



Dear Lenape Valley,

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ!

I love the mission heart of our faith community. Your generosity during this COVID season has amazed me, both your support of our ongoing ministry and your extra giving to support the Deacon's Fund.

With your support, we have given:

Dry goods and Giant gift cards to the Barclay food drive

Fresh fruit and vegetables to Manna on Main

Uber gift cards to the Women's Recovery Center

Regular support to our ongoing missions nationally and internationally

Giant gift cards to families in need

\$1000s to the New Britain food larder

100s of homemade meals to Caring for Friends

Lunches for front line workers

This COVID season seems unrelenting, so we know that the needs will continue into the fall and winter. Thus, we are determined to continue our mission tradition of the *Church Has Left the Building* this fall. Our theme is: *Dare To BE*, with a study focus on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5). Each week- in worship, in the Daily Devotional and in our **BE** Bible study- we will hear God's call to *Dare to BE* the mission of Jesus Christ to the world God so loves. Individually and together we will live into that mission week after week.

The Mission team is finding creative new ways to accomplish some of our favorite missions:

College Care Packages

PJ's for kids

Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

Community Recognition Baskets

Help a Family- Women's Recovery Center Brunch

Caring for Friends

Dry Goods for local food larders

Manna on Main



We are hopeful that you will add to the list by helping a neighbor with a simple task, or writing a 'thinking of you' card, or ... Be creative in how God might use you to bring a grace-full touch into someone's life. **BE** the people God. **BE** light. **BE** salt. **BE** grace in action in the name of Jesus!

With you on the mission field! *Anita*



## Project Details

### Active Projects:

#### HELP A NEIGHBOR (Youth) – CHALFONT

Leader: Rick Bredow

Date and Time: Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup> – 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Yard work

#### Worthwhile Wear (The Well) - Pipersville

Leader: Scott Weidemoyer

Date: Saturday, October 17

Time: 10:00 am (following send-off, carpool to site) – 4:00 pm

Driveway and grounds work.

#### Youth Project – College Care Packages

Leader: Rick Bredow

Date and Time: Sunday, October 18<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Our goal is to reach out to the post high school young men and women, college or military. Acceptable donations include, individually packaged snacks, fresh baked goods, games, trinkets, etc. to brighten their day while they are either home studying or away from home. We want these young adults to know that we love them no matter where they are in life as well as how important they are to God. Last year we sent each of our students two care packages. One for them and one to share with someone else as an additional outreach. The response was amazing and everyone loved the packages. **Deadline for donations – Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>.**

#### A WOMAN'S PLACE - Doylestown

Leader: Laura Cooney

Time and Place: Saturday, October 24 from 1:00 – 4:00 pm

**(rain date) Sunday, October 25 – 11:00 – 2:00**

Participation: 4 – 6 adults or youth

Gardening at the shelter, Doylestown.

#### CARING FOR FRIENDS MEAL PREPARATION

Leaders: Cathie Miller, Faith Frank, Darlaine Manning

Time and Place: 10:00 am – Church Kitchen & Fellowship Hall

Participation: all adults who like to cook including men; children 14 or older with an adult

Prepare food at home, bring it to church and stay for the packing project on October 25 or – pack at home and take to the CFF freezer at Church either before or on that day. [Suggested recipes can be provided](#)

#### COMMUNITY/VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION BASKETS

Leaders Sharon Schiavone and Beth Woodring;

Delivery - Bill Luckenbill

Time and Place: 10:00 am - Fellowship Hall

Participation: All ages

Donate and/or decorate and fill gift baskets for Chalfont Firemen, Chalfont Police, CB Regional Police and the Chalfont Habitat ReStore. Especially appreciated are **fresh home baked goods** in addition to the items on the list below.

Suggested **bagged** items needed to fill the baskets:

Pretzels	Popcorn	Mints / Gum
Cereal Bars	Granola Bars	Candy
Crackers	Chips	Nuts

Suggested **baked/fresh items** - *must be dropped off day of filling baskets (October 25<sup>th</sup>):*

Cookies	Muffins	Pears / Apples
Breads	Brownies	Oranges

#### CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR NURSING HOMES:

(Wrapping Presence)

Leader: Karen Kuder

Our hope is to reach out to the residents in nursing homes in our area this Christmas. We are asking that you write messages in Christmas Cards and leave them unsealed. Suggested salutations are "Wrapping Presence Buddy, "Dear Friend," or "A friend who cares about you." There will be a collection basket in the lobby.

## **Item Donation projects:** **PET PANTRY COLLECTION**

Leader: Maddie Bolger

A few years ago Maddie Boger's Girl Scout Troop collected pet supplies to create a pet pantry at Manna on Main. During these hard times, many people are relying on food pantries to feed themselves, their families, and their pets. So, let's restock the Pet Pantry! Drop off your donations of dog food\*, cat food\*, pet toys and accessories at church any time between now and October 25th. All donations will be transported to Manna on Main later that week. For more information or questions, email Maddie Bolger at [neongirl432@gmail.com](mailto:neongirl432@gmail.com) \*especially needed

## **PJ'S FOR KIDS**

Leader: Patricia Smith

Donate anything for foster children's bedtime needs, such as pajamas, slippers, books, socks, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. All donations **MUST** have sales tags attached.

## **SAMARITAN'S PURSE SHOEBOXES**

Leader: Sue Harris

Time and Place: Pack at Home

Participants: All ages

This year, shoeboxes will be filled at home and returned to the church for delivery to a drop off site.

**Plastic shoeboxes are available in the church lobby. A few craft projects are available to complete at home and add to your box. You may also "adopt" a shoebox by paying for the shipping and a box will be filled for you.**

**Donation requests:** Follow the suggestions in the *How to Pack a Shoebox* pamphlet that was in the *Dare to Be* packet. Extra pamphlets are available with the shoeboxes in the lobby.

Shipping fee \$9.00 per box. The fee can be included in your shoebox or pay online where you will be able to track your shoebox.

**Last day to drop off is Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup>!**

## **CBSD FARMER'S MARKET at Barclay Elementary**

Dry goods donations for families in the Central Bucks School District.

## **SIMPLE MISSIONS: Things you can do at home**

- 1) Send a card – *Brighten the day of someone*
- 2) Caring for Friends cards – to accompany meals  
(drop off to church by October 25<sup>th</sup>)
- 3) Help a Neighbor – *Look around your neighborhood and find a way to help someone.*
- 4) Support a local business – Buy gift card, get takeout

## **Monetary Donation Projects**

**HELP A FAMILY** (supports the YMCA families and Woman's Recovery Community Center)

[https://ppay.co/w\\_XroCnOzMk](https://ppay.co/w_XroCnOzMk)

**THE NBB FOOD LARDER** (cash donations support buying meat and produce for needy families)

[https://ppay.co/AzVzvHf\\_zZk](https://ppay.co/AzVzvHf_zZk)

**MANNA ON THE STREET** (feeds those in need in the Lansdale area)

<https://ppay.co/IEGkU8Kstgg>

**SAMARITAN'S PURSE SHOEBOX MAILING –**

\$9.00 per box

<https://ppay.co/Pr9JHkxy3oU>

If you wish to donate to any of these ministries, please make a check out to Lenape Valley Church and write the ministry's name in the memo section or donate through online giving.

# PROJECT SHOPPING/ SUPPLY LIST



Donations may be dropped off to the Collection Boxes in the lobby through the morning of the 25th.

## Community/Volunteer Recognition Baskets

Suggested **bagged** items needed to fill the baskets:

Pretzels	Popcorn	Mints / Gum
Cereal Bars	Granola Bars	Candy
Crackers	Chips	Nuts

**Epecially needed** - **baked/fresh items** - **must be dropped off day of filling baskets (October 25<sup>th</sup>):**

Cookies	Muffins	Pears / Apples
Breads	Brownies	Oranges

## CARING FOR FRIENDS MEAL DONATIONS –

(Bring in **October 25<sup>th</sup>**)

Large Main Course	Vegetable
Side Dish	Dessert

## PJ'S for KIDS COLLECTION

Anything for children's bedtime needs, such as pajamas, slippers, books, socks, toothpaste, and tooth brushes. All items **MUST** still have sales tags on them. These items will be given to foster children.

