



**Sermon Based Small Group
Leader Discussion Guide**

Sermon Title: "Don't Hide Your Joy"

**Sermon by Pastor Tom Harrington
Week of February 6, 2011**

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<p>Session Objectives (Group Leader)</p>	<p>By the end of the session, group members should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1 Understand that God promises us true joy. • Objective 2 Know that joy comes in unexpected ways. • Objective 3 Realize that true joy is contagious.
<p>Personal Connection (Group Leader)</p>	<p>How does my story connect to the reading? To prepare to lead this Bible study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion 1 Think of a time when you have felt God's joy in the midst of a trying situation. • Suggestion 2 Think about ways you try to be "salt and light" to those around you. • Pray for each member of your group by name.

<p>Icebreaker</p>	<p>Think of a time in your life when something happened that seemed negative at first, but then turned out to be a blessing to yourself or to someone else. (ie: a time when you went through a hard time, but then were later able to help someone else because of it.)</p> <p>After the discussion, share the story of Horatio Spafford, (1828-1888) who wrote the hymn, <u>It is Well With my Soul</u>, after the tragic loss of his four daughters. His wife and four daughters were on a ship headed for England. He was supposed to be going with them but had a last minute business meeting to attend. He was supposed to follow them later. Their ship collided with another ship and sank. His wife survived but all four of their daughters drowned. He wrote this beautiful hymn while on the way to England to be with his wife.</p> <p>When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul. <i>It is well, with my soul,</i> <i>It is well, with my soul,</i> <i>It is well, it is well, with my soul.</i></p> <p>Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, Let this blest assurance control, That Christ has regarded my helpless estate, And hath shed His own blood for my soul. <i>refrain</i></p> <p>My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought! My sin, not in part but the whole, Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul <i>refrain</i></p> <p>And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight, The clouds be rolled back as a scroll; The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend, Even so, it is well with my soul. <i>refrain</i></p>
<p>Big Idea</p>	<p>No matter your situation, you can experience God's abundant blessings in your Life.</p>

Book Ch: Matthew 5:1-16 New International Version

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

The Beatitudes

He said: ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and
be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the
prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made
salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled
underfoot. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵
Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand,
and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before
others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Sermon Text

Learning more about the lesson

In verse 1 it states, "he went up on a mountainside and sat down." This was the tradition of the time, for a teacher to sit while teaching.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is one of the best-known sections of the New Testament. Matthew, a Jew, shows that Jesus is the Messiah whose coming fulfills the Old Testament promise for the coming age of salvation – see for example how Jesus' giving this sermon fulfills Isaiah 2:2-4. In Jesus the Kingdom of Heaven is coming into the world. The conduct demanded in the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) reflects our relationship with the Father, the presence of God's rule in our hearts. Like fruit from a good tree this conduct is not optional but part-and-parcel of true discipleship because of what God has done for us through Jesus the Messiah. The conduct is the fruit of discipleship, not the basis for or the means to achieving discipleship. As disciples we live in this evil age but are called to live lives corresponding with the age of salvation in which evil has been defeated through the person and ministry of Jesus. The Kingdom of Heaven will come in all its fullness only upon the Second Coming of Christ. But the Kingdom is already here, and available to all – even to those the world would consider decidedly NOT blessed! "In the Beatitudes Jesus pronounces blessing on those who stand before God empty-handed and destitute, who seek from him a new relationship with God as well as with others, who come open to God's mercy and forgiveness with integrity, and who desire to experience and establish *shalom* (Matthew 5:3-9)." – Robert Guelich, The Sermon on the Mount, p. 29. *Shalom* is the Hebrew word often translated "peace." *Shalom* includes more than merely the absence of conflict; it means fullness of blessing.

This passage of scripture is referred to as the *Beatitudes*.

