

Light from the Mountain

(Reflections on the Beatitudes)

FOR JUNIOR CHOIR

BY REGGIE KEITH

MUSIC SEQUENCE

HE SAT DOWN	CHOIR
CLIMB THIS LITTLE MOUNT WITH ME	3 SOLOS*/ CHOIR
LOOK TO JESUS	CHOIR
YOU'VE HEARD IT SAID	CHOIR
BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN	JOY
BLESSED ARE THE GENTLE	CHOIR
EV'RY ONE WHO THIRSTS, COME	NATHANIEL, JOY/ CHOIR
GO AND DO THE SAME	SOLO*/ CHOIR
HOW CAN SOMEONE SEE HIM?	JEPHTHAH/ CHOIR
HE MADE US ONE	SOLO*
PERSECUTED	NATHANIEL/ CHOIR
WE ARE SALT AND WE ARE LIGHT	CHOIR
HE IS OUR ROCK	CHOIR
TILL WE MAKE IT ALL THE WAY HOME	SOLO**/ CHOIR/ CONGREGATION

*(SEE SMALL GROUP UNDER PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS)

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Characters - In order of appearance:

Narrator
Little Kid (brother)
Nathaniel
Jephthah
Joy

5 SOLOS (disciples/ pilgrims)
8 Beatitudes (Blessed readers)

Narrator

In days long gone by in a tiny space of history some young people gathered at the foot of a mountain. (Well, let's say, a little mountain; a blessed little mountain... though probably more like a blessed little hillside).

They read about it from the writings of a man whose name was Matthew.

And, oh, how he could write about things of life and how to live; even the gift of God's great love that we saw and heard and touched.

They learned these lessons and they learned them well, and here's the message they want to tell.

But first, you can't learn a lesson, without a Teacher, right?

HE SAT DOWN

(CHOIR)

Little Kid But did anybody listen?

Narrator Well, let's find out!

(Joy and Nathaniel walking with staff in hand, Jephthah is without staff.

They come to a sign post "Entrance to the Way out")
(LEVEL ONE - ground level/ aisle of sanctuary)

Nathaniel I think I've been in this valley long enough... all the smog and crowded streets.

Pilgrim 1 Do you hear all those little ducks quacking... and camels grunting?

Nathaniel It makes me claustrophobic!

Jephthah Is that like a Christian?

Nathaniel No, it isn't knucklehead!

Joy Oh! Look over here. "Entrance to the Way out!" This is the place I read about in the *Great Book on Mountains and Valleys*.

Nathaniel I read about it, too. It's just like He said it would be.

Jephthah Wait a minute...I haven't read about it. And anyway... it all seems really strange to me.

Is this the place some say is a mountain of happiness? It's not very impressive. I actually thought it would be tall like the Rockies, or Mount Everest?!

Joy But this is where He led us.

Jephthah Who led us?

Nathaniel The Lord.

Jephthah The Lord? The Lord who?

Joy The Lord Jesus! He climbed this mountain before us.

Jephthah This little thing? How come? I thought He did great things.

Joy He did! Matthew wrote all about it.

Pilgrim 3 He even climbed a mountain that you and I could never climb.

Joy But He led us here.

Pilgrim 2 Apparently, He thinks we can handle this little one, with His help.

Little Kid He's a good Teacher.

Pilgrim 1 Yes, He is... little kid. And He said things that He expects His students to understand and learn.

CLIMB THIS LITTLE MOUNT WITH ME
(3 SOLOS/ CHOIR)

Pilgrims 1,2,3 We must be on the way. (as Pilgrim 4 enters)
See you again.

Pilgrims 4 Have a good journey.

Jephthah Well, I'm missing it all somehow.

Nathaniel Okay! Well then, listen. One day, He went before us and He sat down. So He knows the way out. And He said, "Follow Me."

Joy Well really, He said, "Join Me in the way I'm going."

Nathaniel That's right! He did say, "Join Me." That's why we're here. This is where it really begins.

LOOK TO JESUS

(CHOIR)

Jephthah DECREASE. What does it mean... decrease?

Joy Jephthah, are your ears working today? If you'd listen you would have heard the opposite of that word... INCREASE.

Nathaniel It means we need to get Him in view; and not consider ourselves more important than we are.

Pilgrim 4 We should learn to do what He wants us to do. You know... what pleases Him. Not what we always want to do.

Jephthah I like to do what I want to do. It's fun! Well sometimes that is.

Joy Jephthah, that's why you're always in trouble at school. Disrupting the class that is wanting to learn.

