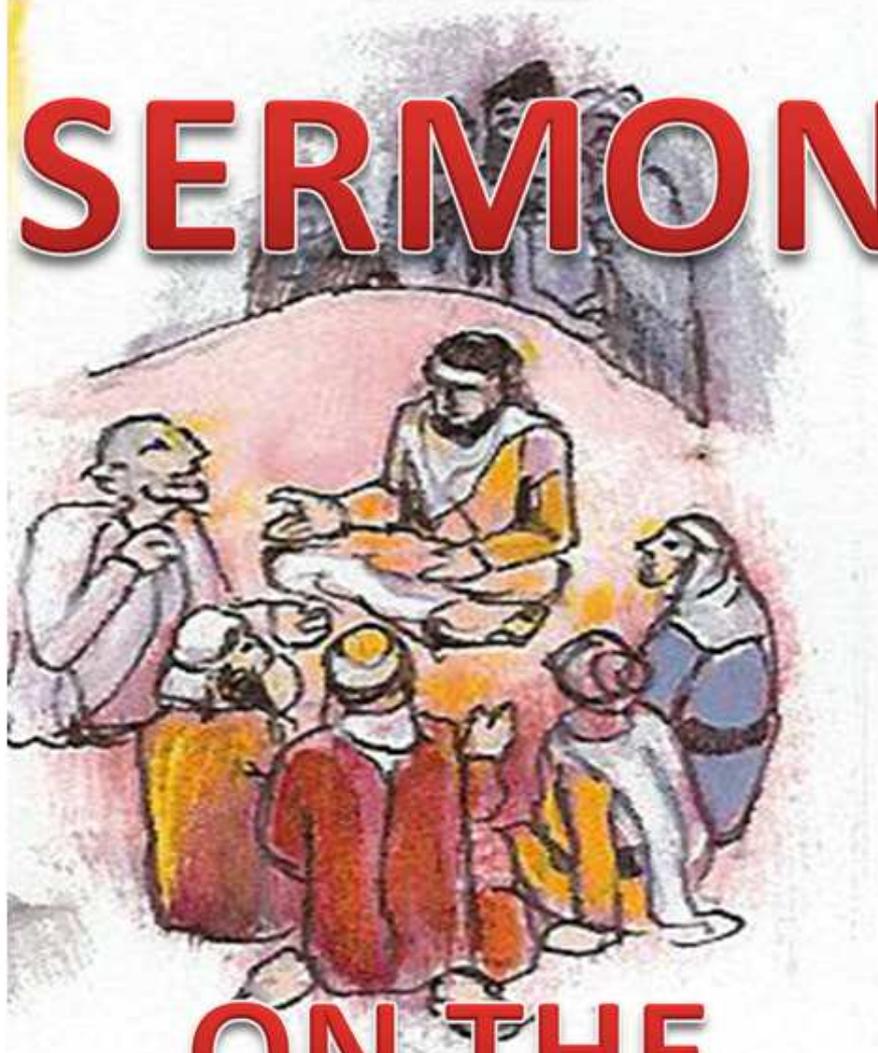


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THE
SERMON
ON THE
MOUNT



Bible Studies FEBRUARY to APRIL 2017

Matthew 5-7: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The great preacher-poet John Donne said of the Sermon on the Mount:

*“As nature hath given us certain elements, and all of our bodies are composed of them; and art hath given us a certain alphabet of letters, and all words are composed of them; so, our blessed Saviour, in these three chapters of this Gospel, hath give us a sermon of texts, of which, all our sermons may be composed. All the articles of our religion, all the canons of the Church, all the injunctions of our princes, all the homilies of our fathers, all the body of divinity, is in these three chapters, in this one sermon in the Mount.”**

Ornate and very strong terms, perhaps a little over the top, but still evocative of this most important of New Testament texts. In our series of studies on Matthew we now reach this first sermon. Up till now Jesus has said very little, he has been introduced and his ministry summed up, but now from this Mount, he presents, if you like, his Inauguration Address. Here at the start of his ministry he lays down the ground rules for what it means to be His disciple, to be part of the Kingdom of Heaven, to put yourself under the rule of the King in the Kingdom.

These 10 studies seek to help us see both the Sermon as a whole and its individual sections of teaching. They will certainly challenge and confront us, if we let the Word speak clearly to our hearts. But they will also strengthen and encourage as we all seek to follow Jesus more closely and to shine his light on the darkened world around us.