## PET PANTRY COLLECTION

Dog food, cat food, pet toys and pet friendly accessories

## COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES

Home-made cookies and brownies, Hot chocolate packages, Granola bars, individually wrapped snacks, individually wrapped candy, Microwave popcorn, Fun little toys, Highlighters, Fun pens

## SAMARITAN'S PURSE SHOEBOXES

**(NO candy, seeds, fruit snacks, chocolate, weapons, liquids, vitamins, medication or toothpaste)**

Suggested items:

- **Toys:** dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, yo-yos, jump ropes, balls, toys that light up and make noise (with extra batteries)
- **School Supplies:** pens, pencils and sharpeners, crayons, markers, notebooks, paper, solar calculators, small scissors, glue sticks, small coloring and picture books
- **Non-Liquid Hygiene Items:** toothbrushes, bar soap, combs, washcloths, etc.
- **Accessories:** t-shirts, socks, hats, flip flops, mittens, gloves, sunglasses, hair clips, jewelry, watches, flashlights (with extra batteries), small sewing kits, small tools.

## THE FARMER'S MARKET AT BARCLAY

Non-perishable food, paper products, health and beauty items

**Cash Donations for Any of the Projects - Make your check payable to Lenape Valley Church with a Memo to "CHLTB and the Project Name". Either mail it, place it in the offering basket through Sunday, October 25, or drop off at the church office during the week. **Links for online giving will be provided next week.****



Church Has Left the Building 2020

Dare to BE!

Church Has Left the Building

*Daily Devotional*

September 13—October 25, 2020

## *Dare to BE*

The Sermon on the Mount is a compilation of many sermons taught during the first year of Jesus' ministry. These lessons were taught again and again at one gathering after another. The disciples sat at Jesus' feet allowing the lessons to become imbedded in their mind and heart, so that later Jesus' words could be scribed for the generations to come. Among the lessons: the call to be *light* and *salt*, the Lord's prayer, the admonition to *love the enemy* and to give beyond what we are comfortable giving. Each lesson is a challenge to live, except by the grace of Jesus Christ.

One of the most famous sermons in this symphony of lessons is called the Beatitudes. The litany reads: *Blessed are... for theirs is...* This fall we will explore the call and blessing found in the Beatitudes.

Blessed are... What does it mean to be "*blessed*"?

Blessed are... the *poor in spirit* and the *persecuted*

Blessed are... those who *mourn*

Blessed are... the *meek*

Blessed are... those who *hunger and*  
*thirst for righteousness*

Blessed are... the *merciful*

Blessed are... the *pure in heart* and the *peacemakers*

This fall ***Dare to BE*** the mission of Jesus Christ to the world God so loves. ***BE*** meek, peaceable, merciful, pure, and compassionate. ***BE*** hungry, poor, and even persecuted for the sake of God's world. ***BE*** God's instrument of grace!

I look forward to sharing the journey with you.

## **BE**

**BE- Attitudes: *Blessed are the pure and peacemakers!***

**Sunday, October 25**

I Corinthians 13

*Now we see in a mirror dimly,  
But then we will see face to face.  
Now I know in part; then I shall know fully  
even as I have been fully known.*

The Navy moved our family 13 times during my childhood. Imagine 11 schools, 13 neighborhoods, 13 houses that never quite felt like home, and 13 times to try to find a friend. My husband has friends from grade school that he still talks to, but my childhood is just a string of broken connections. When I finally settled down, I yearned to find people to share my life... people I could know... people who would know me. There is a gift to that kind of intimacy. But there is also a danger. What if they don't like what they find when they really get to know me?

In I Corinthians 13, Paul points us to the ultimate connection, with the God who already knows us fully and still loves us. We are invited to know... to see... to experience... to be loved deeply, truly, gracefully.

Imagine living in such a way that we point the next person to that precious friendship.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** In the morning, pray for God's work in and through LVC in the CHLTB projects. Before you go to bed, celebrate God's good work and the privilege of being a part of what God is doing in the world!!!! God is good- All the time!!! Especially Today!

**Friday, October 23**

Luke 6:27

*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you.*

How are you doing with this command? Loving an enemy never feels just or right. An enemy does not ‘deserve’ our love. Even more, an enemy is not safe to love. Loving is a very vulnerable act. When Jesus loved his enemies, they hung him on a cross. Perhaps a good way to begin to answer this command would be to “pray” for the enemy. Ask for God’s blessing, God’s healing, God’s grace. In time, God will show you how to be a blessing of grace.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who have lost a spouse, for comfort, for friends on the journey, for God’s presence to fill aching hearts.

**Saturday, October 24**

Hebrews 4:14-16

*We do not have a high priest- Jesus, the Son of God, who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Jesus took on our flesh... walked our paths... felt our pain... struggled with our realities... He knows! When we pray, he understands. Mercy and grace come in abundance. Bring your pain and struggle to Him today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for families expecting a baby, for strength and health and the desire to raise their child in the faith. Pray for those who grieve the loss of a child. Pray for LVC as we go out in mission!

**BE**

**BE- Attitudes: *Blessing***

**Sunday, September 13**

Matthew 5:1-12

*An Upside- Down World*

The last word of the Old Testament is *קלל*-*cursed*. How fitting that Jesus begins the litany in one of his first sermons with *Μακάριοι*- *blessed*. When we think of Jesus, we think of our dearest friend, our Savior, the One who brings blessing. But when we look at the blessings, we discover a view of the world that seems upside down. Those who are poor and hungry, mourning, and persecuted are the blessed ones. With each beatitude, we discover a new world perspective, a new relationship with the Father. The pain of this world becomes the opportunity to know the blessings of God. And with each blessing we are transformed into His likeness.

Read the full passage and find yourself in the description of those who are blessed.

Imagine times in your life when you have discovered God’s blessings in the challenges.

Spend a few minutes praying for those who need God’s blessings today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:**

Pray for Grandparents and their ministry with the little ones and not so little ones in their family.



## Monday, September 14

John 1:16

*From the fullness of his grace  
we have all received one blessing after another.*

Remember (perhaps sing) the simple song:

*Count your blessings, name them one by one.  
Count your many blessings- see what God has done.*

Take a moment to write down the blessings you have received. Make sure you include even the simple, moment by moment blessings- each breath you take, each beat of your heart, each thought and experience of beauty and love, food, and a roof over your head. Include the big blessings- relationships, healing, the chance to know the Savior.

Keep writing... How have you been blessed? Be intentional about noticing God's blessings this week.

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for *Manna on Main St.*, a soup kitchen in Lansdale. Pray for the volunteers and guests.

## Tuesday, September 15

Philippians 4:6-7

*Do not be anxious about anything,  
but in everything by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**,  
present your requests to God.  
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Usually we thank God after the gift has come. Today, thank God for what God will do. Live into that step of trust.

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for the ministry of *Help a Family*, for resources and wisdom to help our community.

## Wednesday, October 21

Psalms 25:7

*According to your steadfast love (hesed) remember me,  
for the sake of your goodness.*

People are very inconsistent. We love and then we get frustrated and irritable. We commit and then lose interest. We forgive and then bring up the failure again. But God is "steadfast". The Hebrew word is *hesed*. Do you remember the faithful love of Ruth for her mother-in-law Naomi even at great cost? Or the love offered to Israel again and again, even though they continued to stray? *Hesed* is consistent, sacrificial, present, effective. Imagine being loved in that way.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who are looking for a job today. Pray for the peace of Christ in an anxious time. Pray for God's hand to support them and guide them to the next step.

## Thursday, October 22

Romans 2:1

*You who pass judgement on others have no excuse,  
for at whatever point you judge, you are condemning your-  
self, because you who pass judgment do the same things.*

Enough said... Sometimes the Word is so clear, it needs no further comment. Find God's lesson for you today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for marriages that are struggling, that they would find God's healing path.



**Monday, October 19**

Micah 6:8.

*And what does the LORD require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
and to walk humbly with your God.*

The Hebrew word we translate as “mercy” is often translated as “kindness.” What does it mean to be kind? Contemplate these synonyms: considerate, generous, compassionate. Who do you know that is kind? What have you done lately that is kind? Who do you know needs kindness today?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our college students as they strive to learn in this current reality. Pray for teachers and students in our local schools.

