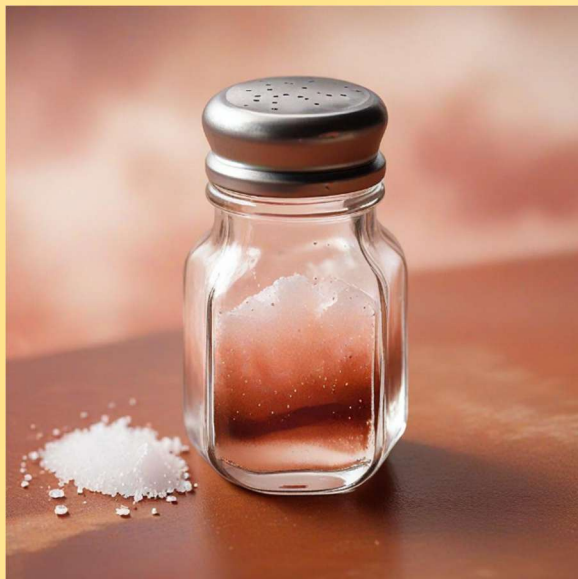


The Sermon on the Mount

This Bible study examines Jesus' teachings on what discipleship looks like when we live in the presence and power of the kingdom of God in our daily lives and what it means to be salt and light.



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Session One: Blessed Are – Part One

Some of Jesus' most well-known words are recorded in the "Sermon on the Mount." Many statements have even become proverbial, such as "Love your neighbor as yourself" or "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Those listening to Jesus were living under the oppressive rule of the Roman Empire. They were experiencing excessive taxation, denied freedoms, and persecution. In this sermon, Jesus expounds on the reality of discipleship lived in the presence and power of the kingdom of God but within the everyday world.

Read Matthew 5:1-6.

1. Describe below the setting of this sermon. (Also see Matthew chapter 4.)
 - What events happened immediately preceding this?

 - To whom did Jesus deliver it?

Jesus begins his sermon with what we call the beatitudes. The word "beatitude" comes from the Latin word *beatus*, which means "blessed." These nine statements all start with the words "Blessed are." Here, Jesus is not telling us how to obtain the kingdom of heaven, how to be comforted, how to see God, etc. Rather, Jesus is simply saying that these results are because these people are displaying the preceding characteristic, e.g., people who are peacemakers will be recognized as the sons of God at the judgment and welcomed into the Father's house.

2. What does it mean to be blessed?

3. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? See Isaiah 6:5 and Luke 5:8.

4. Jesus uses the present tense regarding the poor in spirit: "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." What does this mean?

5. Can the kingdom of heaven be attained without becoming poor in spirit? Why or why not?

6. What is the mourning for in verse four, and what comfort is given? See Luke 18:9-14 and 2 Corinthians 7:6-10.

7. Circle all the characteristics of biblical meekness:

Weak	Gentle	Shy	Humble	Trusting	Unresisting
Patient	Lenient	Resigned	Long-suffering	Passive	Controlled Strength

8. What does it mean to inherit the earth?

9. What does it mean to hunger and thirst after righteousness? See Psalm 63:1

10. When and how will those who hunger and thirst after righteousness be satisfied?

Session Two: Blessed Are – Part Two

Read Matthew 5:7-12.

1. Why should we show others mercy, and how do we do that?
2. What does it mean to be pure of heart? See Psalm 24:3-6 and 1 Peter 1:22-23
3. In what ways are we to be peacemakers? See 2 Corinthians 5:19 and Colossians 1:20
4. “If a Christian is not ever being reviled, persecuted, or slandered on account of their faith, he is not living out his faith.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? See John 15:18-20, Galatians 4:28-29, and 1 Peter 4:12-14.
5. What is the danger to the Christian described in question #4, and what are they missing out on?
6. In what ways would the Beatitudes have been countercultural to the people listening to Jesus?

7. Are the Beatitudes countercultural now? Fill out the table below for what our culture teaches.

What Jesus Teaches	What Our Culture Teaches
Poor in spirit (spiritually bankrupt)	
Mournful (over sin)	
Meek	
Hunger and thirst for righteousness	
Merciful	
Pure in heart	
Peacemaker (sharing the Gospel)	
Persecuted for Jesus' sake	

In the Beatitudes, Jesus revealed the characteristics of his true followers, and because they have these characteristics, they are metaphorically both salt and light to the world.

