

Week 1

April 13, 2008

Mt 5:1-3

Impoverished Citizenship

The Greatest Sermon Ever

Intro

In this sermon series we'll hear how to live together as the Kingdom of God.

Illustration – Those who went to Tijuana for Easter Project had a sense of the nearness of the Kingdom of God and they didn't want to leave because it meant returning home where there are many distractions.

Read**Mt 4:23 – 5:3**

John Sowers suggested that Jesus had gotten to know the needs of his audience and this beginning statement is an acknowledgement of their need and an expression of his love for them.

Identifying with The Story

Feeling rejected might be one definition of what it means to be poor in spirit.

Application

Jesus knows his audience.

The crowd was watching Jesus.

Pray Together

Jesus didn't avoid those in need. Instead, he got down on his knees to say I love you and care about you.

Have you had an experience of the kingdom of God feeling near or more real?

What distracts you from living with a daily awareness of the kingdom of God?

What is the connection between 4:23-25 and 5:1-3?

Why did the people come to Jesus?

What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

Why did Jesus start this sermon with, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"?

What surprising thing does Jesus do here to begin fulfilling the needs of his audience?

Share a time when it was important for you to belong to a group and you felt rejected by them? How did you react? Did you turn to someone for help?

Share a time when someone you cared for rejected you?

What helps you feel included and accepted?

Do Jesus' words in vs. 3 help you feel accepted and loved? Why or why not?

Who should you be getting to know in order to learn how to show them love? In what way might this person feel rejected or poor in spirit?

Who is watching you? How would you describe what they see?

What about Jesus made his message have power and meaning?

What about you makes your delivery of the gospel have power?

Let your prayer be guided by what came up during your discussion.

Use this opportunity to bless one another.

Berachah *vb* [Hebrew] blessing; bending the knee