**Tuesday, October 20**

Psalms 103:8

*The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

Slow to anger... does that describe you? Think about the moments that inspire you to anger... is it that person in your family who can get under your skin... or the person at work who treats you with disrespect... or the events on the news that never seem to resolve? Now think about God's patience and grace toward you... His mercy... His steadfast love. Breathe in that gift. Breathe out that gift on someone today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for *CB Grandfamilies*-for grandparents raising their grandchildren.

**Wednesday, September 16**

Philippians 4:19

*And my God will meet all your needs according to  
his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.*

What do you need today?

Consider the difference between your wants and your needs.

How has God provided for your needs in the past?

When has God also provided for your wants?

What do you do when God's perception of what you “need” is different than what you think you need?

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for new parents, for strength, for joy, for wisdom, for a yearning desire for their child to know Jesus, to love Him and to serve Him.

**Thursday, September 17**

Numbers 6:24

*The Lord bless you and keep you*

Think about the Lord “keeping” you.

Isaiah 49:16- God tells us: *Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands.*

John 10:29- Jesus told the disciples: *My Father, who has given you to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch you out of the Father's hand.*

Rest in His “keeping” today.

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for the *Food Larders* that feed the hungry. May God give our community a heart for those in need.

**Friday, September 18**

Numbers 6:25

*The Lord make his face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you*

The image of “face shine upon” is the sign of favor. Imagine a parent who is pleased with a child and shows that child how precious he/she is. You are the precious child of the King. Do you feel His favor?

Notice the word “gracious”... this is the reminder that God’s favor is not earned but rather given as a gift. You are the precious child of the King solely because God is loving.

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for the women and staff at the *Women’s Recovery Center*, for healing and hope.

**Saturday, September 19**

Numbers 6:25

*The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.*

Peace... for many of us peace is an illusive reality. We live with brokenness in our relationships, in a broken society, with a brokenness that disturbs our inner souls. How many times do we struggle to sleep, or avoid a conversation, or turn off the TV because we are disturbed by the brokenness around us? The peace in this benediction is God’s peace, a deep, lasting, healing peace. Take a moment to allow His peace to begin to seep into the hurting places of your life.

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for those facing health decisions, for wisdom and courage.

**BE**

**BE- Attitudes: *Blessed are the merciful!***

**Sunday, October 18**

Ephesians 4:31-32

*Mercy*

*Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and  
slander be put away from you, along with all malice.  
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,  
as God in Christ forgave you.*

Mercy is a lost art in our modern society. We have forgotten the definition of the word. But the One we follow is MERCY or we have no hope.

Take a moment to define mercy.

Paul reminds us in this letter to the Ephesians that we offer mercy because Jesus has already given us mercy. Then Jesus teaches us that the merciful receive mercy. Do you see the circle? We receive mercy... and offer mercy... and receive mercy again. From mercy to mercy to mercy... blessing all along the way.

What bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice do you need to put away from your life?

Who needs your mercy today?

**Prayer Concern of the Day:** Pray for those in prison, for the guilty and the wrongly accused. Pray for their chaplains as they bring the transforming news of Jesus Christ into the prison. Pray for the families of prisoners, and for those being released back into society- a healthy path back home.

**Friday, October 16**

Deuteronomy 8:3

*We do not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*

Think of a baby... sucking his thumb... cuddled up to her blanket. From our early days, we look for things to comfort and satisfy. Many of us are “stress eaters”... some are stress drinkers. This passage from Deuteronomy reminds us that our fulfillment comes from God... His Word... His grace... His love. Take time today to remember some of those favorite passages that have touched your life over the years. How has God filled you, healed you, given you hope through His living Word?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those facing financial crisis- for hope and expectation that God will lead them through the storm.

**Saturday, October 17**

John 6:33

*I am the Bread of Life; he who comes to me will not hunger,  
and he who believes in me will never thirst.*

When Jesus makes this statement, he is claiming to be the great I AM- the very presence of God. He is not just our best friend... not just a good teacher... not just a good example... He is GOD! As God, he can fulfill this promise to be our “all in all.” But often we fill up on the things of this world and leave no room in our lives for His presence. Go hungry today... Go thirsty today... leave the world behind and let the Bread of Life be bread for you.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those struggling with addiction, for God’s healing grace... pray for their families caught also in the cycle of addiction.

**BE**

**BE- Attitudes: *Blessed are the Poor & Persecuted***

**Sunday, September 20**

Revelation 3:14-22

*Eyes to See*

*Blessed are the poor in spirit... blessed are the persecuted,  
for they will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.  
(Matthew 5:3,10)*

Jesus begins the beatitudes with blessings that seem like oxymorons.

How can being poor and persecuted be a blessing?

What does Jesus mean that the poor and persecuted will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?

These images invite a deep dive into the teachings of Jesus. These images invite us into a deep dive into a relationship with the One who became poor and persecuted for our sake.

Take a moment and think about what Jesus gave up to take on human flesh for us. Remember what he suffered to offer us life. Think of the people that he befriended on this earth- the poor, the sick, the forgotten and cast off.

How does sharing in the poverty and persecution open the door to the Kingdom of Heaven?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for *Samaritan’s Purse*- a Christian organization that does building repair for people in need. LVC’s adult mission team has served with them several times. Pray for the families in need and volunteers.

## Monday, September 21

Psalm 51:17

*The sacrifice God desires is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Why does God “desire” a broken spirit?

The Psalmist helps us to understand the meaning of “broken” when he connects that description with “contrite”. Contrite means to be penitent, aware, and willing to confess failure and sin. To be contrite is to recognize need. Being contrite opens our hearts to the presence of God.

Take time today to confess... to bring to God those areas of failure and sin... to allow God to bring healing and grace. As you experience grace, open your heart to offering grace, and thus to experience the kingdom of heaven.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the safety of the *First Responders* in our community, and for their families. Thank God for their sacrifice.

## Tuesday, September 22

James 4:6

*He gives more grace. Therefore it says,  
“God opposed the proud and gives grace to the humble.”*

Grace is God’s gift... offered to all... but only some welcome the gift. The poor in spirit recognize their need for God’s grace. What keeps you from receiving God’s full grace? What keeps you from experiencing the kingdom?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for people suffering from disasters. How can you put your prayer into action?

## Wednesday, October 14

Isaiah 55:6

*Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
call on him while he is near.*

Sometimes our journey of faith can feel like a cruel game of hide and seek. We pray, but it feels like our prayers bounce off the ceiling. We worship, but are distracted by thoughts of things left to be done. We hear the call to forgive, to change, to love, but we struggle repeatedly in our effort to answer the call. But here, Isaiah reminds us not to stop in seeking the Lord... continue to pray... to worship... to call on the Lord with heart and mind. God is not hiding. God wants to be found... to be heard. Call again...

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who live in the midst of poverty and violence... God’s safe refuge.

## Thursday, October 15

Revelation 21:6

*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.  
To the thirsty I will give water without cost  
from the spring of the water of life.*

This promise comes from the One who was before the beginning, who spoke the world into being, who breathed life into our bodies. The Alpha and Omega created each of us out of love. There is no need that we could have that the Alpha and Omega cannot satisfy. There is no need that we will ever have that the Alpha and Omega does not want to satisfy. Go to the well today and drink.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those struggling with the realities of aging. Pray for families making hard decisions.

## Monday, October 12

Nehemiah 9:15

*In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven  
and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock...  
but they failed to remember  
the miracles you performed among them.*

The passage comes from the story of the people of Israel wandering in the desert. God has saved them from slavery in Egypt. God provides all they need in the desert, but the people complain. They miss the “fruits of Egypt” forgetting that those fruits came with chains.

Think of a time when you have missed the gift from God because it is not what you wanted. Give thanks today for God’s provision.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for caregivers, that Jesus would lighten their burden.

## Tuesday, October 13

Isaiah 55:1-2

*Come all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters and you who have no money,  
come buy and eat:  
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.*

Take a moment to count the cost of God’s provision in your life. A roof over your head... food on the table... your life—each breath, each heartbeat, each thought and glimpse of beauty... Keep counting... the people in your life... the experiences... grace... strength... love... hope... faith... Spend the day counting!

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Elders and Deacons of LVC.

