

## Further Study – November 15, 2020

Read: Matthew 4:23-5:20

If you heard the sermon this week, was there any part of the message or scripture passage that was particularly important or meaningful to you? If so, what?

### Understanding Questions:

- Why did Jesus begin to draw such great crowds throughout Galilee and all Syria?
- What was Jesus' response when he saw the great crowds following him?
- Review each of the 9 beatitudes. Which of these is the most surprising to you?
- Name the two metaphors Jesus uses to describe his listeners in 5:13-16. Which of these resonates most for you and what are the implications of each for how we are to live?

### Application Questions:

- Like Sinai or the temple mount, mountains are often places of significant religious events in the bible. Are their places in your own life to which you attach special religious significance? Or a place where you have felt especially close to God in the past?
- If Jesus is teaching here *who* to bless, rather than *how* to bless, would that change anything in how you read this passage?
- What do you think it means to be salt and light in the world? Who is someone you love and respect that has demonstrated that way of life to you, and how did they do it?
- What do you think it means that Jesus ends this passage by declaring that he has not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it? (Hint: Recall where and how the Jewish people first received the law in Exodus 19-24. Are there similarities to draw between that event and this one?)

### Additional Notes:

The word *blessed* can also be translated as “happy” (which is how many people learned these Beatitudes). Jesus now declares people blessed in light of God’s coming rule. The Beatitudes create what they declare. Jesus makes the new world of God’s rule actual now in this broken world. Yet it also remains a promised future.

“Poor in spirit” means to lack spirit. Spirit has to do with life and life beyond self. Jesus includes the spiritually poor in the kingdom. His friendship with sinners interprets this beatitude – see: Matthew 8:5-13, 9:9-13, 21:32 and Romans 5:6-10.

Jesus states that he has come to fulfill, not abolish, Israel’s Scriptures. The scribes were interpreters of the law; the Pharisees applied the law to ordinary life. Yet this righteousness is not enough. Jesus asserts that God’s will goes beyond what literal law requires.

The law, or Torah, is God’s covenant with Israel at Sinai. Its basis is their election as God’s people. The Torah also includes God’s covenant with Noah, the nations, and all living things (see Gen 9:1-17).