

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Christianity is a Crutch for Weak People | Matthew 5:3

Purpose of Discussion: To explore why it is difficult for us to admit our need.

Sermon Refresher: In Matthew 5:3 Jesus blesses the poor in spirit, people who see their need, admit it, and look to Jesus for help. Sadly, we're often self-reliant people who do not see or admit our need, so we miss out on Jesus' promises.

Icebreaker: Share a time you were hurt or sick and needed someone else's help.

Discussion:

1. Why do you think people make fun of Christianity for being a crutch?

Digging Deeper:

If someone said "Christianity is a crutch" to you, how would you have responded *before* Keith's sermon? After?

How would you respond emotionally? (defensive, embarrassed, confused)

What would you think Jesus would say to that person?

2. Read Matthew 5:3. Jesus blesses people who see their inner poverty, admit their neediness, and seek his help. Why do you think it is so challenging to admit our neediness to others? To ourselves? To God?
3. Read this list of things the poor in spirit say:

I need help. The challenges of life are too difficult for me to handle alone.
I am not the Messiah. I cannot save, rescue, or fix people/situations.
I am not a big deal, so I shouldn't be the center of my thoughts.
I need to obey even when I don't understand God's command.
I need mercy. I am stained with sin, and can't wash it away on my own.

Which of these do you find most difficult to admit others? To God? Why?

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4. Share some areas in your life (work, family, friends, health) where are you tempted to be the Messiah (the one who saves, rescues, or fixes). How would admitting your neediness in these areas change your perspective on the problem you're trying to fix?
5. When are you tempted see yourself as a "big deal"? When do you want to be seen as a "big deal"?

Digging Deeper: How would letting go of your self-importance change how you act? Change how you make decisions? Change how you think?

6. Read Matthew 9:10-13.

Matthew 9:10-13

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Why do you think the "tax collectors and sinners" see their need for Jesus, but the Pharisees do not? How does this story challenge you personally? How does it encourage you personally?

Sharing and Prayer: Divide into groups of two or three. In the groups, allow each person to share one area of personal neediness the discussion brought to light. Then pray together, admitting your neediness to Jesus and asking for help.