

# Leader Guide Simple Gospel

Fall 2025 | Week 1

Message Date 9/14/2025

## THE GOAL

Welcome back to the Life Group quarter. Last week, Pastor Craig kicked off a brand-new series Simple Gospel; How Do We Live It. This week we continue in the Beatitudes, discovering that following Jesus starts with being before doing. Jesus invites us to bring Him a surrendered, repentant heart. As we mourn over sin and the brokenness of our world, we receive His comfort. As we walk in humility, we inherit the earth. As we hunger and thirst for justice, He satisfies us. And as we show mercy, we receive mercy. Our goal is to help your group see that the “Simple Gospel” is not a checklist of things to do, but a transformation of who we are in Christ. It begins with relationships with Christ and then flows into actions. It’s about our heart and our mind first.

## MY STORY

- 1) What’s the most unusual thing you’ve ever done with duct tape?
- 2) You can make one chore illegal forever—which one goes, and why?

## QUICK REVIEW

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

## DIGGING DEEPER / TAKING IT HOME

**Matthew 5:1–7 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup>One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him,

<sup>2</sup>and he began to teach them.

<sup>3</sup>“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup>God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup>God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup>God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup>God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

- 4) Jesus begins with “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Pastor Jen explained this as living with a surrendered, repentant heart. Why is repentance the foundation for the rest of the Beatitudes?

Repentance is about recognizing that I’m turning from my own way and I’m doing it God’s way. It is a surrender of my will to God’s will, turning away from my sin and towards His plan. Without this nothing else works. Without repentance and surrendering my will, I’m still trying to do these things my way, which means it’s forced repentance. True surrender is the beginning of relationship and with that a teachability to become more like my teacher, which is Jesus.

- 5) Verse 4 says: *“God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”* What does it mean to “mourn” in a godly way, and how have you experienced God’s comfort in times of sorrow or repentance?

One of the most important keys about this question is the phrase in a godly way. Too many of us confused guilt and shame with mourning. These are not the same thing. Godly mourning is sensible regret for my past life, my past sin. It’s not wallowing in self-pity or beating myself to death because I fell short. The comfort I receive when I honestly repent and mourn over my sin is God reminds me that He loves me, and He comforts me. 1 John 1:9 tells me that when I confess, He is faithful and just to forgive me and cleanse me of all my sin.

- 6) Verse 5 says: *“God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.”* Why does biblical humility (or meekness) require strength, not weakness? How does humility transform our relationships?

When people are proud, they tend to point the finger and blame others for their shortcomings and failures. Humility requires ownership. I failed. I messed up. It’s the simple recognition that I’m no different than anyone else around me. I’m not better than and I’m not worse than. Both being superior and being less than people around us are opposite sides of pride. Humility requires strength under control to see people the way they really are and to see them the way God sees them. Humility transforms relationships because I don’t have to be right all the time. I don’t need to push my agenda. I can allow people to make mistakes without judgment, without condemnation. It brings love and affection and friendships.

- 7) Verse 6 says: *“God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.”* How can we tell if we truly hunger for righteousness/justice? What practices help us grow in this desire?

Hunger and thirst are the things that God gives us to recognize and to protect us from death. Think about it for a moment, you can go three days without water or a little over 30 days without food, but if you didn’t have the mechanism of hunger or thirst, and you just didn’t pay attention to these things you might die of dehydration. Hunger and thirst are survival mechanisms. What God is saying is this is a survival mechanism for our spiritual condition. We need to hunger and thirst for Him and our relationship with Him. We do this through prayer and His word. Regular constant conversations with God throughout our day without it being formalized prayer is friendship and relationship. The attitudes that precede this are essential. These are all relational states of being with Christ.

- 8) How do you define mercy and how do we define Grace? What is the difference between the two?

Mercy in its simplest form is NOT getting what I deserve. Grace is getting what I don't deserve. For example, because of my sin what I deserve is punishment, but God and His mercy through Jesus offers another way. The second piece of that is Grace. He gives me eternal life. I don't deserve that. They are very well connected to one another, but they are not the same thing.

- 9) Verse 7 says: *"God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy."* Why is mercy central to Christian life? How does showing mercy reflect God's character?

Being merciful to people around us simply means that I'm not paying them back for the behaviors that they deserve. It is seeing them as people, broken and flawed. Seeing past the wicked behavior and offering them Jesus. This doesn't mean that there's no consequence for our sins even in this world. I think that's valid and real. Let me give an example. If someone were to drive drunk and harm my wife in an accident, I would want there to be consequences for the person that did this. And the consequences would be through the justice system. Mercy on my part is offering forgiveness to the person who did this. I'm not saying it's easy, but that's what mercy is. Mercy is the high road in loving people. It's not celebrating their demise; it's grieving over it. Mercy is not giving people what they deserve. Mercy is active compassion and forgiveness.

- 10) How are these "Be attitudes" states of being instead of things to do, and what is the difference?

The state of being is about my heart and my mind. It's about being in the right relationship with Christ. It's a place of existence not just things I have to do. It's not just a box to check. It's about relationship. These things flow from relationship. They come from the transformed life of a person at the side of Jesus. The difference between doing something and being something is about it becoming part of our identity. When our identity is that we are His and His alone, these statements become true about us. They're not things that we have to force in our lives. The do's and don'ts are about behaviors and actions. The Beatitudes are about our heart attitude or thinking, and how we approach life. They should be the lens and the filter in which we view the world because it's about relationship with Christ. It's a state of being.

## CHAIR TIME TOOLS

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

- 1) What in your life do you need to bring to Jesus right now with a surrendered and repentant heart?
- 2) How have you experienced comfort from God recently? Ask Him to remind you of His presence in your mourning.
- 3) Who is one person you can show mercy to this week in a tangible way? Pray for the strength to reflect Christ's compassion.