



WK.1 - GROUP DISCUSSION

Message by Chad Bruegman

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

What was your happiest childhood memory and why?

SHARE

Welcome to our brand new series entitled, “Happy.”

When we think of happiness, most of us think of external things or activities that make us happy. Happiness to many of us might be the first few days driving that new car, the job promotion, recognition for our accomplishments, vacations or that one relationship that had eluded us for so long.

What does God say will bring us happiness? Crowds of people flocked to listen to Jesus speak and to get a glimpse of this person who might be able to change things for them. If we are honest, we are all standing in the crowd hoping that Jesus can change things for us. We desperately want our circumstances to change so that we can be happy, but what will really bring happiness in life?

Let’s reason together through scripture this series and allow God to speak to us about our lives. Will he change our circumstances? Sometimes, yes. But more importantly, God wants to change our hearts so that happiness will no longer be out of reach no matter the circumstances we find ourselves walking through.

Fill in the blank, “if only _____ then I would be happy.”

What do you think our current culture, magazines and media tell us will make us happy?

GROW

Jesus had large crowds following him, swarming around him to hear him speak. Jesus’ influence had spread quickly and the crowds were curious. Many people were hoping that Jesus

might be the answer to their political problems, perhaps he would overthrow the corrupt government. For some, maybe this would be the day where circumstances would change, maybe this would be the inaugural address of the new king.

Jesus went up on a mountainside, sat down and began to teach his disciples with the large crowds pressing in to hear.

Read Matthew 5:1-12

The Bible Reader's Companion by Lawrence Richards talks about the true intention of Jesus sermon on the Mount:

Matthew summarizes the preaching of Jesus in a passage famous as the "Sermon on the Mount" (chaps. 5-7). Jesus begins with a series of statements known as the "Beatitudes" (5:1-12). These surprising statements of blessing underline the difference between human values and God's and call us to view life and success God's way. As salt and light, believers must savor and illuminate God's ways, which alone can preserve and guide humanity (vv. 13-16). Christ rejects the charge of critics that His teaching is intended to abolish the Law and the Prophets. Instead Christ has come to explain the real meaning of ("fulfill") the Law (v. 17). His explanation of Law reveals the defects in the Pharisees' claim to righteousness (vv. 18-20). In a series of examples Jesus shows that God demands righteous intent as well as lawful acts. Righteousness is a matter of the heart and not only behavior (vv. 21-42). In calling for "perfection" Jesus reminds us that true righteousness is actually found only in being like God (vv. 43-47).

What is your reaction to the things Jesus said about being happy or blessed?

Can you relate to any of the struggles or conditions that Jesus brought up in his message? If so, how?

Why should we "rejoice and be glad?"

MOVE

Jesus was not concerned with overthrowing the political oppression of the day, but overthrowing the human heart. Jesus wants each of us to know that it is our hearts that need to change. Happiness is more about your heart's posture than trying to manipulate your environment to obtain happiness.

The good news of the kingdom of God is that true happiness can be found, but the kingdom cannot be earned. The kingdom Jesus was speaking about is a gift to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. What was most shocking to the crowds was that Jesus said "...that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus frees us all up to understand that righteousness is not earned by legalism, but only through faith in Jesus and his finished work on the cross. Regardless of whether or not our circumstances change, our hearts can change by the power of God at work within us.

Read Matthew 5:13-20

Why is it good news to know we can't earn the kingdom?

What is one thing that God is showing you today?

This week, how can you let your light shine given your current circumstances?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Another great book to read about trusting God is **Ruthless Trust** by Brennan Manning.