

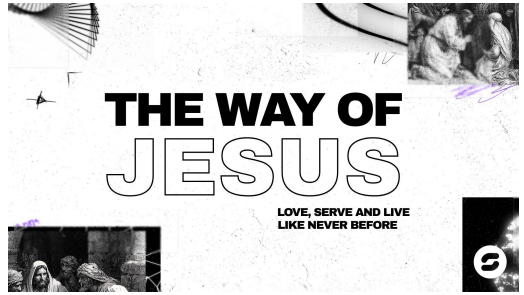
STUDY GUIDE

November 2

STAY IN THE LOOP

Announcements

- We would love to connect with you and help you with any questions you might have. Let us know if you need pastoral care, have a praise, or prayer request! Send a message to office@southgatechurch.com



START WITH PRAYER

Use this Prayer Prompt

Praise God for His upside-down kingdom - that He calls the poor, the grieving, and the humble *blessed* and meets us with His grace right where we are. Ask God to form His character within us - to make us merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers who reflect His nature in an often self-centered world. Ask for courage to live differently - to stand firm in faith when following Jesus feels costly or counter-cultural, trusting that His kingdom is worth it.

STUDY THE BIBLE

Think through and discuss your reactions as you read through Scripture:

Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 5:13-16

John 17:14-16

STIR UP DISCUSSION

How does this week's teaching affect me personally?

1. Where did you see the grace of God this week? Where did you need the grace of God this week?
2. Jesus begins by blessing those who are "poor in spirit." In what ways have you experienced God most clearly when you felt empty or weak?
3. The sermon highlights that Jesus' teachings aren't upside down - the world is. What examples can you think of where Jesus' way seems "upside down" compared to our culture? How can living this way reshape your relationships, goals, or sense of success?
4. Pastor Ben compared two cups - one shiny but empty, one plain but full. When life "bumps" against you, what usually spills out? What practices help you stay filled with the right kind of "substance" (grace, mercy, peace, etc.)?
5. At the end, we're reminded that the Beatitudes aren't a ladder to climb but a welcome to receive. Which Beatitude do you most want God to form in you right now? What would it look like to practice that truth in your daily routine this week?

STEP INTO ACTION

Let's try to apply this by taking some Next Steps.

1. **Receive the Kingdom with Open Hands.** Spend time this week in quiet prayer, admitting your need for God. Ask Him to fill the empty places in your heart - to meet your "poverty of spirit" with His grace. Try starting each morning with a simple prayer: "Lord, I bring You my emptiness - fill me with Your presence today."

2. **Reflect Daily on Grace.** At the end of each day, ask yourself two questions (as the sermon suggested):

- Where did I *see* the grace of God today?
- Where did I *need* the grace of God today?

Write your reflections in a journal or note on your phone

- watch how your awareness of God's presence grows.

3. **Represent the Kingdom in Action.** Choose one Beatitude to intentionally live out this week. Let your faith be visible - live the "right side up" kingdom so others can see Christ in you.

- Show mercy where it's hard.
- Be a peacemaker in a tense situation.
- Offer comfort to someone who's mourning.