Jephthah Wanting to learn?! We're all wanting to learn, but what they teach in school, is sooo boring. I mean, why do they complain that we act like a bunch of animals, when they tell us we're supposed to come from animals?! I thought we were to act like the relatives!! But I guess, life really is not monkey-business, is it?

Joy Of course not! So, don't be a fool!

Little Kid The fool says in his heart there is no God.

Pilgrim 4 That's right! Even, Jesus told us... we've all heard some strange teaching.

Joy But we'll really be much happier if we learn to follow what He says.

YOU'VE HEARD IT SAID
(CHOIR)

Jephthah Well, that's the truth. I definitely have a little more work to do in my life.

Nathaniel We all do. But honestly Jephthah, if you don't care to know Him very well, then all you are doing is guessing at what He says.

Pilgrim 4 And He's said a lot of things to help us follow Him.

Jephthah You guys, go ahead and follow Him. I want to feel good! and be happy! and have fun! I'll see you claustrophobics later.

Joy Jephthah, so you just want it simple, don't you?! But it's too late for that. Life is complicated. There's time to work; there's time to play. There's time to laugh; there's time to cry.

Nathaniel Yeah, it's easy to slide down a hill; but it's harder to have to climb out of the ditch that you fall into. Life is full of easy and hard things to do, every day.

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN

(SOLO/ CHOIR)

Jephthah Huh?! Now, I'm a little confused. I thought Christians always walked with their noses higher than a kite... thanking God they are not like others! (Demonstrate, as Pilgrim 5 enters))

You know, happy, happy, happy... now that sounds fun!

But who wants to mourn. That's no fun. If a person mourns, how can he be happy?

Nathaniel God understands those who are sad... sad for who they are and what they've done. Someone who follows the Lord knows he can never measure up to God's standard or even be mistaken for His Son.

Pilgrim 4 That's why Jesus came. He's like us, but a little different than us, wouldn't you say?

Joy Those who are sad... He forgives them and makes them stronger, too.

Jephthah But how can God be such a blessing when He is so far away?

Joy God can do anything! And He's not far away. At least that's what He says.

Nathaniel Jephthah, He's right here... with us.

Jephthah Aw, c'mon!

Pilgrim 4 The Lord is near to all who call on Him.

Jephthah I can't understand that! I don't see Him.

Nathaniel Jephthah, have you ever seen your mind? Huh?! Or do we just have to take it by faith... that you have a brain?

The Lord is with us all right. And He loves us especially as we help each other in the things we do.

Pilgrim 5 He expects us to be kind... and understanding.

Joy

Jephthah, in other words, He wants to teach all of us a thing or two (even though some... make doing that... difficult!)

BLESSED AND GENTLE

(CHOIR)

Jephthah We have to be kind and gentle? I've tried... well, once or twice. I think?! But then I get so angry. And explode!

Nathaniel We all do! But throw it down.

Pilgrim 4 The more we learn what God has promised... the more we are able to act wisely; and He will bless us for it.

Joy You know, just to climb this little mountain, we all need help. So imagine what kind of help we need to do His will... His way.

Nathaniel Joy, you know we have to want Him to help us—way down inside. And He will.

When Jesus walked around down here, He was always good, and always right. Now, that's RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Hey, we can't just stand here thinking about it. It's getting late and we've got to get on our way... up this mountain.

Joy I'm ready.

Nathaniel Jephthah, how about you. Are you coming?

Joy He said anyone can.

Little Kid Yeah, come on, Jephthah.

Jephthah Well, I'm not sure. I'm just not sure. Do I need to bring anything?

Joy No! Just come with us.

EVERYONE WHO THIRSTS, COME
(CHORUS/ SOLOS)

Jephthah All this talk makes me a little hungry and thirsty, too. Is there a fast-food place, or taco stand nearby?

Nathaniel We're not taking about our belly! Jephthah, we're talking about our heart being hungry to do what is right?

Jephthah Wait a minute. How can you hunger and thirst to do what is right?

Joy Well, you get tired of being obnoxious.

Jephthah Ob- what?

Joy Well Jephthah, if anyone knows about... huh?! Being a bother to your folks, and your friends, and your teachers... and your neighbors... and...

Nathaniel (interrupting) Do you get the picture? Sometimes you're a real pain. Always pretending you are always right.

Joy Or thinking that you're always funny! You're not! That's being obnoxious.

Jephthah (amazed) Well, how... do you... like... that?!

Joy Hey, excuse me... there are times when I've irritated everyone too.

Jephthah Everyone?!

Joy I'm not trying to put you down.