We should all pray that God will work in our lives and through us as we study his Word.

Greg Holmes - January 2017

* Quoted in Hughes, Kent, R. *The Sermons on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom (Preaching the Word)* (Wheaton, Crossway, 2001)

Matthew 5-7: The Sermon on the Mount

February - April 2017

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Bibliography

Stott, J. The Message of the Sermon on the Mount: Christian Counter Culture (Bible Speaks Today Series) (Leicester, InterVarsity Press, 1978). *The Classic*
 Wilkins, Michael J. Matthew (NIV Application Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004). *Excellent exposition and application sections.*

France, R.T. Matthew (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (IVP, Leicester, 1985). *One of the standards.*

Hughes, Kent, R. The Sermons on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom (Preaching the Word) (Wheaton, Crossway, 2001). *33 Expositions on the Sermon*

In addition this is a more technical commentary but regarded as the best:
 Carson D.A. "Matthew" in Expositors Bible Commentary (Revised) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010)

Study 1 '*The LORD speaks from the Mountain*'

Background

This study introduces us to the whole of the Sermon on the Mount and so is different to all the others

The Setting: Read Matthew 4:23-25

1. What is Jesus involved in doing? What is the result?
2. What problems does this 'fame' present to Jesus in his task?

Read Matthew 5:1-2

3. Where does Jesus go? What reason might he have?
4. Who are the people who follow? Why are they distinguished from the 'crowds'?
5. What does Jesus now do for his disciples?

Now read MATTHEW 5:3-7:27 – Yes all of it!

It should take about 20 minutes. You can use one of the many excellent audio versions around, or we do have a couple of videos of the whole sermon using just the words of the NIV.

What does it Mean?

1. John Stott called the sermon "Christian Counter Culture", having heard it right through, what do you think he means by that?
2. Is Jesus asking too much?

What should I Do?

1. What would you say to the person who says, "I live by the Sermon on the Mount"?
2. Which verse/section most impacted you? What will you do about it?

What others have said:

"The Sermon on the Mount is Christ's Biography. Every syllable He had already written down in deeds. The sermon merely translated His life into language."

Thomas Wright (1810-1877) English Quaker Antiquary

Matthew 5:1-16

Study 2 “Blessed are you ...”

Background

1. What do you think it means to be blessed? Where does blessing come from?

What does it Say?

1. Who are blessed? What does it mean to be these things?
2. What are the blessings? When do the blessed get them?
3. What are v11-12 saying about the faithful Christian life?
4. What are Jesus’ disciples to be in the world (v13-16)?

What does it Mean?

1. Can you see any connecting idea about those who will be blessed?
2. Why is the note of ‘persecution’ introduced at v11?
3. What is meant by being ‘salt and light’?

What should I Do?

1. Which of the characteristics of the ‘Blessed’ do you need to work at?
2. How can you be salt and light this week?

What others have said:

“We are about to embark on reading the most morally exacting sermon ever given. Why do you think Jesus began such a sermon talking about poorness in spirit, mourning and meekness?”

Shiner, R. Matthew 5-6 in The Daily Reading Bible, Volume 1 (Kingsford, St Matthias Press, 2004)

Matthew 5:17-32

Study 3 '**But to fulfill them**'

Background

1. How well do we know and how seriously do we take the Old Testament laws?

What does it Say?

1. What has Jesus come to do about the 'Law and the Prophets (v17-19)?
2. How 'righteous' are we supposed to be (v20)?
3. How does Jesus redefine 'murder' (v21-26)?
4. How does Jesus redefine 'adultery' (v27-30)?
5. What is Jesus saying about 'divorce' (v31-32)?

What does it Mean?

1. What do you think 'fulfill them' means?
2. What is all this about eyes, and hands? Does Jesus really mean it?
3. Is there are proper place for 'hate'?

What should I Do?

1. How do you deal with Anger and Lust?
2. What do you need to do for your righteousness to exceed the scribes and the Pharisees?

What others have said:

"No, replies Jesus. His disciples are called to a different kind and quality of righteousness, not an increased quantity."

WILKINS (NIVAC) p231

Matthew 5:33-48

Study 4 '**Be perfect ...**'

Background

1. What does it mean when we say someone is 'perfect'?

What does it Say?

1. What do v33-37 say about the way we speak?
2. What place does revenge have in God's kingdom (v38-42)?
3. From v43-45, who are we to love and pray for?
4. What is Jesus' 'simple' demand of us (v48)? Who is the example?

