

CORE Seminar Sermon on the Mount Course 1: Introduction

WELCOME

Welcome!

Thank you all for signing up for this CORE Seminar on the Sermon on the Mount. We're excited about spending the next couple of months diving into this sermon! If some of you didn't realize this is the Seminar that you signed up for – we still welcome you!

Each week you will have a participant guide – and at the end of each participant guide you will have the Scriptural content for next week's lesson. Please read AND study ahead. This will make our time more interesting as we grow together and learn together.

Before we begin there are a couple of things we should go over:

- Max length of each night should be 2 hours – this includes food/ fellowship and study. If it goes over, it is ok to get up and leave.
- House Rules [opportunity to go over house rules]
- And how to take care of the kiddos.

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Today, we're diving into something truly special and timeless—the Sermon on the Mount. Now, I know the word "sermon" might make you think of long, Sunday mornings, but that is not what this Sermon is about. This Sermon ranks among the most well-known and beloved passages of Scripture, and portions of its content are famous even outside of the church.

The Sermon features the teaching of Jesus – and is a proclamation that the Messiah has arrived! In this sermon, Jesus reveals Himself as Lord, Savior, Redeemer and Teacher. He speaks on a variety of subjects pertaining to the Christian life, discipleship, and life in the kingdom of God.

The Sermon on the Mount is shared in two different places in the gospels – **Matthew 5–7** and **Luke 6:20–49**. For this study, we will focus primarily on **Matthew 5-7** due to the detail

that Matthew includes in this sermon. In these verses, Jesus addresses a number of issues, such as:

- What is Christian character?
- What is the place of the law of God [if any] in the Christian's life?
- Is church discipline important?
- How should we pray?
- How can we be free from anxiety in an anxiety-ridden world?
- What is so wrong about a judgmental spirit?
- Why do we need to have spiritual discernment?

QUESTION: If you had to summarize the full content of Jesus' teachings, how would you summarize them?

- How many of you would say that, "I would summarize Jesus' teachings with the word 'love.' Meaning - Jesus came to share God's love and teach us how we should love each other." [Raise your hand if this is you.]
- How many of you would say that, "I would summarize Jesus' teachings with the words 'right living.' Meaning - Jesus taught us to do unto others as we would have them do to us." [Raise your hand if this is you.]
- How many of you would say that, "I would say that Jesus came to teach us how to get to heaven. That's pretty self-explanatory - no explanation required. [Raise your hand if this is you.]

Now, I think this is a worthwhile question to think through. And here's the reason why - because **how we answer this question affects how we consider and relate to Jesus.** For instance:

- If we think His message was about love - then we might think look at Jesus as a heavenly counselor sent to teach us how to love ourselves and others better.
- If we think His message was about right living - then we might think that Jesus is just a good teacher - had the right morals - and gave some good words to live by.
- If we think His message was about a fast pass to heaven - then we might wonder why in the world did He talk about so many other things. Why not just focus on the "3 steps I need to take to get to heaven..."

But here's the thing, the summaries above are not how Matthew - or any of the gospel writers - summarized the teachings of Jesus Christ.

- Turn to **Matthew 4** with me. Starting with verse 12, my Bible's headline is "**Jesus Begins His Ministry,**" that covers **Matthew 4:12-17.** Let's read:

Matthew 4:12-17 [ESV]

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴ so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—
¹⁶ the people dwelling in darkness
have seen a great light,
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,
on them a light has dawned.”

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Did you see how Matthew summarized Jesus’ teachings in **verse 17? Matthew** summarizes Jesus’ teachings not with love, morals or a fast pass to heaven.

- Matthew summarizes Jesus’ teachings with, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**”

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

More than anything, Jesus taught and preached on the Kingdom of God/ heaven. In fact, He teaches or mentions it approximately 126 times throughout the Gospels [55 in Matthew alone].

Jesus came proclaiming the good news – that His Kingdom had arrived and He was the King. And the main thrust of everything else He says is inviting each and every one of us to be a part of His Kingdom – by His grace through faith alone. Entering into His Kingdom meant that Jesus would deconstruct your current worldview and reconstruct you into His new Kingdom oriented view.

