**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Susan Carey***

**Date: Sunday, April 24, 2016**

**Sermon Title: The Beatitudes: An Invitation to Joy**

 **Blessed are the Bridge-builders**

**Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12**

**5**Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, **2**and he began to teach them.

He said:

**3**“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
    for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
**4**Blessed are those who mourn,
    for they will be comforted.
**5**Blessed are the meek,
    for they will inherit the earth.
**6**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
    for they will be filled.
**7Blessed are the merciful,
    for they will be shown mercy.
8Blessed are the pure in heart,
    for they will see God.
9Blessed are the peacemakers,
    for they will be called children of God.
10Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
    for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**11“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only)**

Leader: People of God, who do you come to worship?
**People: We come to worship the one true God.**
Leader: People of God, how will you worship?
**People: Not with words alone, but by living lives**
 **of justice and love.**
Leader: Come, you who belong to God.
 Come, you who are foolish in the eyes of the world.
**All: Come and abide in God’s tent and in God’s heart,**
 **now and forever!**

**Basic Theme:The introduction to Jesus' first sermon presents a paradox - what the world says will lead to a meaningful life versus what Jesus says will lead to a meaningful life. The voices of the world are often much louder and more shrill than the voice of the gospel; however, the world promises emptiness while Jesus promises eternal life.**

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points):** While the first half of the Beatitudes address the condition of our hearts and our surrender to God, the second half address the outward expression of our hearts. The world says that power and self-reliance bring happiness and satisfaction; however Jesus tells us that it is only through mercy, purity, and peacemaking that we will find unshakable joy and the kingdom of God here on earth. The Christian walk is not easy, contradicting all that society values as success; however, the promise of the kingdom, the promise of eternal life, the promise of complete communion with God is worth enduring every hardship.

**So What?** How do you express the love and mercy of God in your encounters with others? How do you express the truth of the gospel with a pure, loving heart that turns others toward God rather than away from your judgment? Is the promise of the kingdom enough for you to endure social and sometimes physical discomfort in the name of the gospel? Trust that you are not alone. Jesus modeled the life of the Beatitudes and he invites you to experience his unending peace, hope, and joy.