This is one of the hardest things to avoid. Even thinking that I'm watching some TV show that won't have any inappropriate content in it, somehow, they sneak it in. I just have to guard my heart against these things.

Read John 14:27 (CSB)

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful."

6) Why does being a peacemaker start with first having peace in your own heart?

We can't carry peace unless we've received it from Jesus, the Prince of Peace. Peacemaking flows out of His peace in us.

7) Why do you think following Jesus inevitably leads to some kind of persecution?

Living like Jesus looks different than the world; it threatens systems of sin and self. The result is pushback, insults, and resistance. Remember that Jesus tells us that the world hates us because we look like Him. And Jesus addressed sin.

Read James 1:2 (CSB)

"Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials."

8) What does it mean to consider something? How can we "consider it joy" when we face various trials?

Joy isn't about feelings; it's about perspective. We can choose to see trials as opportunities for God's strength, deeper faith, and eternal reward.

9) Is there something that we, as Jesus followers, can do to prepare ourselves for persecution?

One of my real prayers is simply, "Lord when the day comes, please give me the courage to stand and hold to you and not deny you or reject you, but that I would cling to my faith and that you would give me strength." I honestly pray this on a regular basis. I have never experienced real persecution where I have lost a job or the ability to provide for my family because of my faith. I've lost friends. I've lost family relationships. I've never had them call me ugly names to my face. I've never been arrested or thrown in prison unjustly. I have never been physically assaulted because I hold the name of Jesus. That doesn't mean that these things aren't real. It's just not my current experience, but I do know that they are real and that one day they may come. And when they do, I want my heart to be ready.

10) Thinking about all eight of these Beatitudes, what is the single most important thing we can do to be them? What are the rhythms of your life that you have in place to do that? Is there something you need to start or stop to help you get there?

The single, most important thing of all these Beatitudes is a deep relationship with Jesus. All of these come from connection to Him. If I am not regularly connected to Him, I am trying to live these out on my own. I will inevitably fail. Even with Him, I'm going to

struggle. That's why it's daily; a daily refresh, a daily time with Him. I read the Word every day. I talk to Him every day all day in and out of conversations in between things. It is a relationship and an ongoing conversation. I bring all kinds of concerns; concerns for others and myself, to Him. Nothing is off-limits. I ask Him to fill me with these very Beatitudes so that I can live them out.

CHAIR TIME TOOLS

Reflection questions for Chair Time: think about the following questions and pray through them with Jesus.

- 1) How is my relationship with Jesus really doing right now? Am I chasing “doing” more than “being”?
- 2) What do I need to stop feeding into my heart through my eyes and ears in order to grow in purity?
- 3) Is there someone I need to intentionally move toward to build a bridge of peace this week, even if it costs me comfort?