Jephthah Oh! Of course not!

Joy Really.

Nathaniel Jephthah, it's like my father and me. He would rather have me trust him than walk around pretending I'm his perfect child. He knows I'm not... and in my heart... I know it, too!

But I also know, he loves me, and no matter what, I can always go to him. I love him for that.

Joy I'm starting to learn not to go around criticizing others and finding fault with those I don't like.

Jesus died for all the un-godly! All those who are not ...like God.

But... do you know why He died for the un-godly? (pause)

(slow and emphatic) Because there were no godly people to be found.

Jephthah Huh?!

Is that why the Psalmist wrote: His goodness and mercy follows me all my days? Because He's cleaning up after me every step of the way?

Pilgrim 4 Yes! He died, the Just... for the unjust.

Jephthah The Right One for the not-right ones?!

Pilgrim 5 Yes! In other words, He died for all of us - me and you, too!

Pilgrim 4 And He said, those who are marked with God's favor will be merciful... even, loving their enemies!

Jephthah Well that's not me! I'm not really merciful!

Nathaniel Well?! Are we learning something?

(insistently) Now, come on!! Let's get going.

GO AND DO THE SAME

(CHOIR) (Dialogue in song)

(LEVEL TWO)

Little Kid Now that's amazing grace, isn't it?

Jephthah You've talked about a lot of things that I still don't understand. You say that God blesses those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, and are gentle.

And you say I've got to give up my rightness for His? And learn to forgive others?! Well, that's hard, really hard.

Joy Have you been listening? Climbing this little mountain is not impossible though there might be some tough steps along the way. But it's like my faithful walking stick; help is close at hand—lean on it.

Pilgrim 5 When we lean on the Lord, we find He is faithful to help. And no matter if I slip and fall... I still know, I'll climb out of this valley.

Nathaniel And when we get to the top it will be worth it. I hear the view is spectacular.

Jephthah When I hear all this about Jesus, He must have been a very nice person.

Joy He is nice, and He's someone we can really lean on.

Nathaniel You know, if we become the person He wants us to be, then we probably will be more like Him.

Joy Like any good teacher in school, He wants us to think differently... to think correctly about so many things. Just ask Him, He will show you the way.

Nathaniel And He begins with us right where we are. Don't worry so much about changing yourself. Get to know Him; get your eyes on Him, and you'll change.

Jephthah (walks away from the others, finds a staff and picking it up, speaks) There are times when I wish I knew someone like Jesus.

HOW CAN SOMEONE SEE HIM?

(SOLO/ CHORUS)

Nathaniel That's exactly right!

Joy You have a nice voice, Jephthah.

Jephthah Thanks, Joy. It's always hard for me to sing at school, but here it's easy. Maybe...

Joy Yes?

Jephthah Maybe I'm beginning to understand what you've been telling me. The things you said are a little clearer now, but I'm gonna need help.

Nathaniel Listen, we've got to keep moving. It's getting very dark out here, and we still have a long way to go.

(LEVEL THREE) (huddling with flashlights to the audience)

Joy We should stay together.

Jephthah What else did Matthew write about Jesus teaching on this mountain?

Pilgrim 4 Well, He said that peacemakers would be blessed, and people who always fight and cause divisions are just not obedient to Him.

Pilgrim 5 On top of that, a peacemaker shows God's love. With His Spirit and His love in our lives, things change. We can even bring peace to those around us in this confusing world.

Jephthah (bragging) You know, I've been in a few fights before!

(pause) But really, I didn't always like it. You know sometimes, I should just keep my big mouth shut!

Nathaniel Lots of people talk about peace; they make great speeches. But their problem is: they want the credit, while they ignore the only Prince of Peace.

Pilgrim 5 Jephthah, we've all had our fights. But now we know the One who is our Peace; and someday soon He will come and stop the fighting. Only He can do that.

Nathaniel That's right. We are friends with the One who brings peace.

Joy It's because of Him, we are children of God.

Nathaniel Yeah! We are His friends: friends of the Peacemaker and children of the living God.

HE MADE US ONE
(SOLO/ CHOIR)

Jephthah Sometimes if you try to change things that aren't quite right, you can get into trouble.

Joy That's right. That can be persecution.

Nathaniel But Jesus does not expect us to correct all the wrongs we see. That's not what He did.

Pilgrim 4 But if we say we love the Lord, and those we thought we knew keep doing what is wrong, then we've got to choose.

Joy Every day, we have a choice to make: What is most valuable? The things of Time or the things of Eternity?

Nathaniel (pause) Sure, you can be obedient to the Lord and still have difficult times. That's what His word says.

