

## **Inside Out [A Righteous Character] Discussion Guide**

### **Summary**

This message begins a new series on the Sermon on the Mount, focusing on what true righteousness looks like from the inside out. Jonathan emphasizes that following Jesus isn't about rule-following or performing righteousness for others, but about genuine internal transformation through the Holy Spirit. Using the Beatitudes from Matthew 5:1-16, the message explores how Jesus presents a completely different picture of what makes a blessed life... one that values humility, mercy, and spiritual hunger over worldly success. The sermon challenges believers to move beyond surface-level Christianity to authentic character change, becoming salt and light in the world not through performance, but through genuine transformation that naturally affects those around them.

### **Intro Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hearts, ready to learn what it truly means to follow Jesus. We acknowledge that sometimes we get caught up in appearances and performance rather than genuine transformation. Holy Spirit, we invite You to speak to us today and show us what You want us to understand about authentic righteousness. Help us to be honest about where we are and open to where You want to take us. Renew our thoughts and attitudes as we study Your Word together. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **Ice Breaker**

What's one thing you've gotten really good at that you initially thought would be impossible to learn?

## **Key Verses**

- Ephesians 4:23-24
- Matthew 5:1-16
- 1 Peter 4:1-4

## **Questions**

- What's the difference between following rules and experiencing genuine heart transformation? Can you think of an example from your own life?
- Looking at the Beatitudes, which one challenges you the most and why?
- Jonathan mentioned that salt doesn't announce itself, it just works quietly. How can we be 'salt and light' without performing righteousness for others to see?
- What does it mean to be 'poor in spirit' in practical, everyday terms?
- How do you typically handle having a bad attitude, and how might the Holy Spirit's renewal change that response?
- The sermon talks about being 'finished with sin'; what do you think this means, and how is it different from never struggling with temptation?
- What are some ways our culture defines a 'blessed' or successful life that contradict Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes?

- How can we support each other in genuine transformation rather than just accountability for rule-following?

## **Life Application**

This week, identify one specific habit, desire, or pattern in your life that you keep defaulting to that pulls you away from following Jesus. Decide to surrender this area to the Holy Spirit, asking Him to renew your thoughts and attitudes about it. Find one trusted person to share this decision with so you have support in this transformation process. Focus on allowing the Spirit to change your heart rather than just trying to modify your behavior through willpower.

## **Key Takeaways**

- True righteousness is about internal transformation through the Holy Spirit, not external rule-following or performance
- The Beatitudes present a completely different picture of what makes a blessed life compared to worldly values
- Believers are called to be salt and light naturally through genuine character change, not through trying to appear righteous
- Transformation requires actually deciding to be 'finished with sin' and allowing the Holy Spirit to renew our thoughts and attitudes
- Following Jesus involves real cost and sacrifice, but leads to authentic freedom and satisfaction

## **Ending Prayer**

Lord Jesus, thank You for showing us what true righteousness looks like. We confess that we often settle for appearances rather than genuine heart change. Holy Spirit, we surrender our thoughts and attitudes to You. Transform us from the inside out so that we naturally become salt and light in this world. Help us to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to be merciful, humble, and pure in heart. Give us the courage to make the hard decisions that lead to real transformation, and surround us with others who will support us in this journey. We want to be people who truly follow You, not just people who look like we do. Change us, Lord, for Your glory and our good. In Jesus' name, Amen.