

INTRO

- What is something that makes you happy? (e.g. place, activity, person)

PURSUING HAPPINESS

Happiness is such an intrinsic desire for us as humans, and yet so elusive. While we all know we want to feel happy, it's clear that we don't always know what actually makes us happy. In fact, many things we think matter for our happiness simply don't, and may even undermine our sense of wellbeing. Perhaps we've thought about happiness all wrong.

"It is the very pursuit of happiness that thwarts happiness. Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue." — Viktor Frankl

Qu: list some things we typically think will make us happy. Why do they often fail either in making us happy or keeping us happy?

Jesus does indeed invite us to be happy, but as we'll discover through The Beatitudes, it is a far more counter-intuitive and substantive form of happiness.

READ

Matt 5:1-12

REFLECT & RESPOND

Makarios is the greek word used in The Beatitudes for "blessed" and also means "happy." *Makarios* refers to **the highest type of well-being or flourishing possible for humans.**

#1: HAPPY ARE THE POOR

Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. — Jesus (Matt 5:4)

Qu: When you think of the poor, what comes to mind? What then is the point Jesus is making here?

A poor person lacks the essentials to life (food, clothing, shelter) which in turn makes them desperate and dependent for help.

Similarly, Jesus is teaching us that happiness ensues those who:

- acknowledge their spiritual poverty
- resist & repent of their pride, self-sufficiency & independence from God
- receive the riches of the kingdom—living under the rule and reign of God

*"Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, is credited with defining sin as **"unwillingness to trust that what God wants for me is only my deepest happiness."** In the ultimate irony, sin sabotages our capacity for happiness by appealing to our God-given desire for happiness via deceptive ideas."*

— John Mark Comer

God—Father, Son & Spirit—is committed to your deepest happiness and that happiness is ultimately found in him. When we realize this, our pursuit of happiness becomes a pursuit of God himself.

Qu: Do you believe God is committed to your deepest happiness? If we believe this to be true, how should it change the way we live?

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for one another's happiness!