## Wednesday, September 23

Luke 18:13

*But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up  
his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying,  
‘God, be merciful to me a sinner.’*

We eat when we feel the pangs of hunger. We drink when our throat is parched. We sleep when our eyes are heavy with exhaustion. Jesus teaches the blessing of being poor in spirit—recognizing our poverty opens us up to God’s mercy.

Take a moment to beat your breast and cry out, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our military and their families. Pray for the Chaplains who are dedicated to helping them navigate the challenges of serving.

## Thursday, September 24

John 15:18

*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.*

When have you been “hated”? When have you faced disrespect? When have you felt unwelcome? When have you paid the price for what you believe is right?

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake.* Most of us have not felt the sting of a whip or the cold steel of a prison cell bed because of our faith. Would we hold fast to the faith if there was a cost? Would we raise our children in the faith if it was dangerous to claim the name of Jesus? How do we let the subtle judgment of our society quiet our witness?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Deacons as they care for God’s people. Pray for Jeff and Carol Stern in their ministry of visitation.

## Friday, September 25

Romans 5:1-5

*We rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us because God has poured out his love into our hearts.*

Look back in your life at a time of suffering. Allow time to give you perspective. Look for the blessings in that suffering - the perseverance, character, even hope. Look for God's hand in the midst, perhaps not in the way you wanted, but in the way that God willed. Look for his "love poured out into your heart" today.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for families that are dealing with brokenness. Pray for marriages stressed by the challenges of living through the pandemic.

## Saturday, September 26

Psalms 42:1

*As the deer pants for flowing streams, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

The Kingdom of Heaven, promised to those who are poor and persecuted, is the dwelling place of God. Jesus describes the poor and persecuted as those whose souls "thirst for the living God." That thirst is an openness to, in fact a yearning for, the presence of God.

For what do you "thirst"? What is your heart's desire? Where do you find fulfillment? Take a moment today to rest in the presence of God and allow Him to fill you.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for front line workers who sacrifice for the sake of others. Pray for their health and safety. Pray for their families and those whom they serve.

## BE

**BE- Attitudes:** *Blessed those who hunger and thirst...*

## Sunday, October 11

Jeremiah 17:7-8

*Satisfied!*

*Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,  
whose confidence is in the Lord.  
That person will be like a tree planted by the water  
that sends out its roots by the stream.  
It does not fear when heat comes;  
its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought  
and never fails to bear fruit.*

How many times have you heard someone say... or have said yourself- "I'm starving"? The truth is most of us do not know what starvation looks like. By the time our stomach grumbles, we have already reached for a snack, already planned our next meal.

For what do you hunger? Where is your thirst?

The beatitude for this week speaks to a deeper hunger- for righteousness. What does that mean? Righteousness means more than being right. It points us to the One who is all righteousness. What would it mean to hunger for the One who is all righteousness?

Take a moment today to look up Jeremiah 29:11-13. Focus on verse 13.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the children and families in the YMCA preschool program at LVC. Pray for their teachers and leadership, for a healthy, caring environment. Pray for the families who struggle economically in this COVID reality.

## Friday, October 9

Philippians 2:5-8

*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross!*

Read this passage over and over... let the words begin to seep into your mind and heart. What needs to change in your attitude so that you begin to be a reflection of Jesus?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those who volunteer in the ministry. Thank God for their sacrifice. Pray for their encouragement. How does God want to use you?

## Saturday, October 10

Ephesians 4:2

*As a prisoner for the Lord, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

Look at the last line of this verse- “bear with”. Our first read might interpret this verse to mean- put up with. But instead, this verse gives us the image of a pair of oxen ploughing the field, linked together by a wooden yoke. If they “bear” into the yoke together, the work is shouldered by both. If they “bear” unequally or in different directions, the burden will be hard, or the yoke will break injuring the oxen. How are you called to “bear with” someone today?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the Dunn family, the Hinkeldey family and Paulette Thomas as they serve in mission.

## BE

**BE- Attitudes: Blessed are those who mourn...**

## Sunday, September 27

John 11:17-36

### *Before Words*

Grief... All of us have tasted from this bitter pill. Grief changes you. It seeps into every crevice of your being and invades every thought. Grief can make you feel lonely even in a crowded room.

Think of a time when you were weighed down by grief. Take a moment to remember the person you lost, or the blessing in your life that turned to challenge. Imagine Jesus with you like he was with Martha and Mary when their brother died.

What were the lessons that you learned from that time of grief? Did you see God in the midst of your grief... through the gift of a friend, a moment of peace, strength when you thought you were finished...

How have you experienced comfort?

Think of someone who is in mourning today. How might you be an instrument of comfort in that person's life?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for people facing terminal illness, for peace, for relief from suffering, for God's presence in the midst, for their families and caregivers sharing the journey with them.



## Monday, September 28

Isaiah 61:1-3

*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor... to comfort all who mourn and provide for all those who grieve...*

The images in this passage come from the ancient practices of marking your face with ash and covering your head with a dark garment to show grief much like wearing a black armband or dark clothing. When the period of mourning is over, the markings are discarded. Isaiah shows the ministry of helping a grieving person to move from mourning to life.

How might God use you to bring that transformation?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for people struggling with suicidal thoughts, for families in the grief after a suicide. God's healing grace.

## Tuesday, September 29

Psalms 30:5,11

*Weeping may remain for a night,  
but rejoicing comes in the morning....  
You turned my wailing into dancing...*

Have you known that kind of healing- tears to joy? Sometimes we find ourselves in the middle of the two. Imagine a funeral luncheon filled with laughter and tears as stories are told. Each tear lets the hurt escape... each ripple of laughter brings a step toward healing. Where are you in this journey of weeping/rejoicing? How can you help another on that journey?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the staff of Lenape Valley Church.

## Wednesday, October 7

Numbers 12:3

*Moses was a meek man,  
more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.*

Take a moment today to read this story about a sister and brother who talked against their brother behind his back. Have you ever known that kind of betrayal? Gossip- those words spoken behind us, about us, are hurtful. Here, Miriam and Aaron are taking one more step in rallying others against Moses. Have you known that level of betrayal? Have you ever justified betraying another in this way? What can you learn from this story?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our missionaries as they serve in different cultures, that they may be able to introduce people to Jesus and help them grow in faith.

## Thursday, October 8 Psalm 37:11

*The meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.*

When you read the whole Psalm, you will see the contrast between the meek and the wicked. Look at v. 14-15 where the weapon of the wicked ultimately brings their own downfall. V.37 promises: "There is a future for the person of peace." Psalm 37 stands in direct contrast to the way we think this world works. Can we trust that God changes the rules in the final reckoning of eternity? Where do you see God changing the rules to bring blessing today for the meek?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the ministry of the *Gift of Life House* that supports transplant patients and families.

## Monday, October 5

Titus 3:1-2

*Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities,  
to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good,  
to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate,  
and to show true humility to all people.*

The people of Titus's day lived under the rule of Rome, oppressed, taxed without representation, with no voice in their governance. We complain about our government all the time, but we have no idea what it would be like to live in the reality of Titus' day. Is this passage the call to be a good citizen, a law-abiding citizen, a peaceable citizen? What do you do if you disagree with the "rulers"? Can we call for change in a way that is peaceable and humble?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for our nation's leaders, for Godly men and women to seek God's call for our nation.

## Tuesday, October 6

Colossians 3:12

*As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved,  
clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility,  
gentleness and patience.*

Look at the character traits to which we are called. What trait do you wear now? What trait is hard to put on? Notice that Paul does not give the option of just wearing one or two. All are necessary to be fully clothed. Missing compassion would be like going into the store without shoes. Missing gentleness would be like coming to church without pants on. Hopefully you are laughing at the thought! Take a moment to remember that you are "holy and dearly loved. As God's people, all the traits are possible.

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for *Cornerstone Christian Academy* and the *Common Place* in SW Philly.

## Wednesday, September 30

Ecclesiastes 3:1,4

*There is a time for every season under heaven...  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
a time to mourn, and a time to dance...*

What time are you in today? We can move from one season to the next and back again, over and over...

Where is God in this flow of seasons? Does God cause the seasons like he brings spring rains and summer draught? Or is it possible that God shares the seasons with us... weeping... laughing... always there?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those struggling to forgive. Ask for the grace to be able to forgive.

