

The Sermon on the Mount: An Overview And Matthew 5:3-8

Thesis: We are a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Text: Matthew 5 – 7

The Sermon on the Mount is one of the most famous passages in the Bible. People refer to it and quote from this teaching of Jesus all the time.

A few months ago, I felt like the Lord highlighted The Sermon on the Mount to me. These words of Jesus are revolutionary, radical, and relational (righteousness). I wonder if the words of Jesus have lost their cutting edge in our lives because of familiarity. I have read Matthew 5 – 7 many times. I have studied it some. But, I have never taken such an in-depth look at Matthew 5 – 7 like I have done since April 2024.

God is showing me wonderful things from his Word. And, the Lord is using The Sermon on the Mount to transform me.

So, I am asking the Lord to encourage you by his Holy Spirit and to speak to us as we spend time on Matthew 5 – 7 over the next months.

Ponder these words as we begin to look at The Sermon on the Mount.

“We are so familiar with them that the words can glide piously off our tongues without disturbing us. Yet each of these beatitudes is... revolutionary... they can, when properly understood, utterly overthrow secularism and radically transform insipid Christianity” (DA Carson as quoted by Sam Storms: *Biblical Studies: The Sermon on the Mount*. Edmond, OK: Sam Storms, 2016.)

Living out the beatitudes (and the entire Sermon on the Mount) can never be divorced from a right relationship to Jesus himself. Unlike other preachers and their sermons, the latter of which you may like and the former of which you don't (or vice versa), here you cannot embrace one without embracing the other. (Sam Storms. *Biblical Studies: The Sermon on the Mount*. Edmond, OK. 2016.)

[The Beatitudes] are explanations and illustrations, drawn from the immediate setting, of the present availability of the kingdom through personal relationship to Jesus. (Sam Storms. *Biblical Studies: The Sermon on the Mount*. Edmond, OK. 2016.)

Consider While Reading:

The first hearers of these words were mostly low-status, powerless Israelites on the fringes of mainstream society ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7). They were the impoverished, the infirmed, the unimportant, the oppressed, and the ignored.

Overview:

“The introduction (5:3-16) announces the surprising and counterintuitive identity of those who are a part of God’s Kingdom. Then comes the main body of teachings (5:17-7:12), where Jesus explains further what he means when he calls his followers to be ‘righteous.’ Finally, Jesus concludes the sermon (7:13-27) by calling people to make a choice about how they’re going to respond” ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

The Sermon on the Mount is carefully designed and organized.

1. **There are 3 main parts to The Sermon on the Mount.**
 - a. The middle part is divided into 3 parts.
 - b. Each of the parts of the middle part is divided into 3 parts.
 - c. Right at the center of the center of The Sermon on the Mount is the Lord’s Prayer.
2. **The Bible tells us what it means for God’s Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.**
 - a. The kingdom of God coming to earth is the one of the main themes of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.
3. **From the beginning, humans rebelled and started to build their own kingdom by their own wisdom.**
4. **So, God chose one family, Israel, to join him in his mission.**
 - a. And, God offered them his wisdom.
 - b. That wisdom was called the Torah—the teaching.
 - c. Beginning on with Moses on Mt. Sinai, God entered into a covenant with Isreal.

- d. The goal was for Israel, one nation, to be transformed by God's wisdom, so that they could represent God's Kingdom before all the nations and to lead the nations back to God.
5. **In Jesus' day, the kingdom of God was nowhere to be seen.**
 - a. Instead, Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire and Roman oppressors.
6. **So, why wasn't God's Kingdom coming?**
 - a. Some religious leaders-- the **Pharisees**-- believed Israel was not being faithful enough to the Torah.
 - b. Other religious leaders—the **Sadducees**—said it would be best if Israel found a way to cooperate with Rome. They were the power brokers in Jesus' day.
 - c. Some people ran to the hills to become freedom fighters against Rome. They were known as the **Zealots**.
 - d. Others **withdrew to the desert**, waiting for God to use them to start the new Israel.
7. **But walk around the country of Israel, like Jesus did in his day, and here is what you would find.**
 - a. You would find mostly normal people.
 - b. They were trying to figure out how to live their lives as best they can.
 - c. Most people were living in poverty and were carving out a subsistence living.
 - d. There were lots of poor and sick people.
 - e. They were oppressed by high taxes.
 - f. Rome had taken their land away from them.
 - g. Most people were struggling to pay the heavy taxes imposed on them by their Roman occupiers.
 - h. In essence, the people of Jesus' day were powerless and hopeless.
8. **Jesus went to these people** healing the sick, setting free the demonized, mending broken hearts, and bringing salvation.
 - a. Jesus came with good news.
 - b. And, Jesus told these people that the kingdom of God was arriving.
 - c. People came from all over to hear his teaching and to get healing, deliverance, and encouragement.
9. **One day, Jesus went up to a tall hill or small mountain and said, "The arrival of kingdom of God is starting here and now with you."**
 - a. The kingdom of God was starting with the powerless, the weak, and the nobodies.
 - b. **Where can you go to see God's presence and blessing?**
 - i. You see God's presence and blessing among the poor in spirit, the crushed, and the defeated.

