

# Mount of Beatitudes



Panoramic view of the Sea of Galilee from the Mount of Beatitudes, Israel  
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I recall a view similar to this from my first visit to Galilee, it was a cool late autumn morning. There were differences, however, it had been a long and dry summer, the photograph below by Peter van der Sluijs (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0) captures the dryness of the landscape.

I was part of a group on an introductory trip to the Holy Land and we spent an hour or so on the Mount of

Beatitudes. We sat and the Sermon on the Mount was read (Matthew 5 -7). The opening words held my attention, but it was not long before the land and seascape won, along with the sense that I was in the region where Jesus taught, where people sat and listened. The Mount of Beatitudes was a special place. The scenery and thoughts were blended into something sacred, a



blessed moment! The acoustics were marvellous the words 'blessed are the poor' rang out as did each blessing. They hung in the air. Jesus was turning things upside down. I had learnt this through my training, but these moments in the Mount of Beatitudes made a difference. I did what infuriated some of those who taught me as a child, I daydreamed, I did not hear the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount.

Moses came down from the mountain with the Law, Jesus went up a mount, with his disciples and shared with his disciples a different way of thinking not of rewards for a righteous way of living, but a sense of well-being that comes through the free bounteous gift, the grace of God. It is a state of happiness.

In the Book of Common Prayer, there is a section called the 'Comfortable Words' they come just after the absolution and begin with the phrase, "Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all who truly turn to him" The first two from the Gospels are:

Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.  
*St. Matthew 11.28*

So God loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *St. John 3.16*

The Beatitudes are the uncomfortable, yet comfortable words, words that need to be pondered over.

The Beatitudes are at the beginning of what we know as the Sermon on the Mount. Three chapters of Jesus' teaching brought together and set with in a spectacular backdrop where those who were with Jesus could listen and contemplate his words.

The Sermon on the Mount is seen by some scholars as the New Covenant, or perhaps it is better understood as Christ fulfilling the Law.

Our time of reflection is different this week I leave with the suggestion that you read Matthew chapters 5 -7. Do not rush, take your time.



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We start with familiar words:

As always, I suggest you find your favourite space for this time of prayerful reflection  
and



**Come to pray as you can, accept the invitation to be  
with Christ,**

**so**

**Slow down, breathe calmly, be comfortable and relax.**

**Light a candle, turn off your phone. Be ready to  
discover!**

We start with a prayer of confession. We all miss the mark and Lent gives us an opportunity to become more aware of those times when we get things wrong, we miss the mark, we sin.

**A prayer of confession as we begin the season of Lent.**

Forgive us Lord for our apathy, for our lack of courage to speak out.  
Lord have mercy.

Forgive us when we walk past and don't offer help.  
Christ have mercy

Forgive us when we get it wrong.  
Lord have mercy.

**Hearing words of forgiveness.**

Lord, Your forgiveness is total  
there is no notebook, post-it notes to remind you of that moment when we missed  
the mark, sinned.

You take our confession offered with hands outstretched  
and gently like the loving heavenly Father that you are  
put it to one side to be forgotten.

No grudges, no itching for judgement  
No resentment or ill-will  
Not like us who find it easy to say sorry  
but so hard to forgive absolutely

Forgive us, Father that we are often more willing  
to accept forgiveness than to forgive.

(John Birch - adapted from a version on the Worship Cloud)

We sing along with the Chet Valley Churches 'Be still and know'.

The words of the hymn appear on the screen via the YouTube link.

 **YouTube** <https://youtu.be/dbBImzfVy94?si=YjocaiNzp-42Bk07&t=8>

Use (Ctrl + click) below for the text for the New King James Version from the BibleGateway web page

## **Matthew 5-7 NKJV - The Beatitudes - And seeing the**

We close with the Chet Valley Churches and Go tell it on the mountains with

<https://youtu.be/14WM2MKuIGk?si=YECIQcvXOjKCiVyx&t=7>

Fr Derek Akker

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(Derek is a retired Anglican Parish Priest and a member of the congregations of All Saints & St James. Prior to his ordination he was accredited as a Methodist Preacher in 1968 and served within the Methodist Church until returning to the Anglican Church in the mid 1980's)

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