What does it Mean?

1. How are the demands in this passage counter cultural?
2. Can 'turn the other cheek' really work?
3. How is it possible to love your enemy?

What should I Do?

1. Simple truthful words, positive reactions, love for enemies. How can these things impact what we do this week?
2. What is the only way you can be perfect?

What others have said:

"This must not encourage us to conclude that Jesus teaches that unqualified perfection is already possible for his disciples. He teaches them to acknowledge spiritual bankruptcy (v. 3) and to pray, "Forgive us our debts" (6:12). But the perfection of the Father, the true eschatological goal of the law, is what all disciples of Jesus pursue."

CARSON

Matthew 6:1-18

Study 5 ‘And when you pray’

Background

1. Giving, Prayer, Fasting, (Forgiving). What part do these play in your life?

What does it Say?

1. What broad topic does this passage cover?
2. How should we go about our giving (v2-4)?
3. How are we to pray (v5-15)?
4. What should we do about fasting (v16-17)?

What does it Mean?

1. What is the general principle behind these instructions about fasting, praying and giving?
2. Discuss the various ‘petitions’ of the Lord’s Prayer?
3. Discuss what you learn about Prayer from this passage.

What should I Do?

1. ‘Making a request from someone requires two things. Firstly that they are able to do what you ask, and secondly, that they are willing to do what you ask’. Spend some time meditating on (discussing) God’s ability and willingness to fulfill your requests. (see Matthew 7:7-11; Ephesians 3:20-21).*
2. Note v14-15. What sort of challenge is that to you?

What others have said:

“The right of the eschatological community to utter the Lord’s Prayer depends, as does the efficacy of the prayer, upon communal reconciliation.”

Osborne quoting Davies and Allison

*Shiner, R. Matthew 5-6 in The Daily Reading Bible, Volume 1 (Kingsford, St Matthias Press, 2004)

Matthew 6:19-34

Study 6 ‘No one can serve two masters’

Background

1. What is your biggest worry at this time?

What does it Say?

1. In v19-21 what is the potential problem Jesus is addressing?
2. Where should our eyes be focused (v22-23)?
3. Note v24. What is the challenge here?
4. What should we ‘worry’ about and what should we not worry about?

What does it Mean?

1. What should be our attitude to our treasures on earth?
2. What point about worry are v25-34 making?
3. Treasures, eyes, masters and worrying. How are these related through the passage?

What should I Do?

1. What should you do with your worries?
2. How many ‘masters’ do you have? What do you need to do about that?

What others have said:

*“Do not be overawed when a man grows rich,
when the splendor of his house increases;
for he will take nothing with him when he dies,
his splendor will not descend with him.
Though while he lived he counted himself blessed—
and men praise you when you prosper—
he will join the generation of his fathers,
who will never see the light of life.
A man who has riches without understanding
is like the beasts that perish. (Ps. 49:16–20).”*

Matthew 7:1-12

Study 7 'Do not judge ...'

Background

1. What really 'gets up your nose' about some people?

What does it Say?

1. What does 'do not judge' (v1-2) mean in everyday life? Note what is taught in v6).
2. What is all this about specks and planks?
3. How do v7-12 relate to 6v8-13?
4. I know we call it the Golden Rule but does He really mean v12?

What does it Mean?

1. I think there is something of a theme of 'judging' through these verses. How does each of the sections deal with that theme?
2. Discuss what it means to be a hypocrite?
3. What encouragement to prayer is there in this whole passage?

What should I Do?

1. What encouragement do you draw from v7-8 (11)?
2. What do we need to do about our hypocrisy?

What others have said:

"Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount "fulfills" (pleroo) the Law and the Prophets (5:17), while his Golden Rule "sums up" the Law and the Prophets (7:12). So the Golden Rule summarizes the essence of God's will for his people in the Old Testament, and now for Jesus' disciples."

Wilkins (NIVAC)

Matthew 7:13-23

Study 8 'The narrow gate'

Background

1. How do you discern who is 'fair-dinkum' in the Christian Faith and who is not? And should you do it?

What does it Say?

1. What is said about the road we are on as Christians (v13-14)?
2. What is the problem with false prophets (v15-20)? How can you recognize them?
3. How do you discern a person's spiritual state?
4. Who gets into the kingdom of heaven (v21-23)?

