

# The Power of God's Word

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Old Testament book of Isaiah has many passages that contribute to our understanding the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. One such passage can be found in Isaiah 55, in which the Lord declares through the prophet,

Is 55:9-11

**55** <sup>9</sup>“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup>“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there but water the earth,

making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, “so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I intend, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

**What is revealed about the power of God's word in this passage?**

**Answers may include God's word does what he wills and accomplishes his purposes.**

Keeping this passage from Isaiah in mind, reread the story of Jesus' encounter in the synagogue with the man with the unclean spirit (Mk 1:21–28, on page 1 of the Student Text).

**What was it about Jesus that, at first, astounded the people in the synagogue? Why?**

**His teaching; he taught “as one who had authority” (1:22).**

**How did Jesus drive the unclean spirit out of the man?**

**By his word; he said, “Be silent, and come out of him!” (1:25).**

The people in the synagogue of Capernaum were amazed and declared that Jesus' power to drive out the unclean spirit was a "new teaching with authority!" (1:27). Consider again the passage from the prophet Isaiah above. **What is it that was "new" about Jesus' teaching?**

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**Answers may include Jesus' teaching (his word) had the power to accomplish what he intended, unlike the teaching of the scribes; he spoke with divine authority.**

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# Discipleship and the Beatitudes

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

“The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus’ preaching” (CCC 1716). In this short series of statements about those who are blessed—that is, those who are happy or fortunate—Jesus imitates a common feature of the Scriptures of Israel. Consider just two examples of Old Testament beatitudes, first from the Book of Proverbs, and second from the Book of Psalms:

Prov 3:13-14

3 <sup>13</sup>Happy is the man who finds wisdom,  
and the man who gets understanding,  
<sup>14</sup>for the gain from it is better than gain from  
silver  
and its profit better than gold.

Ps 1:1-2

1 Blessed is the man  
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,  
nor stands in the way of sinners,  
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;  
<sup>2</sup>but his delight is in the law of the LORD,  
and on his law he meditates day and night.

The Beatitudes that Jesus proclaimed at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount orient his disciples to eternal life. These eight beatitudes “shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life” (CCC 1717). That is to say, the Beatitudes give us a picture of what following Jesus in this life looks like.

The *Catechism* goes on to say that “the Beatitudes confront us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods; they purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things” (CCC 1728).

Reread the Beatitudes (page 81 of the Student Text) and answer the questions below.

Select two of the Beatitudes. How does each of these Beatitudes present us with a decisive choice concerning earthly goods? What is Jesus teaching us that we must choose if we are to follow him?

Answers may vary.

How do the Beatitudes “teach us to love God above all things”?

Answers may vary.