**HOLY SAVIOUR, BITTERNE BIBLE STUDY – WEEK BEGINNING MAY 10th (Beatitudes 1)**

*We are beginning a series of studies on the Beatitudes this week. That was the theme homegroup leaders had settled on for this term, so it seemed like a good idea to pick up on that. The Beatitudes teach us about Christian character, something which the current crisis may well be helping to shape!* ***Jot down your thoughts about the questions in the spaces provided*** *–* ***and it would be really good to share them with others.*** *Phone, Skype, email some members of your homegroup or a friend and/or email me your thoughts (* brianparfitt@btinternet.com *).* ***Brian Parfitt***

What brings you happiness/contentment/ a feeling of security?

**Read Matthew 5.3-12.**  Jesus speaks of eight qualities of disciples and the blessings that flow from them. Depending on your translation each Beatitude begins ‘Blessed are’ or ‘Happy are’ - the one can sound too super-spiritual, the other too light-hearted. Reading all the beatitudes what do you think Jesus means by being ‘happy’ or ‘blessed’? What is he saying about the position of those who live his way?

**Read again Matthew 5.3. This week we are thinking about the ‘poor in spirit’. In the Old Testament we read of God’s concern for the materially poor but, because they have to depend on God for their needs, the phrase ‘the poor’ came to have the meaning of ‘those who trustingly look to God’. In contrast are the rich, who in their pride have no room for God in their lives. To explore what it means to be the ‘poor in we are going to look at passages from the Old and New Testament. *(If it’s helpful you might look at them one at a time, rather than all at once.)***

To see an Old Testament use of ‘the poor’ **read Zephaniah 3.11-13.** As these verses look forward to a time of restoration and blessing , what do they say about 1. the fate of the proud; 2. the character of the poor; 3. the blessings the poor receive?

**Read 2 Corinthians 8.9.** In what way did Jesus ‘make himself poor’? *(You might also like to read Philippians 2.5-11.)*  How does what Jesus has done help us ‘enter the kingdom of heaven’.

**Read Revelation 3.14-21.** This is the message Jesus addresses to the church in Laodicea. How did the church members think of themselves? What was the reality that Jesus saw? What was the remedy Jesus offered them?

**Read Luke 18.9-14.** What makes the difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector? Which is ‘blessed’?

Reflect on what you have discovered from ***each of the passages*** we have looked at. How do they help you understand the Beatitude, ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’?

What are you discovering in the present circumstances about being ‘poor in spirit’ and your need of God? Are there ways you are learning to be less dependent on material riches? How are you learning to trust and depend on God?