

**Icebreaker:**

Everyone has been talking about the extreme cold. Did it disrupt your plans? If so, how?

**Read this week's scripture and discuss:**

1. Read aloud Matthew 5:1-10 in the Message translation of the Bible on your phone or at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com). In this translation, which uses contemporary everyday language, what stands out to you and why?
2. The beatitudes of verses 2-10 can be viewed as circular and interconnected. Which "blessedness" might you desire? Which "blessedness" do you desire least? What blessing might God desire to give to you?
3. The Greek word "praeis," translated "meek" or "gentle," is used in Matt 5:5 and Matt 11:29, where Jesus spoke of Himself in the image of yokes and oxen. In what way are oxen "meek" or "gentle"? What might be the connection between "meekness," oxen, and "the earth"?
4. Does our culture encourage "meekness"? Why or why not? What would happen in our world if we aspired to "meekness"?
5. Bible commentator Tom Long says "'Meekness' is not timidity or passivity but rather a patient trusting that God will act in due time, an insistence on being nonviolent even in the midst of a violent society, a contentment with the basic necessities of life even in a possession-hungry world, and taking delight in the gifts of God and the many comforts of faith." Do any of these components of being meek stand out to you?
6. The meek that Jesus speaks of can be the powerless of the world. In our community, most of us are not powerless. What does the passage then say to us?
7. Some describe the Kingdom of God as an upside-down kingdom. What would make it upside-down in light of the Beatitudes? How is it different from a worldly kingdom?

**Prayer:**

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

**prayer requests**

- > Prayers of continued healing for Regina Franks.
- > Pray for the guests and team members of the Boys Awakening, which is taking place in our building this weekend.

In the western world, we often deal with the temptation of winning, success, and getting ahead. In the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses those who are often powerless but faithful. They will be blessed. They will be blessed by drawing closer to God, seeing God, and even inheriting the earth. When we relate to and care for the hurting, when we trust in God for His gifts, when we are content in God, when we are meek, we are blessed.

1. If you use [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com), you can search for a passage (Matthew 5:1-10) and choose a translation (The Message) on the top line. Then read it aloud and see if this more contemporary language helps you think in new ways about Jesus' words. Pick a blessing that really stands out to you.
2. The beatitudes are interconnected in that they all give blessings from Jesus for qualities that are not normally valued by a world focused on success. You might resonate with a blessing for the kind of person it describes or for the blessing that is to be received. Get different responses from your group.
3. A yoke would help two oxen work in concert with each other. They must be humble enough, or meek enough not to fight against the yoke, but to work together to do the job. We too can be meek and satisfied by working in concert with Jesus, taking on his easy yoke, and resting in him. The earth must be worked to make it ready for planting, to receive seeds, so that it can grow plants to help others.
4. Being Super Bowl week in America, we see that our culture often applauds victory, success, fun, money, and fame. Those who work in helping careers and sacrifice to serve others may get applause for being meek. On the other hand, those who are too meek might get run over. If we strive for meekness, we may please God and stand out, thus being a witness for God's ways.
5. So the choices are: patient trusting in God, being nonviolent, contentment with basic necessities, or delighting in the gifts of God. Is there one that stands out to your group or individual members? How is this meek?
6. Most of us in Zionsville, Carmel, or the northside of Indy have some success or power, compared to those who are really poor and powerless. If we want to see Jesus, to inherit the earth, then we should seek to interact with and help the powerless.
7. Donald Kraybill in his book called "The Upside-Down Kingdom," says Jesus wins by serving and triumphs by losing. The winners in the Beatitudes are those who mourn, who are poor in spirit, who are meek and merciful and peacemakers. They triumph by being meek, and by helping those who are hurting so that God is honored.