## Thursday, October 1

Revelation 21:4-5

*He will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain,  
for the old order of things have passed away.  
Behold, I am making everything new!*

Have you known someone who clings to grief... as if that pain is the last shed of connection with the person lost? Have you ever languished in the pain? Imagine the One who cried with Mary when her brother died... wiping your tears away. Imagine taking one step and then another into a new day... not forgetting, but finding new life after...

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for Sunday School, Genesis, and youth ministry teachers that they would joyfully, creatively and Biblically share the good news of Jesus Christ.

## Friday, October 2

Isaiah 25:8, 26:4

*Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, is the Rock eternal...  
The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces;  
he will swallow up death forever.*

Consider the promise- “he will swallow up death forever.”

What does that mean? Think of the words from Great is Thy Faithfulness- “strength for today, bright hope for tomorrow.” That bright hope comes from Jesus conquering death, so that we do not need to fear the grave. We are promised life that is fuller, richer, more alive in our days beyond than in our days here. How does that truth impact your grieving?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for those living alone, for God’s presence, for good friends, for peace in the quiet moments. How might you ease someone’s loneliness?

## Saturday, October 3

John 11:32-37

*When Mary reached the place where Jesus was,  
she fell at his feet. “Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.”*

We know that the Maker of heaven and earth is able to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” So what do we do when God does not do what we have hoped, and we are left with loss and grief? Why does God heal sometimes and other times allows the healing to happen in the life to come? What do we do with faith questions that cannot be answered fully with our limited understanding? Where do we find comfort when we do not understand?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for the ministry of *Bold Hope* (aka *Poverty Resolutions*) and for the healing of Haiti.

## BE

**BE- Attitudes: *Blessed are the meek...***

## Sunday, October 4

Isaiah 53:7

*Meek or Mild?*

*He was oppressed and afflicted,  
yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,  
and as a sheep before her shearer is silent,  
he did not open his mouth.*

What does it mean to be meek?

The prophet Isaiah describes Jesus as meek. In our social parlance, meek is seen as the opposite of powerful. Yet, the moment of Jesus’ greatest power came on the cross.

What does it mean for us to be meek?

What is this “earth” that the meek will inherit? From our perspective, it seems that the meek are crushed and the powerful inherit everything. What does Jesus mean?

Look at the description in Revelation 21 of the “new heaven, new earth” that Jesus is bringing. That “new earth” is God’s re-creation... so different from the earth that the powerful work so hard to win. Where are you catching a glimpse of that “new earth” where the meek are blessed and are a blessing?

**Prayer Concern for the Day:** Pray for Refugees looking for safe haven. Pray for the children... for the families... for the Christians who are homeless because of their faith.



Church Has Left the Building

*Bible Study Guide*

2020

## *The BE -attitudes*

### *Dare to BE!*

Greetings! This fall the faith community of Lenape Valley will be exploring God's challenge for us to *Dare to BE!* Imagine *BEing* the people God has created us to be... *BEing* the faith community that God has created us to be! Jesus' Sermon on the Mount offers us a game plan for living into that life! This fall we will explore the opening lessons found in that "sermon" often known as the *BEatitudes*. Each of the Beatitudes gives us a glimpse into God's call. Each lesson not only shows us God's blessing in our lives, but also calls us to *BE* God's blessing in the life of another.

Our *BE* study will open with an exploration of the meaning of "*blessed*" because each Beatitude offers God's blessing in response to our life reality. Then, one study at a time, we will unpack the Beatitude lessons that Jesus offers, considering the life reality and the blessing offered. The *Dare* aspect of our study will come when we consider how we are called to *BE* God's blessing in the lives of others. For example, imagine knowing God's comfort when we mourn and then finding ways to be an instrument of God's comfort when others mourn. Keep in mind that the Beatitudes are more than a catalogue of God-like attitudes that we should emulate. Instead, they are a description of how God blesses us in the midst of life so that we can be a blessing.

These studies can be explored individually or in a small group. Find the setting that best allows you to dig into God's Word to find God's call in your life. You will notice that there is more material in this study guide than you may be able to complete in one sitting. Feel free to pick and choose which of the Bible passages to explore, and which questions best help you to do that exploration. Let this study guide be just that- a guide. You may choose to stretch each session into more than one time, so that you can explore each beatitude more deeply. Shape your study process into the experience that best helps you to seek God's call. Most of all, carve out time for prayer! Prayer is where God moves and shapes our hearts and minds so that we will become a people after God's own heart.

Friends, God is calling us to *Dare to BE* the mission of Jesus Christ to the world God so loves. I am excited to share that journey with you this fall.

With you in the mission,

*Anita*

## Study 1: *BE- Blessed...* Matthew 5:1-12

### The Gathering

**Opening Question-** What are you hoping to get out of this study?

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

### The Study

#### Read Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes are part of what has come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is more likely a compilation of sermons that Jesus taught, placed in the opening pages of Matthew's gospel as the declaration of his ethical teachings. Many of these "sermons" are also found in Luke's gospel account, but there they are interspersed among other teachings, healings and events. Some have called the Sermon on the Mount the "Compendium of Christ's Doctrine", the "Magna Carta of the Kingdom", even the "Manifesto of the King."

In this study, we will concentrate on the opening sermon in this collection. Before we begin to unpack the riches of the Beatitudes, take a moment and listen to the simplicity of their wisdom.

*Which beatitude connects to your life right now?*

*Which beatitude have you experienced along the way?*

*Which beatitude do you find unsettling, troubling, undesirable?*

#### Read Matthew 5:1-2

Notice the details that Matthew includes in this opening description.

*"He went up on the mountain side..."*

Think back to the story of Moses- Exodus 19. God calls Moses to go up the mountain- Mt. Sinai- to meet with God. What did God give Moses on the mountain? Do you remember stone tablets... given twice (Exodus 32-33) because of the people's disobedience? This mountain encounter between Moses and God is the beginning of the foundation of Israel's relationship with God. Those 10 commandments are the central ethical teachings in the Old Testament. The people are called to live in a distinctly different way than all the other peoples of the earth, that they would "bless" the nations (Genesis 12, Isaiah 49). The Sermon on the Mount serves as the main ethical teachings of the New Testament. How interesting that the sermon begins with "blessings".

At the end of Moses' time leading the people of Israel he is once again on the mountain- this time Mt. Horeb. There Moses gathers the people together on the mountain to hear his final sermon that sends them into the Promised Land. Matthew knows that his Jewish audience will catch the connection between the ancient times on the mountain, receiving God's word, and this moment when Jesus is teaching. The moment echoes the prophet Isaiah 2:3, "Come let us go up the mountain of the Lord... He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his

*Have you ever encountered a mountain top experience when God spoke to your heart and mind?*

*“he sat down...”*

Sitting is the position that a rabbi would take when he was ready to teach. Often we see Jesus sitting to teach. In the synagogue do we see Jesus standing as he reads from the scrolls and explains their meaning. He also teaches as he heals and as he walks along the path... but most of the time he assumes the sitting posture so that his disciples know to listen well. Notice, when he sat down, his disciples came.

*What encourages you to stop and listen for the lessons of Jesus?*

*“He began to teach...”*

The literal translation of the Greek reads- “he opened his mouth...” a saying that indicated a solemn, significant utterance. The verb tense for “teach” is not a past tense, but an imperfect which means a repeated action. In other words, he taught again and again, lessons of great importance.

*What lesson of importance has Jesus uttered into your heart?*

Now, focus on the word “blessing.” The KJV translates the word “makarioi” as “happy” but the full context of the sayings suggests a deeper translation- “blessed.” A more thoughtful interpretation describes “blessed” as a godly joy.

*Take a moment to talk about the difference between “happy” and “blessed”.*

Happy often describes a state of being that is contingent on the circumstances. Blessed describes a promised gift that can come when the circumstances are most challenged. In Deuteronomy 28 Moses reminds the people of “blessings” and “curses”- both are the consequences of choices that the people would make. In the beatitudes, the curses are the reality of our lives due to the brokenness of the world, and the blessings are the gifts of God as grace in the midst. Notice the difference between a world governed by the law (OT) and a world transformed by grace (NT)- the old covenant versus the new covenant. Jesus is describing a world that is upside-down from our worldly perspective. The beatitudes teach us to see the world from a new perspective.