- This means a deconstruction of old loves, old habits, old lives, and “old kingdoms.”
- It means taking all of those things – destroying them – and then reconstructing them in the likeness of God.

We see this played out when Jesus calls His disciples [**Starting with Peter, Andrew, James & John in Matthew 4:18-22**]. Each of them is living out their best lives – and then Jesus walks by and calls them into a lifetime of discipleship and service. He doesn’t give them time to consider. He doesn’t give them time to say goodbye to family and friends. He calls them – and they follow. He deconstructs their current worldview and begins to reconstruct them into the Kingdom of God worldview.

Not only does Matthew record Jesus proclaiming the Kingdom of God, but he also recognizes His authority – the Kingship of Jesus.

THE AUTHORITY OF KING JESUS

Look at **Matthew 4:23-25**

Matthew 4:23-25 [ESV]

²³ And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. ²⁴ So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵ And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

The Sermon on the Mount, a pivotal teaching in Matthew, gains profound significance when viewed in the context of the preceding chapters, particularly **Matthew 1-4**. From the very outset, Matthew establishes Jesus as the King, underlining this pivotal role through his genealogy, which traces Jesus' lineage back to the great King David. The gospel also echoes prophecies that foretell the arrival of a significant and authoritative King. Authority to heal the sick, cast out demons and to make the lame walk again. Matthew records demonstrations of the Kingdom's power in **verses 23-25**, as Jesus heals the sick and casts out demons, showcasing the authority inherent in the Kingdom of God. This kingly theme continues with Jesus' closing words in **Matthew 28:18**, where he declares:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Thus, the Sermon on the Mount emerges not just as a collection of teachings but as a proclamation of the authority and kingship of Jesus, providing a holistic understanding of Matthew's narrative.

QUESTION: Matthew's gospel begins and ends with the understanding that Jesus is _____.

- **A good teacher**
- **Political Candidate**
- **King of the Kingdom of God**
- **All of the Above**

So, per the Gospels, we will know Him by His kingdom, by His authority and by His teaching.

JESUS AS TEACHER

As you read through Scripture, you can't help but be in awe of the way Jesus taught. Honestly, you can understand why He is considered the greatest teacher who ever walked on the face of the earth. Even the Jewish officers proclaimed that, "No one ever spoke like this man!" [John 7:46]. Even some of His enemies said that He spoke as One who has authority, and not like the scribes and the Pharisees. I believe "authority" is the perfect word to describe His teaching.

Now the word "authority" in the Greek is *exousia*. The prefix *ex-* simply means *from or out of*. The root of this word *-ousia* is the present participle of the Greek verb, *to be*. So, the literal meaning of *exousia* can literally be translated as "out of substance" or "out of stuff," "out of essence," "out of being." The idea being that the teaching of Jesus is not frivolous. It wasn't superficial. Everything He said had substance to it. Everything He said carried the very weight of His own authority.

Based on this, we understand that Jesus uniquely taught from the standpoint of the authority of God Himself. In John 12:49 He said:

For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.

QUESTION: Which of the following is not a reason for considering Jesus the greatest teacher who lived?

- He is a master instructor with an extraordinary teaching style.
- He taught like everyone else.
- He is the incarnation of truth.
- His teaching had a divine origin.

QUESTION: Why was Jesus a great teacher?

- What characteristics set His teaching apart from that of the other religious leaders in His day?

The kingdom of God has been proclaimed. He's teaching, healing and casting out demons. The crowds are beginning to follow Him and hang on every word He is saying.

And understanding all of this brings us to the **Matthew 5:1**.

Matthew 5:1 [ESV]

5 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

CONCLUSION

Although the Sermon on the Mount merits a verse-by-verse consideration, we simply don't have the time in this semester to do that. Because of our time constraints, we'll take a view of the Sermon from 10,000 feet – seeking to get at the heart of Jesus' message.

Next week we will cover the Beatitudes. This will be **Matthew 5:1-12**. Please read ahead and be ready to discuss.

PRAYER