

# Sermon on the Mount

## Lesson 1 – Introduction

### Matthew 5-7/Luke 6:17-49

Many have called the Sermon on the Mount an ordination message for the newly chosen twelve apostles. Though it was preached on a specific mountain at a specific time, this is a wonderful example of what Jesus taught every day! Let's sit at the feet of Jesus and learn too!

“(And he came down with them (chosen 12 apostles), and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples,” Luke 6:17) And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, (“and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon,” Luke 6:17) and from beyond Jordan.” Matthew 4:25

#### I. The large audience included three groups – from far and near

A. The newly chosen apostles - disciples. Here at the end of Jesus' first year of ministry, Jesus will select twelve to be part of His inner circle. They will learn, see, and be part of His ministry and later be sent out to bring the truth of His Person to the world! This is the first message to them as well as to the crowds! Let's not miss the phrase, “and the company of his disciples.” These are the other faithful followers of Jesus, a group of men and women who also were faithful to Him. (Luke 6:12-13) They were not part of the 12 apostles but would also travel with Jesus.

B. The critical Religious Leaders. By this time, the Jewish Elite were constantly hounding Jesus looking for anything they might find fault in or criticize. We can be absolutely confident there were pockets of Pharisees and Scribes scattered throughout the crowd that day!

C. The common, curious man. The last group of listeners will be common folks who have come to hear Jesus out of curiosity seeking to find out more about the “prophet of Nazareth.” Over time, some will be convinced that He was their Messiah and commit to Him, unfortunately, many will walk away when they realize the price of commitment is high, or Christ came to save them from their spiritual bondage not the bondage of Rome!

As we move forward in Jesus' earthly ministry, we will always see these three groups sitting before Jesus!

D. The Language of the Crowd – Aramaic At the time of Jesus, most Jews knew two or more languages! Aramaic was spoken by the common man living in Israel at the time of Christ. Jesus would have preached and taught in Aramaic. Hebrew was the national language but in reality, used mostly in worship and religious contexts. Greek was common among merchants and traders. It was spoken by educated, upper-class, and businesspeople. Lastly, there was Latin. It was the official language of the Roman Empire. It was spoken in the west and among officials throughout the empire. In the larger towns of Israel, all four languages could be heard!

**II. Took place near Christ's home base town of Capernaum on a mount.** Please realize, the Sermon on the Mount was preached about a year into Jesus' earthly ministry. Much of His time moving forward will be spent around the Sea of Galilee.

**III. Recorded in Matthew and Luke** Both men would write their books in the Greek language. There are those who think the sermon recorded in Luke is that of another message preached by Christ, but after a careful look at content and location, most scholars believe this is the same message.

A. Matthew was writing to the Jews - The many inclusions of Jewish laws and rituals highlight the fact Matthew's audience was Jewish! He spoke of their need to understand the law.

B. Luke was writing to the Gentiles - Luke's recording of the Sermon on the Mount is more concise than that of Matthew's. He will leave out the uniquely Jewish aspects of the Sermon on the Mount and that will also aid in making Luke's sermon much shorter. We should also note that Luke's text is more chronologically accurate. This was not a point of concern for Matthew as he wrote to systematically write convince the Jews that Jesus was their Messiah.

**IV. Virtually every section or theme is repeated elsewhere in the New Testament.** There are those that have taught that the Sermon on the Mount was actually a recorded collection of Jesus' teachings. But a better conclusion is that the Sermon on the Mount was a specific message given and that it was the theme of Christ's earthly ministry! He repeated its tendencies often, for it was central to His message and mission!  
Example – Lord's Prayer found in the Sermon on the Mount and again in Luke 11.

**V. The Sermon on the Mount reveals the mind and heart of Christ.**

A. Kingdom – the true believers of Christ as a whole If you are a believer and follower of Jesus, you are also part of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of believers.

B. The sermon points out the outward manifestations of the character and conduct of true, genuine believers. Jesus is revealing what true lovers and followers of Him should look like! They should have an inward change that demonstrates itself outwardly! Faith and Obedience

C. The sermon is an exposition of the law and a potent criticism of Pharisaic legalism. Jesus will teach the meaning of "righteous" - a heart of love and obedience toward God and a desire to glorify Him. The Pharisees taught that "righteousness" was the keeping of the law and traditions but put the emphasis on outward conforming without any emphasis on the heart of man. The Religious Leaders loved to project themselves as being ultra-pious by living out their obedience to the laws very visually before others! Jesus will openly rebuke the Jewish Elite for this attitude and the hypocritical heart of selfishness and pride.

*"Christ expounds on the depth of the law, showing that it went far beyond the surface meaning of the words and set a standard that is higher than the most diligent students of the law had realized!"*

**VI. Outline of the Sermon on the Mount**

**"Blessed are they...Ye are the salt of the earth:...Ye are the light of the world." Matthew 5:3-11; 13-14**

A. Introduction – Beatitudes and Salt/Light Metaphors – Matthew 5:1-16 Here Jesus will share the ideal character and glorious privileges of those that are truly part of the kingdom of God. If one lives as the beatitudes explain, then your light will shine and others will see your good works and give glory to your heavenly Father!

