



## Who Gets Blessed?

Matthew 5:1-12 | Session 18.5

### Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

### Context

Say: Faith leaders across the USA are speaking out against the actions of the Department of Homeland Security. The push-back is rooted in faith principles that value human life, oppose oppression, and celebrate diversity and freedom.

Share a few quotes from clergy members as listed in this article, "[Faith leaders call for end to ICE aggression in communities](#)".

OR

Share this [video of a PBS interview with Episcopal Bishop A. Rob Hershfeld](#), describing how he is responding to this moment in our society. Watch the first 10 minutes of the video (at least).

Then lead a conversation with questions like these:

- What do you hear motivating these faith leaders to speak out and act?
- What themes or Christian values do you hear in their words?
- How do you think Jesus would respond to the treatment of persons we are witnessing? Why?

Say: Today we are considering a significant passage in the New Testament; the beatitudes. Let's look at the text and hear Jesus' sermon again.

## Content

Read together [Matthew 5:1-12](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask:

- How are these categories of people different from what we'd usually consider as "blessed?"
- Why do you think Jesus decided to turn conventional wisdom on its head? What is particularly effective about the way Jesus chooses to express these truths?
- Take a moment to reflect on Jesus' original audience. What were their lives like, as subjects of the Roman Empire? How does Jesus' message speak directly into their experiences?
- How might those original hearers have received this message?
- While we'd certainly never ask to find ourselves poor, hungry or persecuted, what blessings can be found when we are in those positions? How do these situations remind us of our dependence upon God?

## Closure

Share this brief video of [clergy gathering and standing with immigrant communities in Minnesota](#). Then lead a discussion using prompts like these:

- How do you think the persons in this community in her congregation are feeling?
- What specific beatitudes come to mind that speak to how this community is feeling?
- The beatitudes speak to needs that persons have what does this community need from each other and God?
- How can each of us allow Jesus' sermon to guide our actions and shape our values? What needs do we see in our own community?

Close with a prayer.