Definitions:

Beatitude---highest form of happiness; heavenly bliss Blessed--enjoying happiness (synonyms...joyful, delighted.) (antonyms...miserable, sad, cheerless)

There is a difference between "happiness" and "true joy." Happiness is a feeling that can come and go, depending on outside influences. True joy, however, is a continual state of being from within that is not dependent on other factors.

According to The Interpreter's Bible, the Beatitudes "reveal the secret of happiness." Verses 3 -12 tell us what the blessings are and what we need to do to receive them. As we read through each of them, notice how they seem to

**** leader notes
In bold**

totally contradict the world's view.

Verse 3 ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

1. Who are the poor in spirit? Why do you think the kingdom is theirs?

(The poor in spirit refers to those who know that they are unworthy of God's grace and have nothing apart from God. They are willing to acknowledge their desperate need for God.)

Verse 4 ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

2. Who are those that mourn? How will they be comforted?

(Those that mourn are those who realize that they are sinners. As Paul writes in Roman's 7:24, "What a wretched man I am!". Revelation 7:17 "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.")

Verse 5 ⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

The word meek according to Webster's dictionary means "lacking spirit or backbone, submissive." The Bible definition, however, is quite different. It means "mild of temper, not easily irritated, submissive to the divine will."

Verse 6 ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

3. When is the last time you were *really* hungry or thirsty? Why do you think Matthew used the words hunger and thirst here?

To hunger and thirst for righteousness, according to The Broadman Bible Commentary, means "to yearn for victory of right over wrong, in their own lives and in the world."

Verse 7-9 ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

4. How do Christians learn to show mercy? "Be merciful as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Do you think that our ability to show mercy is proportionate to our having experienced (God's) mercy?

"Mercy is a practice, not a mere feeling or sentiment." (Broadman Bible Commentary.)

5. Who are the "pure in heart" ?

In the Bible, the term heart stands for the whole person: mind, will and emotions.

6. What does it mean to "make peace"? What actions are involved?

Jesus is the Prince of Peace(Isaiah 9:6), therefore, peacemakers are the children of God.

Verses 10-12 ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

7. How are persecution and insults considered a blessing?

8. Have you ever been insulted or treated badly because of your Christian beliefs?

Verses 13-16 ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Salt is used as a preservative and to give flavor. When salt loses its flavor it cannot do what it was intended to do.

7. How can we as Christians be salt to the world? What happens if we "lose our saltiness"?

8. If the non-Christian world is living in darkness, in what ways can we as Christians help to light their path?

"Apart from Christ, we are unlighted lamps; but he lights his lamps that they may give light to all men." (Broadman Bible Commentary.)

True joy is contagious. Can you think of someone you know that exhibits true joy?

How do you feel when you are around them?

Taking it Home	<p>How will I live it? Apply it? The Beatitudes are a roadmap for us to receive God's blessings and to be able to bless those around us. Read through Matthew 5:1-16 each day for the next week as a reminder and focus on a specific verse each day. Keeping in mind that true joy is contagious, focus on sharing your joy with those you meet each day.</p>
Looking Ahead	<p>How can I prepare for the next Small Group meeting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite your group members to attend "Community," 9:00-10:00 Sundays in the fellowship hall. • Text and theme for next week. Matthew 5:17-26 "Coping with Conflict" • Text and theme for two weeks hence. Matthew 5:27-30 "An Alternative to Revenge"
Prayer Focus	<p>How can I connect with God and others through prayer? Leader Tip: Some people are comfortable praying out loud, while others prefer to pray silently. Either is okay. The point is to connect people to God and with each other in a loving, supportive environment. If the group is large you might want to break into smaller groups.</p> <p>A group Care Coordinator is responsible for recording prayer requests and praises and e-mailing them to the group during the week.</p> <p>During the study, allow the members to pray for each other as needs are voiced. After the study, encourage group members to share any prayer requests or praises.</p>
Updates	<p>Announcements from: Care Coordinator Outreach Coordinator, Social Coordinator</p>