*Which beatitude seems the most upside-down to you?*

And finally, we all want to know- when will the blessings come? Are these blessings for later or for now? Notice the tense of the verb... *blessed are*... not “blessed will be”. The Hebrew synonym *ashre*- is literally translated “Oh, the blessedness of...” These beatitudes are not promises for later, leaving us to suffer now in the brokenness without grace for the journey. Instead, these are gifts of grace in the midst.

*Have you experienced grace in the midst...?*



*“The greatness of the Beatitudes is that they are not wistful glimpses of some future beauty; they are not even golden promises of some distant glory; they are triumphant shouts of bliss for a permanent joy that nothing in the world can ever take away.”*

William Barclay (Matthew)

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.

**Homework:** Contemplate- “Blessed are the poor in spirit and the persecuted for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.”

## Study 2: *BE- Blessed are the Poor and Persecuted*

*Blessed are the poor in spirit... blessed are the persecuted,  
for they will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.  
(Matthew 5:3,10)*

### The Gathering

**Opening Question-** Have you ever paid a personal price for being a Christian?

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

### The Study

#### Read Matthew 5:3-12

Take a moment and notice some of the points of comparison between beatitudes.

The Beatitudes are organized in two groups of 4 “blessing” statements,  
each consisting of thirty-six Greek words.

All the blessings in the first four begin with the letter “pi”.

The last beatitude in each group refers to righteousness.

The first four are often called the passive blessings. The last four are often called the active blessings.

Notice that all of the beatitudes are dealing with the brokenness in the world.

Notice that the blessing comes as a gift of grace to heal the brokenness.

#### Read Matthew 5:3

Consider what it means to be “*poor in spirit.*”

*Define the word “poor.”*

The Greek word for poor used here means- destitute with no means to provide for themselves, completely dependent on others to provide for their needs. A beggar. He could have used a less stark word that would mean the “working poor”, those who just got by day to day. Instead, he uses a word that meant utterly, abjectly impoverished.

*With that stark definition, what does it mean to be “poor in spirit”?*

Jesus is talking about those who recognize that they are incapable of providing spiritually for themselves; that they brought nothing with them that would gain them entrance into the kingdom.

**Consider these passages.**

Mark 10:14-15

Ephesians 2:8-10

II Corinthians 4:7

II Corinthians 12:9-10

Matthew 9:12-13

*What does this passage teach you about the meaning of “poor in spirit”?*

The old standard hymn *Rock of Ages* reads:

*“Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling.”*

*What does it look like for you to be “poor in spirit”?*

*“for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven...”*

*Where is Heaven?*

Is heaven where we go when we die? Is heaven the hope we have for when this life is over and our struggles have ceased?

The Bible teaches that “Heaven” is the domain of God. We begin to understand this blessing by recognizing that God is not separate in some other sphere of existence. When Jesus takes on human flesh, he is the Emmanuel- God with us. His presence dwells with us through the Spirit. Remember Jesus declared: “the kingdom of God is at hand.” (Matthew 3:2, 4:17) He was not pointing to some separate kingdom that we will one day experience, but rather Jesus was inaugurating the kingdom here and now, in our midst. Remember from Lesson #1 that Jesus taught “*blessed are...*” not “*blessed will be...*”. The blessing of the Kingdom can be known here and now for those who recognize their poverty of spirit and are open to God’s riches.

*Have you caught a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven?*

*Who do you know is poor in spirit and knows the riches of the kingdom?*

One last note: the Greek word “theirs” indicates that this blessing is exclusive, that only the “poor in spirit” will experience the kingdom of heaven. The rest of us who are so sure we can provide for ourselves will miss the blessing.

**Consider: Revelation 3:14-22**

## **Read Matthew 5:10-12**

*Have you ever been persecuted because of your faith?*

*Do you know anyone who has?*

Jesus knew that the people in his audience would experience persecution if they followed him. He knew that the path would be dangerous and painful for most of his followers. As American Christians we have been shielded from such dangers. At the most, we receive censure in the form of an uncomfortable moment, or a disapproving look. Most of us know how to avoid those unpleasant moments, so we are silent when we probably should speak.

*Have you ever been like the prophets- courageous enough to speak a bold word in the faith?*

*Have you taken a stand for justice... for mercy... for healing?*

*Who do you know that has been bold in the faith?*

### **Matthew 5:10**

*“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”*

*Why do you think the persecuted receive the same blessing as those who are poor in spirit?*

Consider how you might be a blessing... how you might bring the kingdom of heaven into the lives of others... through your willingness to live like the prophets of old.

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.

**Homework:** Contemplate- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”

### Study 3: *BE- Blessed are those who mourn...*

*Blessed are those who mourn... for they will be comforted.  
(Matthew 5:4)*

#### The Gathering

**Opening Question-** Share a joy from this week.

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

#### The Study

##### Read Matthew 5:4

*Share together your initial thoughts about what this beatitude means.*

Greek is a rich and diverse language; often there are several words in the Greek that we translate with one word in English. There are four words in Greek that we translate as “mourn”. The Greek word used in this Beatitude- *penthountes*”- is the strongest of the Greek words, meaning bitter sorrow, being broken-hearted.

*Share a time when you have experienced grief.*

*How were you comforted?*

Though Jesus does not specifically state that “God will comfort you”, that meaning is intimated in each of the Beatitudes. These blessings come from the hand of God.

*When you were comforted, could you see the hand of God at work?*

*Can you see God at work in your life as you reflect back?*

The Greek tense of the word “mourn” is in the present. This blessing is for those who are mourning now.

*Who do you know who is in the throes of grief?*

*Witnessing their grief, what have you seen?*

*What have you learned about grief?*

Notice that there is an absence of a specific object for the mourning... This openness leaves the opportunity for each to personalize this Beatitude to their lives.

Consider the possibilities:

Loss of a loved one... see the story of Martha and Mary when their brother Lazarus died  
- John chapter 11... see Jesus' emotional response- John 11:35

Grieving the brokenness of the world- see Jesus' example-  
Matthew 23:37-38, Matthew 9:35-38

Grieving our sin and our struggle to break the cycle of sin-  
Psalm 51, Isaiah 6:5

*Which of these sorrows have you experienced?*

*What other sorrows would you add to the list?*

*What other sorrows do you see in the Biblical story?*

What are the lessons that we learn through sorrow?

*Share the insights that you discover from these passages:*

II Corinthians 4:16-18

Romans 5:1-5

Ecclesiastes 7:2-4

*What other insights have you discovered from grief?*

What does God's "comfort" look like?

John 11- Jesus with Martha (v.21-27) and Jesus with Mary (v. 32-36)

*Why does Jesus have a different approach with the sisters?*

*What approach does Jesus have with you?*

*What approach have you used with others?*

Psalm 30:11-12

*Have you known that transformation? How? When?*

I Thessalonians 4:13-14

*What hope do we have?*

*How does our Christian hope bring comfort?*

**Revelation 21:1-5**

*Is this just the hope for later? Is God doing this healing work now?*

C.H. Spurgeon-

*“God’s children run home when the storm comes on. It is the heaven born instinct to seek shelter from all ills beneath the wings of Jehovah.”*

Robert Browning Hamilton-

*I walked a mile with Pleasure*

*She chatted all the way*

*But left me none the wise*

*For all she had to say*

*I walked a mile with Sorrow*

*And ne’er a word said she,*

*But, oh, the things I learned from her*

*When Sorrow walked with me*

How is God calling us? How does God want to use us as instruments of His comfort for those who mourn?

*Consider these passages... what call do you hear?*

*To whom is God calling you?*

II Corinthians 1:3-5

Isaiah 61:1-3

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.

**Homework:** Contemplate- *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*  
(Matthew 5:5)



## Study 4: *BE- Blessed are the meek*

*Blessed are the meek... for they shall inherit the earth.  
(Matthew 5:5)*

### The Gathering

**Opening Question-** Who do you think is the most powerful person in the world?  
(Do not answer- Jesus or God... name a person in the world.)

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

### The Study

#### Read Matthew 5:5

*Share together your initial thoughts about what this beatitude means.*

Take a step back and think about the way that this world views meekness.  
*Define the word.*

*Give examples of how this world views meekness.*

*Think about the positive definitions and the negative connotations that our culture gives to meekness.*

**Consider** some of these worldly definitions for meek:

Victim

Weak

Powerless

Oppressed

Doormat

Spineless, Subservient, Submissive, Ineffective

**Consider** some of the biblical definitions for meek:

Lowly

Make no claim for themselves

Not prideful

Willing to suffer for the sake of another

Strength under control

Gentleness that is strong- consider the term “gentleman” and “gentlewoman”

Consider meekness through the example of Jesus:

**Read: Matthew 11:29**

*What does it mean that Jesus is “humble” of heart?*

**Read: Isaiah 53:1-9**

*“Like a lamb led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.”*

*What is the significance of this image?*

*What does this teach us about Jesus the Christ?*

**Read: John 19:6-11... Matthew 27:11, 26:62-68**

*Why doesn't Jesus fight for himself?*

The disciples also do not fight for Jesus- they allow him to face the trial without anyone standing for him. Yet, the disciples' silence is different than Jesus' silence.

*Describe the difference.*

**Read: Philippians 2:5-8**

*Describe Jesus' meekness in this passage?*

*What is accomplished by his meekness?*

*What does it mean that our “attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus?”*

*What would be the cost of such meekness in our world?*

*What good could come from such meekness in our lives?*

**Consider** these passages to deepen your biblical understanding of meekness.

**Read Zephaniah 3:12-13**

Israel has always had a faithful remnant within her even when most of the people were disobedient to God. Look at how the prophet describes that faithful remnant in his day.

*Thoughts?*

**Read: Matthew 5:38-41**

In our culture, we might call this person a doormat.

*What are the dangers of being meek like this?*

*What is accomplished by being meek in this way?*

## **Read Psalm 37:8-17**

Take this passage one section at a time. Consider the meekness of each situation. Consider the risks... and the promise.

*When you look at how the world works, do you see this promise playing out in real life? If so, where?*

*If not, believing that God is true to God's promises, when will the promise come to fruition?*

## **Read Matthew 5:5**

*What is the promise offered to the meek?*

Think about how our world works. Does it look like the meek will inherit the earth? We usually see the powerful, the rich, the movers and shakers in society seeming to inherit the earth. It is those who push, stake their claim, struggle to get their piece... those who are aggressive to get what they want... those people seem to inherit the earth. In that world order, the rest of us get the leftovers, trying to make ends meet. In that world order, an innocent man is nailed to a cross.

*What does Jesus mean when he promises that the meek will inherit the earth?*

*Do the meek want to inherit the earth as it is right now?*

## **Read Revelation 21:1-5**

Consider the vision of "earth" in this Revelation given to John.

*What will this "new earth" be like?*

*How will the meek fit right into this "new earth"?*

Remember Jesus declared: "The Kingdom of God is at hand." He was declaring the inauguration of this "new heaven, new earth" in our midst, not just a reality that we will know when we die. This "new earth" is beginning here and now, and is here and now a place where the meek find their place in the world.

*Where do you see glimpses of the "new earth" in our midst?*

## **Review** in your mind the first three Beatitudes:

Blessed are the poor, the grief-stricken, and the powerless...  
for theirs is God's Kingdom, God's comfort and God's green earth.

*Do you see any of those promises coming into reality in your life, or the life of those around you?*

**Consider:** How your meekness might bless another today...

*How could someone catch a glimpse of God's "new earth" through your choice to be meek?*

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.

**Homework:** Contemplate- *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... for they will be satisfied. (Matthew 5:6)*

## **Study 5: *BE- Blessed are those who hunger and thirst***

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.  
(Matthew 5:6)*

### **The Gathering**

**Opening Question-** What would you order if you knew it was your “last meal”?

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

### **The Study**

#### **Read Matthew 5:6**

*Share together your initial thoughts about what this Beatitude means.*

Take a moment to explore what hunger and thirst are. Most of us in middle class America have never really experienced hunger or thirst to the depth that Jesus is talking about here. When we say, “I’m starving!” we usually mean we have missed a meal, or we are late getting to the table. Often, we satiate that hunger with a quick grab of chips, or if we are more disciplined, a snack of carrots and humus. Likewise, our experience of thirst seldom lasts more than a few minutes with us quickly finding a bottle of water or our favorite drink to meet the need.

Imagine now a hunger that reaches deep... that leaves you weak... yearning... perhaps even desperate. How many in the world know that kind of hunger? How many children in our city know that kind of insecurity every day? Relief workers in third world countries have discovered that children who experience long periods of deprivation literally lose their instinct to eat and must be forced to take nourishment when it is provided. Their bodies can lose the capacity to digest all but simple nutrition sources.

Jesus’ first audience was the working-class folks of first century Palestine. A worker would make 3 pence a week- barely enough to feed a family grain, seldom providing meat or vegetables. These people lived on the edge of starvation all the time. This was not a genteel hunger that would be easy to satisfy. These people were famished... they lived in the midst of famine... they knew a deep longing.

Imagine now a thirst that threatens your life. The body can go for weeks without food, but we can only survive a matter of days without water. Jesus’ first audience lived in a desert region where water was often hard to find. Think of the pictures you have seen of people in Africa walking hours to find and bring water to their homes. We turn on a faucet to access water that others struggle day after day to provide in their homes.

Soren Kierkegaard once wrote, “Man’s supreme perfection is to be in need of God.” Is it possible that living in a world where we seldom experience need, we have lost our yearning?

*What does it mean to be “in need of God”?*

Notice that Jesus does not declare: “Blessed are the righteous”... but rather, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.” This righteousness is desired, not already achieved. When Mother Teresa died, her journals surfaced. In those private pages, Mother Teresa poured out her yearning for a deeper and deeper relationship with the Father. She was never willing to accept where she was as the end point of the journey, but rather as just one step along the way. She always felt she had just begun.

*Where are you on your journey?*

The Greek verbs for hunger and thirst are in the accusative form giving us a sense of not just a deep hunger and thirst, but a yearning for the whole of the feast, not a part. Imagine someone avidly desiring that which is essential for life...not wanting just to survive, but rather yearning to thrive.

*How does this picture of hunger and thirst impact your read of this Beatitude?*

Consider these images in God’s Word: *What do these passages teach you?*

**Psalm 63:1**

**Psalm 42:1-2**

**Psalm 119:20, 40, 81, 131, 174**

**Matthew 4:4**

**Isaiah 55:1-2, 6**

**Revelation 22:17**

Notice that the yearning heart God desires is one that seeks a relationship with God. Hunger and thirst for righteousness is not the desire for right-ness, but rather the deep yearning for the One who is Righteous.

*How does knowing the One who is Righteous impact how we live?*

*How does knowing the One who is Righteous impact our relationship with others?*

**Read Exodus 20:1-11**

Follow this reading with **Exodus 20:12-17**. Notice the call to a right relationship with God that is followed by the call to a right relationship with others.

Look at how Jesus describes the summary of the whole Old Testament law:

**Read Matthew 22:36-40**

*How do these two commandments connect?*

*How does the first part of the 10-commandments connect to the second part?*

**Read Matthew 25:31-45**

*What connection do you see between a right relationship with One who is righteous and a right relationship with others?*

*How are you living into that dual relationship in your life?*

When considering the meaning of righteousness, we must consider Paul's writings on the subject. For Paul, righteousness was not a human activity but rather a God-given gift of grace.

**Read: Romans 9:30-33**

*Thoughts?*

When we add that grace perspective to Jesus's blessing in Matthew 5:6, we see an even fuller understanding of this Beatitude. Paul describes righteousness as heaven-sent, by divine grace, showing us the source of the gift. Jesus points us to an earth-centered righteousness that expresses God's gift of grace through mercy. Thus we see the foundation of social righteousness is found in a right relationship with the One who is all Righteousness.

*Thoughts?*

**Read Ephesians 3:14-21**

*"filled to the measure of all the fullness of God"*

*When have you experienced that satisfaction?*

*Who do you know has experienced that satisfaction?*

**Yearn for that satisfaction!**

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.

**Homework:** Contemplate- *Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.*  
(Matthew 5:7)



## Study 6: *BE- Blessed are the merciful*

*Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy.  
(Matthew 5:7)*

### The Gathering

**Opening Question-** Who would you describe as kind? Why?

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

### The Study

#### Read Matthew 5:7

*Share together your initial thoughts about what this Beatitude means.*

To unpack this Beatitude, we will start at the end and allow the end to bring us to the beginning.