Joy But His word also says, He will protect us just the same. He will never... leave you; or forsake you.

Jephthah Nathaniel, did Jesus really talk about persecution?

Nathaniel He sure did. He said people would someday hate some of us because we love Him. Some hated Jesus without a reason.

Jephthah Oh! I don't think that will happen.

Pilgrim 4 Don't be too sure. Jesus said it. We have to be ready for our faith to be tested in any situation.

Pilgrim 5 People have always persecuted those who love the Lord. It happens every day... even today! It could happen to us.

Jephthah I think I'd rather be a peacemaker than someone who is persecuted!

Nathaniel But the persecuted have a special reward in heaven, because they have a special place in God's heart.

PERSECUTED

(CHOIR)

(LEVEL FOUR)

Jephthah Let me help you.

Joy Wow! Look how much you can see!

Nathaniel It is spectacular! Nothing's as great as making our way out of that valley and up this little mount. I'm glad we're together.

Jephthah Me too!

Little Kid Me three!

Jephthah There's so much to learn, but I am going to. One thing I know is when the Lord says He will lead us, He gives us His word, and we can count on Him to keep His promise.

Joy He said His word is the Light that guides our steps. He's a good Teacher. He makes things clear!

Nathaniel He said we should be like lights... lights that stand on a very high place, like a city standing on the top of a hill. Then all the people will see that we follow Jesus.

Jephthah Best of all, Jesus will know that we are following Him!

Little Kid That's MY Teacher.

WE ARE SALT AND WE ARE LIGHT
(CHOIR)

- Narrator All of the Beatitudes (the blessed sayings) are like a portrait of Christ Jesus our Lord. Each of the promises finds its accomplishment in Him.
- #1 BLESSED (marked with God's favor)... ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT. Look at Christ: "Rich, but He became poor for our sakes that we through His poverty should become rich."
- #2 BLESSED (marked with God's favor)... ARE THOSE WHO MOURN. Look at Christ: A Man of sorrows – because of us; acquainted with grief, as we hid our faces from Him.
- #3 BLESSED (marked with God's favor) ... ARE THE GENTLE. Look at Christ: He touched the hearts of many who heard Him. Little children loved Him. When He was mocked, He uttered no threats, but kept trusting the One who judges rightly.
- #4 BLESSED (marked with God's favor) ... ARE THOSE HUNGERING AND THRIVING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS. Look at Christ: He always was about His Father's business. He only spoke what was on His Father heart. He, who was in perfect fellowship with His Father, calls us into fellowship with Himself.
- #5 BLESSED (marked with God's favor)... ARE THE MERCIFUL. Look to Christ: He loved the unlovely, He healed the diseased, He mended the broken-hearted, He lifted up the fallen, He befriended the stranger in our midst. His mercy endures to all generations.
- #6 BLESSED (marked with God's favor)... ARE THE PURE IN HEART. Look to Christ: He was the Lamb without blemish and spot. He was daily the Lord's delight. He is... perfect, holy, pure. The Voice from heaven says: "Listen to Him" as He comes to write His love on our hearts.
- #7 BLESSED (marked with God's favor) ... ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS. Look to Christ: He made peace through the blood of the cross. He is the Prince of Peace. He has given us a ministry—reconciling, bringing together one another unto God, announcing grace and peace from God our Father.
- #8 BLESSED (marked with God's favor) ... ARE THE PERSECUTED FOR HIS SAKE, for representing Him. Look to Christ: (Psalm 88:15 says) "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up." He was brutally treated, crucified and

buried. But the third day, He rose again. Now He lives, and is coming soon!

Narrator Yes, this is a portrait of Christ Jesus our Lord. Poor in Spirit, He was. Mourn, He did. Gentle, He was. Pure in heart, a Peacemaker, Persecuted, but Merciful.

Jesus is all that, and so much more! And He invites us to follow Him, to be salt and light on the earth.

Matthew wrote:

ALL "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and boast about our Father who is in heaven."

Narrator No matter the circumstance, take Him at His word. Heaven and earth will one day pass away, but His word will never pass away.

Little Kid And that's a long time!

Narrator Take our stand on His Word! Build our lives on what He says. Now, that's a solid Rock!

HE IS OUR ROCK

(CHOIR)

Narrator In deep valleys or on steep mountain slopes, the Lord Jesus is still looking for men and women, young and old... to keep walking in faith; who won't stop...

ALL Till we make it all the way home!

TILL WE MAKE IT ALL THE WAY HOME

(CHOIR/ CONGREGATION)