8. Read Matthew 5:13-16 and fill out the table below.

	Characteristics, Benefits, Uses	How We Are to Apply This Teaching
Salt		
Light		

Session Three: You Have Heard

The statements that Jesus makes in Matthew 5:17-20 have been said to be the key to understanding not only the Sermon on the Mount but all of Jesus' ministry. Read this section of Scripture and answer the following questions.

1. Why would the people have thought that Jesus had come to abolish the Law (the first five books of the Old Testament) or the Prophets (the rest of the Old Testament)?
2. How did Jesus fulfill the Law? See 1 Peter 2:22 and Hebrews 10:11-14.
3. How did Jesus fulfill the Prophets?
4. Today, some Christians think that the Old Testament does not apply, and they only read or study the New Testament. Is this OK? Why or why not?
5. How can our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, who were known for closely following the Law? See Galatians 2:16.

To underscore that he did not come to abolish the law, Jesus then correctly interprets six Old Testament teachings where misunderstandings and faulty applications were prevalent. Jesus introduces each topic with "You have heard that it was said."

6. Read **Matthew 5:21-48** and fill out the table below.

Verses in Matt. 5	What They Had Heard was Said	What Jesus Says	How We Can Apply What Jesus Teaches
21 – 26			
27 – 30			
31 – 32			
33 – 37			
38 – 42			
43 – 48			

7. List below a few ways the world today has misunderstandings and faulty applications of what Scripture and Jesus teach.

8. Why is it essential that we are both salt and light to the world, and how can we do this?

Session Four: The Kingdom Life – Part One

In Matthew 6:1 – 7:12, Jesus sets forth principles for spirituality – in other words, how to live as a citizen of heaven and an ambassador for Christ while we are still on earth and exist in this world. These principles cover our spiritual acts (6:1-18), everyday life (6:19-34), and community relationships (7:1-12). Jesus begins many of these topics by telling us what not to do and then what to do instead.

The first three principles, charitable deeds, praying, and fasting, focus on three things that are very good to do but are done for very wrong reasons. In this session, we will examine charitable deeds and fasting, and the following session will examine prayer.

Read Matthew 6:1-4.

1. In verse one, Jesus exposes the wrong reason for practicing righteousness. What is that, and what is the consequence?
2. What does Jesus mean by sounding a trumpet before doing a charitable deed?
3. What are some examples of this today?
4. Is it wrong to take a tax deduction for gifts to charity? I.e., is that gift somehow tainted by using it to save paying some taxes? Why or why not?

Read Matthew 6:16-18.

5. What was wrong with the fasting habits of the hypocrites? See also Isaiah 58:3-4, 13.
6. Jesus assumes people will fast. What was the purpose of fasting? See also Luke 2:37, 5:33, and Isaiah 58:6-7.

7. Besides denying ourselves food, what other things could we “fast” from to honor the purpose of fasting?
8. Read Galatians 2:11-14. Who did what hypocritical behavior?
9. How is this a warning for us?
10. Besides charitable deeds, praying, and fasting, how can some other “religious” acts that we do be done in a hypocritical way?
11. Besides not getting a heavenly reward, what are some consequences of hypocritical behavior by those who call themselves followers of Jesus?

Session Five: The Kingdom Life – Part Two

Read Matthew 6:5-15.

1. What was wrong with the prayer habits of the hypocrites? Is public prayer wrong?
2. What does Jesus instruct us to do when we pray, and what are some reasons for this?
3. What does it mean in verse seven to “heap up empty phrases”? What is this warning against?
4. Verse eight says our Father knows what we need before we ask; why then should we pray?
5. In verses 9 – 13, Jesus gives a model of prayer, which many people repeat word for word at church services and in their daily prayers. What are some precautions we should take when doing this?
6. Verse 9 opens with an invocation and the first petition. In your own words, what is this petition, and why do you think this leads to Jesus’s model of prayer?
7. Verse 10 contains the next two petitions. Explain what these are and why they are also at the beginning of the prayer.
8. Verse 11 asks God to give us our daily bread. What does the petition encompass besides daily food?

9. What do vv. 12, 14, and 15 say about forgiveness? Why do we need to take this to heart?
10. Verse 13 petitions God's help in our battle with sin and evil. Does God ever tempt us to sin? See James 1:13.
11. The word translated as "temptation" in verse 13 can indicate either temptation or testing. What does James 1:2-4 say about testing?
12. What, then, is verse 13 asking God for?
13. Regarding the whole prayer, what attitude(s) should we bring to prayer?

Session Six: The Kingdom Life - Part Three

The righteousness of the kingdom of heaven works out in the details of our personal lives. Jesus asks us to choose our master and our outlook on life.

Read Matthew 6:19-24.

1. What treasures do we lay up for ourselves in heaven, and how do we do that?
2. Read also Luke 12:33-34. Is it sinful to have nice things or a large bank account? Explain.
3. In what ways can we know what we truly treasure? See also Psalm 139:23-24
4. Verses 22 and 23 switch from discussing treasures to discussing eyes. How do these verses about eyes directly relate to the ones about treasure?
5. In verse 24, Jesus says we cannot serve God and money. The word “money” in this verse is translated from the Greek word “mammon,” which means money or possessions. In what ways do people serve mammon?
6. Paul picks up on this point in 1 Timothy 6:10. Explain what this verse says and how it echoes this section in Matthew.

Read Matthew 6:25-34.

7. Verse 25 starts with the word “therefore,” which signifies that a conclusion is being drawn from the previous verses. How does not being anxious correspond to verses 19 through 24?
8. People’s needs exceed those of birds or field flowers and are more complicated. What is the point, then, that Jesus is making?
9. How does verse 33 relate to verses 19 through 24?
10. Why do people excessively accumulate earthly treasures and/or are anxious about their lives?
11. What does Jesus want us to do instead?

Session Seven: The Kingdom Life – Part Four

In this sermon section, Jesus directs our kingdom life in relating to others.

Read Matthew 7:1-5.

1. Does this passage teach that we should not judge?
2. Use the table below to write what each scripture says about judging others.

Scripture	What This Says About Judging Others
Matthew 18:15	
John 7:24	
Romans 2:1-3	
Romans 14:3-4	
1 Timothy 5:20	

What Jesus just taught us in the above verses, he lives out in the situation John 8:2-11 records. Read this passage and answer the following questions.

3. What was the woman guilty of, and what was the punishment according to Jewish law?
4. What made her accusers decide not to carry out the punishment?
5. Why do you think Jesus was “letting her off the hook,” or was he?

6. What should I do before rebuking my brother or sister's drinking, swearing, off-color jokes, etc.?

Jesus now touches on several other topics in his sermon. **Read Matthew 7:6-12.**

7. How can we decide if certain people fit the mold of a dog/pig/swine? What are our criteria?
8. What do the pearls represent, and what does verse 6 mean?
9. Do verses 7 and 8 mean that all our prayers will be answered according to our requests? If not, what does it mean?
10. God always answers our prayers; however, his answer may not be what we had hoped for. In light of this, what is Jesus telling us in verses 9 through 11?
11. How should the golden rule affect your behavior in these situations?
 - Driving your car
 - At the store
 - Witnessing sin in a sister or brother
 - Finding out about a sick neighbor

Session Eight: A Choice to be Made

Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount by giving those listening four choices to be made.

1. **Read Matthew 7:13-14** and fill out the following table for the two kinds of gates Jesus tells us about.

Type of Gate	Characteristics	What the End Result Is

2. What is Jesus saying to us in these verses, and what is the choice to be made?

3. **Read Matthew 7:15-20** and fill out the following table for the two kinds of trees Jesus tells us about.

Type of Tree	Characteristics	What the End Result Is

4. What does the tree represent, and what are the fruits?

5. What is Jesus saying to us in these verses, and what is the choice to be made?

6. **Read Matthew 7:21-23** and fill out the following table for the two kinds of disciples Jesus tells us about.

Type of Disciple	Characteristics	What the End Result Is

7. What is Jesus saying to us in these verses, and what is the choice to be made?

8. **Read Matthew 7:24-27** and fill out the following table for the two kinds of builders Jesus tells us about.

Type of Builder	Characteristics	What the End Result Is

9. What does the rock represent?

10. What is Jesus saying to us in these verses, and what is the choice to be made?

11. Read verses 28 and 29. The scribes' teachings were primarily quotations from other rabbis. The scribes themselves didn't make strong declarations. Review this sermon and list at least three verses where Jesus established his authority. (Hint: Look at Jesus's words in this session and session three.)