What does it Mean?

1. Noting the two ways mentioned in v13-14 what examples of these choices has Jesus addressed so far in the Sermon? Discuss your experiences in choosing the right road.
2. What, in the Christian life are the fruit Jesus is talking about?
3. Discuss the warning implied in v21-23?

What should I Do?

1. How do you produce good fruit?
2. Discuss how to be spiritually discerning with out being judgmental (7:1)?

What others have said:

"The disciple who takes it on himself to be the judge of what another does usurps the place of God (Ro 14:10) and therefore becomes answerable to him."

Carson

Matthew 7:24-8:1

Study 9 'Yet it did not fall'

Background

1. How good are you at implementing advice and instructions you are given?

What does it Say?

1. Who is Jesus addressing at the start of this passage?
2. What is the gist of the parable he tells?
3. What is the result for the two builders? Why?
4. What is the reaction of the people around to Jesus' sermon (7:28-8:1)?

What does it Mean?

1. What is the 'rock' that we build on?
2. Why are the people amazed at Jesus' teaching?
3. What other passages in the sermon end with the same two 'ends' as Jesus' parable?

What should I Do?

1. Where is your foundation?
2. What will you do this week to put one of the demands, these words of Jesus, in this sermon into practice?

What others have said:

"Jesus alone provides the teaching that leads to eternal life. So the one who listens must choose between temporary satisfaction of worldly ways and the final reality of Christ. ... The emphasis is on obedience, not just adherence to Christ. ... We must put feet on our clams and live our beliefs remembering that those 'who endure to the end will be saved' (10:22; 24:13)."
Osborne.

Matthew 5:1-7:27

Study 10 'Like one who had authority'

This study again looks at the whole Sermon on the Mount.

Background

- 1. Scan through the Sermon (Matthew 5-7) again and pick out one thought that has impacted you.**

What does it Say? Some 'startling' statements:

Read these brief statements (or at least some of them) in context and discuss their impact. How is this "Christian Counter Culture."?

- **Blessed are the meek ...' 5:5**
- **'Blessed are you when people insult you ...' 5:11**
- **'You are the light of the world ...' 5:14**
- **'... but to fulfill them ...' 5:17**
- **'If your right eye cause you to stumble, gouge it out ...' 5:29**
- **'Love you enemies ...' 5:44**
- **'Be perfect therefore ...' 5:48**
- **'Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you ...' 6:4**
- **'This then is how you should pray ...' 6:9**
- **'No one can serve two masters ...' 6:**
- **'Therefore do not worry about tomorrow ...' 6:34**
- **'Do not judge ...' 7:1**
- **'do to others what you would have them do to you ...' 7:12**
- **'Enter through the narrow gate ...' 7:13**
- **'because it had its foundation on the rock ...' 7:25**

What should I Do?

- 1. Corporately, what do we need to change in our church to align ourselves more to Jesus' teaching in the Sermon?**
- 2. Individually, what do you need to work on to be more like the sort of disciple Jesus paints in the Sermon?**

What others have said:

"What we shall find is that it is impossible to drive a wedge between the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount and the Jesus of the rest of the New Testament. Instead, the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount is the same supernatural, dogmatic, divine Jesus who is to be found everywhere else. So the main question the Sermon forces upon us is not so much 'What do you make of this teaching?' as 'Who on earth is this teacher?'" John Stott

Matthew 5-7: The Sermon on the Mount

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Notes

Matthew 5-7: The Sermon on the Mount

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The Sermon on the Mount is the compacted, congealed theology of Christ and as such is perhaps the most profound section of the entire New Testament and the whole Bible. Every phrase can bear exhaustive exposition and yet never be fully plumbed. Along with this, it is the most penetrating section of God's Word. Because the theme is entering the kingdom of heaven, it shows us exactly where we stand in relation to the kingdom and eternal life (see 5:3; 7:21). As we expose ourselves to the X-rays of Christ's words, we see whether we truly believe, and if believers, the degree of the authenticity of our lives. No other section of Scripture makes us face ourselves like the Sermon on the Mount. It is violent, but its violence can be our ongoing liberation! It is the antidote to the pretense and sham that plagues Christianity.

(Hughes, Kent, R. The Sermons on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom (Preaching the Word) (Wheaton, Crossway, 2001) p14.

Most people are willing to take the Sermon on the Mount as a flag to sail under, but few will use it as a rudder by which to steer."

(Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr)