

# Blessed are the Losers (Matthew 5:1-12) Lesson on Unexpected Heroes

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**Losers is not a nice word** – but it carries the same shock value that Jesus’ original audience would have felt when he preached the Beatitudes. Each line take the popular idea of who is “winning in life” and turns it upside down. In other words, Jesus promises that losers are the real winners when God’s Kingdom comes.



Money, success, power, stardom, athleticism, possessions...these are all things that the world considers “blessings,” or things people often look to as valuable. Modern society honors and celebrates those who have made a ways for themselves and pulled up “by their bootstraps” to do what is needed. As Christians, we know that our eyes should be fixed on other priorities, though. What the culture around us says is good or negative is not often the case. This lesson takes a look at the Sermon on the Mount to examine closely what Jesus had to say about our attitudes and actions.

**Lesson focus:** The way the world values and celebrates things often varies greatly from what God considers important. We want to live in a way that pleases and honors God, and He will bless that.

**Passage:** Matthew 5:1-12

**Target Audience:** Pre-k through fifth grade (adaptable)

**Materials Needed:** White board(s), markers; construction paper; decorating materials; copies of the passage; cup(s); water, vegetable oil; magazine cut-outs or printed pictures.

**Lesson Opening:** Does it mix? Start off with a little illustration to demonstrate the difference between how the world views and values things and how God sees them. Show children a cup (or jar) with some water (maybe dye it to stand out). Then pour some oil on top...take predictions as to what will happen. At first, the oil and water might seem to mix, but then they separate. Explain to students that this is how it is with the contrast between God’s instructions and cultural concerns...it might seem like we can chase after earthly things and still follow God, but Jesus has told us that His values are not the same as what we might expect.

**Bible Lesson:**

Ask students to define what they think creates happiness. What does it mean to be happy? What makes us happy? Is it circumstance, goals, people?

How about the term “blessed”? Does it mean the same as happy? What brings blessing to our lives?

Invite students to turn to the book of Matthew, and set the stage for the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus went up on a hillside and began to speak to people. He set up several statements emphasizing hope and the meaning of what God considers important...

\*Prior to discussing, give each child a piece of paper or dry erase board, and a number (4-11). Advise them to keep the numbers secret, but let them know that they will be responsible for creating a picture of the verse corresponding with their number. After briefly explaining this, move on to go through the Beatitudes piece by piece, taking turns reading the verses.

*Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.*

What does it mean to be “poor in spirit?” Discuss with students that we often think people need to be happy or cheery all the time. But sometimes we mourn, or get sad. Jesus says here that is okay, because He will be our comfort. He will always take care of us. In the same token, what does “blessed” mean? We may think of it in terms of holiness (the “blessed Trinity”) or fortunate (“you’ve been blessed with health”). But it may also mean happy, peaceful, or sacred. Regardless, it is a positive thing indeed.

*<sup>5</sup> Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.*

What is “meek”? We usually think of this as a negative thing, with meekness meaning hiding or being shy. But here we see more emphasis on humility. Meek people are not prone to greediness or grabbing, but seek the interests of others ahead of their own. As a result, Jesus says they will “inherit the earth.”

*<sup>6</sup> Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.*

Who has ever had a random sudden craving for something? Maybe you walk by a Waffle House and desperately NEED bacon. Or perhaps you think of a memory and crave Grandma’s apple pie...those things can be good, but they only fill us up so much. And if we

have too much, we may wind up feeling sick. But this verse says that people who want righteousness more than anything will be satisfied and never need more. What does righteousness mean? Doing the right thing! And seeking God in decisions.

*<sup>7</sup> Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.*

We have often heard the “mercy” buzzword and know that God is merciful. But again we have to break this down and ask what exactly mercy means. Mercy has to do with being kind to someone, even if they don’t deserve it.

Ask students if anyone has ever done something mean to them. What did they want to do in response? Usually we want revenge, getting back at those who mistreat us...but mercy means that instead of revenge, we repay evil with good and act kindly toward bullies. When we do that, we get mercy in return, as we have already gotten from God.

*<sup>8</sup> Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they will see God.*

Definition time again! Invite students to discuss the term “pure.” The water mixed with oil is definitely NOT pure... pure means there is only one thing, and it is clean and wholesome. If we have pure hearts, we are undivided for God. We look to what we need (Him), not just what we want (things).

*<sup>9</sup> Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.*

Have you ever been involved in a fight with someone? Whether friends or family, physical or conversational, we all get into spats and disputes at times. Jesus here is calling people to make peace. Anyone can seek revenge or play into a game of back-stabbing...it takes true discipline and love to pursue kindness and forgiveness. How can we be genuine peacemakers?

*<sup>10</sup> Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute  
you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad,  
because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets  
who were before you.*

Fortunately, we live in a time and place where the most we might be “persecuted” is a word of teasing or funny looks (usually). But around the world people are put into jail or even killed for believing in Jesus. What would we do if this was a threat in our lives? It’s a scary thought, but important to remember that Heaven is waiting for us, and nothing can take that away!

**Game/activity:** Blessed are the..... have students play a game of “charades” or “Pictionary” with their appointed verses. See if they can draw or act out the beatitude and have others guess it. Provide a copy of the passage for all students. \*For younger audiences, just act out or use describing words.

**Craft:**

Have students pick a verse to illustrate, and draw a picture to remember what it means. Obviously, some are much easier to depict than others, so encourage creativity and flexibility, and offer suggestions if necessary. Write or attach a verse for caption, and remind students to hang it in a visible spot for guidance.

**Close** with prayer and thank God for all He has given. Ask for guidance as we seek His will and follow the instructions of His Son.