*They will receive mercy...*

- **Define mercy.**

- The Hebrew word *rachmani* translated “mercy” means deep love, compassion, empathy. Think about the meaning of compassion- to have passion with. Empathy means to feel with.

- When have you known that kind of mercy?*

- The Hebrew word *chesedh* is also translated as “mercy”. It means to get inside a person’s skin, to feel with, to see through their eyes, to understand from their perspective.

- Share a time when you wished the other person could understand how you felt.*

- Imagine if you could have given that gift to another.*

- Mercy means sympathy- from the Greek *syn*-together and *paschein*-to suffer, experience. Thus sympathy means more than pity, more than feeling sorry for someone. Sympathy means to go through an experience together.

- When have you received the gift of someone who has come to share your journey through a difficult time?*

- The Latin for mercy is *miseriordes* which means *misery-hearted*.

- Mercy is often partnered with forgiveness.

- Consider these examples of God’s mercy. Imagine being the recipient of that mercy.

- **Isaiah 49:15-16**
- **Psalms 103:8-14**
- **Matthew 8:1-3**
- **Matthew 9:35-38**
- **Matthew 14:13-14**
- **John 8:1-11**

*How does God's mercy shape you and change you?*

Look again at Matthew 7:7. The word “they” is *autoi* in Greek. It bears an emphasis that suggests the corollary that those who do not show mercy will not receive mercy. This fearful corollary is expressed throughout the gospel of Matthew.

### **Consider:**

- **Matthew 6:12**      *Forgive us our debts **as we** forgive our debtors.*
- **Matthew 6:14-15**    *If you forgive... **If** you do not forgive...*
- **Matthew 7:1-2**      *Do not judge **or you too** will be judged.*
- **Matthew 18:21-35**
  - **v. 21**            *What is Peter hoping that Jesus will say?*
  - **v. 22**            *What is the meaning of what Jesus says here?*
  - **v. 23-27**        *How does the master display the character of the Father?*  
*What grace has the Father shown you?*  
*Does the Father's mercy shape your heart?*
  - **v. 28-34**        *Do we ever withhold forgiveness even though we are forgiven?*
  - **v. 34-35**        *What do you do with this part of the parable?*

- **Luke 10:30-37** *Who is the neighbor... the one who shows mercy...*

*When has someone been a neighbor to you?*

*When have you been a neighbor to someone else?*

*When have you paid a price for giving mercy?*

Augustine defined mercy simply as “coming to the aid of the needy.”

Calvin defined mercy as “taking on other people’s trouble.”

*How would you define mercy?*

- **Read James 2:14-17**

Jesus’ call to be merciful is not a condition of his grace, but it is a necessary consequence of receiving his grace. James wrote in his biblical letter that our reception of God’s grace and our expression of that grace with others is intricately linked.

*Where do you see the link in your life?*

*Where do you find God’s grace enabling you to be graceful?*

*Where do you see God’s mercy creating in you a merciful heart?*

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.

**Homework:** Contemplate- *Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called Children of God.  
(Matthew 5:8-9)*

## Study 7: **BE- Blessed are the peacemakers...**

*Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.  
Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called Children of God.  
(Matthew 5:8-9)*

### The Gathering

**Opening Question-** Who do you know is a peacemaker?

**Opening Prayer-** Share concerns and pray for one another.

### The Study

#### Read Matthew 5:8

Take these Beatitudes one at a time. Consider the blessing for those who are *pure in heart*.

*Share together your initial thoughts about what this Beatitude means.*

#### ***Blessed are the Pure in heart...***

In Jewish psychology the heart is the human center, the core of a person's being. To be pure in heart, would mean to be focused, undistracted, centered on God. The word *pure* in the Greek is *katharos* which means unmixed. The example would be a wine that has not been diluted by water or polluted by impurities that would impact the taste. Pure does not mean perfect, but rather it means focused.

Consider these passages:

- **Hebrews 12:1-3**      *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...*

*How do we 'fix our eyes on Jesus'?*

*How does that focus help us run the race that Hebrews is describing?*

- **Psalm 19:14**      *May the words of my mouth...*

*How might this prayer change what you say and think?*

- **Psalm 139:23-24**      *Search me... test me...*

*Invite God's examine...*

*Why is God's examine of our lives often different than ours?*

- **Psalm 86:11... 51:10** Create in me... teach me... give me...

Notice that a pure heart is God's work in our lives that we invite.  
Consider offering that invitation... *What might happen?*

**Read: I Corinthians 13:12**

This passage shows us the dim view we have of God because we are not focused, because there are distractions and brokenness that stand in the way of us seeing God. We are promised that in time we will see *face to face*. But Jesus shows us that we do not need to wait.

*What stands in the way of you seeing the One who loves you perfectly?*

**Read Matthew 5:9*****Blessed are the Peace-makers...***

*Share together your initial thoughts about what this Beatitude means.*

***Define peace.***

Often the word peace is defined in an individualistic way meaning inner tranquility or peace of mind. In the world, peace often means the cessation of hostilities, the absence of war.

The word *peace* in Hebrew is *shalom*. Shalom is neither merely individualistic nor merely the absence of conflict. Shalom is communal and active. Shalom means wholeness. It creates a picture of a circle that embraces a community. Shalom describes communal well-being in every direction, every relationship. This beatitude could be re-written as: Blessed are the circle-makers.

Imagine the warped circle that is our current world. Shalom would round out the world's warped sphere.

*Where do you see the warped edges of the world impacting the circle?*

Consider the effects of poverty, hunger, prejudice, inequality, violence, hatred...

Notice that this beatitude blesses peace-making, not just peace-loving, or peace-wanting, or peace-living... Jesus calls us to be peace-makers! Hear God's call to be peace-makers:

- **Proverbs 12:20**
- **I Peter 3:11**
- **Hebrews 12:14**

- **Jeremiah 6:14**

- **Romans 12:9-21**

Unpack this passage verse by verse to discover its riches. Allow this passage to challenge, inspire, move and shape you. Come to this passage willing to be changed!

*Where is God calling you to help heal the warped edges of the circle?*

*Who do you know is active in peace-making in this world?*

Peacemaking is a dangerous activity. Notice the beatitude that follows this one- “blessed are those who are persecuted...” Think of those who have worked for peace and paid the price for that faithfulness. One example is the Nobel Peace Prize winner- Malala Yousafzai. As a teen, she began to advocate internationally for the right of girls to receive an education. In her native country of Pakistan, that right is not universally accepted. Malala was attacked on her school bus by the Taliban and shot in the head. When she survived, she continued the work she had started with great courage.

*Who else do you know has paid a price for their peace-making work?*

*Have you ever paid the price in your home, your community for seeking peace?*

Luther wrote, “When evil manifests, we must speak up.”

Pope John XXIII wrote in *Pacem in Terris*-1963, “If you want peace, seek justice.”

Abraham Lincoln wrote in his Second Inaugural Address:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

*How will you commit yourself to peace-making?*

Notice, those who are peace-makers are children of God because they are partnering with God to heal the world God so loves.

## Review

The first group of Beatitudes are often referred to as the *Need* Beatitudes (poor, mourn, meek, hungry) and the second group (merciful, pure, peacemakers) are referred to as the *Help* Beatitudes. Together they form an interesting contrast. Think of ways that their contrast displays the richness of God's grace.

Need Beatitudes- God helps those who cannot help themselves.

Help Beatitudes- God helps those who try to help others.

Need Beatitudes- God helps the helpless.

Help Beatitudes- God helps the helpful.

Need Beatitudes- Engages us deeply with God.

Help Beatitudes- Engages us deeply with people.

Need Beatitudes- We are sated.

Help Beatitudes- We are salt.

Need Beatitudes- Passively receiving.

Help Beatitudes- Actively part of God's giving.

Need Beatitudes- We are picked up from the earth.

Help Beatitudes- We are thrown into the midst of what is happening on the earth.

*Thoughts?*

*How do these beatitudes work together to show us a whole picture of God's grace and our call as people of grace?*

Consider the possibility that we are called to all of these, not just to the ones for which we have an affinity.

*Which beatitude fits you easily?*

*Where is there room to grow?*

**Closing Prayer:** Share one prayer concern for the members of your small group to hold in prayer until you meet again.