



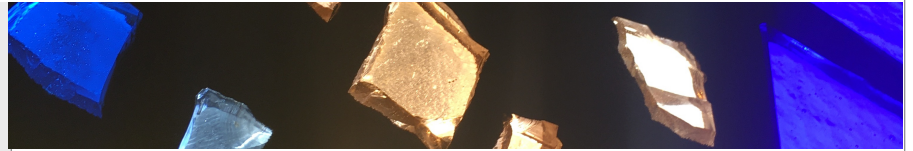
# DEVOTIONS FOR LIFE

Aldersgate Church ~ St. Louis Park, MN

## Week of January 22, 2023 (Matthew 5:1-20)

### Prayer for Groups & Personal Devotion:

Source of all blessing,  
Giver of every good gift,  
we bring before you today our  
neighbors who are having a  
hard time seeing your  
goodness in the land of the  
living. We lift up those who  
mourn, with comfort far off,  
those who hunger and thirst  
even in this world of  
abundance, those who long  
for peace yet are surrounded  
by the violence of hate,  
abuse, war, and oppression.  
We pray your peace and hope  
and providing may surround  
and enfold and protect.  
May your blessing be made  
tangible for them - and may  
we become bearers of that  
blessing for others in our  
community. We lift up those  
who have set themselves  
aside to serve, and lost  
themselves in the process,  
those who have worked so  
hard for purity they've lost  
sight of your grace, those who  
find themselves in the

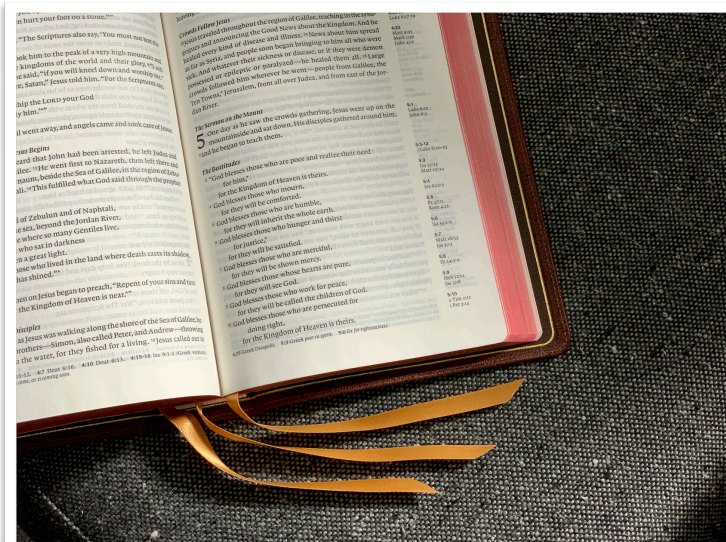


## Devotions for Life

### The Story: Matthew 5:1-20

**Context:** Last week Jesus overcame the tempter in the wilderness, and then immediately gets to work. He begins calling his disciples, teaching in the synagogues, and healing the sick. As we turn to chapter 5, it's apparent that he's now picked up a lot of steam in his work, and wherever he goes crowds follow.

This week's story is actually three chapters long. Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are The Sermon on the Mount, said to be Jesus' greatest teaching.



The setting of the Sermon of the Mount might recall images of Moses for Jews as Jesus goes up a mountain, and what he teaches is directly tied to the Ten

wilderness, feeling lost and alone, unable to recognize your light. We pray your love and truth and call may reach out and take them by the hand. May your blessing be made tangible for them — and may we become bearers of that blessing for others in our community. We lift up your church, meant to be salt that calls attention to your flavor, yet so often caught between fear of being an irritant and desire to be the main dish. We pray you would re-season your church, O God, to fulfil your purpose. May your blessing be made tangible for us - and may we become bearers of your blessing for the world. We ask these and all things in the name of Christ, who bears the kingdom of heaven in the flesh. Amen.

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### Compassion & Justice

Don't forget to donate socks and underwear of all sizes and gender identities this month!

Commandments. Moses went up a mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God, Jesus goes up a mountain to teach on the fulfill of them.

In today's passage we get the opening of The Sermon on the Mount, which is a poem known as the Beatitudes. While we certainly can learn from the Beatitudes, it is important to note that it is a poem (it has rhythm, rhyme and alliteration in Greek), and should be read as such. Don't try to understand it as much as simply let it wash over you. After the Beatitudes, Jesus then gets into his teaching.

### Questions for Reflection & Discussion:

1. Read Matthew 5:1-12 (The Beatitudes) out loud and slowly. What do you hear in the reading of it? Which of The Beatitudes stood out to you the most? Why do you think it did?
2. Which Beatitude seems the most logical to you? Which one seems the most counterintuitive to you?
3. What does it actually mean to be "the salt of the earth"? Or "the light of the world"?
4. What do you think Jesus means by "fulfill the law"?
5. What is the difference between the "spirit of the law" and the "letter of the law"?
6. What is "righteousness"? How can our righteousness "exceed the pharisees"?
7. What is the "kingdom of Heaven"? Is it something different than just "heaven"?
8. Is Jesus preaching a kind of "works righteousness" here? That being that we have to obey the law to some degree in order to get to heaven?
9. What is God speaking to you through these difficult verses? What is God calling out of you, or calling you to?