**"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20**

B. Thesis Statement – Matthew 5:17-20 (concise summary or theme) Christ is calling His followers to a greater righteousness than that of only outward conformity to laws. Jesus is seeking an inward change that should generate an outward righteous life! It will not be until John 14 and the teaching in the Upper Room that He will reveal the source and power of these changes – the Holy Spirit!

**“Ye have heard...It hath been said,...Again, ye have heard...” Matthew 5:21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43 vs. “But I say unto you...” Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44**

C. Six Contrasts of Jesus’ Teachings Versus the Law – Matthew 5:21-48 Jesus was revealing God’s attitude toward the law; no person can keep the law. True righteousness can only be found when Christ lives in and through us!

1. “Thou shalt not kill” vs. don’t be angry without cause v. 21-26
2. “Thou shalt not commit adultery;” vs. lust after a woman v. 27-30
3. Divorce vs. adultery is caused v. 31-32
4. “Thou shalt not forswear (oaths) thyself” vs. always be honest v. 33-37
5. “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:” vs. turn the other cheek v. 38-42
6. “Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.” vs. “love your enemies” v. 43-48

**“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men...And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites...Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites,...”Matthew 6:1, 5, 16**

D. Three Contrasts - True or Hypocritical Worship – Matthew 6:1-18 Jesus took three areas of common worship in the lives of the Jews and again showed the shallowness of their beliefs! It was actually a pure heart and quiet faithfulness that pleased God and brought glory to the Father! And it still is!

**“But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33**

E. Commands Concerning Possessions – Matthew 6:19-34 Jesus taught position, power, and money were not important in His kingdom! **The treasures one holds dear reveals the level of love and devotion they have toward God!** As we serve Him and not the pursuit of possessions, the Heavenly Father will make sure that all the things we need in life “shall be added unto you.”

**“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.” Matthew 7:12**

F. Commands Concerning Relationships – Matthew 7:1-12 Jesus will speak on God’s desire for how men should treat one another. How you would want to be treated is how you should treat others! Those who are followers of Jesus will live with this as a core of their lives!

**Length of the Sermon on the Mount** – It takes between 10-20 minutes to read the Sermon on the Mount, but we can be sure that we only have the highlights. Within the Gospels, we have hints of how the open-air teachings of Jesus would take place. Examples – Feedings of the 4000 and 5000. These were times the people would come to hear Jesus and stay for days! The setting seems very similar to a long time of teaching.

**“ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:” Matthew 7:13**

G. Invitation to Choose – Matthew 7:13-27 Jesus concludes His message with three illustrations of God’s plan for mankind.

1. A narrow gate vs. a wide gate
2. A good fruit tree vs. an evil fruit tree
3. “Lord, Lord” vs. “I never knew you”

Jesus is seeking each listener to examine their path, their fruit, and what words they would hear from the lips of God! Christ is ultimately seeking a decision from each listener. He gives then skillfully tells a story giving two choices – rock or sand; where will your foundation be built?

### **Believer’s Application:**

**“And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: <sup>29</sup> For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Matthew 7:28-29**

At the time of Christ, the Jews knew only the speaking and teaching of the scribes and Rabbis of their day. The religious establishment had long left the preaching of the Scripture. Oh, they would read a passage, but then go on and quote their popular Jewish scholars, or give their personal opinions. Little truth centered on the heart of God was given. **No wonder** the people didn’t recognize their Messiah when He stood before them. **No wonder** they rejected Him for religion as normal! “For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Jesus taught with authority within Himself, He didn’t need to quote others or depend on others to promote Him. He was the authority of the Scripture, He was the Word that was dwelling among them!

As Warren Wiersbe said in his commentary, “We cannot lightly dismiss this sermon, for it is God who gave it to us! We must bow before Him and submit to His authority or we will be condemned.” p. 27

This is exactly what Jesus was seeking as He finished up the Sermon on the Mount and gave the now familiar illustration of the building a house on rock or sand. Jesus was very specifically pointing out the two responses everyman will make, hear and obey, or hear and reject, and then gave the consequences of each, firm foundation in the wake of difficulty or inability to withstand the storms of life.

We face the same two responses to Jesus Christ yet today – hear and obey or hear and reject!

Listen as we read this passage again! Matthew 7:24-27

So, in the weeks ahead, as we study the Sermon on the Mount, I want to challenge you to consider several commitments. I’ll call them the “Let’s,” the “Let us’!”

As we begin to walk through these words from the lips of Jesus,

1. **Let’s commit** to eagerly listen and soak up His words.
2. **Let’s decide** right now to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, be open to Jesus’ words, and obey them.
3. **Let’s be quick** to confess our sins, repent of our wrong direction and go Christ’s way. For He “is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Remember, “no man cometh unto the Father but by…” him.”
4. **Let’s not forget** what we have heard. Oh, we are so forgetful. We may be emotionally energized to change, which happens all the time – getting fit, losing weight, changing a bad habit,- but as time passes and we fail over and over again, we push words and commitments aside, soon forget them altogether, and go back to our defaults.
5. **Let’s be astonished** along with those on the hillside that day, at the authority and power of our wonderful Lord. And commit to be faithful followers throughout our lifetime!