- ii. The kingdom of God was not coming first among the wealthy and the powerful.
- iii. The kingdom of God was coming to the people standing right before Jesus.

10. The structure of The Sermon on the Mount:

- a. There are **3 main sections** to The Sermon on the Mount.
 - i. **Main Section 1:** Matthew 5:3 – 16. This is the introduction. Jesus tells us about the **kingdom identity** of his followers.
 - ii. **Main Section 2:** Matthew 5:17 – 7:12. This is the main body of teaching. In this section, Jesus tells us what he means **for his followers to be righteous**.
 - 1. Section 1 of the Middle Section: Matthew 5:17 – 48. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness relates to the **Torah**.
 - a. Matthew 5:17 – 20. Jesus fulfills the Torah.
 - b. Matthew 5:21 – 32. Six case studies on how the righteousness of Jesus fulfills the Torah.
 - i. Anger, lust, divorce, telling the truth, revenge, and enemy love.
 - c. Matthew 5:33 – 48. Summary: be complete or whole. The purpose of the Torah is teaching people God's wisdom so that they can become mature, whole people who spread God's blessing to the world.
 - i. Being complete or whole links back to what Jesus says: living by Jesus' teachings will fulfill the Torah and Prophets.
 - 2. Section 2 of the Middle Section: Matthew 6:10 – 18. In this section, Jesus tells us how this righteousness relates to **religious practices**.
 - a. Matthew 6:1. Living in right relationship with God and other results in a reward.
 - i. But be careful: If you are doing your righteousness to get public praise, you will miss out on the real reward God has instore.
 - b. Matthew 6:2 – 18. Three examples of how religious devotion can go astray.
 - i. Generosity to the poor, prayer, and fasting.
 - c. Matthew 6:19 – 21. True wealth: the real reward.

- i. The real reward links back to Matthew 6:1. The reward is knowing and being loved by God.
 3. Section 3 of the Middle Section. Matthew 6:19 – 7:12. In this section, Jesus tells us how **this righteousness is expressed in right relationships with God and with neighbor.**
 - a. Matthew 6:19 – 34.
 - b. Matthew 7:1 – 11.
 - c. Matthew 7:12.
 - iii. **Main Section 3:** Matthew 7:13 – 27. In his conclusion, **Jesus calls people to make a choice as to how they are going to respond.**
- b. **Finally, every one of these parts has 3 parts.**
 - i. There is a lot of design in the structure of The Sermon on the Mount.

By the way:

“In the Hebrew Scriptures, salt is a symbol of God’s long-lasting covenant relationship with Israel. So Jesus is claiming that he and his followers are carrying Israel’s covenant relationship to its fulfillment” ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

Here is what Jesus is saying through The Sermon on the Mount.

1. God’s Kingdom comes to Earth through Jesus.
2. In God’s Kingdom, love, justice, and peace prevail.
3. This Kingdom is arriving first to ordinary people—the poor, the powerless, and the outsider ([The Bible Project](#), Weekly Playlist, January 1-7).

Today, we are jumping into our study of the Sermon on the Mount.

1. I want to encourage you to read The Sermon on the Mount as a whole several times.
2. We will take bite sized chunks of Matthew 5 – 7 over the next months. At times, we will also have messages on other topics.
3. Finally, I want to point you to a great resource: [The Bible Project playlist on The Sermon on the Mount](#). It is available online or as an app.

Let's read the first main section of The Sermon on the Mount, which is often referred to as the Beatitudes.

Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying: (Matthew 5:1-2 NIV).

[The Bible Project](#) Translation

3 How good is life for the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of the skies.

4 How good is life for those who grieve, because they will be comforted.

5 How good is life for the unimportant, because they will inherit the land.

6 How good is life for those who hunger and thirst for right-relationships, because they will be satisfied.

7 How good is life for those who show mercy, because they will be shown mercy.

8 How good is life for the pure in heart, because they will see God.

9 How good is life for the peacemakers, because they will be called children of God.

10 How good is life for those who have been persecuted on account of doing what is right, because theirs is the kingdom of the skies.

11 How good is life for you when they insult you and persecute and speak any evil lies against you on account of me.

12 Celebrate and shout for joy. Because your reward is great in the skies, because this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.

13 You are the salt of the land.

But if the salt becomes unsalty, with what can it be made salty again?

It is useful for nothing, except to be thrown out and stepped on by humans.

14 You are the light of the world.

A city that is set up on a mountain is not able to be hidden.

15 And they don't light a candle and place it under a basket. Rather, upon a candle stand, and it will shine on everyone in the house.

16 In the same way, let your light shine before people so that they can see your good works and they can give honor to your Father who is in the skies.

Prayer:

1. Lord, I pray that you speak to us, encounter us, and grant to us your Spirit of wisdom and revelation that we might know you better.
2. Bless our time in your word together corporately.
3. Bless our time in your word individually as a part of our spiritual practices.
4. Help us to hear your voice, God, by the power of your Holy Spirit.
5. Help us to fall more and more in love with you, and help us to join Jesus on his mission together with others in our spheres of influence.
6. May we be a people who follow Jesus, who listen to the voice of God, and who get in action around what the Lord is saying through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Ministry Time: