

# **SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

## **Where Do You Belong?**

### **Living Like a Kingdom Citizen**



**Where do you belong?**

**Do you feel at home where you live and work?**

**Do you feel that you have arrived at your final destination?**

**Well, if you feel comfortable, you are probably in danger. Scripture tells us to be on guard, to be alert, to be vigilant. In other words, don't get too comfortable. Now that does not mean you have to be tense and on edge all the time because our Lord has given us rest as well. But we must never let this world be our sanctuary – the Lord ALONE is our refuge, our strong tower to run to. He is jealous about that so do not share those feelings and knowings of rest and comfort with anything or anyone else. He ALONE is our peace.**



**In this study of Sermon on the Mount, you will find your place, your belonging and your position in Christ. This is foundational teaching for every Christian. We MUST know who we are and Whose we are if we are to have any kind of identity.**

**Please do not read Sermon on the Mount in isolation from the rest of Scripture – that is how error has crept into the teaching on this important passage.**

**I urge you to read Sermon on the Mount in the context of the Gospel of Matthew and of the entire New Testament and then see Sermon on the Mount through the lens of the entire message of God. You will not understand these words of Jesus until you do that.**

**Matthew presents Jesus as King, as the awaited Messiah, Anointed One – anointed to reign and rule in your life. This King Jesus has a kingdom and that kingdom is what He talks about in Sermon on the Mount.**

**When you see King Jesus as the One delivering this sermon, it takes on a whole new meaning.**

**This sermon is really a constitution - a structure around which He builds His realm. It is not a “suggestion” on how to live – it is a proclamation of the King’s decree. It is non-negotiable.**

*“The Sermon on the Mount is the manifesto of the King, the miracles are His royal credentials, and many of the parables portray the mysteries of His kingdom.”*

John MacArthur

**His people WILL be poor in spirit, meek, pure in heart, merciful, peacemakers, persecuted, hunger and thirst for righteousness and will definitely mourn over their sin.**

**As you read this account of a small portion of our Lord's life, remember that the Gospels are the very heart of the Bible because in the Gospels we read of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Who is the heart of our faith.**

**Unfortunately the Book of Matthew also focuses on the rejection of the King. Not all will acknowledge Him as King. There is no penitent sinner hanging next to Christ in Matthew. Matt. 27: 44**

**In his account, no friend or loved one is at the foot of the cross, only mockers and scorners.**

**Matthew's Gospel very plainly offers the choice: recognize Jesus as King or yield to the sin that surrounds you and will eventually suffocate you. See the eternal majesty of this Man, Jesus Christ or become more comfortable with the stranglehold that the world's power of sin has over you. Satan held this power over the apostate Israel that rejected Christ.**

## **CONTENTS**

## **SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

<b>Welcome to Bible Study Transformation</b>	<b>p. 7</b>
<b>Lesson 1 Overview of the Sermon</b>	
<b>Doctrine: What Are Doctrines/ How to Find Doctrine</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
<b>Lesson 2 “May I Introduce You To the King?”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Jesus Christ</b>	<b>p. 29</b>
<b>Lesson 3 “What Does It Mean to be a Citizen of the Kingdom?”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Sovereignty of God</b>	<b>p. 59</b>
<b>Lesson 4 “Are You Yielded to Your Lord?”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: The Righteousness of God</b>	<b>p. 79</b>
<b>Lesson 5 “Bringing All the Blesseds Together”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Sin</b>	<b>p. 101</b>
<b>Lesson 6 “Are You Salt and Light?”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Discipleship</b>	<b>p. 117</b>
<b>Lesson 7 “What Does the Kingdom of Heaven Demand of You?”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: The Law</b>	<b>p. 133</b>
<b>Lesson 8 “True Worship”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Worship</b>	<b>p. 159</b>
<b>Lesson 9 “What Are Your Treasures?”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Redemption</b>	<b>p. 183</b>
<b>Lesson 10 “Only the King Can Accurately Judge”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: God is Judge</b>	<b>p. 195</b>
<b>Lesson 11 “Time to Choose”</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Wisdom of God</b>	<b>p. 215</b>
<b>Lesson 12 Summary Lesson on Sermon on the Mount</b>	
<b>Doctrine: Perseverance of the Saints</b>	<b>p. 231</b>

<b>What I learned This Week About the Kingdom of God</b>	<b>p. 243</b>
<b>Key Verses in the Sermon on the Mount</b>	<b>p. 245</b>
<b>What It Means to be “Poor in Spirit”</b>	<b>p. 247</b>
<b>Daily Time Tracking</b>	<b>p. 249</b>
<b>Prayer</b>	<b>p. 251</b>
<b>Fasting</b>	<b>p. 255</b>
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>p. 263</b>
<b>Pharisees</b>	<b>p. 275</b>
<b>Outline/Terms</b>	<b>p. 279</b>
<b>Maps: Israel and Jerusalem</b>	<b>p. 289</b>
<b>Matthew Text Chapters 1-7</b>	<b>p. 291</b>

## Welcome to Bible Study Transformation!

*“What you think about God is the most important thing about you.”*

A.W. Tozer

This course will cover the Sermon on the Mount. These are Scriptures which will usher us into the very throne room of our King!

God longs for you to know Him as He is in reality. He is King! He reigns over all!

From the study of this book, we will see a theology concerning our God unfold. An understanding of theology is lacking within the church body today. So we will tackle this fearlessly, knowing that our God wants us to know Him. But theology without application and transformation can lead to empty worship. So each lesson will offer application/contemplative questions and hymns for each week's lesson.

- I commend you for making the effort to come to Bible Study – it requires effort – so I do not take for granted that you could be doing many other things. Many times we begin with enthusiasm and energy but as time passes, we grow heavy and forget our initial enthusiasm. I pray you remember your desire right now to become truly transformed by God's Word.
- As a reminder to be steadfast, **write in the front of the book cover**, what you want the Lord to reveal to you during these weeks of study.

### Study Structure

The study is structured so that each week, you will decide whether you will work on the **Basic Study** or both the **Basic Study** and the **Digging Deeper** section.

The first section will only take 1 – 2 hours at most. For those who wish to tackle more in-depth study, the Digging Deeper section will provide that challenge.

Both types of homework will engage in the Application/Contemplative Questions at the end of each week's assignment.

**Make sure you answer the question: What did you learn this week about the kingdom of heaven? The weekly answers to this question will form a spiritual log of your journey through the Sermon on the Mount.**

Whether your week allows you to invest 4-5 hours or 1-2 hours or less, you will benefit from the lessons and the class discussion because you will be working on the same material.

**You will need:**

A Bible

A three-ringed binder

(optional) dividers

Colored pencils

- ❖ **You will need to purchase the *Supplemental Materials* or receive them via *email for free*.** These materials include a section on *Doctrines* which will solidify all we are learning about God and many other important Biblical truths.

You will find instructions in the *Supplemental Materials* on ***How to do your text analysis***. These skills will help you pull all you can from each verse in the Bible. You are digging for gold and you will find it here!

At no time should you feel you must complete a lesson or you have failed. Get rid of those perfectionistic tendencies. You should only do as much homework as the Lord directs you to do. These studies are written for you to have as a resource. Some weeks you will just NOT be able to finish. Accept what the Lord has equipped you with for that time and be content.

This is NOT a pass to watch more TV, but it is a reality check to work under the Lord's supervision and no one else's.

Those weeks you are unable to complete much homework, you can catch up by watching the zoom recording.

**Books of the Bible**

The first lesson, we will spell out the entire book of the Bible when using references.

Thereafter we will use abbreviations to refer to the books: Hebrews = Heb.; Genesis = Gen.

**Hebrew/Greek**

Also when Hebrew or Greek words are mentioned and numbered, the numbering is from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. You will find the corresponding number in this dictionary should you wish to study further.

**Example** - Hebrew for “steadfast love” is *hesed* # 2617: it is a word used for God’s faithful, eternal love which He has poured out on His people; it is His word for covenant love; it can also mean kindness, mercy

**Psalm 136** is the classic text for the use of this word.

## ❖ Appendix

1. In the Appendix, you will find ***the text of the Sermon on the Mount***. These copies are for you to analyze, write notes, make remarks, and pour over time and again for the purpose of familiarity.
2. Refer to the Appendix for your list on What It Means To Be Poor In Spirit.
3. For each lesson, you are to record a key verse from that lesson. Record that in the Appendix under Key Verses in the Sermon on the Mount.
4. There is an Outline in the Appendix for your use.
5. There are Additional Activities included in the Appendix for your continued study of the Sermon on the Mount.
6. **Marinate in each lesson.**

### **MARINATE** *What does it mean to marinate?*

Meditate each week on what the Lord has brought to mind as you have poured over His Word. This is why you do not wait until the night before class to do your homework. Start right away so you have the full week to hear from Him. As you “marinate” on His Word, you take on the flavor of His Word. You begin to give off an aroma of Christ to a dying world.

Marinate and let the truths the Lord is revealing to you rise to the top of your consciousness. We are not a mass of cells and material matter, we are *pneumatikos* – we are spiritual beings and we need to saturate our minds with spiritual life.

Think of your favorite meal. Imagine it cooking in your home – all the flavors soaking into one heavenly bite!

Imagine throwing all the same ingredients together for a couple of minutes – barely cooking it. How would that taste?

Well, that’s what you do with Bible study when you slap it together at the last minute or worse don’t do it at all.

Just as a meal undercooked is not tasty, (it is also not safe at times), so it is with God’s Word.

Our Lord lives!

**The goal of studying the Bible is not to know more stuff – it is to be permanently transformed by what you learn, incorporating these truths into**

**your life.**

**So if you are looking for another study to fill your time or an interesting study or a safe study, keep looking. This study has one goal – to transform you into the image of Christ.**



**Transformed by the Master's Hand**

## LESSON 1

## OVERVIEW OF THE SERMON

**Doctrine: WHAT ARE DOCTRINES/ HOW TO FIND DOCTRINE**

### BASIC STUDY

**What does the word “sermon” mean?**

**We are so accustomed to this word that we take it for granted. But the meaning of “sermon” comes from a very old word which means “talk” or “discourse.”**

**So settle in and prepare to hear a “talk” from Jesus!**



**For us to benefit from Sermon on the Mount** it will be necessary to find ourselves in context with this portion of Scripture in relation to the Whole of God's Word. So we will do a little wide lens work for now.

When we open to **Matthew 5**, we look into a world *without the New Testament*; we see a band of disjointed, directionless people, without an instruction manual, soon to be without the earthly physical presence of their leader. There were no churches, no concept of Christianity. They were the first – everything depended on them getting it right. Were they extraordinary people? Extra smart, extra gifted, extra connected? No.

❖ So what can we learn from these pioneers that will help us today?

As always with any study of God's word, **context** is key. What is context?

Biblical meaning must be gathered from the **context** of Biblical passages. Every word you read must be understood in the light of the words that come before and after it. Every verse relates to the verse before and after it. Every verse relates to the chapter in which it is found. That chapter relates to the prior chapter and the following chapter. To study the Bible properly is not for the casual reader. Bible study is strenuous. Christians have become very lazy when it comes to thinking and logic.

So let us approach this passage of Matthew with energy, diligence and resolve. The Lord has provided these Scriptures for our understanding. What is it that He desires us to understand?

What you derive from this study will almost certainly be different from what I take from it. What each one sees will be pertinent to his own walk with the Lord.

So come to this study with anticipation and an open mind. The Lord will surely speak to you as you wait on Him.

Let's gain some context concerning the relationship of Matthew 5-7 to the rest of the Bible.

To properly understand this sermon, it is helpful to have a little background info on the people to whom Jesus spoke. Now where would you discover this info?

- ✓ Now to put us in context with the gospels, let us remember how the gospels relate to all of Scripture.

The Bible as a whole has been referred to as the redemption story. Now how would the writers of Holy Scripture be able to get across the idea of redemption? The first necessity would be to reveal **man's need to be redeemed**.

➤ **The Bible is divided into 2 major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.**

The Old Testament has 39 books. The story of redemption is seen within the first 3 chapters of the book of Genesis. Chapters 1 and 2 cover the creation of the world. Chapter 3 informs us of man's fall and utter ruin due to his disobedience to God's one command. God did not give him a massive amount of rules and burdens, He simply gave him one command. Yet, Adam could not resist the temptation to "be as god." Because of his yielding to sin, mankind was plunged into a world unknown until that time. After the first 3 chapters of the Bible, the remainder of it discloses little by little God's plan of buying back man from the slavery of sin.

The next four books, Exodus through Deuteronomy, comprise along with Genesis, what is known as the Pentateuch. These are the five books of the Bible which contain the Law, also called the Torah.

Man was given the Law to show him what the standard of God was. Man was unable to keep this Law and was confronted with his need for a **substitute**. Within the legal system, God had provided for a substitute to take the penalty for the sinner. In the case of the Old Testament, the substitute was a lamb or in some cases another animal sacrifice. These animal sacrifices would never permanently take away man's sin, but would serve as a reminder to man of the seriousness of his transgression. Sin brings death.

The remaining books of the Old Testament deal with the continuing saga of man's battle with sin and God's never failing, everlasting demonstration of His undying love for His sinful children.

- As in every epic, there are characters and a plot. The plot is the redemption of God's people. The characters are many. The primary characters are the people singled out to become God's own possession: Israel. For the Lord to provide a Redeemer, He would also provide a nation from which the Redeemer would come. Jesus was prophesied to come from Israel and not only from this nation, but specifically from the tribe of Judah. The OT is replete with the promises of a Messiah coming from Judah.

Genesis – Deuteronomy is the Law.

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1, 2 Samuel, 1, 2 Kings, 1, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther comprise the histories of the OT. These books also tell the story of man's continual battle with sin.

There are victories and there are slaughters in these accounts.

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are the books of poetry.

Again these poems are filled with man's crying out to God for His deliverance. The remaining books of the OT are the prophets: major and minor.

- ❖ The OT begins with an account of the generations of Adam (**Genesis 5**) and ends with a curse in Malachi.
- ❖ The NT begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ and ends with "there will no longer be any curse." **Revelation 22:3**
  - Matthew is the Bridgebuilder. His book of the account of the life of Christ bridges from the OT to the NT. He focuses on the Messiah. Matthew has more OT references than almost any other NT book. (Only Revelation has more.) Matthew's Gospel was written primarily to Jews. So his purposes were a bit different from the other writers. Matthew presents Jesus as **the Messiah-King**. His audience is Jewish. Matt. 28:18-20 are the key verses.
  - Mark wrote primarily to the Romans (suffering persecution) and presented Jesus as **God's Suffering Servant**. **Mark 10:45**

**About 90 % of Mark is included in Matthew. (Baker)**

- Luke wrote to the Greeks. He wrote specifically to Theophilus, an unknown person to us, but important to Luke. The writer was diligent to make known to this unknown man the truths of who Jesus was and the course of action which His followers took to ensure the establishment of His kingdom.

In Luke, we see **the humanity of Christ**. Jesus is a man as well as God. Key verse: **19:10**

Luke narrates those events which demonstrate *the humanity of Christ*. The genealogy is traced back to *Adam*. The parables included by Luke have a *human element* to them. **Son of Man acts as key terminology for Jesus.**

- John was written to all men, everywhere. John presents **Jesus as the Son of God**. The key verses are: **20:30, 31**

The deity of Christ is proved by miraculous signs in this gospel account.

Keep in mind that Graeco-Roman biographies were typically arranged by **topic** rather than strict chronology (e.g., eight kingdom parables clustered in Matthew 13).

John contains the "I am" sayings of Jesus which point to His identity as God. I AM is the key name God is known by throughout the Old Testament. It is the name which designates God as self-existent, all-sufficient. It is used 6, 800 times in the OT. Jesus says, "I am the bread of life; I am the true vine; I am the living water; I am the resurrection and the life; I am the good shepherd; I am the gate; I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the light of the world."

- ❖ These gospel accounts are key for a correct understanding of the kingdom of God. His kingdom is so unlike any kingdom we have ever seen or heard of.

Now having read all of the above concerning a better understanding of the context of Sermon on the Mount in relation to the Gospels, why are there four accounts of the Gospels?

**Read Matthew 1-4** and ask the Lord to answer the following questions.

What am I learning in regard to the kingdom of God?

How does it relate to the gospels?

How does it relate to my life today?

How can the Lord use my life to make an impact for His kingdom?

As we study, we will learn biblical study skills. The 5WH (who, what, when, where, why and how) will be our guides to unveil the truths of God's Word.  
Are you more of a "Why" person? A "When" person?  
The most important is always "WHO."  
ALWAYS find out WHO is speaking or being spoken about because we are seeking a **relationship** and not answers alone.

May you be eternally blessed as you seek the Eternal One.

➤ **Now read Matthew 5-7.**

**Do not stop to take notes or remark about questions. This is your first of many encounters with the Sermon on the Mount and it is important to get your first impressions.**

**After you read these three chapters, record what impresses you most with this passage.**

**During this initial look at the sermon, it is crucial to see these words of Jesus as a whole. What do you think Jesus is trying to get across in these three chapters?**

**What seems to be the main point Jesus is making?**

**Make a list here of the major points.**

**Now we are going to go over each of these chapters – one by one.**

- **Read Matthew 5 and record here what seems to be the message Jesus is giving.**

What are the key words in Matthew 5?

Words are coming at you all day long. As a disciple of Jesus it is crucial to sift through the words in your day that really matter and have transforming influence over you.



Are there any contrasts or comparisons? What are they?

Mark the words which denote time or place. Mark these in a distinctive way from other key phrases or words.

**Do you see any doctrines (teachings) discussed? What are they?**

- **Read the two articles on Doctrines in the Supplemental Materials**
- **GO TO APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**
- **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Now you are going to summarize each paragraph. Try to use words from the text; limit your words to no more than five; use distinctive words in each paragraph.**

**Record those paragraph “titles” here and then transfer them to your Text Analysis in the Appendix.**

**Matthew 5: 1-2**

**Matthew 5: 3-10**

**Matthew 5: 11-12**

**Matthew 5: 13**

**Matthew 5: 14-16**

**Matthew 5: 17-19**

**Matthew 5: 20**

**Matthew 5: 21-26**

**Matthew 5: 27-30**

**Matthew 5: 31-32**

**Matthew 5: 33-37**

**Matthew 5: 38-42**

**Matthew 5: 43-48**

**You are on your way to a deeper understanding of these crucial words of our Lord! That can never be taken away from you.**

Now look over all of these paragraph titles and see if you can come up with the major teaching Jesus is trying to communicate.

By doing all of this background work, you are untangling all these words. You are going to make better sense of all that you are reading by untangling in this initial period.



Now you are going to go back again through Matthew 5 and this time you are going to ask the 5WH.

**Read a paragraph and note what you see about who, where, when, etc.**

**You can use the same paragraph division above that you used for the paragraph titles. Just note on the side your answers to the questions you find most compelling.**

**No doubt this is a lot of work, but you are laying a foundation so that you will be able to interpret the passage.**

**Some people are detail people and some are big picture people. This week we are doing the big picture work. But even big picture work requires you to “see” what is there in the passage. These observations will serve you well as we move toward the detail work later.**

## **Matthew 6**

**Now you are going to do the same “intel gathering” on Matthew 6.**

**Write the paragraph summaries of the following:**

**Matthew 6: 1**

**Matthew 6: 2-4**

**Matthew 6: 5-6**

**Matthew 6: 7-8**

**Matthew 6: 9- 15**

**Matthew 6: 16- 18**

**Matthew 6: 19-21**

**Matthew 6: 22-23**

**Matthew 6: 24**

**Matthew 6: 25- 33**

**Matthew 6: 34**

**Now look over all of these paragraph titles (for Chapter 6) and see if you can come up with the major teaching Jesus is trying to communicate.**

**Now you are going to go back again through Matthew 6 and this time you are going to ask the 5WH.**

**Read a paragraph and note what you see about who, where, when, etc.**

**You can use the same paragraph division above that you used for the paragraph titles. Just note on the side your answers to the questions you find most compelling.**

**In a few weeks we will look more intently at this chapter, but for now record the basics that you find in this initial, cursory viewing.**

## **Matthew 7**

**Now you will gather the teachings of this chapter.**

**Matthew 7: 1-5**

**Matthew 7: 6**

**Matthew 7: 7-11**

**Matthew 7: 12**

**Matthew 7: 13-14**

**Matthew 7: 15-20**

**Matthew 7: 21-23**

**Matthew 7: 24-27**

**Matthew 7: 28-29**

**Remember to record your paragraph summaries (titles) on your Text Analysis located in the Appendix.**

**You are well on your way to being an expert on this sermon! What other teaching could be more important for you to be expert concerning?**

**These are the things Jesus felt important to deliver to His kingdom citizens.**

**➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**1. If you had heard this sermon the first time it was preached, what would have been the hardest thing for you to absorb?**

**2. What is most crucial to you right now as a Christian that you find in the Sermon on the Mount? For instance, “Being a Christian is a ‘blessed life’ but not blessed in the way the world considers blessing. It is hard, impossible to be a Christian, but this is the life we are called to live by His grace!”**

**3. To whom does Jesus deliver this sermon? His disciples? The crowd?  
Does it matter to whom He intended this sermon be addressed?**

**4. Why would Matthew see the need to record this sermon here in his  
gospel, right after the baptism and temptation of Jesus and right at the  
beginning of His ministry?**

**What does that tell you about the importance of this sermon in your own life?**

**5. If you knew nothing about Jesus or this sermon before this week, what has been the most indispensable thing you learned?**

**6. If you have walked with the Lord a very long time, what has been the most indispensable thing you learned this week?**

**7. Why is the kingdom of God a better place because you are in it?  
(This is not pride; God has called you to His kingdom. God is always right and knows what He is doing. So by answering this question, you are lifting up the name of the Lord!)**

**8. Which of the “blesseds” is most dear to you and why?**

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God's Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being "poor in spirit." How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week's message.



iStock  
Credit: Sasha\_Ka

1225014776

## LESSON TWO

## “MAY I INTRODUCE YOU TO THE KING!”

Matthew 1-4

Doctrine: JESUS CHRIST

### BASIC STUDY

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is He? ...” Matt. 22: 42

This is a question you must deal with and so must everyone!

This week is going to be helpful for laying a groundwork for the entire book of Matthew. This will assist you in gaining context for the sermon we are studying.

*“The tree of David, hacked off so that only a stump remained, was sprouting a new branch (Is. 11: 1). Expositor’s*

**Read Matthew 1 - 4 without taking notes.**

**Now go back and look at Matt. 1**

How does this chapter (book) open?

Why would this be valuable given Matthew’s purpose in writing his gospel account? (If you are having trouble with what his purpose was look back at Lesson One. There was information in that lesson concerning the context of Sermon on the Mount. In that information you will find Matthew’s purpose for writing his gospel.)

In Matthew 1, as you move to the end of the chapter, a quote is given from Isaiah. See if you can glean anything from:

Isaiah 7: 14

Is. 8:10

Is. 9: 6, 7

Matthew 1 gives us the hereditary background of the Messiah. \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 2 shows us the homage given to the “baby king.” \_\_\_\_\_

This chapter also shows the hostility that was directed toward Messiah as well. This hostility is a foreshadowing of the hostility yet to come. \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ In the blanks, write the verse(s) where you find the particular teaching regarding the Messiah.

Compare/ contrast the response to the news of the birth of a king in **Matt. 2.**

How did Herod respond? How did the Magi respond? The shepherds? Etc.

Which of these responses corresponds most closely with your own response to the King of kings?

In **Matt. 2: 13-15**, Joseph, Mary and the Baby flee to Egypt. It would have been about 75 miles from Bethlehem to the border of Egypt and then another 100 miles or so would have been necessary to find a secure place of safety. Alexander the Great had established a sanctuary for Jews in Alexandria. That was a very special city for Jews and perhaps there or near that city the young family could live. By A.D. 40 nearly one million Jews lived there. This is the city where the Septuagint had been produced around 200 B.C.

- **Matt. 2: 18**

Read the Old Testament verses – **Jer. 40: 1-6; Jer. 31: 15**

Ramah was a staging point for those Israelites going into captivity to Babylon.

As a historical note about the maniac who ordered the deaths of the babies of Bethlehem, see what the Jewish historian Josephus wrote not long after the death of Herod.

*Herod “died of this, ulcerated entrails, putrified and maggot-filled organs, constant convulsions, foul breath, and neither physicians nor warm baths led to recovery.”*

### **Read Matthew 3.**

How much time appears to have elapsed from the end of **Chapter 2** to the beginning of **Chapter 3**?

Matthew quotes Isaiah again: **Matt. 3: 3** and **Is. 40: 3**. Compare.

Describe what is going on in **Chapter 3**.

What was John preaching?

✓ Matthew has called one witness after another to verify the identity of Jesus the Christ. In **Chapter 3**, Matthew calls John the Baptist to the stand. How does what Matthew tells us through John strengthen the case for the Messiah-ship of Jesus?

What other “Witnesses” do you find in **Matt. 3: 16, 17**?

How does this witness of John’s baptism continue to be of value as the gospel story progresses?  
**Acts 1: 21-22**

“Repentance” becomes a key word in this book. **Matt. 3: 2, 8, 11**

✓ Look up this word and note what you find.

How is repentance a “witness” of sorts to the world?

Why is establishing a **repentant heart** so important before the sermon is given?

*“Repentance is not just sorrow for sin but a turning away from sin and to a life of obedience. ‘Repent’ translates the Old Testament call to Israel to ‘return’ to faithfulness to the covenant. It does not mean self-punishment, depression or remorse.”* Reformation Study Bible

Metanoeo *“means more than regret or sorrow (Heb. 12: 17); it means to turn around, to change direction, to change the mind and will. It does not denote just any change, but always a change from the wrong to the right, away from sin and to righteousness.”* John MacArthur

*“Whenever this Greek word is used in the New Testament the reference is to changing the mind and the purpose from sin to holiness.”* John Broadus

Erich Sauer speaks of repentance as a threefold act. *“In the understanding it means knowledge of sin; in the feelings it means pain and grief; and in the will it means a change of mind.”*

First we must have an awareness of the need for moral and spiritual cleansing and change.

Second our emotions are engaged. We actually feel the need that our changed mind has experienced.

Third, true repentance involves definite actions that result from what our mind knows and our heart feels.

Be very clear: repentance is NOT merely a recognition of personal sin. This is only the first step. The other steps must follow in a true repentance.

**Salvation and repentance go together.**

**Salvation is not verified by a past act, but by a present fruitfulness.**

**Read Matthew 4.**

What happens in the first **11 verses**?

Who was the only one here?

So how could Matthew or anyone write about this experience of Jesus?

Mark uses the word “*ekballo*” – “impelled” to refer to necessity of Jesus’ temptation. Why was it so compelling that Jesus should endure this temptation?

**Read Mark 1: 9-14**

How much time elapsed from the baptism to the temptation?

**Matt. 4: 12- 25** – What is going on here?

- ✓ This leads up to the Sermon on the Mount. So give this adequate attention.

The quotes from Isaiah here refer back to **9: 1, 2** and **60: 1-3**.

How are these important as a foreshadow of what is taking place in **Matt. 4**?

- ✓ Boil down the message of Christ here in this chapter.

How does that lead into the first part of the Sermon on the Mount?

Before Jesus begins the sermon, what has He been busy doing?

What do you see about the kingdom of heaven in **Chapter 4**?

Where does **Chapter 4** take place?

❖ The four major groups of Jews in this time period are:

**Pharisees** “separated ones” – this group of Jewish leaders were formed in response to the growing influence of Hellenization (Greek culture pervading the Jewish culture). They were the traditionalists of the day. They started out well, trying to maintain a purity of the Jewish faith; but before long, legalism had crept in their ranks and their man-made laws and traditions began to supercede the true covenant faith.

**Sadducees** “righteous ones” – a wealthy, powerful religious group, from the aristocratic and liberal persuasion in Judaism. They controlled the “temple business” that Jesus cleaned out. Sadducees believed only in the Law and no other books in the Jewish Bible. So since they saw no evidence for resurrection in the first five books, they did not believe in the resurrection, nor miracles. While the Pharisees and Sadducees rarely agreed on anything, when it came to destroying Jesus they found common ground.

The Sadducees also denied any spirit or angelic beings, (**Acts 23: 8**).

The Sadducees believed in free will to the point of self-determination, rejecting the idea of any preordination on the part of God.

**The Essenes** – Their motto appears to be “go out” – They desired to separate from the world and were basically hermits going to the wilderness. Here they observed certain rituals, including the ceremonial baths which can be seen to this day within their community. They occupied much of their time with copying and preserving the holy Scriptures.

**Zealots** were revolutionaries, attempting to overthrow the Roman domination of Israel. Political revolution was their agenda.

Keep in mind, Jesus never brought up politics. He was not as concerned with changing the structure of society as He was about working within the heart of individuals.

So the Pharisees were nostalgia buffs – always looking back to tradition.

The Sadducees were modernists and materialists – counting nothing but today.

The Essenes were isolationists – separating from all contact with the world.

The Zealots were social activists – wanting to overthrow the current government.

What a mess! Sounds a lot like today.

As you read the chapters leading up to the Sermon on the Mount, do you sense the atmosphere in which Jesus moved and lived?

For instance, in **Matt. 4: 18, 19, 21, 22**, is Jesus suggesting the disciples come with Him or is He commanding them to come?

Before you answer this, take a look at the end of Sermon on the Mount.

**Read Matt. 7: 28-29; 8: 25, 26; 9: 6; 10: 1; 11: 27**

Do you view your obedience to God as an option or a necessity?

What would be the possible danger of viewing your obedience as an option?

As the people sat down to hear the words of Jesus, were they prepared for what He had to say to them concerning the Kingdom of heaven?

As followers of Christ our hearts need to at all times be responsive to what He says to us. How can we be in ready, receptive mode at all times? What would assist us in this attitude?

Which verse so far in Matthew has convicted you that your heart needs changing?

Now going back over the first four chapters of Matthew, how do you see the sovereignty of God exhibited in these chapters? Note where you see this truth expressed.

**Matt. 4** – Who led Jesus to be tempted by Satan?

Do not think that Jesus used His divine powers to overcome the enemy because that is exactly what the enemy wanted Him to do! Jesus used the spiritual resources that are available to us today: the power of the Holy Spirit of God and the power of the Word of God: "it is written."

Jesus was tempted so that every creature in heaven and on earth might know that Jesus is the Conqueror. He exposed Satan and his tactics and He defeated Satan.

Because of His victory, we can have victory over the tempter.

Jesus exposes for all time and for all to see the tactics of the tempter.

Learn from what is preserved in writing in this passage. (**Matt. 4: 1-11**)

**Matt. 4: 12-25** is crucial to our understanding of the next three chapters.

What do you gather from these verses that will help your interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount?

- **Read the article on Jesus Christ in the Supplemental Materials**
  
- **GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**
  
- **DIGGING DEEPER**

**There is a LOT of work in Digging Deeper this week, so if you choose either to read the Scripture references or just the informational notes, that will still give you a great understanding of this passage. We should call this week's Digging Deeper "Digging REALLY deep."**

**While this study is not a study on the entire book of Matthew, but specifically on the Sermon on the Mount, certain things here in the early parts of Matthew will help us better understand the Sermon.**

*"The central personality of the Old Testament prophecy is the coming great King who will rule in God's promised kingdom. Over and over we are told of a special individual who has the*

*righteousness, the wisdom, the power, the authority, and the right to reign not only over Israel but over the entire earth.” John MacArthur*

Some passages concerning this coming King:

**Ps. 24; 45; 72; 110** and many others

**Matthew contains more than 40 formal quotations from the Old Testament.**

**His formal introductory statement occurs at least 16 times: “All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying... “**

**These and other stylistic marks make for a very Jewish gospel.**

**Yet many things cause his gospel to be very inclusive of the Gentile as well. For instance, Matthew’s is the only gospel to actually use the word *church (ecclesia)*.**

***Matthew is a bridge book which links the Old Testament which anticipates the coming Messiah to the New Testament which presents the Messiah to Israel and to the world!***

- **Matthew 1: 1-17**

**Just a List of Names?**

**With our independent way of looking at life, we Westerners may not appreciate the need for these verses. In the ancient world, knowing a man’s heritage was a very important part of his identity. This is especially true of Jews who had to prove their “Jewishness” in order to participate in temple worship.**

**Not only is Jesus the son of David, thereby qualifying Him as Israel’s Messiah, He is also descended from Abraham, thereby suggesting that He is the one through Whom the promise was to come to bless all nations. Gen. 12: 3**

**Matthew is the Gospel to the Jews, but Matthew makes certain that he presents Jesus as the Lord of all. He is the only writer who mentions the Gentile Magi, he includes the names of women in the genealogy – Gentile women even!**

**Matthew and Luke present somewhat different genealogies. Part of the reason could be the two lines of Joseph and Mary. But also the unique blend of legal (Nathan) and royal (Solomon) lines is important here. This will be addressed in class more fully.**

**Suffice it to say, Jesus of Nazareth is the only One Who could satisfy both houses of David.**

- **Read Matt. 1: 18- 2: 1**

Jesus was born in \_\_\_\_\_ .

Read the first place this town is mentioned.

**Gen. 35: 16-20**

Jacob saw this town as a town of death. But the birth of Jesus has made it a place of LIFE!

What does this show you about the power of perception and experience?

In regard to the genealogy, how many divisions are there? \_\_\_\_\_

How many names are listed in each grouping? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any idea why this number and how the groupings are designed?

Matthew organizes the genealogy into three groups of fourteen to reveal God's clear purpose in history. Some have suggested the numeric value of DVD (David's Hebrew letters) as the reason for the number fourteen.

But also where each divide occurs is noteworthy as well.

The first leads to the monarchy with David; the second ends with the exile to Babylon; the third covers the return to Jerusalem and the coming of Messiah.

None of this is by accident. The Lord shows His work in all lives and all circumstances, leading to the consummation of the ages – His Great Messiah!

**Ps. 132: 11**

**Jer. 23: 5**

**Luke 1: 32, 69**

Gal. 3: 16

- ✓ Matthew shows us the son of David, through whom the Messiah of Israel would come; he also reveals the son of Abraham, through whom One would come Who would bless \_\_\_\_\_ . Gen. 12: 3

“Birth” is from the same Greek root as “genealogy” in verse 1. Matthew provides a parallel account of Jesus ancestry. One from the human point of view and one from His Father’s side.

Keep in mind, in regard to the genealogy, most likely several names have been omitted. The Greek verb, *gennaō*, means “was the ancestor of.” It does not require immediate relationship, so a grandfather or great-grandfather, or levirate father could be intended.

Expositor’s helps clear this up.

- ✓ Many of the Psalms point to the fact that Israel’s hope lies in the Lord alone.

Read Ps. 130 and see if you can see where Israel’s hope resides.

- Matt. 2: 1-12

Compare to Luke 2: 4-7, 15

Luke 2: 8-20

Wise men are not mentioned in Luke. We are told of the shepherds in the field who went to worship Baby Jesus. Matthew wants us to see that “kings” went to worship THE KING!

Yet these men had to ask for information about the birthplace of the King which was written in the Word of God. Trusting the Word of God is the first step to seeing the glory of God.

➤ **Back to Matthew.**

**Matt. 2: 7-13**

In regard to Jesus the Baby King or Jesus the adult King, why would anyone be hostile to Him (as was Herod)?

Herod the Great is of one of several “Herods.” This is a family name and for a while was a name similar to “Caesar.”

This Herod, called the “Great” because of his building projects, was ruthless, maniacal and fearful. He killed many of his family members, including his favorite wife – all because he was paranoid. He married at least nine times.

The priests were asked about information regarding the birthplace of the Messiah. Five miles from Jerusalem the Christ was to be born. Yet the priests did not bother to go to Him. The priests ignored the Christ.

In your opinion, which is worse: to ignore the Christ or to be hostile to Him?

List here the people who sought the Lord and where they were from (their religious affiliation as well).

Why would some be interested in the Christ and some be hostile or ignore Him?

The Magi are scholars, wise men and there is some connection with a man like Daniel from Old Testament times. It is conjectured that Daniel played a part in instructing wise men of the east, exposing them to Scriptures such as:

**Num. 24: 17**

**Rev. 22:16**

There was a great threat to Jewish life at the time Jesus enters the scene. The gradual assimilation of Hellenistic culture (Greek culture) into the Jewish lifestyle was steady and pervasive. Already Jews were reading the Scriptures in Greek; the plays people attended were predominantly Greek; gymnasiums enlisted young men at 18 to join their social and athletic centers; Greek had become the common language; the dress of the Jewish man began to take on decidedly more Greek style than Hebrew – gone were the Jewish beards and the flowing robes, these had been replaced with broad-rimmed hats, short togas and high-laced sandals. (2 Maccabees 4: 10-17)

Relate **Matthew 2: 1-12** to:

**Ps. 68: 29, 31**

**Ps. 72: 10, 11**

**Is. 49: 7**

**Is. 60: 1- 6**

**Micah 5: 2**

**Ezek. 34: 23**

*“Formal knowledge of the Scriptures, Matthew implies, does not in itself lead to knowing Who Jesus is; just as God sovereignly worked through Caesar’s decree that a census be taken (Luke 2: 1) to ensure Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem to fulfill prophecy, so God sovereignly used the Magi’s calculations to bring about the situation this pericope describes.” Expositor’s*

**Matt. 2: 18** is a quote from **Jer. 31: 15**. Here we see the prophetic announcement in regard to the region. Ramah was in the region assigned to the tribe of Benjamin – Rachel’s son. She weeps over the destruction of the north in 722 B.C. Later would come the brutal display of Herod.

Yet when the context of **Jer. 31** is viewed, the prophecy contains a major element of hope (**Jer. 31: 10- 17**). Here also there is hope: while many babies lost their lives, the life of Messiah was preserved. Without Messiah, there is no hope for any of us.

Also in this portion of the early life of Messiah, we see His connection with Israel. Many view the return of the “exiled king” from Egypt as a picture of God’s people truly being finally delivered from their own exile. This is foreshadowed in the return from exile to Egypt so long ago.

EXILE IS NOW OVER! THE TRUE KING HAS COME!

What possible truth could we learn from the fact that thirty years pass between the events of **Matt. 2 and 3**?

In our lives not every event is earth shattering. Not every event is noteworthy from the world’s point of view. But God chooses to focus on what He sees as necessary to our development as followers of His Son. Living a life of relative obscurity is not a bad or good thing – it is just life.

Even Jesus Christ led a fairly obscure life for thirty years.

Do not discount what God is doing in those seemingly ordinary years. God is at work building in you day by day what HE CONSIDERS IMPORTANT! That is what matters.

## **Matthew 3**

The four Gospels do not usually cover the same material. So when all four mention something, it is noteworthy. All the Gospel accounts mention John the Baptist. What is so important about him?

**Luke 1: 13-17**

**Matt. 3: 11**

**Matt. 11: 1-13**

**Matt. 17: 9-13**

**Matt. 21: 23-27**

**Luke 16: 16**

***“By introducing John as the exact fulfillment, Matthew rightly ties together the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. There had not been a prophet in Israel for four hundred years, since Malachi. But after four hundred silent years, the flow of God’s revelation starts again as Matthew picks up precisely where Malachi had left off.” J. M. Boice***

**How does John fulfill the prophecy in Is. 40: 3?**

**Luke 1: 76**

**The message of John was repentance.**

✓ **We shall learn more about repentance as we go, but for now a simple question:**

**Why is repentance so needed?**

**Also look at Acts 26: 20**

**In regard to fire:**

**Look at Is. 4: 4**

**Mal. 3: 2; 4: 1**

**John at first objects to baptizing Jesus in Matt. 3: 14.**

**Why does he go ahead and baptize Jesus?**

**How does this act of baptism fulfill all righteousness?**

✓ **Optional Assignment: Look online or in your study tools and see what you can learn about passive and active obedience (or atonement).**

**As this chapter closes, we see the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit acting as one. Where do you see this?**

**For further comparison in regard to Matt. 3: 17, look at:**

**Is. 42: 1**

**Ps. 2: 7**

**2 Pet. 1: 17**

**John 12: 28**

## **Matthew 4**

**Now for the very important chapter that precedes the giving of this transforming sermon.**

**John the Baptist gave witness to Who Jesus was; the Holy Spirit did the same in Matt. 3: 16; the Father did in Matt. 3: 17; now Satan would try and undermine the identity of the Son of God. How crucial it was for Jesus to maintain His divine identity!**

**Read Matt. 4 and record here how you think this chapter prepares you for the Sermon.**

**How do the following relate:**

**James 1: 13**

**Deut. 8: 1-5**

**Deut. 6: 13**

The location of this temptation is desolate. It has been described as an area of yellow sand and crumbling limestone, contorted strata, where the ridges run in all directions as though warped and twisted. The hills are dust heaps, the rocks are jagged and sharp, the limestone is peeling and even the ground sounds hollow. There is essentially no life here. This is where our Lord faced 40 days of hunger and thirst, followed by this relentless nagging by Satan for Jesus to take a short cut to victory – thereby bypassing the cross.

In Matt. 4: 6, Satan is misquoting Ps. 91. He is using this psalm in a way completely opposite to its original meaning. Ps. 91 is intended to build trust in the Lord and not tear it down by testing Him.

- Read Ps. 91 and note how Satan twists it.

Jesus was led by the Spirit to be “tempted.” This word is *peirazo* and means “to test or prove.” It can mean “to test to prove the worth or value or good quality of.”

Praise God! Jesus refused to take a shortcut!

Is that not what we do all our lives when we count these temporal pleasures more enticing than our eternal union, our eternal identity with Christ?

Where are you struggling to maintain your identity as belonging to Him alone?

The first temptation pertained to the issue of sonship. Satan wanted to persuade Jesus to act independently of the Father.

*“It was that absolute trust and submission that Satan sought to shatter. To have succeeded would have put an irreparable rift in the Trinity. They would no longer have been Three in One, no longer have been of one mind and purpose. In his incalculable pride and wickedness, Satan tried to fracture the very nature of God Himself.”* MacArthur

The second temptation appealed to the personal display of deity.

The third temptation was an effort to get Jesus to take a short cut and not follow the plan of the Father.

- Matt. 4: 8, 9 - Satan wanted Jesus to worship him. This is still his tactic with the people of God. Read Rom. 1: 24, 25.

Verses that relate to this passage are:

2 Cor. 4: 4

John 12: 31

Eph. 2: 2

Compare the temptation of Christ to that of Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve were in paradise while Jesus was in the \_\_\_\_\_ .

Adam and Eve were physically content and satisfied, free to eat from any tree of the garden except for \_\_\_\_\_ .

Jesus was hungry, having fasted for \_\_\_\_ days.

Adam and Eve were together. Jesus was alone.

Adam succumbed quickly.

Jesus stood firm, saving His sheep and bringing life and salvation.

Heb. 2: 18; 4: 15

What do you see happening in Matt. 4: 11?

When do you see this again? Luke 22: 43

- **Matt. 4: 12- 24**

**Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes that Galilee at this time had 204 cities and villages, with as many as two million people.**

It would take months to visit these cities. But this is the ministry with which Jesus occupied Himself as He entered upon His mission.

What is occupying your life's mission?

Do you even know you life's mission?

In **Matt. 4: 16**, we are told "the people saw a great Light." In what way did Jesus bring Light to the people?

Has Jesus brought Light into your life? How?

Jesus began to "preach" – *kerusso*: to proclaim, to make known publicly, to publish

This word does not mean to argue, to reason, to dispute or to convince.

Jesus never got sidetracked into political or personal disputes. Our Lord's job was to proclaim the truth of His kingdom. And that is our job as well – we do not need to dispute or argue.

- ✓ The **kingdom of heaven** begins to have increasing importance in this book. "Kingdom" means "rule, reign, authority" rather than a specific place. The kingdom of heaven is the place at which God rules in the lives of His redeemed people. The people, especially the Jewish leaders, wanted Jesus to declare a physical rule as Messiah, overthrowing the Romans. Jesus knew the kingdom of God was about ruling hearts and minds and NOT geography.

*"Contrary to what many, perhaps most, unbelieving Jews today think, those ancient teachers of Israel knew that the coming Messiah, the Christ, would be more than a godly attitude or the personified perfection of the Jewish kingdom. The Messiah would be a real man born among men, sent to rule men." MacArthur*

*“A central affirmation in Matthew is that Jesus, the Davidic Messiah, inaugurates God’s **reign**, as God’s chosen **king** and Lord (28: 18) and the manifestation of ‘God with us’ (1: 23; 28: 20).” Baker*

God’s kingdom is never to be seen apart from His righteousness – God’s sovereign rule in both salvation and judgment is defined by His righteousness.

- **Record in the Appendix what you see about the kingdom of heaven from these first chapters.**

Keep in mind, *“in the first century there was little agreement among Jews as to what the messianic kingdom would be like.”* Expositor’s

### ➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Nowhere in this gospel does the writer identify himself. Why might this be?

The early church fathers were unanimous that Matthew wrote this account. There is no plausible reason to consider otherwise. Matthew Levi was an accountant of sorts; he was a despised tax collector; he was literate and he was not one of the main disciples. There would be no reason to attribute this gospel to such an obscure disciple unless it were true. His gospel is the most Jewish yet he also gives mention to the Gentiles as much or perhaps more than the other writers. In **Matt. 1: 1**, he sees Jesus as the Son of David Who would come as King; he saw Jesus as the answer to the promise given to Abraham to bless ALL people. **Gen. 12: 3**

***This gospel’s writer “intends the audience to focus its attention on Jesus and the events and time frame of His life rather than on the author and author’s world.”***

#### **Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary**

**How might knowing this help us more than knowing for sure who the author is?**

**There is some internal evidence which points to Matthew as the author. This book has more references to coins than any of the other gospels. Matthew includes three terms for coins that appear nowhere else in Scripture. Matthew’s occupation as a tax collector indicates an interest in coins which other writers likely would not have. Also as a tax collector Matthew**

would have ability to keep and record documentation which would be useful to one giving account of such an important life.

**Matt. 1: 1-17** gives us the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Why would Matthew consider this so important that he placed it front and center in his Gospel?

Some scholars see this genealogy as a response to Jewish slander. The identity of Christ is established. This could have been easily disputed at the time this document was written. But it wasn't!

Others have seen the genealogy as an answer to first century Docetists who denied the humanity of Christ.

Some stress the reflection of the two covenants: Abrahamic and Davidic.

Still others focus on the sovereignty of God through the naming of those in the lineage of our Savior.

Whatever purpose you see in this genealogy, never again look at it as just a list of names.

This recording tells us much about our Lord.

2. **Matt. 1: 18-25** What does Matthew next write about?

How does recording what he records here prepare you for his coming message of Jesus Christ as King of a kingdom?

What doctrines are included in this passage?

**Take a long look at Joseph in this account. He is remarkably obedient. “While the story is told simply, Joseph’s obedience and submission under these circumstances is scarcely less remarkable than Mary’s.” Luke 1: 38**

**Expositor’s**

**Matt. 2: 1-12**

3. At great cost, the Magi came to worship the King. Worship always costs. What has it cost you to worship the Lord?

How many Magi were there?

How do you know?

Was Matthew interested in telling us how many wise men there were?

Why was this not important to him?

What was important to him in the telling of this unusual part of the life of King Jesus?

Why do we accept certain things as true without really checking? What does this show about us?

Matthew highlights the worship of Jesus at the beginning and end of his work. **2: 2, 11; 28: 9, 17**

What makes worship such an integral part of his writing?

In other words, given Matthew's focus on the kingdom of heaven, how does his remarking about worship develop his theme?

An interesting point about the Magi is the fact that they were temporarily deceived by Herod. **Matt. 2: 7-12** tells us how Herod instructed the Magi to tell him where the baby was once they found him. The Magi must have innocently believed Herod because Herod sent no officials with the Magi. Herod must have thought he had successfully deceived the Magi. So here, even deception works in the Lord's favor. Because Herod arrogantly thought he had sufficiently duped the Magi, he had no need to send any envoys. So the Magi, once warned by God in a dream, could leave unnoticed. Had the Magi displayed any suspicion before Herod, this may have alerted Herod to the degree that he would have sent escorts.

This teaches us that even the things we are not aware of are under the Lord's control and we must rely on Him and not how clever or prepared we are.

### **Matt. 3**

4. Why would preaching a message of repentance be so important before the coming of Messiah?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. John the Baptist was to prepare the people to hear from Jesus. How did he accomplish this?

Are you a John the Baptist?

Why or why not?

John's message was God's message – he refused to compromise that message. He would not clutter God's message with the world's message. His words were God's words and he proclaimed no kingdom but God's kingdom.

Whose kingdom do you proclaim? Your own little fiefdom or God's eternal, righteous kingdom?

6. Is the baptism of John the Baptist the same as today's Christian baptism?

Make sure you support your answer with Scripture.

**Matt. 3: 17** testifies that God has broken the silence which has typified the last 400 years. God Himself resumes His revelation to man – this is *“a clear sign of the dawning of the Messianic Age.”* Expositor's

**Matt. 4**

7. How does this wilderness temptation of Christ relate to **1 Cor. 10: 13**?

8. At the end of **chapter 4**, you see that large crowds followed Jesus. Why do you think they did this?

What do large crowds mean?

What do they **not** mean?

*“Jesus’s wilderness temptations in Matthew 4 affirm His identity as the faithful Son of God, fulfilling Israel’s call to covenant faithfulness, which includes being a light to the Gentiles. (3: 13-16).” Baker*

Matthew begins his gospel with many Gentile names in the genealogy.

He is the only writer to mention the Magi – Gentile wise men.

**Matt. 4: 15** tells us where Jesus begins His ministry. Write that here

\_\_\_\_\_ .

**Read Matt. 28: 19.** How does this gospel end?

What does this tell you about the “kingdom of heaven?”

The end of **chapter 4** also mentions the two major thrusts of Christ’s ministry: **teaching and healing**. The Sermon on the Mount is occupied with the first. Matthew contains five main sections on teaching: **Matt. 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 24-25.**

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God's Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being "poor in spirit." How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week's message.

*After the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70 "no genealogies exist that can trace the ancestry of any Jew now living. The primary significance of that fact is that, for those Jews who still look for the Messiah, his lineage to David could never be established. Jesus Christ is the last verifiable claimant to the throne of David, and therefore to the messianic line." MacArthur*

Matthew's intent in his gospel account is to trace the actual legal line through Joseph.

Luke's was tracing Jesus' royal claim by showing His legal descent from David through Joseph, Jesus' legal, though not natural, father. Luke follows the royal line through Nathan, another son of David. Jesus was therefore the blood descendant of David through Mary and the legal descendant through Joseph.

Jesus' legal right always came from the father's line.

Jesus' blood descent, and His human right to rule, came through Mary.





## **LESSON THREE “What Does It Mean to Be a Citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven?”**

### **Matthew 5                      Doctrines: Sovereignty of God/ Justification by Faith**

#### **BASIC STUDY**

Matthew’s purpose in writing this gospel was to prove to a Jewish audience that Jesus is the Messiah. To do this, Matthew proclaimed several things.

- 1) Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
- 2) “Jesus” is a parallel telling of the nation of Israel – Jesus came out of Egypt; Jesus suffered in the wilderness; Jesus gave His “law” on a mountain.
- 3) Jesus is presented as Teacher and much of Matthew’s Gospel is didactic.
- 4) The ancestry of Jesus is traced to Abraham and frequently Jesus is referred to with the Messianic title, Son of David.

Watch for these things as you proceed through the study of Sermon on the Mount and further references throughout Matthew’s Gospel.

**There is a major teaching in each of the five divisions of this book. Each of these sections end with, “When Jesus had finished saying ...” 7: 28; 11: 1; 13: 53; 19: 1; 26: 1.**

**It is thought that these five divisions reflect the five books of Moses.**

**Most scholars today recognize the five teaching discourses as the key to Matthew’s basic design, especially since each discourse ends with the same expression – “And when Jesus finished these sayings.” Also note the relationship between each discourse and the narrative immediately preceding it.**

- **Read Matthew 5.**
- **Do your Text Analysis of Matt. 5. Refer to your Supplemental Materials for the Instructions on How to Do Text Analysis.**

**Do Word Studies on:**

**“Blessed” (notes below for your use on this word)**

**“Poor in spirit”**

**“Mourn”**

**“Kingdom of heaven”**

**These are crucial words if you want to understand Sermon on the Mount!**

**The key to understanding these words is given by the Holy Spirit – He speaks truth to your heart. Having a better understanding of these words is**

**synonymous with “speaking His language.” Jesus always chose His words carefully, so we need to study His words with care.**

I will do one word study for you here. But just one, because I do not want to rob you of the joy of discovery.

✓ Vine’s Word Studies

“blessed” – #3107 *makarios* – fortunate, blessed, well off happy

Root mak –large, lengthy (makros)

Reformation Study Bible

This word means more than the emotional state represented by the word “happy.” It includes spiritual well-being, having the approval of God and thus a happier destiny. (Ps. 1)

Notes from Sermon on the Mount, John MacArthur

*Makarios* means possessing the favor of God; the state of being marked by fullness from God; the express symbol of a happiness identified with pure character

To be happy, but not in the sense of happiness based on circumstances; Homer, the Greek poet, used the word to describe the Greek gods as being blessed in themselves, a state unaffected by the world of men

*Makarios* describes that inner joy that is the fulfillment of every longing in the human heart

As a Christian term it becomes the express symbol of a happiness identified with pure character

“Blessed” is a word that indicates character, touching man at the very base of his existence, this is because the word is used to describe God. Blessed be God! **Ps. 68: 35; 72: 18; 119: 12; 1 Tim. 1: 11**

**Whatever the state is (of being blessed), it is true of God ... Thus it stands to reason that the only people who will ever experience it fully are those who partake of God and His Christ. Sermon on the Mount has nothing to offer someone who is apart from faith in Jesus Christ.**

*“The word ‘Makarios’ was a word not used for humans; it described the kind of joy experienced only by the gods or the dead, ‘Blessed’ implied an inner satisfaction and sufficiency that did not depend on outward circumstances for happiness.” Warren Wiersbe*

Notes from The Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)

**“Blessed” is said of one who becomes a partaker of God’s nature through faith in Christ (2 Pet. 1: 4) The believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit because of Christ and as a result should be fully satisfied no matter the circumstances.**

This word is different from happy because to be blessed is to have God’s kingdom within one’s heart. Aristotle contrasts *makarios* with *endeos* (the needy one). “Blessed” is the one who is in the world yet independent of the world. His satisfaction comes from God and not from favorable circumstances.

Baker’s Illustrated Bible Commentary

“These blessings, the great reversals that will happen with the arrival of God’s reign, indicate that God’s decisive act of restoration precedes and grounds the expectation for kingdom discipleship and enables the believing community to live it out.”

Notes from Bible Knowledge Commentary

- ✓ The qualities mentioned in the Beatitudes “the Blessed,” are internal. These come only when one is properly related to God through faith, when one places his complete trust in God.

Notes from Messianic Jewish scholar Arnold Fruchtenbaum

“In its context – in the Jewish frame of reference in which it was spoken – the Sermon on the Mount is the Messiah’s interpretation which the *Torah* demanded, put in contrast with some of the Pharisaic interpretations. A better title for this “sermon” would be “The Messiah’s Interpretation of the Righteousness of the *Torah*.” Simplistically stated, the difference is between mere external conformity in contrast to internal conformity that naturally lends itself to external conformity to *Torah*.”

Other Biblical uses of the idea of “Blessed” follows:

(In the Old Testament “blessed” is the Hebrew word “*asher*.”) Choose 5 Scripture passages to write and read the rest.

**Ps. 32: 1, 2**

**Ps. 41: 1**

**Ps. 65: 4**

**Matt. 11: 6**

**Matt. 13: 16**

**Matt. 16: 17**

**Matt. 24: 46**

**John 13: 17**

**John 20: 29**

**Glean all you can from these other uses of “blessed.” Mark your discoveries next to each verse.**

**As you can see from these few pages, there is so much you can learn from a simple word study.**

**❖ Begin memorizing Matt. 5: 3, 4.**

**Memory is very important to your absorbing God’s Word on a penetrating level. Once you memorize a passage, you can meditate on it throughout the day even when your Bible is not handy. Also you will be amazed at how often the verses you are memorizing come up in conversation and you will be ready to engage with authority in regard to what the Lord has said. How **blessed** is that!**

John MacArthur tells us about Sermon on the Mount, *“It is one of those deep wells to which we can return for refreshment again and again.”*

These fundamental principles of the King’s Kingdom should guide your life as His citizen.

**Make sure you devote a considerable amount of time to “poor in spirit.” Understanding this phrase is the key to living the LIFE of Christ. No longer do you rely on your abilities but you truly have become reliant on the LIFE of Christ within you.**

To become a Christian, we must become “poor in spirit.” We must acknowledge our need of a Savior and our need of the Lord to lead our lives.

To grow as a Christian, we must be “poor in spirit” as well.

Growing as a believer in Christ is called sanctification – becoming holy as He is holy. The problem is, we cannot do this.

We must grow in dependence on Christ’s Spirit within us to fulfill our destiny each day, each moment.

It is good when the reality hits us that in our strength, ability or smarts, we can accomplish nothing of eternal value (and by the way, that is why we remain here after our conversion); with that reality we begin to see our dependence on Christ as completely necessary.

“Poor in spirit” means dependence on Him, not a mixture of me and Him, but absolute yielding to His life being lived in me.

“Poor in spirit” is where true Christian life happens. It MUST start and remain here!

The unawareness of the teaching of “poor in spirit” leads to many instances of bad theology.

The teaching of the disciple or follower of Christ needing to be “poor in spirit” protects you from:

“I can try to clean myself up for God.”

“I can accomplish good in this world.”

“I can help God with His kingdom.”

Works salvation:

Pride comes from thinking: “I have done something eternal.” Only God does eternal things.

Sin – self always leads to sin.

My life, every day, starts and ends with the realization that I am “poor in spirit.” At the end of each day, I quietly examine, asking the Lord:

“What did I do today in Your strength?”

“What thoughts were Yours?”

**Words**

**Actions**

**Responses**

**“What did I do today that was in my own strength?”**

**When I am “poor in spirit” – realizing that the only Life that matters is His, then I am free to truly live. As long as I hold on to the illusion of my own will I am like a walking dead person – a zombie – draining life from all those around me and deriving no spiritual nutrition myself. The solution: turn to Jesus in complete reliance. Rely only on Him/ nothing and no one else.**

- This first of the beatitudes reflects on one of the major doctrines of the Church: the

**Doctrine of Justification by Faith.**

Read it along with the other doctrines for this week.

How is “blessed are the poor in spirit” reflected in the doctrine of Justification by faith?

- ❖ **Because an understanding of the kingdom of God depends on us truly “seeing” this King, we are going to spend some time on the Attributes of God.**

**This week you are going to dive into a study of God’s:**

- ❖ **Sovereignty – God rules and reigns, even if His subjects rebel or refuse to acknowledge His authority. Read all of the quotes but write down only 5.**

**Dan. 4: 35**

**Deut. 32: 39**

**1 Sam. 2: 6-8**

**Ps. 33: 11**

**Ps. 115: 3**

**Ps. 135: 5, 6**

**Job 42: 2**

**Is. 14: 24, 27**

**Is. 46: 9-11**

**Dan. 2: 20-23**

**Luke 22: 31**

**John 19: 10-11**

**Rom.8: 28, 29**

**Gen. 50: 20**

**These Scriptures should give you a sound basis for understanding a relationship between the Sovereignty of God and the Sermon on the Mount.**

**At this point, how do these two truths relate?**

**Specifically looking at the blessed on meekness. How does truly knowing that God is sovereign help you with the command to be meek?**

**➤ Read the article in Supplemental Materials on The Sovereignty of God.**

**There would be no Sermon on the Mount apart from God's goodness, so read the following Scriptures on this attribute and record what it has to do with Sermon on the Mount.**

**❖ Goodness of God. Again read all of these quotes but write only 5.**

**Ps. 27: 13**

**Ps. 31: 19**

**Ps. 34: 8**

**Ps. 52: 9**

**Ps. 54: 6**

**Ps. 86: 5**

**Ps. 100: 5**

**Ps. 119: 68a**

**Ps. 136: 1**

➤ **Many other references are in the article on the Goodness of God. Read that article. (Optional)**

**Record how God's goodness relates to Sermon on the Mount.**

❖ **Now we are going to worship the Lord by reading about His holiness. Read all; write only 5.**

**Lev. 19: 2**

**Lev. 20: 7, 26**

**1 Pet. 1: 16**

**Job 34: 10**

Is. 47: 4

Is. 57: 15

Matt. 5: 48

How does His holiness relate to Sermon on the Mount?

- **GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**
- **DIGGING DEEPER**

It cannot be repeated too much – Matthew’s Gospel brings the kingdom of heaven into clear focus. *“The kingdom or the reign of God is what the Old Testament prophets awaited: God’s display of His sovereignty in the redemption of His people. John and Jesus proclaimed that the time of waiting was over and the King Himself had come. With the death and resurrection of Jesus and the spread of the good news to all nations, the Old Testament promises of God have been largely fulfilled for us, although we await their complete realization when Christ returns in judgment Matt. 13.”* Reformation Study Bible

**Chapter 5** of Matthew is one of the most important chapters in Scripture. So it is with great trepidation and gravity that we approach this chapter. The truths within this chapter will assure the Christian’s transformation or they will expose the true condition of the heart of the one deceived regarding their position before Almighty God.

So take great care with this chapter. Give it appropriate time.

Of all things Jesus could do after He saw the crowds, what did He see as most important (based on His actions)?

So instead of healing or performing miracles, He chose to do what?

What does that tell you about your own times of teaching with the Lord?

Does Jesus continue to teach you through His Spirit or are you content with the years of teaching He has given you? Really think about this and do not answer quickly.

What “blessed” would you have begun with?

What kind of person do you see as blessed?

Popular, wealthy, powerful, friendly, privileged, smart, attractive???

Yet Jesus begins with “poor in spirit.” Why?

- ✓ Go back to the Basic study and review what you found about this phrase.

Being “poor in spirit” has been called being “spiritually bankrupt before God.”

What does that mean to you?

If the Sermon on the Mount offered a set of rules and regulations for the Kingdom of heaven, how would that undermine the very first beatitude?

*"The one thing the law cannot do is to make a man righteous before God."* James M. Boice

Jesus begins with this particular "blessed" because He is making it clear for those listening, you CANNOT make yourself worthy of God's blessings. You cannot, by trying harder, make yourself presentable to God.

❖ **Read Isaiah 11: 1-6**

When Jesus Christ returns to set up a holy kingdom, all things will be made right.

The nature of the wolf must change.

If you go to the zoo today and see a wolf and a lamb in a cage together, what happens?

So until the King sets up His kingdom in the heart of a believer, the nature does not change.

We must become new creatures in order to live as citizens of His kingdom. HE MUST RULE! We must set aside our own agenda and seize upon His.

First principle of Christian ethics: a new nature must be acquired.

This is where "poor in spirit" is absolutely necessary; we must see that we cannot live this Life in Christ. He must live in us by our decision to bow to His wishes as our King.

**Read Luke 18: 9-14**

Where in your life right now are you struggling to yield to your King?

We need to come to the point where we see that a true *poverty of spirit* means that we have done with ourselves. We realize that we have nothing to offer a holy God, so we are eternally grateful that He has loved us for no reason found within us. His reason for loving us is completely His own reason and we are not privy to it. But we are eternally grateful for it and will thank Him for all time! This is the evidence of being “poor in spirit.” This is also where we become so occupied with our King that we are no longer occupied with ourselves.

John MacArthur says, “*You might as well expect fruit to grow without trees if you think the graces of the Christian life grow without humility.*” The Beatitudes – The Only Way to Happiness

When you first read **Matt. 5: 1-3**, be aware that the only standard of righteousness the people hearing Jesus speak understood at that time, was the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

They wondered if they were worthy to enter the King’s kingdom.

These people knew very well that they could not keep the law which the Pharisees proposed. But now Jesus was giving them an even more impossible way of living! Yet ... there was something filled with hope about the way Jesus spoke of His kingdom.

Could it be that they would indeed be able to live as Jesus described?

In your own words, what is the difference between what the Pharisees offered by way of the law and what Jesus offered?

✓ Now let’s back up a minute.

Could it be possible that Jesus was saying it is good to be financially poor? Why or why not?

This poverty is not material poverty. Otherwise it would be a hindrance if you ever financially assisted anyone because you would be countering this blessing. A rich or poor person can both be overly focused on material things: the acquiring of these things or the lack thereof. Jesus is

letting us know that blessing comes from a detachment from either material riches or material poverty. Blessing comes from realizing your inability in what really matters: your spiritual life.

Being “poor in spirit” is the opposite of being “rich in pride.”

What does that mean to you?

When we recognize that we can offer God not one thing of eternal value, we then begin to see how destitute we are in what really matters. But have no fear, the Lord is ready to bless you with His Kingdom when you make this realization!

*“Blessed are those who mourn”*

There are nine Greek words for “mourn.” This one is the strongest, most severe of all nine!

This is the word reserved for mourning the dead. Who died?

*“A mourning for sin lies at the heart of Christ’s message.” J.M.Boice*

**Sin is the great separator from God**, so to be delivered from this tyranny of sin is a great blessing. The comfort we receive as we enter God’s kingdom is a relief from the burden of sin. But first you must recognize your sin and see Jesus Christ as the only solution for your sin.

Can you be comforted if you do not first mourn? Why or why not?

## **Key Principles of the Sermon on the Mount**

1. Recognition that one cannot fulfill the standards of this Sermon by one’s own will.

This is clearly seen in the giving of the Law on another mount – Mount Sinai.

Sinful human beings cannot perform the righteous law of God as evidenced while Moses was receiving the commandments from God. The Israelites were breaking the very laws the people of God were to hold dear. The sacrifices had to be instituted because that was the only way they would not face the wrath of God against their constant sinning.

An accurate understanding of the view of Christ in regard to the Law is crucial. Did Jesus see the Law as terminated or complete?

**Matt. 5: 17, 20**

Paul makes this clear in **Rom. 3: 19, 20**

How does this relate to:

**Isaiah 29: 13**

**Matt. 15: 1-9**

2. There must be an emptying in our lives before there can be a filling.

**Mark 8: 34, 35**

**Gal. 5: 24**

**Col 3: 3-7**

**Rom. 8: 12-13**

**Rom. 6: 11-13**

**Luke 2: 34**

When you say, "I am an empty vessel, Lord, fill me with the life of Christ," then the Lord will fill you up with all the Life you need! Only then can you begin to live the standards of the Sermon on the Mount. This is not a New Age emptying, but a dying to self and the will of self which Jesus clearly calls us to do, not once but daily.

*"Being poor in spirit means being without resources, without pride, without self-assurance, without self-reliance. There must be an emptying before there can be a filling." John MacArthur.*

3. Nothing but a direct confrontation with the holy, just and loving God will produce this life within you. It is not possible to create a true poverty of spirit by looking within or by comparing yourself to others and looking around at other people.
4. One commentator calls this verse (**Matt. 5: 3**) "Happy are the nobodies."

If that is accurate how can a "nobody" be considered "happy?"

Basically the key to a life in the Kingdom of God is a life of humility.

Humble yourself before Him at ALL times!

### ➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Do not answer this question hastily. It tells you so much about where you are with God right now.

Does God want to bless you?

How do you know?

In your mind what would be the greatest blessing He could give you today?

Is this the same blessing you think He desires to give you?

If you desire something He does not desire for you, what does that say about your current relationship with Him?

2. What one thing in your life right now is hindering you from being poor in spirit?
3. What areas of your life would change if you were poor in spirit?
4. How does the holiness of God impact your desire to live humbly before Him?
5. How does the Sovereignty of God show you your place in His kingdom?
6. What do you need to mourn over concerning your own sin?

**Realize: mourners are happy because they are the only ones who are forgiven.**

7. How does the Arab proverb, “All sunshine makes a desert,” relate to the second blessing?

8. “There no greater message I can think of for the church today than for it to start crying instead of laughing.” John MacArthur

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

9. How can you actually know if you are a mourner? Are you sensitive to sin? Do you have a sense of God’s forgiveness? Do you have a real peace that comes from the comfort of a forgiven, purified, cleansed life?

10. What actually caused you to become a Christian?

If you are not a Christian yet, what causes you to want to know more about Christianity?

*“The Beatitudes are especially significant as both the starting place and the foundation of all that Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount. In a sense, the Beatitudes lay the groundwork for all Christian truth... The Beatitudes call for a full self-examination.”* **John MacArthur**

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God's Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being "poor in spirit." How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week's message.



## LESSON FOUR      “ARE YOU YIELDED TO YOUR LORD?”

### Matthew 5      Doctrine: RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

*“Jesus’ message devastates worldly attitudes. You cannot fill a man’s empty soul with external things. That’s what the world tries to do. Jesus came to announce that the tree of happiness does not grow on the cursed earth.”* Wiersbe

#### BASIC STUDY

Read over your Text of Matthew 5. Mark any new insights you pick up in this reading.

## ❖ WORD STUDY

Do a word study on the following words:

- **By the way – this study on *meek* may be the single most important word study you ever do. Don't skip this!!!**

**“Meek” (or “gentle” in some versions) “meekness” - *prautes***

*Praus* denotes gentle, mild, meek. Christ used it of His own disposition, Matt. 11: 29; it is said of Him as the King Messiah, Matt. 21: 5, from Zech. 9:9; it is an adornment of the Christian profession, 1 Pet. 3: 4; word related to *epios*, of a soothing disposition, 1 Thes. 2: 7; 2 Tim. 2: 24

In its use in Scripture, in which it has a fuller, deeper significance than in non- scriptural Greek writings, it consists not in a person's “outward behavior only; not yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather it is an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us a good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; it is closely linked with the word *tapeinophrosune* (humility), and follows directly upon it, Eph. 4: 2; Col. 3: 12 ... it is only the humble heart which is also meek, and which, as such, does not fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him. This meekness, however, being first of all a meekness before God, is also such in the face of men, even of evil men, out of a sense that these, with the insults and injuries which they may inflict, are permitted and employed by Him for the chastening and purifying of His elect. In Gal 5: 23, it is associated with *enkrateia*, self-control.

The meaning of *prautes* is not readily expressed in English, for the terms meekness, mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness and pusillanimity to a greater or less extent, whereas *prautes* does nothing of the kind. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find a rendering less open to objection than ‘meekness and gentleness,’ *prautes* describes a condition of mind and heart, while ‘gentleness’ suggests action. It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was ‘meek’ because He had the infinite resources of God at His command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.

In 2 Cor. 10: 1 the Apostle appeals to the ‘meekness ... of Christ.’ Christians are charged to show ‘all meekness toward all men,’ Tit. 3:2, for meekness becomes ‘God's elect,’ Col. 3: 12. To this virtue the ‘man of God’ is urged; he is to ‘follow after meekness’ for his own sake, 1 Tim. 6: 11, and in his service, and more especially in his dealings with the ‘ignorant and erring,’ he is to exhibit ‘a spirit of meekness,’ 1 Cor. 4: 21, and Gal. 6: 1; even ‘they that oppose themselves’ are to be corrected in meekness, 2 Tim. 2: 25. James exhorts his ‘beloved

brethren' to 'receive with meekness the implanted word,' 1: 21. Peter enjoins 'meekness' in setting forth the grounds of the Christian hope, 1 Pet. 3: 15.

### Vine's Expository Dictionary

Meek was often used to describe, a soothing medicine, a gentle breeze, a colt that had been broken and domesticated, power under control

*"Broken in spirit focuses on my sinfulness. Meekness focuses on God's holiness.*

*Broken in spirit is negative and results in mourning.*

*Meekness is positive and results in seeking righteousness."*

*"The meek person has died to self. He never worries about his own injuries. He bears no grudges."*

John MacArthur

The reason he can act this way is because of the blessings which come before this one. He is broken in spirit over his own sin, he does not contend with God, but yields to His wishes. He is truly humble.

**What does meekness mean?**

- 1- Power under control
- 2- My life totally submitted to the will of God
- 3- I recognize that whatever comes into my life has been allowed by God and is therefore good for me
- 4- Events are to be accepted without resentment or retaliation on my part
- 5- Meekness in its truest sense makes no defense of self and defends only God and others – not self.

**Make sure you do not miss within the definition of this crucial word, the fact that we are to "accept His (God's) dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting." It exhibits a heart that "does not fight against God and more or less struggle and contend with Him."**

Again, to trust God to this level, requires that you know Him intimately.

So we will continue with our study of the attributes of God. Keep in mind we are not studying all of His attributes, but our goal is to study enough of them to give us a good handle on how trustworthy our Lord is!

So after the word studies below, we will return to the study on the Attributes.

## **Hunger/thirst for righteousness**

Additionally, the word for “filled” is *chortazo* # 5526 and means to be foddered up (for an animal) It means to be absolutely satisfied

## **Merciful**

## **Pure in heart**

## **Peacemakers**

## **Persecuted**

**❖ Righteousness of God    Choose 5 quotes and read the rest**

**Deut. 32: 4**

**Ps. 11: 7, 8**

**Ps. 71: 16, 19**

**Ps. 96: 13**

**Ps. 97: 2, 6**

**Ps. 103: 6**

**Ps. 119: 160**

**Hosea 14: 9**

**Zeph. 3: 4, 5**

**1 Cor. 1: 30**

**Rom. 3: 25, 26**

**2 Cor. 5: 21**

**Rom. 8: 10**

**Do you hunger and thirst for this righteousness? Well, this is Who our God is! If you do not hunger and thirst for righteousness, you are not hungering and thirsting for Him!**

**If this is true of you right now –STOP! Get on your face before God and hash this out with Him. Ask Him for this kind of hungering and thirsting. Nothing is more important for you to settle right now.**

➤ **When you finish your talk with the Lord, read the article on the Righteousness of God.**

❖ **Now do a study on God's attribute of mercy. Choose 5 to write and read the others.**

**Ps. 62: 12 (lovingkindness is a translation of mercy)**

**Ps. 89: 14**

**Ps. 116: 5**

**Lam. 3: 22, 23**

**Joel 2: 12-14**

**Rom. 9: 14-16**

**Eph. 2: 4-5**

**Titus 3: 5**

**Heb. 4: 16**

**James 2: 13**

**Now read Matt. 5: 3-8 and examine why the mercy of the Lord is so necessary to the message of the Sermon on the Mount. Note your findings below.**

**Now we are going to examine verses which teach us about God's justice.  
Read all verses and choose 5 to write out.**

**❖ Justice of God**

**Deut. 10: 18**

**Deut. 32: 4**

**Ps. 99: 4**

**Ps. 146: 7-9**

**Is 30: 18**

**Is. 61: 8**

**Col. 3: 25**

**Eph. 6: 9**

**God is ALWAYS fair and just. His actions are without wickedness and guile.**

He is fair one hundred percent of the time. Since He is all-knowing, He always judges perfectly and in accord with true justice.

What does that truth have to do with what we are learning in Sermon on the Mount?

➤ **GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**

➤ **DIGGING DEEPER**

*"Blessed are the meek (gentle)"*

The Greek philosopher Aristotle had a lot to say about this word: *praus*.

He said that it was a virtue because it was the mean between excessive anger and the inability to show anger at all. For Aristotle, the mean between two extremes was the virtue to be cultivated. For instance, bravery was the mean between cowardice and foolhardy abandon. Generosity is the mean between stinginess and excessive spending, a profligate waste of one's resources. So the meek person is one who has found God's balance of the correct response to every encounter.

This word also refers to animals who have been tamed. These animals had learned to yield to their master's touch and voice.

The word also came to refer to people of the upper class who were well-mannered, balanced or polite: gentleman, gentlefolk

**We also learn that *praus* is a word that means equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.**

**Are you sitting down?**

**Jesus did not make up this beatitude. He actually quotes from David in the Psalms for this one beatitude.**

**Read Ps. 37: 1-11**

**As you read, note here the things that point toward the right attitude toward the Lord if one has committed to be humble, gentle, meek.**

**For instance: “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”**

As I delight myself in Him and NOT in my own agenda, more and more the things the Lord loves will become the things that I love and I will be more and more yielded to Him and His ways.

As I delight myself in Him, I will be less occupied with myself.

As I delight myself in Him, I will not ride the roller coaster of life – my spirit will have an equanimity (calm balance) of character that only comes from Almighty God.

Truly as I delight myself in Him, my desires change from my own to His. This is the life of Christ living within me. When Jesus says, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,” I believe this is what He is talking about.

**Go through Ps. 37: 1-11 examining each verse to see how it relates to “blessed are the meek” (gentle, humble)**

**Read Num. 12: 3**

Who was declared by God to be meek?

How do we know that he was meek, in other words, what is this story shows his meekness?

**Num. 12: 1-16 (Besides the Lord’s declaration in v. 3)**

**What do you learn from Moses that can help you in your desire to be meek?**

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled.”*

**Relate this beatitude to St. Augustine’s comment:**

*“You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You.”*

**Some Christians may think that hungering and thirsting for His righteousness is optional; it is meant only for the dedicated Christian. This is wrong thinking. Jesus here describes someone who belongs to His kingdom. You either belong to His kingdom or you do not; if you do, then **YOU WILL HUNGER AND THIRST FOR HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.****

**The beatitudes have expressed man’s need to this point; here man’s need is expressed and the solution which God has provided: He will satisfy you with His righteousness.**

✓ **If it is this simple, why are so many Christians unhappy, unfulfilled, unmotivated?**

**Relate this to Matt. 6: 33**

**Relate to 1 Cor. 1: 30**

**What kind of Righteousness are we talking about?**

The kind the Pharisees had? Clearly not. Jesus made that point again and again. Man’s righteousness would never do for God’s purposes.

The two major groups of religious people during the earthly life of Christ: Pharisees and Sadducees, were both proponents of being “self- righteous.” Pharisee= “pious ones”

The Pharisees came from the *Hasidim*, those men who kept themselves pure from the influence of Greece when the Jews returned from Babylonian captivity.

Sadducees= Zadikim, the righteous, were thought to originate from Zadok the Priest.

Also *zaddiyq* is Hebrew for righteous.

**So we are to hunger and thirst for God's brand of Righteousness, perfect Righteousness.**

Many people have settled for their own self-righteousness and this has brought them nothing but broken relationships, broken ministry, and broken understanding between them and God.

But how can we procure, obtain God's Righteousness? Go back to the verses above.

**Is it wise to seek happiness?**

**So what should we seek? Matt. 6: 33**

**This verse says that the happy people are those who seek, not happiness primarily, but holiness before God.**

**Grammar lesson**

**Now I know some of you are not fond of grammar; you never liked it in school and you still don't like it. So I do not throw a lot of grammar at you, but here it is so valuable.**

**In the normal construction of this verse "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness," this would be in the genitive case, BUT IT IS NOT!**

**It is in the accusative case. This doesn't mean much to us, but the readers of Greek would have understood this.**

**The genitive case has reference to the partitive nature of the object.**

**Give me some bread. The French see this in "*Passez du pain.*" Give me some bread.**

So in normal construction the request would be for some righteousness. But here it is in the accusative case which ignores all grammatical rules in order to make plain the fact that the request is being made for *all righteousness, all of God's Righteousness.*

What this means is that the one who hungers and thirsts the way Christ intends must hunger and thirst not for a partial or imperfect righteousness but he must desire and long for the whole thing. He must crave a perfect righteousness, a righteousness equal to and identical with God's.

Relate this to Matt. 5: 20

John 4: 10, 13, 14

*"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."*

*"The quality of mercy is not strain'd.*

*It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven*

*Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:*

*It blesses him that gives and him that takes.*

*'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes*

*The throned monarch better than his crown –*

Merchant of Venice speech by Portia

How is mercy different than grace?

It has been said that mercy is grace in action.

**Do you agree?**

*“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”*

**Relate to 1 John 3: 3**

**Jer. 17: 9**

**Matt. 12: 34**

**Heb. 11: 27**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.”*

Can you be a peacemaker without first knowing peace with God?

If you have experience peace with God, you are called to BE A PEACEMAKER.

You MUST be a peacemaker now.

When is the last time you brokered peace when peace was needed?

*“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

**Phil. 1: 29**

**1 Thes. 3: 3, 4**

**2 Tim. 3: 12**

**1 Pet. 3: 14**

**1 Pet. 4: 14**

**Persecution is a calling for all Christians to accept with grace.**

**There will be persecution from following Christ. His message is one which the world does not tolerate well. The question is: how will we respond when the persecution comes?**

**Being persecuted for righteousness is not the same as being persecuted for being obnoxious or insensitive. Many people regard their rejection as a badge of their Christian maturity. Actually they are suffering for their own wrongdoing.**

**To suffer persecution in the right way means we have been unjustly persecuted for being like the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus meant that those who are persecuted for being like Him will be happy.**

**John 15: 20-23**

**Keep in mind: just as grace is evidence of your relationship with Christ, so is persecution.**

**Begin to see persecution as evidence of your identity. Just make sure your own behavior is not causing the persecution.**

**One last point on persecution – we are to rejoice! But how do you rejoice when you are being persecuted?**

1. **The Christian must know that through persecutions God is demonstrating his identity with Christ.**

**Acts 5: 41, 42**

2. **Know that God often uses persecution to perfect the believer.**

**1 Pet. 1: 6-8**

**1 Pet. 5: 10, 11**

**Ps. 119:67, 71**

3. **Persecution allows the Christian an opportunity to manifest the supernatural radiance of the Christian life.**

As they were being led to the stake, Hugh Latimer said to Nicholas Ridley, *“Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle by God’s grace in England as I trust shall never be put out.”*

4. **With persecution comes the promise of reward.**

**Heb. 11: 26**

5. **The Lord Jesus Himself is particularly near in the moment of severe persecution.**

**Dan. 3: 24,25**

- ❖ **Just as the first of the Ten Commandments relate God to man and then we see the remaining Commandments relate man to man (adultery, stealing, murder), so here with the Beatitudes.**

**The pattern is the same: relationship with God and then the natural outflow of that divine relationship will touch every human relationship we encounter.**

Warren Wiersbe see the Beatitudes as:

Our attitude toward ourselves (5: 3)

Our attitude toward our sins (5: 4-6)

Our attitude toward the Lord (5: 7-9)

Our attitude toward the world (5: 10-16)

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. In regard to meekness, it is a gift that comes with salvation; it is a fruit of the Spirit, given to every believer. The meekness I need in order to live is resident within me, so in any circumstance of life, it's a matter of turning to God and saying, 'God, fill me with Your Spirit.' Appropriating meekness is essential to growth. **James 1: 21**

**What do you see in these statements that affects your walk with the Lord right now?**

2. **If someone were to say to you, "All this meekness is fine and good for you, but it is impossible for me. I cannot make myself meek," how would you respond to them?**

3. **A wonderful example of meekness is Joseph. Read Gen. Chapters 37, 39 and 40.**

**What do you learn from this young man of the Lord?**

**How did he exhibit meekness?**

**4. How do you know if you are meek?**

**Do you exhibit self-control?**

**Do you get angry, do you react, or do you retaliate only when God is dishonored?**

**Do you always respond humbly and obediently to the Word?**

**Do you always make peace?**

**Do you receive criticism well and love the people who give it?**

**5. As we delve deeper into the character of a true follower of Christ, which of these characteristics is the Lord bringing into focus for you?**

**6. After this week's study, how has your understanding of Matt 11: 28, 29, increased?**

**7. In regard to persecution, how does a Christian rejoice in persecution?**

**J. Boice says "I am convinced that the only valid answer to that question is –**

*by knowledge.”*

**Not by feelings, not by emotions, but by knowledge. You cannot trust your reasoning ability either. Your safety during persecution comes from a solid knowledge of the God you serve and His ways. “It is only knowledge that will calm the Christian’s troubled heart and allow the supernatural joy of God’s Spirit to triumph in the midst of his suffering.” Boice**

- **We are studying some amazing doctrines. But there is a tendency to admire the doctrine itself instead of living a holy life through the power of the living and reigning Christ.**

This is why, after the profound teaching in the first eleven chapters of Romans, Paul urges his readers to *“present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service of worship.” Rom. 12: 1*

**What you believe must always affect your conduct.**

**Keep in mind, the “blesseds” are a description of the kingdom follower of Christ.**

**The one described here, and he alone, can possess all the things discussed in the beatitudes. First must come the identification with the King and His Kingdom before we can begin to appropriate all these kingdom blessings.**

In the further description of the kingdom person, Jesus makes clear that this person who has tasted the Righteousness of God is to show mercy to others; he/she is to be pure in heart; he/she is to be a peacemaker.

**All of these qualities we have witnessed in the Life of Christ.**

8. **Where do you see that the Lord has molded you in the image of His Son?**

**Where is there more work to be done?**

**John MacArthur sees this sequence as a progression.**

***“We see first the poor in spirit, which is the right attitude toward sin and which leads to mourning in verse 4. After you’ve seen your sinfulness and mourned, you’re meek with a sense of humility. Then you seek and hunger for righteousness. Do you see the progression? That manifests itself in mercy (v. 7), in purity of heart, (v. 8) and in a peacemaking spirit. The***

*result of being merciful and pure in heart and peacemaking is that you are reviled and persecuted and falsely accused, Why? Because by the time you have been poor in spirit and mourned over it, have become humble, sought righteousness, and lived a merciful pure and peacemaking life, you have sufficiently irritated the world.*

9. Do you agree with his assessment?

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God'S Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being "poor in spirit." How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week's message.



**Is He your Lord?**

**Would people listen to the sermons of Jesus today?**



**LESSON FIVE      “BRINGING ALL THE BLESSEDS TOGETHER”**

**Matthew 5      Doctrine: Sin**

**BASIC STUDY**

Just to bring us into the spirit of this sermon, let's review for a moment.

- ❖ **Being poor in spirit is also said to mean being “broken in spirit.” If brokenness of spirit was necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, it is this same brokenness of spirit that is to characterize my life as a believer. My spiritual poverty and dependence on the Lord will ensure I remain close to Him.**

**What can you do today that will keep you reliant upon the Lord?**

- ❖ **“Blessed are they who mourn.” Over what do they mourn?**

**They mourn over their sin and over the sins of others. Here we are talking about initial mourning that produces repentance over all sin that's been in my life and a turning from sin. This mourning brings about repentance as I walk and live my daily life.**

**How can you maintain a tender spirit toward any sin which creeps into your life?**

- ❖ **Meekness**

**Based on what you learned last week, is meekness a passive or active quality? Support your answer.**

**Look back at last week's list on Meekness.**

**What do you learn about meekness from Num. 12: 3?**

**Read Ps. 37: 11 and record what you see about the meek.**

**1 Tim. 6: 11**

**Here you see that you will have to pursue meekness. What does that mean to you personally?**

**Have you ever been to the beach? Did you venture out where the waves were?**

**If you “rode” the waves, did you fight against them or did you learn to ride the waves, moving with the waves in their rhythm and force?**

**It is much more enjoyable and less tiring to “ride the waves” using their power and energy instead of struggling against them and wearing yourself out and getting nowhere.**

**Meekness is like riding the waves. Let God use the events in your life to transform you and take you to His designated place of growth.**

**How does the Sovereignty of God fit into your ability to rest in His choices for you?**

Being meek is really \_\_\_\_\_ God.

How do I know if I am meek?

{Answer to above blank is: TRUSTING}

❖ **Hungering and thirsting after Righteousness**

❖ **Merciful**

With whatever knowledge you possess right now, answer this question.

What was the religious atmosphere into which Jesus entered as the Messiah?

**The religious leaders of His day were external and very ritualistic. They thought they were secure in their beliefs as long as they followed their man made rules.**

**But look at what Jesus said to them in Matt. 23: 27.**

**What rituals are you counting on? Rituals gave then and give now a false sense of righteousness.**

**Righteousness on the inside will produce the fruit of holy action.**

**Out of righteousness will flow the remaining fruit.**

**Now we see the merciful in view.**

**Would you be characterized as merciful? Why or why not?**

*"We are not meant to control our Christianity. Our Christianity is meant to control us."*

MacArthur

**Keep in mind what a merciless society Jesus lived in. Rome was in charge of the lives of His people. The Romans were a ruthless people. IN the Roman world when a child was born into the family, the father had the right of *patria potestas*. If he wanted the child to live, he held his thumb up. If he did not want the child to live, he held down his thumb and the child was immediately drowned or left out in the elements.**

**Write here what mercy means to you.**

**Mercy is not some human virtue that man can cultivate.**

**Mercy is from above and only God possesses mercy.**

**Mercy is not sympathy. You can feel sorry for someone and remain uninvolved.**

**Mercy MUST act.**

**Titus 3: 5**

**Eph. 2: 4-9**

**Daniel 9:9**

**Ps. 130: 1-7**

**Ps. 119: 64**

**Neh. 9: 19**

**Ps. 69: 13**

❖ **Pure in heart**

**As for the rituals swirling around Jerusalem, it is not those who observe the external washings who are pure in heart. It is not the one who goes through the ceremonies. It is not the one who measures himself by another man.**

**There really are only two kinds of religion in the world. Two.**

**One is the religion of human achievement – you earn your own way.**

**The other is the religion of divine accomplishment that realizes we are incapable of doing anything of eternal value; we are incapable of saving our souls; we are incapable of approaching a holy God.**

**See how this psalm explains this.**

**Ps. 24: 1-5**

**Prov. 4: 23**

**Ps. 51; 10**

**PURE= KATHAROS unmixed, pure, unalloyed or unadulterated, sifted or cleansed of chaff, no foreign element**

**Jesus is telling us that we must have a heart that is devoted to God – not mixed or half-hearted.**

## ❖ Peacemakers

The Bible has over 400 references to peace. This must be important to the Lord.

Is your world ruled by peace?

How has our government been doing in their effort to find man's peace?

Any history of the League of Nations after WW1 and the United Nations reveals what a miserable failure man has experienced in his quest for peace.

Is the cemetery the only real place of peace because there is no strife there?

God has provided for us a true peace, the kind only He can offer. God's peace is far more than the absence of turmoil. No, His peace is the presence of righteousness that causes right living, right relationships, right thinking.

Peace is not just stopping war; peace is creating righteousness that causes God's order here and now. We can begin returning the world to its "right side up" status that it enjoyed before the fall. But there is a cost – the cost is found here in these "blesseds." We must begin always with poor in spirit. The rest will fall into place if the poor in spirit is there.

What do you learn about peace from the following:

James 3: 17, 18

Heb. 12: 14

Ps. 85: 10

1 Cor. 14: 33

2 Thes. 3: 16

Eph. 2: 14

**Mark 9: 50**

**The peacemakers are called the “sons of God.”**

Sons is *huios* in the Greek – this is a key word because there are other ways of denoting sonship. But this word is the one used when you want to speak of the dignity of sonship. *Huios* shows the dignity honor, and standing of the son.

**The Lord wants you to know how very dignified you are. You are His, what more could you possibly be!!**

**❖ Persecuted**

**Now as God’s sons (and daughters), He would not leave you “unfinished.”**

**Read James 1: 2-4**

**1 Pet. 5: 10**

**This world sees all the virtues of the “blesseds” as intolerable. So the natural response of the world will be persecution. Expect it.**

**We must be honest – God is calling us to a life contrary to the world’s system and there will be a cost.**

**Godly living will provoke the ungodly. They will be resentful. This is to be expected since it is a manifestation of the serpent against the holy seed.**

**2 Cor. 11: 23-27**

John 15: 21-24

Col. 1: 24

Before we move on in the Sermon on the Mount and leave the “Beatitudes” let us not neglect to drill home the importance of the message of self-examination.

If these “blesseds” are not a part of your daily life, growing and developing, you must settle with the Lord your relationship with Him.

We are not told these characteristics are optional; these are absolutely necessary to be an anchor in your life as a follower of Jesus Christ. Remember, His life is within you and others should see traits of Jesus in you. (Eph. 1: 13; Col. 2: 10-12)

Our own human attempts at godliness do not achieve the righteous standards of Jesus Christ. But once we see this truth and yield to His rule in our lives, there must be fruit; there must be evidence that Jesus is my Master as well as my Shepherd and Savior.

On what do you base your assurance of salvation – a past decision or ongoing obedience?

Now you are poised to receive the teaching from the Lord on being His Salt and His Light. This we will look at next week. Be in prayer as to how the Lord will speak to you on this crucial topic.

- **Read the article on Sin found in the Supplemental Materials. Sin is the agent in our lives which threatens our peace, our purity, our meekness, our righteousness, our mourning over sin, our poverty of spirit, our relationship with our Lord. We must root out sin with the powerful work of the Lord’s Spirit Who lives within us.**

## ➤ DIGGING DEEPER

**Grammar helps again here as we look over the “blesseds.”**

**Each blessed says “theirs” which in the Greek is *autoi*.**

This word is emphatic and means “theirs and theirs alone.”

So each “blessed” is theirs and theirs alone.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit and them alone.

The ones who will find comfort are those who mourn over their sin and them alone.

The ones who will inherit the earth, be satisfied, see God, find mercy, be called the sons of God ... all of these are the only ones – theirs and theirs alone is the kingdom of heaven!

Don't miss this!

For those who want to find a backdoor into God's presence, it does not exist and they will find the door to another place instead. “Theirs and theirs alone” is the message that Jesus wanted to get across to His disciples and the same is true today!

We keep coming back to “poor in spirit.” That is because everything hinges on this.

If being poor in spirit is so important, how do we become poor in spirit?

First of all, you must not try and accomplish anything yourself.

Stop looking at yourself at all!

Begin with finding Jesus in His Word. Come face to face with Who He is. It's funny how you lose your selfish focus as you turn your gaze on Him.

Second, deny the flesh. Starve the flesh. For instance, do not let pride gain a foothold in your life. Every time the devil tempts you to be proud or filled with unholy pride about your children, run him off!

Third, simply ask the Lord for a humble spirit. **Luke 18: 10-14** The man who asked God for mercy went home justified. We must ask. God will provide.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells us *“there is no entry into the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, apart from it {becoming **poor in spirit**} There is no one in the kingdom of God who is not **poor in spirit**... this is the foundation of everything else.”*

**So just to be crystal clear, write down here why this is true.**

**If this is true then the greatest virtue you can cultivate is the virtue of humility.**

**But again, how do we grow humble?**

**The best way to become poor in spirit is to look at God. Read His Word, talk to Him about His Word, imagine standing before Him. This will also lead to humility. See the greatness of God and all of a sudden your own agenda seems terribly small and inconsequential.**

**Now I have a hard question for you, but I want you to search the Scriptures and see what they say about this.**

**Do we spend too much time in the Church laughing and not enough time weeping? Why do you answer as you do?**

**There are so few “blesseds,” why would Jesus spend one of His characteristics of being a kingdom citizen on mourning? What is so important about mourning?**

**This mourning, is it true only at conversion for one time?**

**Or are we to mourn frequently through our lives as Christians?**

**What is the comfort?**

**What is the daily comfort?**

**How do the following verses relate:**

**Luke 19: 41**

**Luke 13: 34, 35**

**2 Cor. 5: 1-5**

**What do the following verses tell us about the comfort that we will receive after mourning?**

**Titus 2: 13**

**Rom. 8: 20-23**

**1 Cor. 15: 51-58**

**Phil. 3: 20-21**

Each “blessed” is so opposed to the way the natural man thinks. Especially the fact that the kingdom citizen will be *meek*. This is altogether different than the world. But Paul explains to us why this is a crucial truth.

**2 Cor. 5: 17**

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *“Meekness is essentially a true view of oneself... a man can never be meek unless he is poor in spirit. A man can never be meek unless he has seen himself as a vile sinner. These must come first.”*

**Matt. 11: 29** says, *“Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls.”* **Think about what you know of the earthly life of Jesus. In what ways was He meek? List them here.**

**How can you emulate the meekness of Christ?**

**Luke 14: 11**

**We are not to hunger and thirst after blessedness. We are clearly told to hunger and thirst for**  
\_\_\_\_\_ .

D.A. Carson says, *“righteousness here and in verses 10 and 20, means a pattern of life in conformity to God’s will... The person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness, then, hungers and thirsts for conformity to God’s will.”*

**This person does not find righteousness optional; he cannot get along without righteousness.**

**Does that describe you?**

**Righteousness as God sees it is not some adherence to rules but instead a conformity to all of His will. It is not trying to be just a little bit better.**

*“The desire for righteousness, the act of hungering and thirsting for it, means ultimately the desire to be free from sin in all its forms and in its every manifestation... It means a desire to be free from sin, because sin separates us from God ... All the trouble in the world today is due to the fact that man is not right with God.” D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

Do you view mercy as a desirable trait?

How can you grow in mercy without dealing with people in need?

What is your plan of attack to grow in mercy? Share this plan with someone today!

*“The one who is not merciful is inevitably so unaware of his own state that he thinks he needs no mercy. He cannot picture himself as miserable and wretched; so how shall God be merciful toward him?... The merciful man is merciful toward the wretched because he recognizes himself to be wretched.” D.A.Carson*

What do you learn about being merciful in the following?

**Luke 18: 10- 14**

**Matthew 18: 21-35**

**Col. 3: 13**

**Personal test time!**

**Am I merciful to the wretched?**

**Am I gentle or hard-nosed to the downtrodden?**

**Am I helpful or callous to the backslidden?**

**Am I compassionate or impatient with the fallen?**

**Purity of heart must never be confused with external conformity to rules.**

**What do you think about when your mind wanders?**

**How much do you enjoy a dirty joke?**

**What do you want more than anything else?**

**Are your words and actions an accurate reflection of your heart?**

**Our King is pure, His kingdom is pure and anyone admitted to His kingdom must be pure as well!**

*“Our perception of God and His ways, as well as our fellowship with Him, depends on our purity of heart.” D.A. Carson*

## **➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Sin has been termed a pollution. What is most likely to be the area in your life which is more prone to “pollution?”

2. To hunger and thirst for righteousness is to desire to be free from self and to be occupied with God and His way alone.

How does coupling the two beatitudes of meekness and hungering and thirsting for righteousness help rid you of self?

### 3. Luke 15: 11-19

When did the prodigal son return to his father?

How does that relate to “hungering and thirsting for Righteousness and you will be filled?”

4. To hunger and thirst really means to be desperate. In what way are you desperate to know your God?

**5. You will never fill yourself with righteousness. You will always be hungering and thirsting until He fills you.**

**In what way have you been trying to “fill” yourself up?**

**For instance, doing good deeds, obeying lots of rules, doing “God’s work,” or just living for self (sex, alcohol, pleasure)**

**Examine yourself and see where you have believed the lie that you can be fulfilled apart from His miraculous work in your life.**

This “blessed” is particularly important because here we begin to turn away from just looking at our sin or our abject poverty of spirit. Here we begin to turn toward God, examining His ways, His offerings and His provision. He alone fills us. Turn from an examination of self, to God.

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God’S Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week’s lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being “poor in spirit.” How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week’s message.

## LESSON SIX

## “Salt and Light”



shutterstock.com · 2416923547

### BASIC STUDY

**Matthew 5      Doctrine: Discipleship**

**You cannot be salt and light until you are first poor in spirit.**

**Why is that true?**

- **In order to best benefit from this Kingdom Study, you will need to do a few things out of the norm.**

**This week you are keeping a Time Tracking Schedule. This will assist you in finding where the majority of your time goes. I did this many years ago and it helped me immeasurably. I pray it does the same for you.**

**This Time Tracking Document is in the Appendix.**

**Begin this TODAY!!!**

**Matthew 5: 13, 14**

Keep in mind these pronouns are in the *emphatic construction* which means the point being made is this: “You and you alone are the salt of the earth – there is no other. You and you alone are the light of the world – there is no other.”

**WORD STUDY on:**

**Salt**

**Lev. 2: 13**

**Ezra 6: 9-10**

**Ez. 43: 23-24**

**Num. 18: 19**

**2 Kings 2: 19-22**

**Vine’s**

Salt is halas: being possessed of a purifying, perpetuating and antiseptic qualities, salt became emblematic of fidelity and friendship among eastern nations. “In Scripture it is an emblem of the covenant between God and His people.” In the Lord’s teaching it is also symbolic of that spiritual health and vigor essential to Christian virtue and is counteractive of the corruption that is in the world.

Food is seasoned with salt: offerings presented must contain salt; it is emblematic of the holiness of Christ and as betokening the reconciliation provided for man by God on the grounds of the death of Christ – Lev. 2: 13

**Unger's**

**Covenant parties were accustomed to partake of salt, to make the covenant of salt, i.e., inviolably sure. The meaning appears to have been that the salt, with its power to strengthen food and keep it from decay, symbolized the unbending truthfulness of that self-surrender to the Lord embodied in the sacrifice by which all impurity and hypocrisy were repelled.**

**Salt gives flavor to life, to conversation.**

**"Salt preserves from corruption and renders wholesome." K. Wuest**

**Salt makes you thirsty.**

**Salt, poured on wounds, may hurt, but it is necessary as a purifier and antiseptic.**

**While salt is used to fertilize soil, excess of it on the ground produces sterility e.g., Deut. 29: 23; Jer. 17: 6; Zeph. 2: 9**

**Salt and light are used as metaphors. What is a metaphor?**

**Metaphor is an implied comparison between two things which are different.**

**Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." This is a metaphor.**

**Light**

**Is referred to over 250 times in Strong's Concordance. So we will by no means be exhaustive in our word study on light.**

**Light is used throughout Scripture as a guide, an illumination, as something which dispels darkness.**

**Light exposes sin.**

**John the Baptist was referred to as light guiding the people to Christ.**

**❖ Read all of the following but only record 5.**

**1 Kings 11: 36**

**Ps. 27: 1**

**Ps. 119: 105**

**Is. 8: 20**

**Is. 49: 6**

**Is. 60: 19-20**

**Matt. 4: 16**

**Matt. 6: 22, 23**

**Luke 2: 32**

**John 1: 4-9; 3: 19-21; 5: 35; 8: 12; 9: 5; 12: 35-36**

**Acts 26: 18**

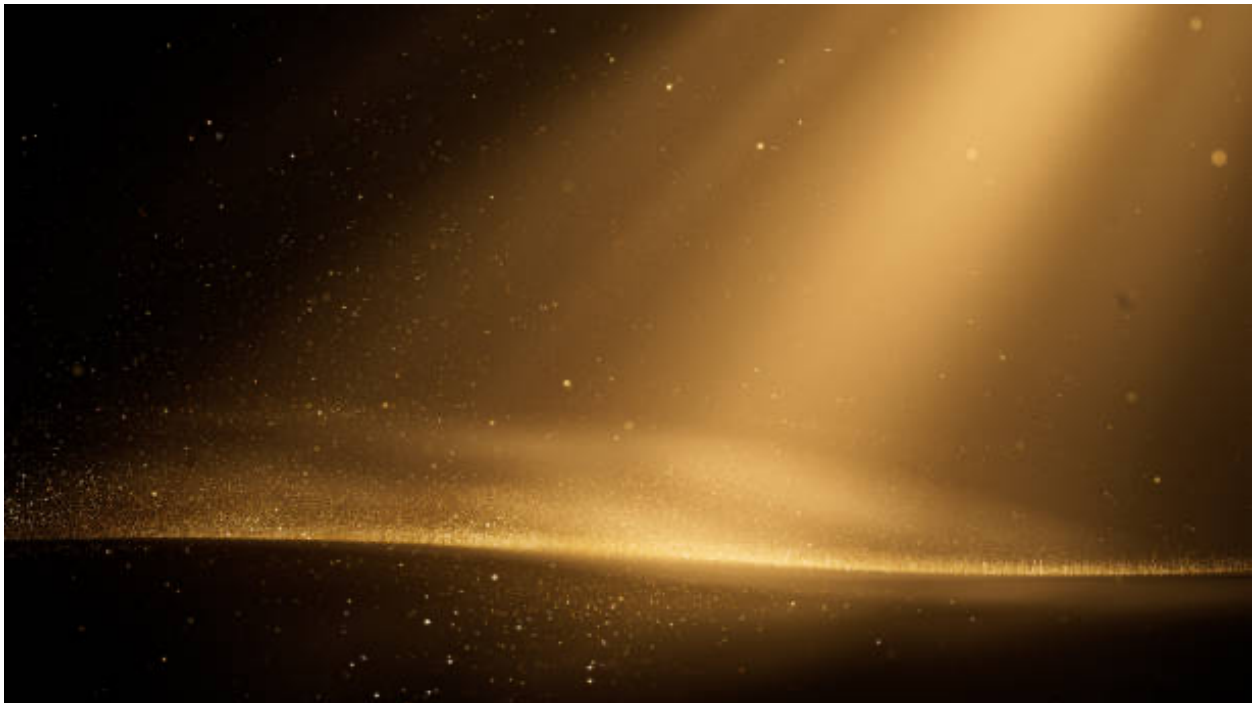
**Eph. 5: 8**

**Phil. 2: 15**

**1 Pet. 2: 9**

**1 John 1: 5-7**

✓ **Rev. 21: 23, 25; 22: 5 Make sure you take a look at this.**



**Light is crucial to the very first beatitude. You must first “see” yourself as a beggar with nothing to offer God before you can come to Him in repentance. You also must “see” God in His holiness to realize the true nature of your own depravity.**

Light is necessary to “see” our sin and mourn over it.

We desperately need His “light” to see Him as sovereign and worthy to be praised and trusted as our Sovereign.

We need His light so we can see our light and momentary trials for what they truly are.

2 Cor. 4: 17, 18      This puts persecution in proper perspective.

As we progress through the Sermon, we will see more and more the effect which Christians have, in other words: our witness. This is where we are the salt and light in our community.

*“Christians have the effect of delaying moral and spiritual putrefaction.”* D.A. Carson

We are to be an influence for good in our society.

For those who have lived in many places or visited many places, you have noticed some locations are particularly susceptible to darkness. At times, when there is no moonlight or stars, it is utter darkness. This is both interesting and frightening.

When you meditate on darkness, you begin to reflect on what this verse really means: “You are the light of the world, a city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

You will begin to long to be that lampstand that gives light to the whole house.

We live in a dark world, so it is imperative that we take the words of Jesus seriously here.

We are the only light some people will ever have; let’s not waste that opportunity.

➤ **Relate what you find on salt and light to certain attributes of God.**

**Omnipotence: God’s power is perfect.**

Gen. 18: 14

Job 42: 2

Jer. 32: 27

**Matt. 19: 26**

**Omnipresence: God's presence is everywhere.**

**Ps. 139: 1-10**

**Prov. 15: 11**

**1 Kings 8: 27**

**Is. 66: 1**

**Jer. 23: 23. 24**

**Omniscience: God's knowledge is perfect.**

**Ps. 33: 13- 15**

**Ps. 139: 4**

**Heb. 4: 13**

**Infinite: the realm of God is without limits**

**1 Kings 8: 27**

**Ps 139: 7-12**

**Eternal**     *“God’s eternity may be defined as follows: God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in His own being, and He sees all time equally vividly, yet, God sees events in time and acts in time.”* Wayne Grudem

**Ps. 90: 2**

**Job 36: 26**

**Rev. 1: 8; 4: 8**

**John 1: 3**

**1 Cor. 8: 6**

**Col. 1: 16**

**Heb. 1: 2**

**Is. 45: 21**

- **GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**
  
- **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Being a disciple of Jesus Christ**

**The lessons in this book of Matthew's Gospel are life-changing for the committed reader and student of God's Word.**

**So for Digging Deeper this week we are going to take a more thorough look at what it means to be a "disciple" of Jesus.**

- **Read the selection on Discipleship in the Supplemental Materials.**

**You are going to do your Digging Deeper a little differently this week. Instead of pouring over extra cross references and looking up more Greek words, etc., you are going to examine yourself. This is a crucial part of your walk with the Lord. A daily checking in with the Lord is necessary – to ask His input on how you are living that day. I believe more than a daily check-up is required, but periodically throughout the day. Who else should you talk with? Our Lord is ever ready to converse and encourage us along the way.**

- **So begin with Reading this article on Discipleship.**

**For your “inventory” start with the section on what Discipleship costs.**

**❖ Look at each point and talk to the Lord about each one.**

**For instance, the first point is Love Christ above all.**

**Read the suggested verse and then ask the Lord if you love Him more than mother, father, son or daughter.**

**Keep notes on how He responds. Keep notes on your own thoughts.**

**Go through each point in the handout following this procedure.**

**Do this on separate paper.**

**As you go through the points on Discipleship, make sure you are talking with the Lord and not just going through the assignment. This is life-changing stuff if you will take it to the Lord!**

**Some further points on being salt and light.**

**Do you make people thirsty?**

**Salt makes you thirsty. If you are truly being salt in the world, you will have that impact on people. How do you know if you are making them thirsty?**

**They will ask you “where to get some water!”**

**Your job is not to satisfy that thirst but to point them to Jesus Christ Who can satisfy their need.**

**Salt also gives food a good flavor. Do you provide savor to those in your sphere of influence? They will want to spend time with you; they will want to know what you have that they are missing. God is the One Who provides the flavor, and the flavor does not disappear when the salt is dispensed or dissolved.**

**In fact, until the salt is dissolved the flavor is not released.**

**The Church must dispense the salt if it is going to be healthy. The Church becomes bloated if the salt remains tightly with her.**

**Salt is a preservative.**

**The Christian is to influence his society.**

**In ancient times, salt was used as well as a preservative. But key here is the fact that the salt had to be rubbed into the meat to be of any benefit. So Christians must allow God to rub them into the world.**

*“Christians have the effect of delaying moral and spiritual putrefaction.” D.A. Carson*



**Salt is common. Salt is everywhere. The Lord chooses to use the most common everyday people to accomplish His works.**

**When God made man in the Garden, He used – not gold or silver- but clay.**

**When God spoke to Moses, He spoke out of a bush.**

**When David fought Goliath, did he use the king's armor? No he used some rocks.**

**When Jesus was born, was His delivery in the palace? Not it was in a stable!**

**Was He born of a noble woman, a princess? No He was born of a peasant girl.**

**God uses the small, common things in life. In fact, the more we can get out of the way, the better. A good word picture is this: we are the picture frame through which Jesus is to be the focus. Jesus is to be the One and Only priority in our lives. Then we will truly be salt and light.**

**Light**

**The moon is a picture of the Church. The moon reflects the sun, it does not shine by its own light.**

**John 8: 12 says, "I am the light of the world." But He also tells us that we are the light of the world. To the degree that we yield to His life in us, this is how His light shines in us.**

**Read 2 Cor. Chapters 3 and 4. Just read it and then write down what you learn about light.**

**Is. 9: 2; 42: 16**

**John 14: 12-18**

**John 15: 4, 5**

**In the last two hundred years or more, the philosophy of man has said that man will improve with knowledge. Just educate man and he will stop his violence. The period of the Enlightenment preached this. Evolution has taught this. Man just needs more light.**

*“What man needs is not more light; he needs a nature that will love the light and hate darkness – the exact opposite of his loving the darkness and hating the light.”* D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

➤ **Application Questions**

1. Why do you think the words about salt and light follow right after the “blesseds?”

2. In seeing God as your only true light, how does that truth help you as you continue your path as His child?

3. Where have you become “tasteless?” Where have you lost some saltiness?

What specifically are you going to do about it?

4. Unlike some creations of nature, like vegetables or flowers, when salt has lost its usefulness it is utterly useless. Vegetables, for instance can be used for the compost pile. Not so with salt – it is utterly useless.

*“There is nothing in God’s universe that is so utterly useless as a merely formal Christian. One who has the name but not the quality of a Christian.”* D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Write here your thoughts about this quote.

5. **Matt. 5: 16**, your light does not shine the spotlight on you. So where does the spotlight shine?

Is this true of your light?

6. What pitfalls (in the handout on Discipleship) are you particularly vulnerable to exhibit?

7. As a disciple of Christ, what are your marching orders?

8. What does being poor in spirit have to do with being the salt of the earth and the light of the world?

- **Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God's Kingdom this week.**
- **Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses**

- **The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being “poor in spirit.” How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.**
- **Find a Hymn which relates to this week’s message.**





**The Law is important to God so the Law should be important to us.**

**The Law presents the standard of God; the Law shows us the perfection of God and His ways. (Ps. 19) We are not to ignore or challenge the Law, but we are to rejoice that Jesus fulfilled the Law and by His fulfilling it, He has made a way for us to fulfill it through Him.**

**When we look at the Ten Commandments, is it possible to think that we can pretty much keep these commandments?**

**Now read Matt. 5: 17-42.**

**Do you think you can abide perfectly by these standards?**

**So what was Jesus saying when He spoke about God's standard here?**

**Read Matt. 19: 26; Luke 18: 26, 27**

**Do you see that here the disciples are beginning to get His drift?**

**What is Jesus saying?**

**Before we can make any approach to the entrance to the kingdom of heaven, we must see that we cannot accomplish anything eternal on our own good works. So then, what?**

- **Matt. 5: 17-19**

What is Jesus saying here?

In Matt. 5: 17, what exactly did He mean that He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets?

Let's start with the easier one: fulfilling the Prophets.

Look at the below verses and explain in what way Jesus fulfilled the prophet's words.

Micah 5: 2

Is. 7: 14

Is. 9: 6, 7

Is. 40: 3 (Matt. 3: 3)

Is 9: 1 (Matt. 4: 15, 16)

Is. 42: 6, 7

Is. 49: 5-7

**Is 50: 5-9**

**Is. 52: 13- 53: 1- 12**

**Is. 61: 1-2a (Luke 4: 18, 19; Matt. 11: 2-6)**

**Micah 7: 6 (Matt. 10: 35)**

**There are many more occurrences but I will try and not weary you too much.**

**What about fulfilling the Law?**

**Where do we see that occur?**

**➤ Read the article on The Law in the Supplemental Materials**

***“The Bible is about Jesus and that He is its fulfillment in all ways. He fulfills the moral law by His obedience, the prophecies by the specifics of life, and the sacrificial system by His once-and-for-all atonement. This is a part of what Paul means in Rom. 10: 4 when he calls Christ ‘the end of the law.’” J.M. Boice***

***“The best interpretation of these ... verses says that Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets in that they point to Him, and He is their fulfillment. The antithesis is not between ‘abolish’ and ‘keep’ but between ‘abolish’ and ‘fulfill.’***

***As far back as Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), many Christians have divided the law into three categories: moral, civil and ceremonial. Some say that the civil law of the Old Testament has passed away because God’s people no longer constitute a nation. The ceremonial law has disappeared because it pointed to Jesus, Who ‘fulfilled’ it by dying on the cross... that leaves the moral law; and it is argued, Jesus in Matt. 5: 17-20 is actually referring to moral law, which never changes.”***

**D. A. Carson**

**Carson then goes on to show there are some problems with the above view. Matt. 5: 18 presents a problem.**

**He gives us another solution:** *“Jesus does not conceive of His life and ministry in terms of opposition to the Old Testament, but in terms of bringing to fruition that toward which it points.” Carson*

- **Matt. 5: 20**

D.A. Carson says, *“Verse 20 does not establish how the righteousness is to be gained, developed or empowered; it simply lays out the demand.”*

**Jesus many times does not yet tell the how something is to be done; this explanation will come later when His Spirit will makes these things clear.**

**Matt. 5: 21 begins a long list of contrasts.** Is Jesus contradicting the Law here?

How do you know?

Every time Jesus says, “But I say to you ...” what is He driving at in regard to the Law?

**Let’s look at the first one.**

- **Matt. 5: 21, 22**

What is the law here?

Is Jesus contradicting the law?

So what is He saying?

- **Look further at Matt. 5: 23-26.** How does this help you understand what Jesus is getting across?

- **Matt. 5: 27-30**

What is the law here?

What does Jesus say is the real intent of the law when it comes to adultery?

- **Matt. 5: 31, 32**

What is the law concerning here?

What point does Jesus make?

**Matt. 19: 1-12** sheds more light on this, if you desire to delve into it.

**Mark 10: 1-12**

**Luke 16: 18**

- **Matt. 5: 33-37**

**Look at:**

**Lev. 19: 12**

**Num. 30: 2**

What is Jesus teaching them?

- **Matt. 5: 38-42**

**Compare to:**

**Lev. 24: 20**

**Ex. 21: 24**

**Some have referred to this as the *lex talionis* or the law of retribution. The victim is not allowed to kill the man who knocks out a tooth. He is restrained to only reciprocate in like manner.**

The principle or law of retaliation that a punishment inflicted should correspond in degree and kind to the offense of the [wrongdoer](#), as an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; retributive justice.



How do you compare the law of man and the law of God?



**"An eye for an eye"**, or the **law of retaliation**, is the principle that a person who has injured another person is to be penalized to a similar degree, or in softer interpretations, the victim receives the [estimated] value of the injury in compensation.<sup>[1]</sup>

The principle is sometimes referred using the Latin term ***lex talionis*** or **the law of talion**. The English word talion (from the [Latin talio](#)<sup>[2]</sup>) means a retaliation authorized by law, in which the punishment corresponds in kind and degree to the injury.

**Wikipedia**

- **Matt. 5: 43-48**

**Do you see an attitude of loving your enemy and praying for those who persecute you in the Old Testament or do you see the injunction to hate your enemy there?**

**Lev. 19: 18**

**Think through the OT and see if can come up with any direction in regard to attitude about enemies.**

The life of David – what does he teach us about how to act toward our enemies?

Jonah – how did God direct Jonah about his enemies the Assyrians?

Joseph – the brother sold into servitude, how did he react to his brothers when they were revealed?

Rahab – why did she bless instead of curse her enemies, the Jews?

**Joshua 2: 8-15**

So based on the lives we see in the OT, what was God's overall message concerning enemies?

Which of the “blesseds” does this relate to? Which “blessed” would have you care for your enemy?

Can you think of any parables of Jesus where he admonished the Jews to care for their enemies? Samaritans?

**Look at these New Testament directives.**

**Acts 7: 60**

**Rom. 12: 20**

**Luke 6: 35**

**Luke 23: 34**

What verse in **Matt. 5: 44-48** tells you why you are to be kind to your enemies?

Does that make any sense to you? Why?

**Relate the last verse of Chapter 5 to these verses:**

**Lev. 19: 2**

**Deut. 18: 14**

**2 Cor. 7: 1**

**Phil. 3: 12-15**

Now that you have thoroughly studied **Matt. 5**, what area of Kingdom living is most troubling to you?

What can you do to correct this hole in your mission as Christ's disciple?

**If we are to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect, we need to be sure we know Him.**

**So again, let's look at some of His attributes.**

**❖ Attributes of God**

**Immutable – God does not change**

**Ps. 102: 25-27**

**Malachi 3: 6**

**Num. 23: 19**

**James 1: 17**

**Heb. 13: 8**

**Incomprehensible – Because of Who God is, He is beyond the comprehension of man; we know God only as He chooses to reveal Himself to us.**

**Rom. 11: 33**

**Job 5: 9**

**Job 11: 7**

**Job 36: 26**

**1 Cor. 13: 12**

**Self-existent – God exists apart from His creation. Nothing was added to Himself when creation occurred. God does not depend upon anything for His own existence. Everything concerning His existence is within Himself.**

**Ex. 3: 14**

**John 5: 26**

**1 Tim. 6: 16**

**Acts 17: 23-25**

**Is. 40: 18-31**

**Ps. 115: 3**

**Is. 44: 6**

**Is. 48: 12**

**In the accounts where God says, “I am.” He is pointing to the significant truth that He IS. He simply has the name that expresses the fact that He exists.**

**Self-sufficient- God needs no assistance; He alone achieves His will.**

**Acts 17: 24-25**

**Rom. 11: 34-36**

**Ps. 50: 7-12**

**Job 22: 2, 3**

**1 Cor. 8: 6**

**1 Cor. 11: 12**

**Col. 1: 16**

**Wise-All that God does is based on His character. Wisdom is the essence of Who He is.**

**Ps. 104: 24**

**Prov. 3: 19**

**Dan. 2: 20-22**

**Job 12: 13, 16**

**Jer. 10: 12**

**Jer. 51: 15**

**Loving- God's love is entirely a mystery to us because we have no natural comparison to His divine love. It is only by His merciful revelation that we even have a glimpse of this perfect love.**

**Jer. 31: 3**

**Rom. 5: 8**

**Rom. 8: 39**

**John 15: 13**

**1 John 4: 8**

**Deut. 7: 7, 8**

**Wrathful- God hates all unrighteousness. He has determined to punish all unrighteousness. Whatever is contrary to His nature of righteousness will be destroyed. In saving us from His own wrath, God has done what we could not do, and He has done what we did not deserve.**

**Read all of the following, but choose only five to write.**

**2 Chron. 19: 2**

**2 Chron. 24: 18**

**Jer. 30: 23**

**Nahum 1: 6**

**Zeph. 1: 18**

**Rom. 1: 18**

**Rom. 5: 9**

**Eph. 5: 6**

**Col. 3: 6**

**1 Thes. 1: 9, 10**

**Matt. 3: 7**

**1 Thes. 2: 15, 16**

**Rev. 6: 16**

**Rev. 11: 18**

**Rev. 15: 1, 7**

**Rev. 19: 15**

**Truthful-Man's vision of reality is damaged; so his view of truth is damaged as well. Not so with God! He is ever truthful and ever capable of seeing reality for what it is. If God calls something true and real, then without doubt it is so.**

**Ps. 31: 5**

**Ps. 71: 22**

**Ps. 119: 142, 151, 160**

**Is. 65: 16**

**Jer. 5: 3**

**Faithful- God is completely and utterly steadfast. He can never lie or misrepresent His true nature which is truth. He will always keep His promises – both to bless and to punish.**

**2 Tim. 2: 13**

**Deut. 7: 9**

**Deut. 32: 4**

**Is. 49: 7**

**1 Cor. 1: 9**

**1 Cor. 10: 13**

**2 Cor. 1: 18**

**1 Thes. 5: 24**

**2 Thes. 3: 3**

**1 John 1: 9**

➤ **GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**

➤ **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Matthew 5: 17**

When Jesus referred to the Law or the Prophets, what was He talking about?

What did the Lord Jesus teach about the Bible?

How connected was the mission of Christ with His value of the Word of God?

*“Christ so identified Himself with Scripture that it is impossible to weaken the authority of the one without at the same time weakening the authority of the other.” J.M. Boice*

Just to make the point clear of these crucial verses, did Jesus come to supplant or oppose the Scriptures?

Just a few chapters prior to this Sermon, we saw Jesus facing His great opponent Satan.

With what did Jesus arm Himself in order to defeat Satan? **Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10**

### **Matt. 5: 18**

What is jot or a tittle?

The jot was the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

The tittle was tiny protrusion on letters that distinguishes them.

*“Some have argued that many Jews in Jesus’ day believed that the law would be set aside and a new law introduced at Messiah’s coming.” Expositor’s Bible Commentary*

Is that what you think happened with the coming of Jesus Christ? Defend your answer.

- ✓ The place of Pharisees in the Gospel

Information found in the Appendix in article titled **Pharisees**

**Matt. 5: 17- 7: 12** forms another inclusio. The key words for this one are: *“the Law and the Prophets.”* This inclusio covers the body of the sermon and shows that Jesus is teaching in regard to His role in redemption as it relates to Old Testament Scriptures.

The Jews of Jesus’ day could refer to the Scriptures as the “Law and the Prophets,”

**Matt. 7: 12; 11: 13; 22: 40; Luke 16: 16; John 1: 45; Acts 13: 15; 28: 23; Rom. 3: 21**

“The Prophets and the Psalms:” **Luke 24: 44**

Or just the “Law:” **Matt. 5: 18; John 10: 34; 12: 34; 15: 25; 1 Cor. 14: 21**

*“In **Matt. 5: 17-20**, Jesus presents Himself as the eschatological goal of the OT, and thereby it sole authoritative interpreter, the one through whom alone the OT finds its valid continuity and significance.” Expositor’s*

What about the least and the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?

Most people think heaven is very democratic.

Well, there are “gradations of privilege or dishonor in the kingdom.”

**Note Matt. 20: 20-28**

**Luke 12: 47-48**

In **Matt. 5: 20**, Jesus is demanding the radical righteousness which is in direct contrast to the feeble, man-oriented requirements of the Pharisees.

*“It is Jesus’ interpretation and explanation of the torah that must guide His followers.” Baker’s Bible Commentary*

The religious leaders had made a mockery of God’s Law; *“while their multiplicity of regulations could engender a ‘good’ society, it domesticated the law and lost the radical demand for absolute holiness demanded by the Scriptures.” Expositor’s*

Man has always looked at the externals; God has always looked at the heart. (**1 Sam. 16: 7**)  
How does that relate to **Matt. 5: 20**?

The next verses are many times called the six antitheses because all six sections begin with “you have heard it said ... but I say to you.” Here Jesus is not overthrowing Scripture but instead “what they had heard.”

❖ **Matt. 5: 21-26** The first point Jesus makes has to do with anger.

What is Jesus saying is the cure for anger?

What are the three punishments for the escalating offense of anger?

❖ **Matt. 5: 27-30** has to do with lust.

What is Jesus' attitude regarding marriage? **Matt. 19: 4-9**

Here's one thing Jesus means: *deal drastically with sin!*

How can you deal deal drastically with sin in your life?

❖ **Matt. 5: 31-23** deals with marriage and divorce.

What is the stance which Jesus holds in regard to divorce?

Why did God allow for divorce among the Israelites? **Deut. 24: 1-4**

We will never settle the argument concerning divorce, but we can do as Jesus does here – He goes back to first principles. God instituted marriage and originally made no allowances for divorce and God hates divorce. **Mal.2: 16**

❖ **Matt. 5: 33-37** has to do with truth.

Oaths were greatly abused during the time of Christ. The practice of using oaths had become frivolous.

**Matt. 23: 16-22**

**2 Cor. 10:5 (The key to victory over the tongue)**

**Matt. 12: 34**

The problem Jesus is dealing with here stems from the excessive rules surrounding the observance of the Jewish code – called the *Mishnah*. This document provided for numerous exceptions, ways around keeping and faithfully following the words one had spoken. For instance, one rabbi allowed for swearing *by* Jerusalem (in which case you were not bound by your vow.) Yet if you swear *toward* Jerusalem, you are bound by your vow.

These oaths were beginning to foster deceit instead of truthfulness.

**John 8: 44**

❖ **Matt. 5: 38-42      What Are Your Rights?**

**Question to consider: Do you only want to be right?**

**Look at 1 Pet. 2: 23**

**Luke 23: 34**

*“As Christians our standard of living can never be ‘right or wrong,’ but the Cross. The principle of the Cross is our principle of conduct.” J.M. Boice*

**When Jesus died for us on the cross, He did not do it to defend our rights. Why did He do it?**

**The way of the cross, not precious “rights and wrongs,” is the Christian’s principle of conduct.**

❖ **Matt. 5: 43-47      Love Your Enemies**

**The standard of love which God requires of His people is a love which we are incapable of giving. Only divine love will do and only God has this kind of love. So what are we to do?**

**Describe divine love.**

*“This love is one that loves without variableness. It loves even when the object of the love is hateful or unlovely.” Boice*

For many centuries, the Jewish Law has been divided into three categories: moral, civil and ceremonial. *“Some people say that the civil law of the Old Testament has passed away because God’s people today no longer constitute a nation. The ceremonial law has disappeared because it pointed to Jesus, who ‘fulfilled’ it by dying on the cross, thereby rendering the Old Testament ceremonies obsolete.”* D.A. Carson

In regard to fulfilment, not only do the prophets prophesy, but the Law prophesies. *“The entire Old Testament has a prophetic function; and Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament.”*

**John 5: 39**

*“The Old Testament prescriptions may well be superceded, because whatever is prophetic must be in some sense provisional. But whatever is prophetic likewise discovers its legitimate continuity in the happy arrival of that toward which it has pointed.”* Carson

As this section of the Sermon draws to a close, what we see is a strenuous focus on holiness.

The disciple of Jesus must practice holiness, breathing in and out a holy life, patterned and filled by His Lord.

### ➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. How does Luke 24: 25-27 relate to what you have seen this week?

2. Do you submit yourself to Scripture, as Jesus Christ did?  
Do you acknowledge Christ as the author, Christ as the subject, Christ as the authoritative interpreter of His own acts?
  
3. After studying this crucial passage on the Law, how do you think this relates to **Rom. 8: 4**?
  
4. **Matt. 5: 48** is the climax of the first part of the Sermon. With this charge, you have been given the essence of all that Jesus Christ is teaching.  
Compare this verse with **Phil. 1: 6** and explain how one can be “perfect.”

**Remember: God is determined to lead you in righteousness and He will accomplish this!**

- **Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God’s Kingdom this week.**
- **Find a verse to summarize this week’s lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses**
- **The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being “poor in spirit.” How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.**
- **Find a Hymn which relates to this week’s message.**

*“True Christian morality must arise from the heart; and, as a result of this, no one but God (Who controls the heart) can provide it.” J.M Boice*





## LESSON EIGHT

## “True Worship”

Matt. 6: 1-18

Doctrine: Worship

*“The most important part of a Christian’s life is the part that only God sees.”*

### BASIC STUDY

- **Do your Text Analysis of Matthew 6.** Remember to review Text Analysis instructions (in Supplemental Materials) if you need help with doing your work.

As we approach this next chapter of this sermon, we must look back for a minute to see how we got to this passage on how to practice true religion.

*“Matthew 5: 21-48 focuses on the teaching of the law, on what men believe, (moral righteousness) and 6: 1-18 focuses on the practice of the law, what men do (religious activity.)”*

John MacArthur

In Chapter 5, Jesus has described the incredibly high standard of behavior of the kingdom believer. First, the follower of Christ must have a righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisee; then, in six areas of life, Jesus elevates the manner of living beyond that of the Ten Commandments; then to cap it all off, Jesus tells his followers to be perfect!

If someone were to strive to attain this kind of lifestyle, it could lead to hypocrisy.

✓ Define hypocrisy:

The first hypocrite was Cain. In what way was he a hypocrite? Gen. 4: 5-8

*Hypokrites* (original meaning) was a Greek actor who wore a mask that portrayed in an exaggerated way the role that was being dramatized.

*“The goal of pleasing the Father is traded for its pygmy cousin, the goal of pleasing men.”*

D.A. Carson

The opposite of a hypocrite is a truly righteous individual.

So we need to know exactly what righteous behavior and a righteous heart look like for us today.

#### ❖ WORD STUDY

Righteousness # 1343 – *dikaiosune* : the character or quality of being right or just. In Old English it was spelled “Rightwiseness.” It is used to denote an attribute of God (**Rom. 3: 5**), essentially the same as His faithfulness or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises; **Rom. 3: 25, 26** speaks of His righteousness as exhibited in the Death of Christ, which is sufficient to show men that God is neither indifferent to sin nor regards it lightly. On the contrary, it demonstrates that quality of holiness in Him which must find expression in His condemnation of sin.

*Dikaiosune* is whatever conforms to the revealed will of God, whatever has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man and the sum total of the requirements of God, also religious duties ... For the most part, Paul uses this term of that gracious gift of God to men whereby all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are brought into right relationship with God. This righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man’s own, or any other condition than that of faith in Christ ... The man who trusts in Christ becomes ‘the righteousness of God in Him’ **2 Cor. 5: 21**, i.e., becomes in Christ all that God requires a man to be, all that he could never be in himself.

The faith thus exercised brings the soul into vital union with God in Christ, and inevitably produces righteousness of life, that is, conformity to the will of God. Vine’s Expository Dictionary

Man, in his natural, fallen state, tends rather to accept his own set of standards, creating his own righteousness **Rom. 10: 3; Phil. 3: 6 ...**

God's righteousness is imputed and imparted as a gift to man and not earned.

The Complete Word Study Dictionary S. Zodhiates

He next discusses Jewish piety, which had been understood as: giving, prayer and fasting.

Jesus warns His follower not to seek man's praise or if he does, he will forfeit the praise of the Father. Instead, Jesus commands His follower to perform these acts in private therefore receiving the promised praise of the Father.

List here the ways of practicing righteousness before God and not man.

**ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

<b>Giving</b>	<b>Praying</b>	<b>Fasting</b>

*“Righteousness is not primarily a matter between a person and others, but between a person and God.” Bible Knowledge Commentary*

**Where in your prayer life, fasting and giving do you hear the voice of the Lord speaking to you through this study?**

**Why would Jesus care that you do these things in private?**

**How does what you see here in the first 18 verses of Chapter 6 relate to the “Blesseds” of Chapter 5?**

**Do you desire your reward from God or man? You cannot have both.**

**What are some wrong ideas floating around the church about giving, praying and fasting?**

**Why would these false ideas take hold in the church?**

**❖ Giving**

**Some cross references on giving may provide added insight.**

**Acts 2: 44-45**

**Acts 4: 32-35**

**2 Cor. 8: 1-15**

**2 Cor. 9: 5-15**

**1 Cor. 9: 6-14**

**Gal. 6: 6-10**

**Phil. 4: 15-19**

**As you look at these Scriptures in Corinthians, Galatians and Philippians, keep in mind that these were predominantly Greek cities. The prevailing philosophy of these places was self-pleasing and worldly prior to the coming of the gospel. To respond as they did marks a decided and remarkable change in behavior.**

**Examine your own heart in regard to giving. Seek the Lord's counsel; see if you are pleasing Him.**

**There are so many opportunities to give today – how do you know where to give?**

**We are commanded to give – make sure you have the right attitude about this practice.**

### **❖ Praying**

**Please read the article on prayer and then record your thoughts. Then spend time praying that the Lord will reveal Himself to you in an even more deliberate way.**

*“Rather than making prayer a matter between an individual and God, the Pharisees had turned it into an act to be seen by men.” Bible Knowledge Commentary*

**Pious Jews prayed three times daily:**

**Ps. 55: 17**

**Dan. 6: 10**

**Acts 3: 1**

**There will be more to do on prayer in the digging deeper section if you choose to do that.**

**There are two handouts on fasting and praying. Read these and then answer the following questions.**

**How has your prayer life changed you? Changed your view of Who God is?**

**We are to pray by direction of the Holy Spirit. How do you yield yourself to the Spirit in prayer?**

**At what point in prayer do you stop wanting something from Him and all you want is for Him to be blessed? When does that occur?**

**❖ Fasting**

**Why is fasting so difficult?**

**When does fasting become a routine part of a believer's life?**

**What are the benefits of fasting?**

**What are the pitfalls of neglecting this discipline?**

**Are you going to fast in the next two weeks?**

**When you read the verses Matt. 6: 1-18, what do you see is the heart of Jesus? What, more than anything, is He trying to tell His disciples?**

**You are one of His disciples, what is He trying to tell you?**

**➤ GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**

**➤ DIGGING DEEPER**

**Our Lord will root out hypocrisy from our lives!**

**He begins here.**

**Matt. 6: 1**

**In what way does God expose hypocrisy here?**

**What is the “reward” for hypocrisy?**

## **Giving**

*“Before Christ’s time there were no homes for the sick or poor, no orphanages. There was a world of toil and poverty, of the exposure of unwanted children, of slavery, of great hunger side by side with great affluence, and appalling indifference.” JM Boice*

**Christians were known for caring for others, for the downtrodden and needy.**

**The letters and writings of the Romans, for one, are filled with comments about the bizarre behavior of Christians in how they gave to those who could offer them nothing.**

**These writings have provided “*evidence that true charity entered the world with Christianity.*”**

**Boice**

**How do the following relate:**

**Prov. 19: 17; 29: 7**

**Ps. 41: 1**

**Deut. 15: 13-14**



**While giving was a practice already in existence in Judaism, the act of giving had become more external, for the approval of men.**

**Where do you see the proof of that comment in Matt. 6: 2-4?**

**The Greek word for “be seen” is where we get our word for “theatre.” Their desire to be seen by people prompted their giving.**

**What do you learn about giving from:**

**Mark 12: 41-44**

**2 Cor. 9: 6**

**2 Thes. 3: 10**

- ✓ **True charitable and loving generosity begin with a heart which has first been surrendered to God.**

*"Hypocritical righteousness, just as true righteousness, begins in the heart."* MacArthur

## **Prayer**

- ✓ **Prayer is to begin with worship. Worship is the essence of all prayer.**

**Matt. 6: 5-15**

**When you pray, you are to make sure you are praying to God and not for the benefit of those hearing your prayer.**

**Read:**

**Heb. 10: 19, 22**

**Rom. 8: 26, 27**

**Ps. 66: 18**

**Prayer is access to our Father.**

**We see a special word throughout the New Testament which helps us understand this relationship.**

The Greek word is *prosagoge*.

Look at **Eph. 2: 18; 3: 12** and **Rom. 5: 1, 2** for more on this word.

*Prosagoge* means: access, introduction, be led into the presence of

Jesus takes us by the hand and leads us directly into the presence of the Father. What a beautiful picture that is of the nature of prayer!

**Write here a prayer of thanks** that the Lord has provided this blessed access to us.

**Read Luke 11: 1-4**

What prompted the disciples to ask Jesus to teach them to pray?

All good Jews knew how to pray, but the disciples also knew that they had NEVER heard a prayer like the prayers of Jesus! What made His prayer so distinctly different?

**Our Father**

Had Jews referred to God as father before these words of Jesus?

**Read Is. 64: 8**

**Is. 63: 16**

**Ps. 103: 13**

**Jesus routinely referred to God as His Father: Matt. 11: 25; 26: 39, 42; Mark 14: 36; Luke 23: 34; John 11: 41; 12: 27; 17: 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25; 20: 17**

**We are, in fact, encouraged to call God, Abba = "Daddy."**

**Look at Gal. 4: 6**

**Rom. 8: 15**

**Mark 14: 36 (Here Jesus uses “Abba” Daddy) – basically Jesus was saying, “ Daddy, You can do this!” Jesus was urging His Father, if at all possible, to find another way. Can you imagine how hard that would be to hear as the Daddy?**

## **God’s Name**

**What does it mean that God’s name is to be “hallowed?”**

*“In true worship the Father must be first, must be all. The sooner I learn to forget myself in the desire that He may be glorified, the richer will the blessing be that prayer will bring to myself. No one ever loses by what he sacrifices for the Father.” JM Boice*

**A trip throughout Scripture of the names of God would be of benefit here, but we have time only for a few.**

**The name in Hebrew culture represented the whole person, the character as well as the nature.**

- ✓ **God is El Elyon – the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth**

**Is God the Most High to you?**

- ✓ **Jehovah is His covenant name, His name as Redeemer.**

**Are you in covenant with Him? Do you acknowledge Him as your Redeemer and Him alone?**

- ✓ **Jehovah-jireh, the Lord my Provider – is He your only Provider? Or do you look elsewhere for provisions of any kind?**

- ✓ **Jehovah-shalom – the Lord my peace – is He your peace or do you look elsewhere for peace?**

- ✓ **Adonai – “Lord” Is He your Lord? Is He the One to Whom you give your highest allegiance? Does He direct and guide your life?**

**“To hallow God’s name is to revere, honor, glorify, and obey Him as singularly perfect.”**

**You cannot “hallow” Him as Lord unless you do so practically.**

There are many other names which refer to the different characteristics of God. A study of these names draws you into a deeper appreciation of the nature and heart of Almighty God.

O for a thousand tongues to sing

My great Redeemer’s praise,

The glories of my God and King,

The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,

Assist me to proclaim,

To spread through all the earth abroad

The honors of Thy name.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,

Your loosened tongues employ;

Ye blind, behold your Savior come;

And leap, ye lame, for joy.

## **Thy Kingdom Come**

What is God’s kingdom?

**Luke 17: 21**

This points clearly to another name of God – Sovereign. This means that God rules entirely.

**Is. 24: 23**

**Zech. 14: 9, 16**

In what way does God rule TODAY?

God's kingdom comes today whenever and wherever God's righteousness, peace, and joy transform a life and bring fullness of spiritual blessing.

*"God's kingdom is coming to earth each time a new soul is brought into the kingdom."*

**Phil. 2: 10, 11**

## **Your Will Be Done**

**There is one perfect will and every other will is at odds with this perfect will.**

**John 8: 29**

**John 5: 19, 30**

**Matt. 26: 39- 46**

**Where do you get your understanding of the will of God?**

**Rom. 12: 1, 2**

*“When we pray Thy will be done, we are praying first of all that God’s will become our own will.” MacArthur*

*“If we are to understand the fullness of what this statement means, we must begin by realizing that all the troubles that exist in this world exist because someone, or some group of people, wants man’s will instead of the will of God.” Boice*

After seeing prayer as a way to draw closer to the heart of God, now Jesus teaches us how to ask the Lord for our daily needs.

We ask for our daily bread. We do not angst over next week’s fare, we simply trust Him for today.

- As we pray for the daily needs, we are echoing the ancient believer’s response to living day to day, not amassing great sums. The laborers of Jesus’ day were commonly paid each day for the work they had done that day. The pay was usually just enough for that day’s needs. Praying this prayer would teach dependence on God

Next He speaks of **forgiveness**.

Read on and see what He says in **Matt. 6: 14, 15**.

What does this mean? Is your forgiveness from God based on you forgiving others? In other words, your good works?

- **Forgive** *aphiemi* means “to hurl away.” We desire God to hurl away our sins; we must do the same for others if we are to be His child.

*“There is no forgiveness for the one who does not forgive. How could it be otherwise? His unforgiving spirit bears strong witness to the fact that he has never repented.” D.A. Carson*

*“Though God’s forgiveness of sin is not based on one’s forgiving others, a Christian’s forgiveness is based on realizing he has been forgiven. Personal fellowship with God is in view in these verses, not salvation from sin. One cannot walk in fellowship with God if he refuses to forgive others.” Bible Knowledge Commentary*

**Read Heb. 10: 14**

**John 10: 27, 28**

**1 John 1: 9**

- We are told to forgive because it is the character of righteousness. Remember **Matt. 5: 8?**  
*“Because it reflects God’s own gracious forgiveness, the forgiving of another person’s sin expresses the highest virtue of man.”* MacArthur

\*Optional Assignment

If you want to delve more into the concept of forgiveness, look at **Matt. 18: 21-35**

Keep in mind a parable has ONE teaching. Do not get sidetracked by other details. This parable is about forgiveness. What do you learn?

*“An unforgiving spirit not only is inconsistent for one who has been totally forgiven by God, but also brings the chastening of God rather than His mercy.”* MacArthur

**Luke 17: 3, 4**

**Our Debts**

**Opheilema is the Greek for “debts” here. It likewise means “sin.” Sin is a debt, both moral and spiritual, to God that must be paid.**

*“As it is contrary to the holiness of God, sin is a defilement, a dishonor, and a reproach to us as it is a violation of His law. It is a crime, and as to the guilt which we contract thereby, it is a debt. As creatures we owe a debt of obedience unto our maker and governor, and through failure to render the same on account of our rank disobedience, we have incurred a debt of punishment; and it is for this that we implore a divine pardon.”* Arthur Pink

## **How to Defeat Temptation**

**2 Tim. 2: 22**

**1 Cor. 6: 18**

**James 4: 7, 8**

**But what does it mean to submit to God? To surrender one's will to God?**

**What does it mean to resist the devil?**

**John 15: 3**

**Ps. 119: 11**

**Eph. 6: 17**

**How did Jesus do it?**

**Matt. 4: 1-11**

*"This petition is a safeguard against presumption and a false sense of security and self-sufficiency." MacArthur*

## Fasting



Keep in mind from the above information, one of the ways that Jesus resisted the Devil's temptation was through the Word, but also, He had been fasting while in the wilderness!

In the Old Testament, fasting was almost always associated with mourning, either for sin or sadness.

The Day of Atonement was the only prescribed national day of fasting for the year.

**Lev. 16: 29; 23: 27**

Also look at:

**Is. 58: 1-7**

**Joel 2: 12**

**Jonah 3: 5**

**Judg. 20: 26**

**Matt. 9: 14, 15 Fasting implied sorrow.**

*“Fasting emphasized the denial of the flesh, but the Pharisees were glorifying their flesh by drawing attention to themselves.” Bible Knowledge Commentary*

**After the coming of Christ and the forgiveness of sin, fasting became a way of setting aside time for seeking the Lord. “It was a discipline by which they waited upon the Lord while asking Him to reveal His will to them.” Boice**

**Acts 10: 30-32**

**Acts 13: 2, 3**

**You may also fast from other things besides food.**

**Fasting is merely voluntary abstinence for a time. Our souls need to recharge at times, by concentrating more fully on the One needful thing in our lives: our Lord.**

**\*Optional material on fasting**

**Matt. 9: 14, 15**

**2 Chron. 20: 3**

**Esther 4: 16**

**Ezra 8: 21- 23; 10: 6**

**Dan. 9: 2, 3**

**Note that fasting is always associated with prayer.**

***“There can be no right fasting apart from a right heart, right living, and a right attitude.”***

MacArthur

## ➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

### **Giving**

How do you decide when and where to give?

What role does giving play in righteous living?

Now think with me for a minute, which of the Ten Commandments would support the idea that private property is not wrong?

So if owning property is not a sin, what is the role of our possessions? And our response to them?

## Praying

For the religious Jew, “Prayer had become ritualized. The wording and forms of prayers were set, and were then simply read or repeated from memory. Such prayers could be given with almost no attention being paid to what was said. They were a routine, semiconscious religious exercise.” MacArthur

The prayer we are considering in **Matt. 6** (frequently called the Lord’s Prayer) is what is referred to as an *index prayer*. This means you take each point, really each word and expand as you talk with the Lord. For instance, “Our Father,” here you would dwell on the fact that God is our Father – ours in community and fellowship with other believers. We are truly family. We meditate on the fact that God Almighty is Father and what that means. Talk with Him about this for as long as He leads you.

Then you move on to the next point and so on.

When it comes to prayer, if you are preoccupied and distracted, do you just pray another time when you can collect your thoughts better?

- **Keep in mind, nothing pleases Satan more than coming between you and your Father in the sacred intimacy of prayer.**

Is prayer necessary to accomplish God’s goals?

What is the chief purpose of prayer?

Do I pray more frequently and more fervently when alone with God than I do in public?

Do I love the secret place of prayer?

What do you learn about prayer from the following Scripture:

**Luke 18: 1-8**

**Luke 18: 9-14**

**The earthly ministry of Jesus was fairly short – three years. Yet a great amount of time was occupied with prayer.**

**The importance of prayer in the life of Christ:**

**Luke 5: 16; 6: 12; 9: 18, 28; 11: 1; 22: 41f Read these and then pray.**

*“Prayer was the spiritual air that Jesus breathed every moment of His life.” MacArthur*

**Pray expecting God to answer!**

**We are told that once D.L. Moody felt so abundantly blessed by God that he prayed, “God, stop!”**

**That is what our Father will do for us as we pray in faith.**

**Fasting**

What does fasting do in your life?

Why did Jesus fast?

Of all the practices a believer could be involved in, why did the Lord choose these three: giving, praying and fasting, to make His point about Holy Spirit living?

How does the message of **Matthew 5** relate to the message here in **Matthew 6**?

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God's Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being "poor in spirit." How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week's message.

## LESSON NINE

## “What Are Your Treasures?”

Matthew 6: 19-34

Doctrine: Redemption



### BASIC STUDY

At the outset, let me encourage you **NOT** to take this week’s subject matter lightly. Really devote appropriate time to each question. Ask yourself Who you truly worship: yourself? Or the Lord Himself?

There is nothing more important for you to settle right now. But you have built layers of protection to keep you from the truth. Tearing down these layers will not be easy. It will take time and effort. **DO** not resist what the Lord will reveal to you. You want to know where you really stand in your relationship to Him.

Begin by reading Matt. 6: 19-34 out loud before the Lord, asking Him to speak as He spoke so long ago when He first delivered this message. Then write below what He says to you.

Compare Matt. 6: 23 to Matt. 5: 8. How are they similar and how different?

**Matt. 6: 19-34** employs many contrasts. For instance: treasures on earth are susceptible to moth and rust, while heaven's treasures cannot decay or be stolen.

**Look for the other contrasts in this passage and note them here.**

Why is contrast so useful in this particular teaching of Jesus?

What does contrast provide us that a mere command would miss?

The reason contrast works so well here is because we are all very familiar with storing up treasures on earth, we are familiar with darkness in our eye, we are familiar with serving the wrong master, we are familiar with anxiety, etc.

Jesus is showing us another way, a better way, to live and follow Him.

The question is: will we abandon ourselves to His way or will we continue on failing and living miserably?

### **Your treasures**

**Take a walk through your house. Talk to the Lord about each item that comes into view.**

**Ask Him if that particular item has a hold on you that is displeasing to the Lord. Then ask the Lord what you are to do about that thing.**

**You own your treasures/ they do not own you!**

**Write here what you sense the Lord is saying to you concerning your things.**



The word “rust” is *broxis* and means “an eating away,” possibly referring to the destruction of stored grain by rodents. Rust destroys things.

Keep in mind: our highest and most noble thoughts concern where we are going > heaven, and not here where we are earthbound. Yes, we are inhabitants of the earth, but we were made for heaven, and our highest and most noble efforts are because we are made in the image of God. We are also made for fellowship with God. By focusing on wealth we strangle what is most noble about us and we become empty shells of what God intended us to be **RIGHT NOW**.

This is very important for you to settle. *“Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables of Jesus deal with money. One out of ten verses in the New Testament deals with that subject. Scripture offers about five hundred verses on prayer, fewer than five hundred on faith, and over two thousand on money.”* MacArthur

- **Matt. 6: 24**

Have you ever served two masters?

Describe what that was like/ or if you have never done so, describe what you imagine it would be like.

- **The Christian has only one Master. A bondslave’s only responsibility is to his master.**

**Matt. 6: 25-34**

**“Do not worry.”**

List the things here that Jesus warns us **NOT** to worry about.

**Basically Jesus is warning us not to worry about dependence on worldly goods. This is what He had been talking about all along.**

Why should we not worry?

Kenneth Wuest says, *“We commit sin when we worry. We do not trust God when we worry. We do not receive answers to prayer when we worry, because we are not trusting.”*

**Also, when we worry we are slandering God and what He says about caring for us.**

After you have studied **Matt. 6**, do you see any similarities between the two chapters (**5 and 6**)?

**Seek= zeteo is present imperative, suggesting an unceasing quest**

**This is a continual seeking without stopping.**

What does it mean to you, today, in your own life, to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness? Apply this to you now, where you live.

- **Read the article on Redemption:** God bought you out of slavery to sin so you would no longer be bound up with material things or any other sin.

*“Jesus never brought up politics. He was not as concerned about changing the structure of society as He was about working on the inside of individuals.”* MacArthur

- **GO TO THE APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**

- **DIGGING DEEPER**

**The first 18 verses of Matt. 6 expose hypocrisy.**

**Now Jesus teaches about two indispensable kingdom perspectives: unswerving loyalty to kingdom values and the second is uncompromised trust in God.**

Here Jesus speaks of loyalty to God in contrast to storing up possessions. (19-21)

Enslavement (6: 19-24)

Materialism will enslave the heart ((1-21), the mind (22-23) and the will (24).

### ❖ Storing up Treasures

Where is our focus to be?

**Col. 3: 1, 2**

What is the right attitude toward riches?

**James 5: 1-8**

Paul explains to us about money and our response to it.

**1 Tim. 6: 10** – What does he teach here?

Many contrasts are given in this passage. If this is a contrast in verses 19-21, the opposite of being committed to God is \_\_\_\_\_ .

- **Archaeological Study Bible tells us that houses in the Holy Land had walls made of mud bricks and could easily be broken into.**

Is it wrong to prepare financially?

**1 Tim. 5: 8**

**1 Tim. 6: 17**

**Prov. 6: 6-8**

## 2 Cor. 12: 14

**Contrast the treasure in heaven.**

*“One’s attitude toward wealth is another barometer of righteousness.” Bible Knowledge Commentary*

- **6: 22-24**

*“The eye is regarded as the window by which the light gets into the whole body.” Boice*

**We want to be full of light. But with the metaphor here we must think in terms the people of Jesus’ day would have understood. For them many things could interfere with a clear view of their surroundings. If a flame is smoky or the glass is caked with soot, if their wick is untrimmed or their fuel depleted, the vision is greatly impaired. Then the person remains in darkness.**

*“The ‘healthy’ eye might be better rendered ‘single-focused’ (the Greek term frequently refers to singleness of purpose), since the context is about loyalty and the impossibility of serving two masters.” Baker Bible Commentary*

- *Haplous* has many meanings, one of which is single-minded, undivided

*Mammon= “something in which one puts confidence”*

*Man places so much confidence in riches that eventually this word came to be associated with material possessions*

*“Jesus is saying that the man who ‘divides his interest and tries to focus on both God and possessions has no clear vision, and will love without clear orientation or direction.” Expositor’s*

**Read Matt. 20: 1-15** to see why daily concern for necessities was pertinent.

- So we have several choices here: the two treasures, two visions (or eyes), and two masters.

*“Attempts at divided loyalty betray, not partial commitment to discipleship, but deep-seated commitment to idolatry.” Expositor’s*

DA Carson tells us *“Just as there are only two kinds of piety, the self-centered and the God-centered, so there are only two kinds of ambition: one can be ambitious either for oneself or for God.”*

*“We are not called upon to relinquish things but rather use them under God’s direction.” Boice*

### ❖ Worry

*“The root of anxiety is unbelief.” Expositor’s*

**Matt. 6: 25** Take no thought= *merimnao* denotes “to be anxious, careful, to be divided, to be drawn in different directions”



From this definition you can see that worry pulls you apart

The English term *worry* comes from an old German word meaning “to strangle or choke.” We mentally and emotionally choke ourselves when we worry. The Christian commits sin when he worries because he is distrusting the promises of God. We probably worry more than any other sin we commit! Worry is the opposite of contentment.

**Phil. 4: 11, 12**

**1 Tim. 6: 6-8**

**Someone has said that the average person is crucifying himself between two thieves; the regrets of yesterday and the worries about tomorrow.**

**Read the following verses and note the things Peter worried about, then note Peter’s remarks in regard to worry later in his life.**

**Matt. 14: 30**

**Matt 17: 24-27**

**John 13: 21-24**

**Mat. 16: 21-23**

**John 18: 7-11**

**1 Pet. 5: 7**

**The word for “care” in 1 Pet 5 is a word that means “He is mindful of you and your interests.” In other words, God thinks about you!! This is why we do not need to worry; God cares for us.**

There is another reason we do not need to worry.

If we seek His \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_ ( Matt. 6: 33) all these things will be added to you.

If you do not know God's peace perhaps you are not seeking His righteousness.

Relate Matt. 6: 33 to Matt. 5: 6 and then Matt. 6: 19-21

Jesus is not saying we do not need to work, He is saying we do not need to worry.

Just as the bird continues to gather his food, we continue to occupy ourselves with gathering God's provisions. But just as the bird does not simply wait for God to drop the food in its mouth, but makes his daily rounds, he also does not need to fret.

Relate all of this to Matt. 11: 28-30

*"A mind that is not centered on God is a mind that has cause to worry."* MacArthur

### ➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS

*"The follower of Jesus will be concerned to have a distinctive lifestyle, one that is characterized by values and perspectives so un-pagan that his life and conduct are, as it were, stamped all over with the words, "Made in the kingdom of God."*

1. In what way or ways have you made an effort for this to be true in your life?

We are accustomed to dividing life into spiritual and material, but Jesus made no division there.

2. Why is it dangerous to make these separations and how can you avoid doing that?

3. What does it mean to lay up or store treasures in heaven?

4. Why did God bless Abraham, Job, David and Solomon, just to name a few?

**Gen. 13: 2; 24: 35**

**Job 42: 12-17**

**Matt. 25: 14-30** What do you learn here that can help with attitudes about wealth?

5. *“Spiritual problems are always heart problems.”* Where do you see the truth of that statement in this week’s passages?

6. *“The rich are tempted to trust in their possessions, and the poor are tempted to doubt God’s provision... Whether men are wealthy or poor – their attitude toward material possessions is one of the most reliable marks of their spiritual condition.”*

Why is this statement true?

7. Have you ever looked at two things at once? Is it even possible?

So why do we think we can do that spiritually speaking?

- Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God's Kingdom this week.
- Find a verse to summarize this week's lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses
- The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being "poor in spirit." How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.
- Find a Hymn which relates to this week's message.

## LESSON TEN

## “Only the King Can Accurately Judge”

Matthew 7: 1-14

Doctrine: God is Judge



### BASIC STUDY

- **Do your Text Analysis of Matthew 7.** Read the Instruction on Text Analysis found in your Supplemental Materials if you need refreshing.

**Write down your impressions of this chapter.**

Judgment is a vital part of righteousness. In this regard we must judge ourselves and not others. We see the connection between the last chapter's focus on righteousness and where your heart truly lies – with earthly matters or heavenly – and this chapter, where we see our true loyalties measured by a release of temporal concerns and a determination to make wise and Godly choices. All of this relates to the strangle hold the Pharisees had on the Jewish mind. People of the time of Jesus had immense respect for the Pharisees. Jesus had to expose their false sense of righteousness for what it was – self-promotion.

**The Pharisees considered the external appearance of man of greater value than the internal spirit of righteousness.**

**Look at John 7: 24**

**John 8: 15**

**Before the people could embrace the kind of righteousness the Lord expects, they had to let go of the striving after the kind of righteousness the Pharisees offered.**

- **Matt. 7: 1-5**

What do you learn about judgment in these verses?

**Read Luke 6: 37, 37** and see if you gain any insights.

**Read John 8: 7- 9**

**Read Luke 18: 9-14** and see how this helps in regard to self-righteousness, judging others, self-examination and humility.

**Matt. 7: 3, 4** Draw two pictures below: one with a man with a speck in his eye/ the other, a man with a two-by-four stuck in his eye.

What does drawing these two scenarios reveal concerning the words of Jesus?

What incentive do the following verses give you in self-reflection?

**Col. 3: 22-25**

**Rom. 2: 16**

**Matt. 7: 1, 2**

- Judge= *krino* which means “to judge, to distinguish, to decide, to discern, to condemn”

**The context must determine the precise shade of meaning.**

**Compare this verse to:**

**1 Cor. 5: 5**

**Gal. 1: 8, 9**

**Phil. 3: 2**

**1 John 4: 1**

**Rom. 14: 10-13**

**James 4: 11, 12; 5: 9**

The rabbis felt that God had two measures by which He evaluated men, the measure of justice and the measure of mercy. Perhaps **Matt. 7: 2** reflects how Jesus perceived the Father's evaluation. In other words, the measure we use – mercy or judgment – will be applied to us.

*"A judgmental attitude excludes us from God's pardon, for it betrays an unbroken spirit."*

D.A. Carson

- **Matt. 7: 3-5**

**God's people must reflect the character and the manners of God. This means showing mercy since that is what the Lord does.**

**Read 2 Sam. 12: 1-7**

What do you learn here about being blind to one's own sin?

- **Matt. 7: 6-11**

**In verse 6**, does a person need a certain amount of discernment or judgment to make the assessment if he is indeed giving what is holy to gods or throwing pearls before swine?

Then how does this compare with the command "not to judge?" **7: 1**

Is there a danger of being indiscriminating in the disciple's effort to refrain from judging?

**Look at:**

**Matt. 10: 14**

**Acts 13: 44-51**

What do you learn about "judging" here?

Is it different and if so, how is it different?

➤ **Read the article on God is Judge found in the Supplemental Materials**

**The next five verses open up a new look at praying. Why would Jesus stop His discussion on judging to take another look at praying?**

**Matt. 7: 9-11** shows us what is at stake here: man's picture of Who God is. We frame out requests in accordance with what we know of the character of the One Whom we are addressing. So what do we find out in these verses about the Father to Whom we pray?

“How much more” is an *a fortiori* argument frequently used in Hebrew teaching.

It shows us “how much more then” will God give good gifts to His children.

Compare Matt. 7: 11 to Luke 11: 13.

Now compare Matt. 7: 7-12 to Luke 11: 1-13.

➤ Now go back to Matt. 5: 17, 20.

Relate this to Matt. 7: 12 which states that ... this is the “Law and the Prophets.”

Is Matt. 22: 35-40 connected to this at all?

How does what Paul preaches interact with this teaching?

Rom. 3: 20-23

- Matt. 7: 12 stands alone.

Some scholars have seen an *inclusio* from Matt. 5: 17 to Matt. 7: 12, meaning a repetition of words that both begin and end a section, serving as an envelope, with the teaching within the phrases. The words “the Law and the Prophets” mark the *inclusio* for this section. Between these remarks, one finds the summation of the Law and the Prophets.

So why are we to act this way? Is it for karma? Is it so that others will be nice to us?

**When Jesus said the words in this verse, this was not a new or uncommon idea. It had been around for a long time, but the difference was striking. As it existed as a form of behavior, it was stated in the negative form: “do not treat others how you do not want them to treat you.” Never had it been stated as a positive mode of action: “treat other as you would want to be treated.” This changed from a negative, “Don’t do something” to a positive, deliberate action of doing good to another person.**

**Relate this verse to Matt. 22: 35-40**

- **Matt. 7: 13-14**

What is being described here?

How many ways are there?

What is critical about your choice?

- **Matt. 7: 15-20**

**Everything in nature reproduces after its kind; this is true in the spiritual realm as well.**

**Compare with 1 Tim. 1: 3; 6: 3, 4**

**2 Tim. 2: 18**

**2 Pet. 2: 1**

**Matt. 3: 10**

- **Matt. 7: 21-23**

If **v. 15-20** deal with false prophets, **v. 21-23** deal with false followers.

Also **Luke 6: 46-49**

**1 Cor. 8: 2, 3**

*“Only storms reveal the quality of the work of the two builders.” Expositor’s*

Storms will come into your life to reveal things to you about your relationship with the Lord. These storms are not your enemy, they uncover vital areas of your life.

The wise person is the one who puts trust in Christ alone.

- ❖ The sermon draws to a close, leaving us with a decision to make: our Lord makes a demand on us – radical submission to the exclusive lordship of Jesus.

- **Matt. 7: 28, 29**

**“When Jesus had finished these words,” will be stated four more times in the Gospel account of Matthew, indicating the conclusion of another discourse. These are formulaic conclusions which designate five crucial aspects of the kingdom over which Jesus is Lord.**

The root of the Hebrew term used to refer to Jewish law, halacha , means “go” or “walk.” Halacha, then, is the “way” a Jew is directed to behave in every aspect of life, encompassing civil, criminal and religious law.

As rabbinic teachings increased, it was necessary to commit them to writing, lest they be forgotten. Around the year 200 CE, the Mishnah, the earliest compendium of Jewish law, appeared. It became the curriculum of rabbinic instruction.

In every age, outstanding Jewish teachers and thinkers emerged who became the rabbinic leaders of their communities. Individuals, including other rabbis, would send them questions about the proper observance of Judaism or matters of Jewish thought. This body of questions and responses (*teshuvot*, or responsa), preserved through the ages, is also an important source of halacha.

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/halakhah-the-laws-of-jewish-life/>

*“Jesus fulfills the law and thus determines the nature of its continuity.”* Expositor’s

➤ **GO TO APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**

➤ **DIGGING DEEPER**

### **Giving the standards for kingdom living**

- **Matt. 7: 1 – 5**

**Jesus has been teaching in His sermon about His kingdom. But there are misconceptions which He takes great pains to ensure do not stump His disciples. In Ch. 6 He warns of hypocrisy. Here in Ch. 7, one of the things He warns of concerns the danger of being judgmental, but then He also warns in Matt. 7: 6 of lacking in discrimination and discernment.**

**But He clearly tells His disciples they must not rely on their own powers of determination to enter and maintain the kingdom life, they must utterly rely by constantly asking the Father to supply their every need.**

**Let’s begin with “judging.”**

**The Pharisees ‘played God’ as they condemned other people; it did not occur to them that God would one day judge them.**

*“The first principle of judgment is that we begin with ourselves.” Warren Wiersbe*

✓ The tense of the verb signifies a once-for-all final judgment.

There is a future judgment coming for the unbeliever and the believer.

**Rev. 20: 11- 15; 17: 8**

**Rom. 2: 1, 2**

**Romans 14: 4, 10**

**2 Cor. 5: 10**

**Matt. 25: 31-36**

**Matt. 7: 1-5 relates to Luke 6: 37, 38**

**The image of the eye helps in another regard: practice tenderness as you minister to others.  
The eye is one of the most tender spots on the body.**

**Eph. 4: 15**

**Relate this verse to Luke 23: 9**

**Acts 13: 44-49**

*“What Jesus here forbids is self-righteous, officious, hasty, unmerciful, prejudiced, and unwarranted condemnation based on human standards and human understanding... Self-*

*righteousness is the worst of sins because it is unbelief. It trusts in self rather than God.”*  
MacArthur

- **Matt. 7: 6**

What did the common Jew think of dogs and pigs at the time of Jesus?

**Lev. 11: 7, 27**

**Ps. 22: 16, 20**

**Phil. 3: 2**

**2 Pet. 2: 22**

**Rev. 22: 14-15**

How do all of these relate to **Matt. 7: 6**?

**Relate to Acts 14: 22**

**Jesus tells His disciples not to judge and then He tells them to be aware of who is a “dog” or a “pig.” Doesn’t that entail judging?**

What does He mean for us to do here? What is the difference between the two responses?

What is key here about the word “holy?”

Relate what you are learning in this verse to:

**Matt. 10: 14**

**Matt. 15: 14**

**Acts 13: 44-51**

**Acts 18: 5, 6; 28: 17-28**

**Titus 3: 10f**

**Luke 16: 15** helps us understand what God judges as important.

*“Jesus is commanding His disciples not to share the richest parts of spiritual truth with persons who are persistently vicious, irresponsible, and unappreciative.” Carson*

**As a note – although there are certain individuals who will remain hostile to the gospel, as followers of Christ we are never given license to become nasty or vindictive. Perhaps some of you were originally less than receptive at first to the message of grace. Perhaps you mocked as well. So use great discretion in presenting these glorious truths, both to the receptive and the resistant.**

**Discernment, as a gift from the Lord, is a must in how we relate to others. There are no simple rules of engagement – it’s all about God’s Spirit doing the leading, preparing and effectual transforming. We must be His ready vessels.**

**These are holy truths we are talking about here.**

*“The entire thrust of the Sermon on the Mount is to show the complete distinction between true religion and false religion, between spiritual truth and spiritual hypocrisy.” MacArthur*

- **Matt. 7: 7-11**

The verb tense here (present) indicates and emphasizes the continual action of praying: keep on asking, keep on seeking keep on knocking. Also these are imperatives, denoting their emphatic nature.

Why are we told to do this continually?

**Jer. 29: 13** We are to knock and knock some more on heaven’s throne room. God has told us to search for Him with all our heart. Relate this to **Matt. 7: 7**

**Compare to Luke 11: 9- 13**

The kingdom of heaven requires poverty of spirit, purity of heart, a merciful heart, a forgiving heart, all of the beatitudes. We lack all of these things. So we must ask for them!!

Only God can give these traits to His children.

Are the *good gifts* that the Father will give to His children, things like, wealth, popularity, authority, job promotion, success?

What are the *gifts* Jesus refers to here?

*“These gifts from the Father are the things Jesus has been describing as necessary for disciples: righteousness, sincerity, purity, humility, and wisdom. Those who know their own need will ask God for them.” Reformation Study Bible*

The disciple has many needs to make it on this road to the kingdom. One of the key things he needs is persistence. But persistence in what?

The answer is persistence in **prayer**. Ask, Seek, Knock and keep on doing it.

- **Matt. 7: 12**

How does this verse demonstrate the true righteousness that Jesus says will define His kingdom?

### **Read Mark 12: 29-31**

Rabbi Hillel, around A.D. 20 taught this: *“What is hateful to you, do not do to anyone else. This is the whole law; all the rest is commentary.”*

*“The so-called Golden Rule is found in negative form in Rabbinic Judaism and also in Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. It also occurred in various forms in Greek and Roman ethical teaching. Jesus, in contrast, stated it in positive form.” Archaeological Study Bible*

Only Jesus phrased the rule in a positive frame.

*“The dynamic for living this supreme ethic must come from outside our fallen nature. It can come only from the indwelling Holy Spirit, Whose first fruit is love (Gal. 5: 22). MacArthur*

- **Matt. 7: 13, 14**

**Keep in mind that the Sermon begins with a call to spiritual bankruptcy. The Lord teaches this because it shows us our great need. We have no righteousness or purity or any of the other**

requirements for entry in His kingdom. But He provides these things to the one who admits their utter destitution.

**The Sermon on the Mount is a “crushing blow to self-righteousness... The discipleship which Jesus requires is absolute, radical in the sense that it gets to the root of the human conduct and to the root of relationships between God and men.” Carson**

“Two ways” language is common in Jewish literature. Here, Jesus is teaching that the way of discipleship is “narrow,” even restrictive.

**The gate is small means you must bow low to go under the gate. This points to the fact that you must be poor in spirit to have eternal life. This bowing low marks the beginning of life for the believer.**

*“There are not many good religions, but only one. Man cannot come to God in any of the ways that man himself devises, but only in the one way that God Himself has provided.” MacArthur*

A Biblical example of this is found in **Rom. 10: 3**. See what you learn here about man-made substitutes for God’s righteous way.

**Luke 13: 24-27 Relate this to Matt. 7: 13, 14**

**The way to life is on God’s terms, we cannot dictate how we will enter His kingdom. Now at this point in the Sermon, Jesus is issuing an appeal, really a call: decide Who you will serve.**

- **“Enter” (Matt. 7: 13) is in the aorist imperative tense, which means that a definite and specific action is required.**

➤ **Explain the contrast that you see in these two verses.**

**Relate this to Acts 14: 22**

We proclaim a narrow gospel because *“there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”* **Acts 4: 12**

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**Matt. 7: 1-5**

The tendency to judge others shows a deficiency in which of the beatitudes from **Matt. 5: 3-10?**

What can you do in your spiritual life to ensure that you do not fall into judgmental attitudes toward others?

- **Matt. 7: 5**

How does being poor in spirit, mourning over sin, being humble before God, being pure in heart relate to **Matt. 7: 5?**

**Read 1 Kings 18: 20-21**

The Lord has placed before His people many opportunities to make the right decision. **Jer. 21: 8**, *“Thus says the Lord, Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.”* Which way will you choose?

There have always been two systems of religion in the world – the system which God provides and the system which man has developed upon which he depends: his own good works. One is based on faith in what God has done and will do, the other is the religion of the flesh – man’s system of human achievement. One systems breeds sincerity and humility the other breeds pride and hypocrisy.

In presenting the gospel message there must be a demand for a verdict. Jesus does not allow us to have multiple choices in this regard.

**Matt. 7: 9-11**

How do these verses relate to your own relationship with God as your Father?

- **Matt. 7: 12**

If God demands radical, absolute discipleship, yielding all to Him as Lord, what would that mean in your life right now that you are not ready to yield to Him?

What is there in your life that makes it worth it to say “No” to God? What gives you more pleasure and joy than your relationship with Him?

- **Matt. 7: 13, 14**

**When we submit to Christ, trusting in Him alone as our Savior and Lord, we are not adding Christ to our accumulated treasures. He is our only treasure; we have exchanged all that we are for all that He is. (Matt. 13: 44-46)**

### **Overview Questions**

What ruins your Christian witness in Chapter 6? Love of money and worry

What ruins your Christian witness in Chapter 7?

A judgmental attitude excludes us from God's pardon because it betrays an unbroken spirit; we must be poor in spirit to truly belong in His kingdom.

Is there a difference between being judgmental and being discerning? What is it?

"Ask, seek, knock" are all verbs in the present tense. The present tense denotes continuous, persistent activity. What does knowing this show you about these three actions?

How does following the first 14 verses of Chapter 7 help equip you as a follower of Christ?

*“Jesus only saves those for whom He becomes Lord.” MacArthur*

We can pay nothing for salvation, but it costs everything. Saying “Yes” to Jesus means saying “No” to the things of the world.

- **Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God’S Kingdom this week.**
- **Find a verse to summarize this week’s lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses**
- **The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being “poor in spirit.” How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.**
- **Find a Hymn which relates to this week’s message.**



## LESSON ELEVEN

## “Time to Choose”

Matthew 7: 15-28

Doctrine: Wisdom of God



**You cannot study the Sermon on the Mount and be untouched. It moves you to make a decision – Will I turn from my way and live His way?**

**The truths we are considering here are deep and demanding and are not for the half-hearted.**

### BASIC STUDY

- **Matt. 7: 15-20**

Where have you seen the word “beware” in this sermon before?

What is the connection?

**Read Jer. 5: 31**

Why do the people love false prophets?

**Jer. 23: 16-40**

**What is a prophet anyway?** *“A prophet was one who spoke for another and particularly one who spoke for God.”* Boice

**Go through the reminder of the Sermon and draw each of the word pictures the Lord has given us.** What does each picture teach?

**Good tree/ Bad tree**

So many people begin their walk of faith well and then things start to fizzle. Why is that?

**2 Tim. 3: 13** – what do you learn about false prophets here?

**2 Cor. 2: 17**

**2 Pet. 2: 1-3**

**Pretend the sermon ended with Matt. 7: 14. What would it cost the follower of Christ NOT to have these verses (Matt. 7: 15-28) preserved in Scripture?**

- **Matt. 7: 21**

**What does it mean to you “to do the will of My Father?”**

**Does Matt. 7: 22, 23 surprise or alarm you?**

**What do these verses mean in regard to salvation?**

**Relate to Rom. 10: 2-3**

**By the way, name doubling, “Lord, Lord” or “Peter, Peter” were addresses of intimacy. This would indicate the speaker was under the impression he had a very close, intimate relationship with the Lord. What does that information mean to you?**

**What had John the Baptist said long before as he baptized along the river?**

**Look at Matt. 3: 7-12.**

✓ **Memorize Matt. 7: 21-23.**

**All of this brings us to the main teaching of Christ here – How can we recognize false teaching?**

**Wolves' Teaching:**

- no straight gate, no narrow way**
- no focus on Christ as the only way**
- no disturbing doctrines, false peace**
- no repentance, no humility**

**On the opposite side, the positive side**

**For the teaching to be genuine:**

- there must be fruit produced**
- the fruit must be honoring to Christ and not only the individual**
- the fruit will cause growth in the Christian community**
- true fruit causes obedience to God's ways**
- there is a genuine, growing relationship with Christ**

**So always ask yourself as you listen, "Does this teacher promote Christ as my only answer/ Is Christ the center of everything?"**

- **Look at Matt. 7: 24-28.**

Until the storms came these two houses looked equally stable, but the storm revealed the true condition of the house.

How can that understanding help equip us as we follow Christ?

Compare this to Luke 6: 48 and see what additional information you find here.

What have you learned personally about the standards of God as you have studied Sermon on the Mount?

❖ **Our God is so much higher than we can possibly comprehend. So how can we KNOW we are in good standing with Him? You desperately need to know the answer to this question. Do not rest until you find the answer.**

➤ **Read the article on the Wisdom of God. You have some choosing to do and you dare not make these decisions apart from His direction.**

Grace is a wonderful gift of God, but we can in no wise demand His grace. When we get grace out of balance with His character of holiness and justice, we have violated the truths of Scripture. Yes, our God is gracious and He has provided a way of salvation – but He is also holy and has provided for a holy salvation to occur throughout my life.

If God was only a God of love, the Bible would be MUCH shorter.

➤ **GO TO APPLICATION QUESTIONS IF YOU ARE NOT DOING DIGGING DEEPER**



## ➤ Digging Deeper

- **Matt. 7: 15-20**

The topic of false prophets may seem a world away from your twenty-first century life, but it really isn't. False prophets abound even now!

So how can we spot them? That's why we study to show ourselves approved – one benefit is being prepared.

To what does Jesus compare the false prophets?

What does that tell you as far as how dangerous they are?

**Read Ezek. 22: 27**

**Zeph. 3: 3**

**Acts 20: 29, 30**

**2 Thes. 2: 7-12**

*"The danger lies in the fact that there are going to be agents of the devil in the Church."* Boice

How does that apply today, in your world?

Does Jesus explicitly say what kind of error these wolves promote? Does He state what type of damage they do? Why would He leave out those particulars?

**Compare to: James 3: 12**

**1 Tim. 6: 4, 5**

**Can believers be taken in by false teachers?**

*“When believers are careless about study of and obedience to the Word, lazy about prayer, and uncritical about the things of God, it is easy for them to be deceived by someone who pretends to be orthodox.” MacArthur*

**note: In Jesus’ day it was well known that the buckthorn had little black berries which could be mistaken for grapes, there was also a thistle whose flower, from a distance, could be seen as a fig. The buckthorns berries were bitter and unfit to eat, by the way.**

- **Matt. 7: 21-23**

**By saying “Lord, Lord” the person is showing an added, intense zeal demonstrating devotion.**

This person would be fully convinced that they were a dedicated follower of Jesus. How can we be sure we do not fall into that trap?

What will determine entry into the Kingdom?

**In Matt. 7: 22, Jesus refers to “on that day.”**

**He refers here to the final judgment. To gain a better understanding of this reference, look also at:**

**Is. 2: 12**

**Joel 2: 1**

**Mal. 4: 5**

**1 Thes. 5: 2**

**2 Pet. 3: 10**

**Matt. 24: 36**

**Matt. 25: 1-13 (esp. vv. 11-12)**

*“Jesus Himself is preparing His followers to put the deepest content in the title.” (Lord)*

Expositor’s

*“This is the first use of ‘my Father’ in Matthew.” Expositor’s*

- **Matt. 7: 24-27**

**Who is the wise person?**

**Compare to:**

**James 1: 22 - 25**

**James 2: 14 – 20**

**Jesus doesn't give you multiple options; how many choices does He say there are?**

**Doesn't life seem like it offers more than two options? Why does Jesus indicate there are really only two options?**

**Relate to Jer. 21: 8**

Building a house on the sand may not sound like such a terrible idea, but in Israel, this would prove disastrous. A wise builder would dig down up to ten feet below the surface, until he hit rock – bedrock. This would ensure his structure could withstand the torrential rains of winter without collapsing. During the summer the sand which rings the Sea of Galilee is rock hard, but this changes as the climate changes and the land becomes soft.

The use of **twos** points to God's dealing with us. The two ways illustrate the *start* of the life of faith; the two trees illustrate the *growth* of the life of faith on earth; and the two houses illustrate the *end* of this life, when God will deliver His judgment to all.

The successful builder "dug deep" and built his house on the rock. A false profession may not be seen during this life, but it will be evident to God when His judgment falls. Even if this person calls "Lord, Lord" he may be turned away because he built on sand and not on rock.

The two ways remind us to count the cost because following Jesus will definitely cost us.

The two trees remind us to find evidence of fruit in our lives – eternal fruit. Have our lives really changed?

The two houses remind us that true faith in Christ will last, even the storms will not prevail against us.

This analogy is a good way for Jesus to end His teaching about His kingdom.

On what foundation have you trusted?

Is Christ the only foundation you depend upon or do you have back-up supports?

If you think this sermon presents a good life to follow and you will just try harder, you have missed the point Jesus is making. He is telling you that you will never be able to make this work on your own. You cannot construct the kind of character you will need to be a part of His kingdom. The first and most important point of these verses is that Jesus alone is your foundation, your Rock.

**Is. 28: 16**

**Eph. 2: 20**

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand.

What are you building today, Christ follower?

**1 Cor. 3: 12-15**

- **Matt. 7: 28, 29**

“When Jesus had finished saying these things ...” This phrase is repeated for the other discourses given in Matthew’s Gospel: **11: 1; 13: 53; 19: 1; 26: 1**

These serve as turning points in the book’s message.

Also note the word “amazed” *exeplessonto* = struck, overwhelmed, it suggests a strong, sudden sense of being astounded and is stronger than the word for “wonder or amazement” *thaumazo*

This word literally means “to be struck out of oneself” used figuratively means to be struck in the mind, that is, being astounded or beside oneself *ekplesso*

### **Unfortunately what they needed was not amazement but belief!**

**Keep in mind, these Jewish followers of Christ had not had a true prophet for over four hundred years! Now one stood before them who spoke with authority from God.**

**They may not have understood much of what He had said, but they knew that He was God’s Man and He spoke the truth.**

*“The Preacher of the Sermon on the Mount is the Sermon on the Mount, and so by studying it we are brought into the most intimate contact with Him.” Boice*

**Following the giving of this tremendous sermon, filled with authority, Jesus will walk among the people healing, delivering from demon possession, feeding the five thousand with a little fish and bread, raising some from the dead and controlling the sea and winds. Yes, the words of Jesus had authority, but He was about to extend His authority beyond words and into the very lives of His people.**

**Has His authority in word and deed been accomplished in your life?**

### **➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Jesus presents us with two ways, two gates, two trees, two foundations – in what way does He teach us that there are really only two choices?

2. **Read Ps. 23** and list the things a Good Shepherd does to care for His sheep.

What specifically in your life needs to come under the “Shepherd’s scalpel?”

In what ways is Jesus feeding you? Protecting you? Guiding you? Disciplining you?

3. **Matt. 7: 15**, How are we to recognize these wolves who come to us as sheep?

4. Which of the “ways” that Jesus teaches about does the false prophet dismiss?

**Matt. 7: 13**

5. What is the essential characteristic of the true believer? **Matt. 7: 21-24**

Focusing on works so much can begin to make the believer think that salvation is by works. But this is not the message of the Sermon on the Mount.

6. How do you relate works with being saved by grace?

Use passages you know of and also include **Eph. 2: 8-10**

**Gal. 2: 20**

Remember to go back to **Matt. 5: 20** and relate that verse to this debate.

➤ **Examine where you are right now, your church, your teaching opportunities, etc.**

Does the teaching you are receiving bring you closer to God?

Does it equip you to live for Jesus Christ at home and in your place of work?

Does it make you less selfish?

Does it prompt you to help and serve others when you have the opportunity to do so?

**Matt. 7: 24-27**

7. **The foundation dictates the ability of the structure to withstand the elements.**

**The sand represented the Pharisaic righteousness which the people knew and on which many were basing their hopes.**

**The rock foundation symbolized the Lord Himself and the truths which He had been presenting.**

What sand is there in your life? In other words, what “religious” trappings are you clinging to when you should be clinging to Jesus alone?

**8. What Jesus requires here is absolute and radical submission to His rule as Lord of God’s kingdom.**

**Have you fully accepted His rule in your life? If not, why not? And where do you resist Him?**

- **Record in the Appendix What I Learned About God’s Kingdom this week.**
- **Find a verse to summarize this week’s lessons in the Appendix Sermon on the Mount: Key Verses**
- **The key to Sermon on the Mount, indeed the key to living for Christ, is to be found in a life which embraces His message of being “poor in spirit.” How have you gone deeper in your understanding of what it means to be poor in spirit this week? Record this in the Appendix.**
- **Find a Hymn which relates to this week’s message.**



## LESSON TWELVE SUMMARY LESSON ON THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5-7

Doctrine: Perseverance of the Saints

*“The Person of Christ is to me the surest as well as the most sacred of all facts; as certain as my own personal existence; yea, even more so; for Christ lives in me, and He is the only valuable part of my existence. I am nothing without my Saviour; I am all with Him, and would not exchange Him for the whole world.” Philip Schaff The Person of Christ*



### BASIC STUDY

Who is Jesus and what did He do while on earth to make history revolve entirely around Him?

Imagine the people to whom this sermon was first given. Could they ever be the same after hearing these words of Jesus?

Now the question is: can you ever be the same after dwelling in these words of Jesus?

How has the Sermon on the Mount issued a charge to you to follow Jesus wherever He will lead?

In order to appreciate the impact of this sermon on those who heard it first, let's look briefly at **Matt. 8**.

What was the response of the people? **Matt. 7:28, 29; Matt. 8**

What do you see in **Matt. 8: 4**, that is interesting given the fact that the Lawgiver Himself was speaking to the leper?

What does this show you that you have been seeing all throughout the Sermon?

What feeling do you have when you read **Matt. 8: 10**?

**Read Matt. 8: 10-13.**

What is the message Jesus is giving here?

How does that relate to the Sermon we just examined?

- **Matt. 7: 15-20**

**Relate Matt.'s message to 2 Thes. 2: 10-12**

- **Matt. 7: 21-23**

**Read Matt. 13: 1-23**

What do you learn about following Jesus as Lord here?

**1 John 2: 3-6**

**The one who simply claims to be devoted to the Lord will not necessarily enter the kingdom of God. Obedience is the issue which will decide his fate.**

- **Matt. 7: 24-27**

The follower who simply hears and acknowledges the words of Christ is NOT building on a secure foundation. He must OBEY the words as well. This is what building on the rock means.

*"Building on the rock is equivalent to obeying God's Word."* MacArthur

**Look at:**

**Matt. 24: 13**

**Col. 1: 22-23**

**1 Tim. 4: 16**

**Titus 1: 15-16**

**Heb. 3: 14; 10: 38, 39**

**1 John 2: 19**

**The Good Shepherd knows His sheep intimately.**

**John 10: 1-14**

**Matt. 25: 41 He also knows those who are not His.**

**2 Tim. 2: 19**

**This does not mean that His true followers never fail or trip up. Otherwise we would not have verses like:**

**1 John 1: 9**

**Matt. 6: 12**

**❖ Building on the sand is looking at the wrong things to support your life: man's philosophy, man's ideas, and man's religions.**

**➤ Read the article on Perseverance of the Saints**

**Why are some people more committed to a denomination or a Christian organization than they are to the Word of God?**

**Before we leave the Sermon, we need to establish a few crucial points. One of which concerns false prophets.**

**First of all, there have always been false prophets. Why would that be?**

**Who benefits and how from the existence of false prophets?**

**Look at:**

**Is. 30: 9-10**

**For nearly twenty chapters (5-23) Jeremiah repeatedly exposes the ways of the false prophets during his day. Choose 5 to write and read the rest.**

**Rom. 16: 17-18**

**1 Tim. 4: 1, 2**

**2 Pet. 2: 1, 3, 9, 12, 17**

**Matt. 24: 24; 26: 60**

**1 John 4: 1**

**Acts 20: 29-31**

**Jer. 5: 30-31; 23: 14, 16, 21, 30-40**

**2 Tim. 3: 5, 13**

**Jude 10-13**

**Why the mention of the clothing of the false prophets – “coming to you in sheep’s clothing?”**

*“Just as the ancient false prophets often wore the garments of the true prophet, so false shepherds often disguise themselves as true shepherds.” MacArthur*

**The responsibility of the Christian to be on the alert in regard to false prophets.**

*“When believers are careless about study of and obedience to the Word, lazy about prayer, and uncritical about the things of God, it is easy for them to be deceived by someone who pretends to be orthodox – especially if he is pleasant, positive and permissive.” MacArthur*

To whom does the false prophet appeal?

The false prophet *“appeals to the natural man and carefully avoids anything that is offensive to man’s proud, fallen nature.”* MacArthur

*One more essential truth which must be addressed: the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is a key theme throughout this sermon. The history of the word “kingdom” bears remark.*

*“Kingdom” was a word that eventually formed its current contraction of “king-dom.”*

*Originally it meant “king’s domain. Now the question is this: Is Jesus the King over all that holds sway in your life? Is there any domain to which He does not hold the key?”*

## ➤ DIGGING DEEPER

*“MOST LIKELY JESUS PREACHED PRIMARILY, IF NOT EXCLUSIVELY, IN ARAMAIC, A DIALECT OF HEBREW. The New Testament documents were written in Greek.”* D.A. Carson

What does this mean for the English-speaking believer?

It means that we must read the Word of God as the Word of God. He has preserved for us what we need for life and godliness. When one gospel is slightly different from another, this translation from Aramaic to Greek to English may account for the variation.

*“We usually have preserved for us, not verbatim records of all that Jesus said on any particular occasion, but highly condensed reports...I could believe, for example, that the beatitudes were points of a larger message.”* Carson

Keep in mind that each Gospel writer has his own skills and focus which he will present as the Lord guides him. One evangelist may use a particular miracle or event to introduce his teaching message while another writer would choose another encounter. This does not in any way compromise the truth of his writing. This is perfectly within the bounds of this type of writing.

*“If part of the message of Jesus in Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount is found in another context in Luke, it may simply mean that Jesus preached the same thing more than once.”* Carson

Remember also that at the time of Christ, learning was largely done by rote. These people were more equipped with skills of memorization than the modern learner or disciple. *“Some have even argued that Jesus trained His disciples to memorize all His teachings in the same way that Jewish rabbis memorized the entire Hebrew Bible plus great masses of traditional material.”* Carson

As we approach Scripture, we must remember, we are under the authority of this Scripture and not the other way around. We dare not judge the holy Writings, but rather these truths will be our judge. As Matthew wrote, Jesus spoke with authority and He still does to this day – through His eternal Word.

This is one of the great blessings of studying Sermon on the Mount. Commit as much to memory as possible and meditate on these words every day, all throughout the day. These words will transform you.

*“Matthew was the most highly valued and widely read of the four gospels in the first decades of the early church.”* Irving Jensen

Why do you suppose this was true?

*“Each of the four Gospels, with its distinctive picture of Christ, seems to have circulated at first in the churches of a particular area, but shortly after the appearance of the fourth the four appear to have been bound up together and acknowledged by the churches at large as the authoritative fourfold Gospel of Christ.” F.F. Bruce The Books and the Parchments*

**Matt. 1-4** introduces you to the Person of the King.

**Matt. 5-7** teaches you the Principles of the King.

**Matt. 8-9** will now put on display for you the Power of the King.

While our focus is on the Sermon, we need to be at least somewhat familiar with the powerful ministry of our King.

Why did Jesus perform miracles?

**Is. 29: 18-19; 35: 4-6**

**Matt. 11: 1-5**

As Jesus descended from the mount from which He delivered the sermon, He was met by a leper whom He healed.

Why do you think the leper was the first miracle Matthew records after the sermon?

“Sin is deeper than the skin; it spreads; it defiles and isolates; and it is fit only for the fire.”  
W.Wiersbe

Sin and leprosy have many traits in common. But Jesus, unafraid of the contamination of leprosy, stretched out His hand and touched the leper. Jesus, in giving the sermon on the mount, had “stretched out” His heart in order to cleanse us and reach us with His loving touch.

The next encounter Jesus has in **Matt. 8** is with the \_\_\_\_\_ . **Matt. 8: 5**

This points to the fact that although Jesus is the Messiah, the Jewish King, He is much more than that – He is the Eternal and Everlasting King to all people.

While this is not a study on the entire book of Matthew, realize that a truly full understanding of the Sermon on the Mount will relate to the entire book and really to the New Testament.

Now to wrap this sermon up, we need to think in results.

The final test of our lives is not what we think of ourselves or what others think of us.

What is the final test?

What is the true test of a Christian’s faith?

### ➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Matthew’s book is considered a bridge from the Old Testament to the New. How has studying this book the last few weeks given you a greater appreciation for the entire Bible?

2. Matthew is the only Gospel writer to use the word *church* (16: 18; 18: 17)

In what way does Matthew prepare the reader for a new people – the church?

3. Much of what Jesus teaches us is in counter to the Pharisees and their teaching.

What have you learned about the errors of the Pharisees that you can take into your daily abiding as a disciple of Jesus?

4. How has Sermon on the Mount deepened your relationship with Jesus?

5. What is the danger of knowing this Sermon and not applying it?

After studying this sermon for months now, you are equipped to answer this question.

6. What is the most important message of this sermon?

**Boice p. 117 (Matthew)**

7. False prophets will talk of the Lord's love but never of the Lord's holiness. Why is that?

**1 Cor. 11: 28**

8. How do you personally go about doing this kind of examining?

What is your procedure?

9. Satan is not discussed at any great length throughout this study, but his presence is around every corner. How has the study of Sermon on the Mount made you more prepared for the deception of your soul's great enemy?

If you go all the way back to the beginning of the study when we looked at the chapters prior to the sermon, we saw in **Matt. 4** the Temptation which Jesus suffered. We saw that Satan tried to get Jesus to "take a shortcut."

What was the shortcut?

Where is your enemy urging you to take a road less difficult and bypass some discomfort?

**Matt. 5: 48**

10. God did not lower His standard to accommodate humans; instead He set forth His absolute holiness as the standard.

How are you living a life of holiness?

**11. Matt. 7: 13-23**

Did Jesus indicate it was easy to become a Christian?

## WHAT I LEARNED THIS WEEK ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD



## KEY VERSES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT



## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE “POOR IN SPIRIT”



NAME:

## DAILY TIME TRACKING

TIME	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	THESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12:00 AM							
1:00 AM							
2:00 AM							
3:00 AM							
4:00 AM							
5:00 AM							
6:00 AM							
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
12:00 PM							
1:00 PM							
2:00 PM							
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							
11:00 PM							
CODES	SLEEP = 1	SHOP = 2	FOOD/PREP = 3	TV = 4	WORK = 5	STUDY/PRAY = 6	HOUSEWORK = 7
	YARD WORK = 8	SOCIAL = 9	HOBBY = 10	AUTOMOBILE = 11	DOCTOR = 12	TRIP/TRAVEL = 13	VOLUNTEER = 14

**Thanks to Lenny Webb for creating this chart on time tracking!**

## Prayer

“Help me.”

“Save me.”

“Teach me.”

“Revive me.”

“Incline my heart to Your testimonies.”

“Give me understanding that I may observe Your law.”

So much has been written on the discipline of prayer. We can all learn more about prayer, but the real education for this discipline is accomplished in “the school of prayer.”

This is one of the most talked about and read about practices, yet one of the least exercised.

- Follow the practice of Christ

When asked to teach His disciples regarding prayer, our Lord offered a simple yet profound example. He did not tell them “about” prayer, He prayed.

“Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” **Luke 11:1-4**

Each point in this prayer can be a stopping point to dwell and talk with the Lord. This is called an *index prayer*, meaning each point is one which can be elaborated upon.

For instance, “Our Father.” Stop here and thank the Father that He has called you His own. Thank Him that He will provide, protect, love and guide you as a father does his beloved child.

“Who is in heaven” reminds us that our Father is the Sovereign God of all the universe.

- Pause to praise and adore Him.

“Hallowed be Your name.” God is holy. He is altogether other than we are. We must approach a holy God with the reverence and awe He deserves. The only reason we can boldly enter the holy place is because of “the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.” **Heb. 10:19, 20**

“Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” **Heb. 4:16**

As you progress through each point of the prayer Jesus gave as an example,

- Allow the Spirit Who lives in you to speak. “In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He Who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” **Rom. 8:26, 27**
- By the way, the disciples had probably prayed all their lives. So why did they ask Jesus how to pray? Because they heard **Him** pray and it was not like anything they had ever heard! Do not be satisfied with vain, empty Santa Claus prayers. Do not bring God your grocery lists.
  - To deepen your prayer life, go throughout the Scriptures and learn from the prayers – the people who prayed. Start with Cain in **Genesis 4:13-15**. If God can hear the prayer of Cain, that should give you confidence that He will certainly hear you. Look at **Gen. 5:24**. “Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”

Is walking with God similar to prayer?

**Read** the Bible in this manner, searching and asking God to teach you everything He wants to reveal to you about talking with Him. Literally talk out loud to God as you read the Scriptures.

What do you learn about prayer?

- Another hindrance to prayer is lack of discipline and lack of planning.

*“We Protestants are an undisciplined people. Therein lies the reason for much of the dearth of spiritual insights and serious lack of moral power.”*

Albert Edward Day

While lip service is given to the practice of prayer, in actuality, prayer is always demoted to non-essential status. We think we can manage without prayer. Therefore prayer is never planned, but sporadic. Would you plan a two week vacation which has a far less significant impact on your life? Then why do you not plan for prayer?

*“As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.”* Martin Luther

The average believer prays less than five minutes a day. (From a survey taken while attendees participated in a seminar on spiritual awakening)

Christian, we are in a battle. John Piper encourages us that **“prayer is a walkie-talkie for warfare, not a domestic intercom for increasing our conveniences.”** If you are not in constant communication with your Commander, you are at RISK!

**Colossians 4:2** tells us to “Devote yourselves to prayer.”

- ✓ How do you know if you are devoted to prayer?

When you are devoted to something or someone, you make sacrifices for them, you make time with them a priority, you will give energy and resources to them.

**1 Thes. 5:17**, “Pray continually.”

Prayer, in a sense, in the Christian’s expression of an unbroken relationship with the Father, with Abba.

**Eph. 6:18**, “With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for the saints.”

So after all of this encouragement, WHY DO WE NOT PRAY?

Prayer is learned and we have not been “With Christ in the School of Prayer.” (a book by Andrew Murray)

❖ We learn to pray by:

1. Praying
2. Praying with others who have a passion for prayer **Prov. 13:20**
3. Meditating on Scripture {there should be a smooth, almost unnoticeable transition between Scripture input and prayer output as we move closer to our Father}  
We learn to pray by meditating on Scripture, for *meditation* is the missing link between Bible intake and prayer.
4. Reading about prayer and those who are devoted to prayer ... and then, pray
5. Examining the content of our prayers to ensure their content is in line with Scripture
6. Expecting God to answer
7. Continuing in faithful prayer regardless of what we see with our eyes  
Ask, Seek, Knock **Matt. 6:7, 8** These verbs are in the present tense, which means they are continuous. Remember, faith would never grow if all prayers were answered immediately.

Many books have been written *about* prayer; put them aside ... and pray!



## **Fasting**

“Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” Matt 6:16-18

**Notice here that Jesus does not say, “If you fast”, but He says “When you fast.”**

Some people who considered fasting important are: Moses, David, Nehemiah, Esther, Elijah, Anna the prophetess, Paul, and even Jesus Christ Who is the Lord of lords. Also many of the great leaders and teachers fasted regularly. Martin Luther, John Knox of Scotland, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Finney, David Brainerd, C.H. Spurgeon followed the example of our Lord in fasting.

Even those who were not followers of Jehovah fasted: Plato, Aristotle, Socrates are a few.

In our society even when fasting is practiced, it is usually for vain purposes and not for spiritual ones. The Biblical purpose of fasting is to draw closer to the Lord in obedience.

- Some Biblical background on fasting

Originally, God’s people were instructed to fast only one day a year, the Day of Atonement.

“On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God.” Lev. 23:27, 28 (also Lev. 16:29-30; Num 29:7) It was understood that to humble themselves and do no work included fasting for this event.

The Day of Atonement was to be a time of sorrow, affliction and reflection of their sin and separation from God.

Over time, fasts were added by the leaders at the direction of God and also for their own legalistic appeasement so that now there are over twenty fasts!

“Go, assemble all the Jews who are found in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens also will fast in the same way. And thus I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.” Esther 4:16

“Blow a trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, proclaim a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber. Let the priests, the LORD’s ministers weep ...” Joel 2:15-17

When threatened by foreign invasion, “Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.”

2 Chron. 20:3, 4

Moses “went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, and the tablets of the covenant which the LORD had made with you, then I remained on the mountain forty days and nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water.” Deut. 9:9

Speaking of Elijah, the prophet, we read that he “arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of God.” 1 Kings 19:8

“I did not eat any tasty food, nor did meat or wine enter my mouth, nor did I use any ointment at all until the entire three weeks were completed.” Dan. 10:3

Even Darius fasted when he had to follow his own decree and put Daniel in the lions’ den.

“Then the king went off to his palace and spent the night fasting, and no entertainment was brought before him; and his sleep fled from him. Then the king arose at dawn ... and went in haste to the lions’ den... The king said to Daniel, ‘Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, Whom you constantly serve, been able to deliver you from the lions?’” Dan. 6:18-20

When Jonah preached to the people of Nineveh, a key city of the fierce Assyrians, the people “believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of

them... the king of Nineveh issued a proclamation and it said, 'In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles. Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands.'

Jonah 3:5-8 Note that here even the animals were required to fast!

When Ezra embarked on his journey back to Jerusalem, he "proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God to seek from Him a safe journey for us, our little ones, and all our possessions. For I was ashamed to request from the king troops and horsemen to protect us from the enemy on the way, because we had said to the king, 'The hand of our God is favorably disposed to all those who seek Him, but His power and His anger are against all those who forsake Him.' So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter; and He listened to our entreaty." Ezra 8:21-23

By the time of Zechariah, there were four fasts which were observed. "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh and the fast of the tenth months will become joy, gladness, and cheerful feasts for the house of Judah; so love truth and peace.'" Zech. 8:19

By the time of Christ, the Pharisees fasted twice a week: Mondays and Thursdays. These were also market days which would provide the Pharisees more opportunity to be seen for their "piety."

We see the early church involved in fasting. "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart from Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Acts 13: 2, 3 At Paul's conversion, before being selected for the above work, "And he (Paul) was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank." Acts 9:9

The *Didache* (an early Christian treatise for believers) instructed followers to fast twice a week: Wednesday and Friday. At the Second Council of Orleans in the sixth century specific fasting was made obligatory.

- **Is fasting too demanding? Is it old-fashioned and unnecessary?**

Then why does the church of today resist this discipline and call it fanatical or optional?

*“Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross.”*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer The Cost of Discipleship

Once it has been established that fasting is a positive activity for the believer to observe, the questions become *how* and *why*.

### **Why Do We Fast**

First the motive of fasting must be addressed. As with all the disciplines, this cannot become a legalistic practice. It will not honor or please the Lord if it is done in the flesh.

“Say to all the people of the land and to the priests, ‘When you fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh months these seventy years, was it actually for Me that you fasted? When you eat and drink, do you not eat for yourselves and do you not drink for yourselves? Are not these the words which the LORD proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and prosperous along with its cities around it...’” Zech. 7:5, 6

“‘Even now’, declares the LORD, ‘return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting and weeping and mourning; and rend your heart and not your garments.’” Joel 2:12, 13a

“When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.” Acts 14:23

Each discipline must center on God. God must call you, equip you and sustain you through your offering of faith. Fasting is an offering to the Lord.
--

He has called us through His word to observe fasting.

He has equipped us through His word to deny self, deny the flesh in order to hear Him more clearly.

He has sustained us with His word by abiding with us. He has sustained us with His very **Presence** as we obediently yield to His word. Do you know that the daily bread which was placed by the priest on the table of showbread was referred to as **the Presence**? “You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times.” Ex. 25:30

Anna is our example here. She “never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” Lk. 2:37, 38

Anna saw and recognized the Messiah because she was so very in tune with God that she did not miss His appearing as so many others did. She was willing to pay the cost and she was rewarded for her faithfulness.

Fasting is so closely associated with prayer that the two become a form of communication with the Giver of life. **We must ever be on guard that we are not more interested in the blessing than in the Blessor.**

*In times of fasting, we are really feasting and not fasting. We are feasting on the Bread of Life Himself. We are more intimately abiding in Him because we are denying the flesh for a period of time. Once we deny the flesh in this way, the power of the flesh is not as strong. The real strength in our lives is the resurrected life of Christ. "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish His work.'" Jn. 4:34*

*At times we fast because we are desperate. When Nehemiah heard the news of the devastated condition of Jerusalem, he "sat down and wept and mourned for days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." Neh. 1:4*

### **How Do We Fast**

With this discipline in particular, you must begin in stages. To attempt a 40 day fast might be "biting" off too much.

Begin with a short, partial fast. Here you may fast from certain foods for a time. As you fast, let your hunger pains or your denial of desires be a reminder of Who you serve.

As you progress, you may fast from any food for one meal or even two meals.

Next you may want to fast a specific amount of time, for instance 24 hours, from all food.

It is important to stay hydrated, so drink plenty of water.

You may fast for a longer period of time. Some experience fasting for three days or more.

A forty day fast has been successfully attempted by many including Bill Bright.

Check out [Your Personal Guide to Fasting and Prayer](#) which you will find by simply searching under this title online.

John Wesley was so adamant about fasting that he refused to ordain anyone to the Methodist ministry who did not fast two days a week.

Many times when prayer does not satisfy the inner longings, fasting will close the gap of that sense of separation. I have prayed for things that I did not gain a peace about. I continued

praying, but sensed no response. This is the time when I might ask the Lord if He would direct me to fast. So many times a fast is what will break through within my spirit and allow me to hear the Lord's answer to my prayer.

In Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology, he points out several benefits from fasting.

1. Fasting increases our sense of humility and dependence on the Lord
2. Fasting allows us to give more attention to prayer
3. Fasting reminds us that we are to sacrifice ourselves entirely to our God
4. Fasting is a good exercise in disciplining the body to refrain from food and strengthens our ability to refrain also from sin as we gain more and more control over our desires
5. Fasting heightens our spiritual alertness and offers a sense of God's presence as we focus less on the material things of this world
6. Fasting expresses earnestness and urgency in our prayers

Remember also that we can fast from other things besides food. Fasting from food is the prescribed, biblical form of fasting, but you may also fast from television, radio, activities, habits that have begun to master you too much. As your Father, Lord and Designer, He knows what you need to put aside for a time. This laying aside of our desires is a sure way of disciplining our bodies and our wills.

"Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." 1 Cor. 7:5

These instructions were to married people regarding abstaining from sexual involvement for the right purposes. The main objective in the denying of the flesh here was to devote oneself to prayer.

"David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?" 1 Sam. 21:5

Check out this reference and you will be amazed to see that it has to do with .... bread!

At the giving of the Law, God instructed Moses to tell the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman." Ex. 19:15

There are many ways we can humble ourselves and acknowledge the Lord as our Master and King. Listen to His voice and He will direct in this matter. But you and I must be willing to obey as He leads.

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst... I am the bread of life...This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever, and the bread also which I will give, for the life of the world is My flesh.” Jn. 6:35, 48, 50, 51



**While Giving and Thanksgiving are not exactly the same thing, I believe a generous heart comes from realizing all God has done for you thereby creating in you a heart like His heart. Then you will want to give.**

## **Thanksgiving**

*“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;*

*For His lovingkindness is everlasting.” Psalm 118:1*

While thanksgiving is not mentioned in most lists for spiritual disciplines, we see our Lord practicing thanksgiving throughout His life. If our Lord demonstrated His appreciation for the value of this discipline, then we are wise to follow in His footsteps.

**Matt. 15:36; 26:27; Luke 22:17, 19; John 11:41**

- Giving thanks is an often repeated topic in the psalms as well. The practice of giving thanks displays a grateful heart, dependent on the Lord and acknowledges the Sovereign King as worthy of thanks.

In contrast, an ungrateful heart betrays a stingy attitude toward God. If the practice of thanksgiving is foreign to you, if you do not have time for it, if it seems child-like, or if it is not spiritually deep enough for you, then why was it a practice of our Lord? Can we ignore something which was a priority to Him?

Thanksgiving is not simply the offering of a prayer at a meal and then you are done. Anyone can do this out of habit or tradition. **True thanksgiving is an act born out of a heart which acknowledges that each and every (every single one, without exception) good thing comes from the Father of lights. James 1:17**

### ❖ The Historic Significance of Biblical Thanksgiving

God specified ***certain offerings*** to be a staple activity of His chosen people. He prescribed offerings for His people in several areas: trespass or guilt offerings, sin offerings, peace offerings, meal and drink offerings, burnt offerings, wave and heave offerings and thank offerings.

Each offering had a particular purpose. The ***sin offering*** was a general recognition of sin as a separating element between God and man. The ***trespass or guilt offering*** was for a specific

offense against God, offered to restore fellowship with God. The **meal offerings** were acknowledgements to God as the Provider for His people, etc.

*“When you sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, you shall sacrifice it so that you may be accepted.” Lev. 22:29*

Jesus has been that sacrifice because through the offering of His life, we have been found acceptable. (**Jesus is pictured in all the sacrifices.** Do not miss that blessed truth.)

The **thanksgiving offerings** came under the **peace offerings**. The **peace offering** is divided into three categories: **thanksgiving, votive and freewill offerings**. The **thanksgiving offering** was given primarily in times of prosperity and success to demonstrate the gratitude of the offerer.

As Christians we experience spiritual abundance at all times and hence should offer this sacrifice of thanksgiving constantly. **John 10:10**

*“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” 2 Cor. 9:15*

#### ❖ Exercises in Thanksgiving

**Read** through these verses on giving thanks and see what you learn. Use the *who what when where why* and *how* questions to aid you in your discovery.

*“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him.” Ps. 28:7*

(For instance, here you might note HOW you thank Him.)

*“That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders.” Ps. 26:7*

*“It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High.” Ps. 92:1*

*“Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.” Ps. 95:2*

*“Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.” Ps. 110:4*

*“Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praises to our God on the lyre,*

*Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who provides rain for the earth.” Ps. 147:7, 8*

*“Then on that day David first assigned Asaph and his relatives to give thanks to the Lord.*

*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples.”*

**1 Chron. 16:7, 8**

*“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.” Rom. 6:17*

*“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Cor. 1:4*

*“And there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” Eph. 5:4*

*“Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.” Eph. 5:20*

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.” Phil. 4:6*

*“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.” Col. 3:17*

- ✓ How is our national Thanksgiving different than the thanksgiving a Christian offers to God?

In the United States we celebrate Thanksgiving once a year; for us, it is a reminder of our national ancestry. As our forebears faced difficulties they relied on God as their Jehovah-jireh.

At this one time each year we remember and reflect on this desperate point in our national identity.

It would be wise and effective to pause and reflect daily (really multiple times throughout each day) on the cause for our spiritual identity.

If you truly understand what the Lord has done for you, you will live a life of thanksgiving.

**Practicing the discipline of thanksgiving is not optional for the Christian who loves his Father; it will be as natural as the air you breathe.**

*“Oh give thanks to the Lord, call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples. Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; speak of all His wonders. Glory in His holy name; let the heart*

*of those who seek the Lord be glad. Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His face continually. Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth. O seed of Abraham, His servant, O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones! He is the Lord our God; His judgments are in all the earth." Ps. 105:1-7*

### Is the *Discipline of Gratitude* Working in You?

**Principle Scriptures on the *Discipline of Gratitude*:** 1 Sam. 12:24; Matt. 5:17-20; Luke 17:11-19; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 4:7; Col. 3:17; 1 Thess. 5: 12-18; 1 Tim. 5:17; 6:1; 1 Pet. 2:17; Heb. 12:28-29

Here is how you can find out. Take a careful look at this *Discipline of Gratitude* from God's most precious Word by examining your life and the passages above. Now ask yourself:

1. How do I exhibit a life of *Gratitude* in my life now?
2. How can I develop the willingness to be a more disciplined person who will realize *I am grateful for His work in me*?
3. What blocks *Gratitude* from working and being exhibited in me?
4. How can I initiate an attitude of *Gratitude*, and discipline myself to carry it out?
5. What can I do to make *Gratitude* function better, stronger, and faster, even in times of uncertainty and stress?

· Here are positive examples from Scripture: 2 Sam. 2:5-7; Dan. 2:17-23; Luke 17:15-18; Rom. 16:1-12; Phil. 1:3-7

· Here are negative examples from Scripture: Gen. 31:36-42; Ex. 17:1-4; Luke 17:11-14; 17; Romans 1:18-21

**The *Discipline of Gratitude*** means we are practicing and producing an attitude of Gratitude, of being thankful, even when we cannot see what we have. This is an aspect of our worship of Christ-expressing to Him our appreciation and reverence for how He has benefited our lives. We are grateful because His blood has redeemed us. This also has a relational application in that it helps us deal with others as we show our support, appreciation, and benevolence to them for how they have benefited our lives. As a discipline, this means we are to realize our indebtedness to God and "practice" our faith and church life because of what He has done for us. Thus, this Discipline of Gratitude enables us to know Him and His will more and do for Him more as we keep our focus on God's promises and not our circumstances-His provision and care, not merely our experiences. Christianity is not for our personal benefit; it is for His glory. Seeing life from the perspective of *what I can't get or what I deserve* rather than what I have already been given will create grave problems. We must discipline ourselves to see His gifts of eternal life, grace, and forgiveness-such things that could never be earned or merited-so that we are willing to grow closer to Him and to lead others to Him.

**What *Gratitude* is not** is mindless joy or a good attitude without a reason behind it, because it will not last. Good attitudes are important and essential, but we have to have a basis for them to keep them, to hone them, and further develop them.

**What happens when we do not practice this discipline?** We will be fueled and filled with ingratitude, refusing to acknowledge and respond to what Christ has done for us. This will produce in us a very unhealthy attitude and a life that is not Spirit-led. We will not realize what we have or could have, but rather focus on an "entitlement" mentality that says we deserve this or that, and where humbleness and servitude are absent. It will create for us a life of dissatisfaction and dysfunction. This can happen to a Christian who does little to nothing with his or her faith and remains in the ways of the world, or someone who refuses to grow and respond to God. This places a barrier to seeing the great, incompressible gift of grace we have received, and then refusing, or forgetting, to respond to Christ as our LORD. When we refuse to be partakers of gratefulness, the waywardness of our sinful ingratitude will rise up and continue to fester and build and eventually take control of who we are and what we do, even as Christians. Then, pride will come in, causing us to hurt others and cutting us off our relationships and growth while creating self-defeating anger and bitterness that worsens to produce more ingratitude. We must be careful that ingratitude does not take root in us!

### Further Questions

1. How would you define the *Discipline of Gratitude*? Are you a person who is Grateful? If so, why? If not, why not? How does knowing who and what Christ has done help you to be grateful? How does ingratitude affect the way people treat one another? What about your church's vision and agenda (whether you are in leadership or not)?
2. What part does *Gratitude* play in your relationships with church members, friends, coworkers, and family? Have you ever met a person who is ungrateful yet happy? Why do you suppose he or she is that way? How would the *Discipline of Gratitude* help your church handle problems and overcome difficulties?
3. How does the *Discipline of Gratitude* give us rewards and successes in life? Do you realize that gratitude creates a happy heart and a functional Christian life and that ingratitude creates chaos, confusion, strife, and discontentment? What about Christians who think they are entitled to something?
4. What happens when your church does not engage in *Gratitude* or teach and model to its people their indebtedness to Christ?

5. What happens to your relationship with God, with others in your church's community, and with the opportunities God gives you when your church refuses to be grateful for whom Christ is and what He has done—such as taking Him for granted?
6. When have you exercised *Gratitude* the most? How does gratitude produce happiness? How does ingratitude produce bitterness and unhappiness? Why do so many Christians engage in ingratitude and bitterness and not pursue His promises? What do you suppose their rationalization is? How would Christ feel about it?
7. In what situation did you or your church fail to engage in *Gratitude* when you should have? How would people respond to your church if you all actually and sincerely gave God the glory for all that you do and practice?
8. Do you have a sense of His presence in your daily life? If so, how does this help you be grateful? If not, why? What can you do to have a heart that is aware of His care for you?
9. How does a list of agendas and personal motivations show ingratitude? Do you have a stilled soul or a raging cry? What would real, authentic *Gratitude* look like in your church fellowship, meetings, and other doings?
10. What issue is in your church that would improve with a dose of *Gratitude*? What do you need to do to raise your trust in Christ? How does *Gratitude* play out here?
11. Do you come to Christ only when you feel that things are going great, or only when you are facing a crisis? Do you realize that gratitude creates a happy heart and a functional Christian life and that ingratitude creates chaos, confusion, strife and discontentment?
12. Think through the steps that you need to take to put *Gratitude* into action in a specific instance. For example, what can you do to instill within yourself a sense of gratitude, even when you do not see a reason for being thankful? What will you do to get rid of it ingratitude in you and prevent its reprisal? How can the *Discipline of Gratitude* help your church focus on being edifying and equipping for its people? What will you do about this? What can your church do to make this a priority?

Are you a Christian who is overflowing with praise, or overflowing with criticism? Do you have a sense of His presence or a list of agendas? Do you have a stilled soul or a raging cry? Do you come to Christ only when you feel that things are great, or only when you are facing a crisis? How you answer these questions may indicate if you are practicing a discipline of thankfulness or a life of stress and fear. We must realize that gratitude creates a happy heart and a functional Christian life as well as a triumphant church and that ingratitude creates chaos, confusion, strife and discontentment! Gratitude comes from the relationship we have in Christ; when we are happy in Him, we are happy in general and content, humble, and mature. Our hearts are secure and at rest in Him! When our relationship with Christ is not working, it is usually because we messed it up by our attitudes, refusal to work at it and focusing on our disappointments and not Him. Thus, we become ungrateful, and in turn, unhappy and immature (Psalm 131; John 13:17; Philippians 4:6-13).

Gratitude shows character because it is a temperament that comes from the spiritual growth we are called to emulate; it is also a discipline because it fuels our spiritual growth. But, it does not come to us naturally and we have to work at it. Just like the other disciplines, we need to do it consciously, constantly, and carefully. We need to think through and meditate on the things of God and in so doing, be aware of His presence and practice His presence by being thankful to Him. This stimulates our spiritual formation. Gratitude should be a daily practice, as any discipline, and not just at set times. Like prayer; it is a way we commune and grow with and in Him.

Gratitude is fueled from our heartfelt thanks to God for what we have, for what He has done, and is a lifestyle of worship and adoration. This also allows us to give to and value others with respect and honor because it takes the focus off us and places it on God's purpose and direction. This aspect is central in producing our character by focusing our heart on Christ and thus taking the focus off ourselves and our situation, fears, and self-centeredness. When we are making God our complete focus, we will see what we have and what we can have. This helps us develop a good attitude of gratitude. We are not consumed just with our needs and desires; being thankful is an essential aspect to growing deeper in Christ, and in character and maturity.

Our focus needs to be on our gratitude for the gift of grace we received from Christ's work on the cross, and disciplining ourselves to keep *front and center* in our Christian walk. Gratitude is the *carrot on the stick* for our scriptural and relational growth. This helps us focus on God and live a life of Christian maturity, faith, and character as well as being happy and fulfilled. Grateful people realize that God indeed cares, even when they can not see it. This forms a mindset that cultivates happiness and enthusiasm and subsequently inspires love toward others. Those who are ingrates promote anger and bitterness. If Gratitude is not our focus, then ingratitude will be what leads us—what we do or do not get. Ingratitude says, "I did not get what I deserved," or "I am not going where I want to go." So, we become consumed with our wants and desires. This causes mistrust, an absence of hope, and/or a mindset that one is unworthy of love and acceptance. All produce a lack of love, lack of Fruit of the Spirit, of hospitality, generosity, and of good stewardship. This further escalates when the hurts, pains, and disappointments of life come knocking on the door. Disappointments come when our expectations and our experiences collide. Disappointments for a Christian come also by ignoring God, His promises, and His provisions. Then, ingratitude will turn into hostility and bitterness.

When we fully recognize our dependence on Christ, and fully feel the love and acceptance we have from Him, then our spiritual walk will increase. When our walk increases, then the flow of love and care will proceed from us in a powerful and focused way. We will then see that we already have all that we could ever want or need because all that we are and could ever be is found in Christ.

Gratitude also shows that our obedience to God is motivated by the fullness we receive from our Christian life and the joy that can't be found without Jesus. Thus, we are able, and should give God the glory for that all that we do and practice in life, no matter what happens. Holding on to Him in our struggles and fears and still having Gratitude means we are maturing in Him. If all we have is ungratefulness, then all we will have is stress and fear and not the holding on of faith in Christ, a life of disappointments without meaning, and a hope that is not seen. Then, all we will produce is bitterness and malevolence to self and others.

I have found something very interesting through the years of my counseling experiences and that is people in causes that are self-defeating or are chaotic to society are started, run, and staffed by people who are very ungrateful in life. (I have not seen any study on this subject, just my observations.) Ingratitude produces a firm desire to destroy and cause havoc to others out of jealousy or contempt or for whatever reason. Ungrateful people hate and desire to destroy. For example, when I was involved with "Operation Rescue" in the 80s, we would go to abortion clinics to pray and hand out literature showing pictures of unborn fetuses as a "proof" for their humanity, showing they were persons. But, such people who perform abortions or work with those who carry them out do not see the humanity of the unborn. They demonize or rationalize that a fetus is like a tumor even though the biological evidences clearly show it is fully human. And primary, I noticed they tend to be people of extreme ingratitude who are motivated by anger and bitterness. While rational, honest, and even some grateful people will think through this issue and say it is human, they say that the mother's rights supercede its rights (which is flawed logic and I strongly disagree with). The same attitudes, arguments and rational were used by Nazi Germany to show the Jewish people as inhuman and deserving of extermination. And, having met some of the doctors who experimented on the Jews and researched this ("Logo-therapy Center," run by holocaust survivor Victor Frankel in San Jose in the early 80s, was a goldmine for such research!), I found them to be extremely ungrateful in their character makeup; they also had entitlement issues. Ingratitude can produce great amounts of evil and rationalization that a lie is a truth. The ingratitude mindset is extremely dangerous to a Christian personally, because it stagnates. We will never realize what we have, nor will we be able to grow in faith or worship God with this mindset. And, if we remain in it, we may even become evil in our thinking and eventually in our actions. It is essential that this discipline of Gratitude is pursued for the sake of contentment and for the sake of humanity.

Be aware: when we become infected with these age-old diseases of ingratitude, ungratefulness, and thanklessness, they will lead to apathy, envy, anger, lust, misplaced ambition, greed, aloofness, and bitterness. They will block the growth of our relationship with Christ and cut us off from the character and reflection of Christ to the world. It has been said we cannot control our circumstances, but we can control our attitudes. I have found, both from Scripture and my personal experiences and research, that if we forget who we are in Christ, we will actually dismiss God from our lives and replace Him with the gods of *self* and *ingratitude*.

The reason the Discipline of Gratitude is a discipline is because it comes easy theoretically and actually; all we have to do is recognize Christ and His work in our lives. But, the "practice" seems to come hard; we have to work at it. To cover ourselves in the call and blessings that Christ has for us should be easy; He says so. *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.* (Matt. 11:29-30). Christ actually offers to us His love in place of His wrath. Grace takes the Law off our shoulders when we turn to Him, and away from all that is false; this means freedom (Jer. 6: 13-20; 27:2; Gal. 5:1; 1 Cor. 1:26-31)! But we complicate it, so we must discipline our focus and work at it.

Take this subject seriously. As a church growth consultant and a pastor, I have seen lives as well as churches destroyed by ingratitude! A church that allows the ungrateful Christian to run *amok* will cause enormous damage that may never be repaired. Such a person will quickly turn to legalism and/or connive with his or her ill begotten feelings and agendas to manipulate others and in turn produce the various forms of discontentment toward others. Because he or she is unwilling to see the love that Christ has for him or her, he or she is unable to give it to others. They do not see appreciation from others or even from God, so their focus becomes "entitlement" or the "poor me" attitude. This attitude will reciprocate discontentment in a very powerful and focused way. If you want your Christian walk disarmed and muted, be ungrateful; if you want your church destroyed, all you need to do is allow people who are ingrates to be in leadership; your pews will either soon be empty, or your church will become a festering haven for ingrates who fuel off one another. Ingratitude is a serious disease that must be cut out like a malignant cancer and healed by the sowing of love, serious counseling, and awareness of Christ. If you or another person refuses to heal, then you must be removed from others until healing and forgiveness can take place and help can be obtained. If you are in leadership, it is essential to help these people while at the same time keeping them away from others until they are able to be people of gratitude. If they refuse, they need to be under church discipline and be cut off from the rest of the flock, if necessary, until they accept and realize healing and forgiveness. If not, they will spread their disease to others.

**Ideas:** Use these Scriptures to count your blessings (start off by taking two a day and read them several times): Psalm 30:4-5; 12; 75:1; 97:10-12; 105:1; I Chron. 29:6-13; Dan. 2:23; Mark 1:15; John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 27:34-35; Rom. 1:8; 6:17-18; 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 1:4; 15:55-57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 9:15; 12:9; Eph. 1:18; 5:20; Phil. 1:3-5; 2:9-11; 4:6; Col. 1:12; 2 Thess. 1:2-3; 5:18; 1 Tim. 4:3-5; Heb. 2:3; 12:28; James 1:2-4; Rev. 11:16-17. Now, consider what it is like in a third world country, 100 years ago, and compare it to all the conveniences we have today!

Thanksgiving of faith for who Christ is and what He has done (Rom. 15:1; 25-27; 1 Cor. 11:4; Phil. 1:3; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:1; Philemon 4)

### Some practices for Grateful Living

- Begin and end the day with giving thanks
- Tell at least 3 people you interact with during the day what you appreciate about them
- Send a card, note, or leave a voicemail of gratitude
- Send an e-card or e-mail of gratitude to someone
- Write a poem about being grateful
- Declare a fast from complaints for period of time
- Create a piece of art that reflects gratitude
- Journal daily about how you experienced gratitude
- Find scriptures or quotes about gratefulness and repeat one during the day
- Play songs that inspire gratitude during day

In the words of the Apostle Paul, this is an invitation to be “Rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Colossians 2:7, NIV).

<b>A Summary of the Recommendations for Growing and Sustaining Gratitude</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make a habit of thinking about the blessings in your life and thanking God for them. Make this a practice throughout every day. Consider keeping a daily “gratitude journal” to formalize this process of identifying the blessings.</li><li>• Watch for envy. Regularly examine yourself to identify where and when you are envious and work toward rejecting such thoughts when they creep into your mind. Replace those thoughts with thanks to God for what you do have in life.</li><li>• Practice the disciplines of periodic fasting and regular confession of sin with one aim being a clearer understanding of the gifts bestowed on you in life.</li><li>• Expose yourself to information about the dire condition of others around the world and make prayer for these people a staple of your prayer life.</li><li>• Create other habits that remind you of how blessed you are and of how much worse life could be.</li><li>• Engage in this gratitude-growth program as part of a broader program to become a more God-centered person.</li></ul>

there's nothing that man has created that will even come close to the complexity of the human brain. Far too often, we take lightly the wonderful and dynamic gift that God has given us when we consider ourselves dumb or less than brilliant! Each one of us were created in the very image of God, and gifted in many ways, and it is a crying shame when we refer to ourselves as anything less than downright amazing!

**Unthankful people are never satisfied with what they have been given, but always want more.** This is an obvious sign of an unthankful heart. Greed is a sin that causes us to become unthankful for the things that God has blessed us with. When we become greedy, we are thinking about things we don't have, rather than things we do have.

**Unthankful people don't take care of the things God has given them.** Those who are thankful for the good things that God has given them will take good care of those things, whether it be their mind, car, body, spouse, children, job, etc. Taking good care of the things which God has given us shows Him that those things mean something to us and we are thankful for them. Not that we ever should worship the things God gives us, but we should take good care of them.

All of these symptoms should not be found in our lives, but if they exist (and I doubt many of us are immune!), there is something we can do about it. Develop a thankful heart! So the next question is....

One of the vital steps to developing a thankful personality, is to meditate (that is to think about often) the things that you have in your life to be thankful for. Make a list of the things God has done for you, and keep those things on your mind throughout the day. It may take a little more work at first, especially if your mind is programmed to think negatively. This process is the tearing down of strongholds and the renewing of your mind as God's Word tells us:

If you want to develop a thankful heart, then you'll need to meditate and think about the good things God has blessed you with. Even if it seems you have nothing to be thankful for, you have been blessed far beyond those living in the OT era, because of what Jesus has done for YOU! Healing, prosperity, joy, peace, and deliverance are all parts of what Jesus has done for YOU! God's Word tells us that ear hath not heard, nor eye seen the great things that lie ahead for those who love God! Every one of us have a LOT to be thankful for!

*1 Corinthians 2:9, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."*

My husband, Stuart, preaches a wonderful sermon called "the gratitude attitude." I need to listen to it regularly. I find my rebel heart much more engaged with the "bratitute attitude." Being discontent comes naturally to the race from Eden who weren't content with paradise! Living with resentment is quite understandable in the sinner, but what part does it play in the lives of the redeemed? How can sinners saved by grace dare to whine and mutter their way through life? It all started in Eden when Eve, having bitten into the apple, began to whine about it being too sour, or not hard enough, or not as

nice as a Granny Smith's! Her dissatisfaction was catching and she hastened to find a recruit for her cause. Adam bit - and so it began.

I call it the G virus or the grumble germ. From the moment man moved outside the garden gate, grumpy human beings have grumbled their way through the centuries. And neither does it stop when we are lost to grace. The forces that tempted man at the dawn of 'man time' are the same forces that tempt us to be unthankful and resentful today. Satan still whispers, "If you can't think of anything to whine about because you're trying to cultivate a thankful heart, I'll give you a hand. Have an apple!"

He tempts us to think we never have enough of anything or anybody. "You poor thing," he hisses. "That husband of yours is always out looking after other people. He doesn't have anything left for you! I'd complain if I were you. When he comes in tonight try pouting until he notices and then when he asks you what's wrong say, 'Nothing!' Make him guess what's wrong." We whine about the fact that we don't have enough money, or time for ourselves, our church, our friends. Have you noticed it's not that we have nothing? It's just that something in our hearts called the 'greed need' is telling us we would like just a little bit more! The devil is into this "little bit more" thing. Have you noticed nothing is ever enough? But then paradise wasn't enough for Adam and Eve, so what's new? Next time you hear the hiss of the snake in your garden, resist him and say "thank you Jesus" out loud - he will disappear in a hurry. The evil can't stand being around thankful Christians. If you're going to cultivate a thankful heart, try going to sleep singing hymns and spiritual songs. Allow the wind of His Spirit to grace you with a "gratitude attitude."

Having traveled extensively in Third World countries these last years, I have been greatly convicted by the attitude of my sisters and brothers who live incredibly difficult lives with much to complain about. But what we would call hardship, they call inconvenience. While teaching in a restricted country where a knock on the door could mean imprisonment for daring to gather to study the Scriptures, I thought about all the whining we do in the West. We, who are drowning in our freedoms, comforts, and materialism get hardship and inconvenience mixed up. These people don't! I asked the Lord to show me how to, like them, cultivate a thankful heart. Here are a few practical suggestions: *Stop whining!* Go on, you can do it; it's a decisio. *Count your blessings.* Choose one blessing a day to think about. *Share something you are thankful about* with your husband, parents, or friend. *Write a personal note* to someone you've never thanked for something. *And Smile at God.* That's called praise!

And remember "a thank-you a day keeps the devil away!" He hates it when you're thankful, but God loves it! Who do you want to please?

We are made to offer our lives, and all that is in them, back to God in thanksgiving. **Question: How do you cultivate gratitude in your life? How has the discipline of thankfulness changed your heart?**

A spiritual discipline has been defined as a regular practice that brings us into closer relationship with God/the Divine, self and others. The practice of gratitude as a spiritual discipline has the potential to lead us to look at our lives with new eyes, seeing the great abundance that we already enjoy, regardless of our income level or life circumstances. AND, it is a practice that can lead us to experience more joy in our lives and an opening of the heart that promotes generosity and the desire to share of our abundance with others who are less fortunate.

Could the discipline of gratefulness be the key that unlocks an abundant life for the Christian, even in times of deep sorrow, and physical and emotional suffering?

Gratitude doesn't always come easily, though. It takes practice; we have to train our minds to be thankful. As M. Craig Barnes observes in his book, *When God Interrupts*, only one of the ten lepers whom Jesus heals, a Samaritan — an outcast — returns to thank God ([Luke 17:11-19](#)).

### **Gratitude is a "Parent Virtue"**

Centuries ago, the philosopher Cicero argued that among virtues, gratitude is "the parent of all the others," a virtue that begets other virtues. There seems to be a lot of truth to that

claim. Growing one's gratitude appears to have a radical and transformational effect on character because it is one of God's primary vehicles for inducing (or "parenting") other Christian qualities. Stated from a Christian worldview, gratitude is a vehicle that makes us better, more Christ-like people. Call it a "parent virtue," call it "the gratitude effect," call it miraculous, call it whatever you'd like. Regardless the label, gratitude is a powerful disposition that provides us with a very efficient, very effective mechanism for developing myriad character traits. Want more inner peace? Work on gratitude. Want more patience? Work on gratitude. Want to be more compassionate? You get the idea.

Gratitude does all this by setting a new thought context for processing our circumstances in life—a context of an abundant life. A context where everything we have is a gift. A context where we see clearly all that we really do have in life, and where we recognize that things could always be worse. Within this context, our view of the entire world is different and we are suddenly empowered to be the people God calls us to be—to more deeply love God, to love neighbor, and to love our own lives. To be authentic salt and light at home, at work, at church, and everywhere else.

This theory of gratitude as a parent virtue derives not only from ancient philosophers like Cicero, but, not surprisingly, from theologians as well. Exegetes of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament and even the Qur'an have all seated gratitude as central among virtues. What may surprise some people, though, is that contemporary social scientists have also advanced and empirically-tested this theory, concluding that gratitude "stimulates moral behavior" and encourages people to behave in a "pro-social manner." Stated more concretely, they have shown that gratitude is positively related to such critical outcomes as life satisfaction, vitality, happiness, optimism, hope, empathy, and the willingness to provide emotional and tangible support for other people, while being negatively related to anxiety, depression, and overall disposition.<sup>[21]</sup> Collectively, such studies present credible evidence that feeling grateful generates a ripple effect through every area of our lives, potentially satisfying some of our deepest yearnings—our desire for happiness, our pursuit of better relationships, and our incessant quest for inner peace and contentment.

Pop psychology has piggy-backed on these research findings, introducing gratitude to the mass market as a potential panacea. Simply peruse the self-help section of any major bookstore these days and you'll find that many of the best-selling books propagate the premise that gratitude is a key to joy, to replenishment of the soul, to inner transformation, and to blessing others with our lives. "Gratitude journals"—diaries with little more than flamboyant artwork and blank, lined pages—flank these best-sellers on each side. Now these journals have become best-sellers, too.

Given all this, it should be clear that what I report in this article regarding the effects of gratitude is not new information. Quite the contrary, it's old and very public news. It's news that's been around for millennia. But that's a testimony to its merits. The advice to cultivate character through growing gratitude is time-honored wisdom that transcends generations, cultures, and religious traditions.

### **Growing Gratitude by Disciplining Your Mind**

Much of the above reasoning may ring true for you. We've all experienced moments in life when we suddenly become cognizant of the enormity of blessing in our life. A narrowly-averted collision with a tractor-trailer. A momentarily-lost child at the store. A news segment about some illness that's plaguing a third world country. A phone call at three a.m.

that, contrary to our fears, is not tragic news, but only a wrong number. An eye-opening missions trip to a destitute area. A clarifying moment of watching our children sleep.

A wave of thankfulness quickly follows such events and lasts for as long as we remain mindful of the blessing. During that time, we experience significant manifestations of Christian virtues. We become more Christ-like in our disposition toward everyone and everything. But—and most of us have experienced this as well—the empowerment vanishes as suddenly as it appeared, and we're back to being the people we were before. The transformation, while welcome and wonderful, was fleeting. That's the nature of gratitude. It's a generator of other virtues, but only so long as it exists.

I found that one of the major secrets to success for "high-virtue Christians"—those who are most consistently Christ-like—is that they have mastered the art of *maintaining* a grateful disposition. Gratitude is simply part of who they are, rather than being some sporadic, refreshing occurrence. How do they do it? How do they nurture and sustain a grateful spirit?

In a sentence, they **think differently from the way many of the rest of us think**. The mind of the high-virtue Christian, it seems, is a disciplined mind, a pure and godly mind. A mind that is adept at immediately clearing away sinful thoughts. It is a mind that is focused on what one has rather than what one does not have. A mind that refuses to think in terms of what's missing from life—in terms of how much better life could be "if only..." Instead, the high-virtue Christians in my study want what they have. They are fully content with what's been conferred upon them, and they frequently thank God for their blessings.

an envious frame of mind, we are blinded to God's providence, ungrateful for what He has done, and ungrateful for what He continues to do in our lives.

suggest keeping a "gratitude journal." This is a daily diary that focuses exclusively on the blessings in your life thereby re-centering you on God's providence. Beyond that, a journal permits you to look back over several days, weeks, and months to review the numerous blessings that you might have forgotten had you not written them down.

Many claim there is power in the spiritual discipline of journaling, so to grow gratitude, you may want to give it a try. If you do, remember that there's no one right way to do this. Just use a format that you find helpful. You don't need to buy a special edition, full-color, twenty-dollar journal at your local bookstore. You don't need to be concerned about whether your writing makes sense. You don't need to worry about *why* you are grateful for these things. Just let the words flow.

The standard recommendation is to log five blessings per day. List more, list fewer. The exact number is not important. Just list some daily. For the first couple weeks, the blessings you list may be a bit repetitive from one day to the next. Over time, though, people generally find themselves including in their journal many new and formerly unrecognized gifts from God. linkage exists between confession of sin and greater gratitude. Why would this be? It is likely that regularly bringing our sin before God reminds us of both our flaws and God's grace. The combination of contritely admitting sin and knowing it has been cleansed will automatically generate feelings of thanksgiving. The relationship works the other way as well: A stronger spirit of gratitude toward God leads us to a greater willingness to bring our sins before Him ... which leads to more cleansing ... which leads to more gratitude on our part ... which leads to more willingness to bring our sins before Him, and so on. It's a theory of an upward spiral—a theory that is now bolstered by this finding of a positive association between confession and gratitude.

However, it's important to remember that fundamentally shifting your outlook from "I want" to "I have" takes time and perseverance. For those of us who seek quick results (and that may be the majority of us), this endeavor is fraught with setbacks and frustration.

The good news, though, is that you need not pursue this change by yourself. God is your ally in this transformation. As you grow closer to God, the many habits that generate gratitude become natural.

## **Pharisees**

**We do not know the exact time in which the Pharisees came on the scene, but we know that by the intertestamental time, there were a group of people known as Pharisees.**

**With the advent of the Greek domination of this part of the world, the Pharisees arose as a distinct sect of Jewish leadership committed to preserving the purity of the Jewish faith. These Jews were devoted to reformation in restoring the ancient ways of Israel and maintaining the purity of the Jewish faith. They were zealous for Old Testament Law.**

**Hellenization is the Greek influence which spread among the countries ruled by Greece. The Sadducees accepted the Greek ways and absorbed them into their way of life, but the Pharisees refused to be so indoctrinated.**

**(The Sadducees obtained their name from the High Priest Zadok. These Jews embraced Greek influence because this view was popular among the priests as well as the aristocracy.)**

**The Pharisees had developed an extensive oral tradition but their interpretations of the Law altered many of the biblical requirements. Mk. 7: 1-3; Lk. 18: 9-14**

**Slightly before this time the Old Testament writings had been canonized to a certain degree into Tanakh= Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets) and Ketuvim (the Holy Writings).**

**This was a dark period in Jewish history, especially during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian king, who committed many outrages against the Jews.**

**Antiochus sent a General named Apollonius to Jerusalem. He destroyed the temple, stealing objects and corrupting it with unclean animals and sacrifices to Greek gods. On the Sabbath day when the Orthodox Jews would not fight, the Seleucid army fell upon the Jews, killing many thousands of Jews and carrying off the women and children as slaves.**

**An intense persecution of the Jews commenced and only those Jews who would cooperate with the Greeks would thrive.**

**The Hasidim which means "the pious ones" came to be known as the Pharisees, the separated ones, because they sought to retain the separation of their culture from the Greek influences of Hellenization.**

**So the Pharisees began with an honorable quest: to preserve the Jewish faith intact with little or no corruption from the Greeks.**

**The Pharisees were the keepers of the Mosaic law (The Torah). They believed that having guardianship of this law was proof that they were God's chosen people, to whom the Messiah would come. They believed that the Messiah would be an earthly king, a son of David whom God would raise up. He would establish an earthly kingdom, freeing them from Roman rule. They also believed that in order to remain in favour with God, the keeping of the torah was essential.**

"Basic to the Pharisees conception of religion was the belief that the Babylonian Exile was caused by Israel's failure to keep the Torah (The Mosaic law), and that its keeping was an individual as well as a national duty."

To the Pharisee, keeping the law (both written and oral) was everything. The condition of a person's heart towards God was unimportant. Because of their strict adherence to levitical laws of purity, they kept themselves separate from gentile sinners (on whom they looked down), for fear of being defiled.

The experts of the law set about "hedging" the Mosaic law with precepts so as to make its violation almost impossible. They also added to these laws and precepts, customs which had been handed down through the years. They took these precepts to such extremes that the original intent of the written law was often lost, having been made of no effect by the oral laws and traditions which they had brought in.

The Pharisees placed great importance on Temple worship, but they had no personal relationship with God. Their worship was merely formal religious observance. This strict observance of the written and oral law (the latter often negating the former) and formal religion while paying no attention to the motives of the heart, led to self righteousness and hypocrisy. When the Pharisees met Jesus, a clash was inevitable.

Throughout His ministry, Jesus was openly opposed to the Pharisees. He denounced them publicly for their hypocrisy, spiritual blindness, and evil ways. The Pharisees had been entrusted with the guardianship of the Torah which was God's gift to Israel."

<http://www.lastdays.org.uk/jesus-and-the-pharisees.html>

**But over time, the Pharisees came up with their own version of how these "purities" would be maintained. Little by little, their own man made rules supplanted the holy Law of God.**

**"The Pharisees used all kinds of tricks to sidestep the truth, and oaths were among them. They would avoid using the holy name of God, but they would come close by using the city of Jerusalem, heaven, earth or some part of the body." W. Wiersbe**

*"The only standard of righteousness the people knew was that laid down by the current religious leaders, the scribes and Pharisees... The qualities Jesus mentioned, 'poor in spirit,' 'those who mourn,' 'the meek,' etc., obviously could not be products of Pharaic righteousness ... the qualities Jesus mentioned are internal. These come only when one is properly related to God through faith, when one places his complete trust in God."* **Bible Knowledge Commentary**

**All throughout the gospels, Jesus refers to the Pharisees as hypocrites and "dead men's bones."**

Jesus called them blind guides who had shut the gates of heaven so that neither they nor the people could enter. He constantly attacked them for hypocrisy, calling them fools.

**Matt. 15: 11ff; 23: 13; 23: 23-26**

**Mark 7: 14ff**

**Luke 11: 37-53**

Throughout His ministry, Jesus had told them the truth.

Such was their blindness and hardness of heart that, when God came to them, they did not know Him.

**So there is a tremendous lesson for us in the name “Pharisee.”**

**What began with good and right reasons ended up being the enemy of Jesus Christ.**

**Let that be a warning to us.**

**In what way have we come up with our own brand of “purity,” turning our spiritual backs on what matters to God?**



## Sermon on the Mount Outline

- 5:1-2 — Before Jesus Began
  - 5:3-16 — Prologue: Beatitudes, Salt, and Light
  - 5:17-20 — Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law and Prophets
  - 5:21-48 — Six Subjects to Show the Law's Intent
  - 6:1-18 — Disciplines to Practice in Secret
  - 6:19-7:11 — Dealing with Possessions and People
  - 7:12 — The Golden Rule is the Law and Prophets
  - 7:13-27 — Epilogue: Two Ways, Two Trees, Two Foundations
  - 7:28-29 — After Jesus Finished
- Here is the Sermon itself (excluding the set-up verses of 5:1-2 and 5:28-29) fleshed out in more detail:

- **5:3-16 — Prologue: Beatitudes, Salt, and Light**
- 5:3-12 *Eight beatitudes*
- 5:13-16 *Salt of the earth and light of the world*
- **5:17-20 — Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law and Prophets**
- **5:21-48 — Six Subjects to Show the Law's Intent**
- 5:21-26 *Anger*
- 5:27-30 *Lust*
- 5:31-32 *Divorce*
- 5:33-37 *Oaths*
- 5:38-42 *Retaliation*
- 5:43-48 *Loving Enemies*
- **6:1-18 — Disciplines to Practice in Secret**
- 6:1-4 *Giving*
- 6:5-15 *Praying*
- 6:16-18 *Fasting*
- **6:19-7:11 — Dealing with Possessions and People**
- 6:19-24 *Don't lay up treasures on earth*
- 6:25-34 *Don't be anxious about your life*
- 7:1-5 *Don't judge others hypocritically*
- 7:6-11 *Don't give what is holy/pearls to dogs/pigs*
- **7:12 — The Golden Rule is the Law and Prophets**
- **7:13-27 — Epilogue: Two Ways, Two Trees, Two Foundations**
- 7:13-14 *Two ways: narrow or wide*
- 7:15-23 *Two trees: healthy or diseased*
- 7:24-27 *Two foundations: rock or sand*

## TERMS

**Acrostic:** An acrostic poem is a type of poetry where the first, last or other letters in a line spell out a particular word or phrase. The most common and simple form of an acrostic poem is where the first letters of each line spell out the word or phrase. <https://examples.yourdictionary.com/acrostic-poem-examples.html>

An **acrostic** is a [poem](#) (or other form of writing) in which the first letter (or syllable, or word) of each line (or [paragraph](#), or other recurring feature in the text) spells out a word, message or the alphabet. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acrostic>

a [text](#), usually a [poem](#), in which [particular letters](#), such as the first [letters](#) of each [line](#), [spell](#) a word or phrase. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/acrostic>

**Antiphonal** music is that performed by two choirs in interaction, **often singing alternate musical phrases**. Antiphonal psalmody is the singing or musical playing of psalms by alternating groups of performers.

**Chiasm:** a feature of Hebrew poetry that structures thought in a mirror pattern, restating themes inversely. The name comes from the Greek verb *chiazein*, meaning “to place crosswise,” and the pattern follows the shape of the Greek letter *chi* ( $\chi$ ). This device can either mark entire psalms or merely highlight certain segments.

**Condensed expression:** also called *abbreviated expression*; the suppressed word or phrase can usually be supplied easily from the surrounding context.

**Context:** the parts of something written or spoken that immediately precede and follow a word or passage and clarify its meaning.

**Cross reference:** verses located in other places within scripture which relate and explain the currently observed text

**Declarative praise:** praise found in psalms that declare the majesty of God; also psalms in which believers are commanded to praise God

**Descriptive praise:** psalms in which the poet praises God and points out specifics that prompt the worshiper to remember concerning God’s actions and attributes, i.e., creation, salvation

**Distich:** a two-line compound thought; also called a bi-colon

**Eisegesis:** the process is misinterpreting a text by reading into the text one's preconceived ideas

**Exegesis:** explanation, critical analysis or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., esp. of the Bible; the process of interpreting a text of scripture

**External Evidence:** Data derived from sources other than the document under consideration

**Hendiadys:** the combination of two or three things to express the same meaning.

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” (**Psalm 27: 1**)

“Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains,

For they had rebelled against the words of God.” (**Psalm 107: 10**)

“...encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his *kingdom and glory*.” (**1 Thess. 2:12**)

“May the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole *spirit, soul and body* be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (**1 Thess. 5:23**)

“...while we wait for *the blessed hope - the glorious appearing* of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” (**Tit. 2:13**)

**Hesed** – “The name of the Lord is the solemn guarantee by covenant that He will fulfill all His promises. The phrase “for His name's sake” is equivalent to the use of “in Jesus' name,” as it applies all the promises and assurances given to the saints.” Expositor's

“Lovingkindness” is Hesed in Hebrew. This is one of the most important words in Hebrew. This word refers to God's covenant love, His motivation for the protection, provision, paternal affection and other relationship-based sentiments He shares with His children. This is unfailing love. Without “hesed” we have no hope.

**Historical Critical Method:** Umbrella term for various interpretive tools aimed at discerning the historicity of certain biblical events, including source and redaction criticism. Unfortunately, this approach has historically been wedded to a skeptical stance toward the reliability of Scripture.

**Hypostatic Union:** union of Christ's human and divine natures in one being

**Inclusio** - *Inclusio* is just another word for *sandwich*.-John Niemelä

Ancient Greek and Hebrew literature, such as the Bible, did not have punctuation and paragraph breaks, so the authors had to use other methods to tell their audiences when certain things were happening in the structure of their books. One literary device they used to do this is called the "inclusio."

An *inclusio* pattern is one in which a paragraph or longer portion of literature ends in a similar fashion to how it began.

Repetition of same language at beginning and end of a section of literature forming bookends. An *inclusio* tells the reader that what is in the middle of the two bookends is support or an explanation of the words making up the bookends.

**Internal Evidence:** Data derived from the document under consideration itself

**Kerugma - Kerygma** (from the ancient Greek word κήρυγμα *kérugma*) is a Greek word used in the New Testament for "preaching" (see Luke 4:18-19, Romans 10:14, Matthew 3:1).

*Kerugma* is the Greek word associated with preaching. It means "proclamation or proclaiming."

At least five elements are involved in the New Testament kerugma.

1. It presented Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
2. It described Him as God in human flesh.
3. It focused on His life and work, especially His death and resurrection.
4. It spoke of His second coming.
5. It declared that salvation was only through faith in Him and those who rejected Him faced God's wrath.

The *kerugma* always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of salvation.

*Martin Luther has stated that every time the gospel is presented in its entirety, there will always be conflict.*

### **Litotes or Meiosis**

Ironic understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of its contrary (e.g., "You won't be sorry" meaning you'll be glad)

"Not badly at all"

"I am not as young as I used to be"

**Definition:** A phrase that understates or lessens one thing in order to magnify another.

The Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes. (**Gen. 18:27**)

We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). *We looked like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.* (**Num. 13:33**)

Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel,

...for I myself will help you, declares the Lord. (**Isa 41:14**)

Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, *a citizen of no ordinary city.* Please let me speak to the people. (**Acts 21:39**, italics added)

For I am the least of all the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect... (**1 Cor. 15:9-10**)

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (**1 Peter 2:10**)

**Maskil:** a song for teaching purposes as well as artistic, it's exact meaning is unknown but it is attached to 13 psalms

**Merism** (Latin merismus, Greek μερισμός merismós) is a **rhetorical device (or figure of speech) in which a combination of two contrasting parts of the whole refer to the whole.** For example, in order to say that someone "searched everywhere", one could use the merism "searched high and low".

**Metonymy:** use of the name of one thing for that of another associated with or suggested by it (Ex. "the White House" for "the President")

**Original Language:** the language in which the text was originally written (for instance, Greek for the New Testament)

**Parallelism:** a literary pattern common to Hebrew poetry in which an idea is stated in one line and then re-enforced in the next either by synonymous terms or antithetical ones

**Pericope:** in rhetoric, a unit or passage of writing that forms a thought, such as a story

**Pesher:** The hermeneutic of “this is that,” which sees a past biblical prophecy as being presently fulfilled before the very eyes of the interpreter. The apostles often used this method (“this is that which was spoken”) in light of Jesus’ person and work, and specifically applied it to prophetic aspects of the Psalms.

## **Psalms**

**Hallel psalms:** Hallel, (Hebrew: “**Praise**”), Jewish liturgical designation for **Psalms 113–118** (“Egyptian Hallel”) as read in synagogues on festive occasions. In ancient times Jews recited these hymns on the three Pilgrim Festivals, when they offered their required sacrifices in the Temple of Jerusalem.

The “Great Hallel,” **Psalm 136**, which is used in the morning service on the [Sabbath](#), festivals, and during the Passover seder.

**Imprecatory psalms:** those which contain the request for God to judge the enemies of the psalmist

**Psalms of lament:** psalms characterized by a complaint or distress expressed by the psalmist

**Laments of the individual:** there are eight parts to this type of psalm: address and cry to God for help, the lament itself, confession of trust, petition, belief in being heard, longing for God’s intervention, vow of praise, and rejoicing when the personal cry has been heard.

**Interior lament:** psalms in which the poet describes problems which he has gone through or is currently going through from which he has gained insight, shaping his faith and building his trust in God; the focus is not on the trial but on the Lord’s faithfulness.

**Psalms of Confidence** These psalms are so called because their main characteristic lies in their attitudes and actions of trust in the Lord. For this reason, they are also called psalms of trust. In this regard, we need to remember that the Hebrew view of life (as indeed, that which is and should be the Christian perspective) is that of a pilgrimage - a tough, challenging journey through the trials and hostilities of day-to-day living until the pilgrim eventually arrives in the Presence of God in whom and through whom he will experience eternal rest and comfort.

Psalms of confidence are expressions of trust in God by his people as they encountered countless dangers and distresses of life.

Many times, the psalms would contain the elements of a declaration of trust in God; an invitation to trust him; the basis for such trust; a petition; they lament; and lastly, a vow to praise the Lord. However, all of these elements are not always present in every song nor do they always appear in the above stated order.

The key notion in the psalms of confidence is that of Yahweh as the Protector of his covenant people.

**Psalms of praise:** psalms characterized by praising God and recounting why God is to be praised; there are four predominant themes in these psalms: creation, Yahweh's omnipresence and omnipotence, Israel's history and God's works and deeds

**Psalms of thanksgiving:** usually involves the psalmist gratitude at deliverance from crisis

**Songs of ascent: Psalms 120-134** which were most likely sung by pilgrims on their journey to Jerusalem for the annual feasts; later these psalms were sung by the Levites as they stood on the fifteen steps of the temple

**Torah psalms:** three psalms in particular make the Torah the focus: 1, 19, 119. Sixteen others focus on this topic enough to fall in this category as well: 18, 25, 33, 68, 78, 81, 89, 93, 94, 99, 103, 105, 111, 112, 147, 148. It is said these psalms form the structure for the entire Psalter; they give a foundational interpretive framework for the personal, moral and national identity of the psalm as a form

**Yahweh is King psalms:** "*YHWH malak*" – The Lord reigns! is declared in these psalms; these psalms proclaim the present reign of Yahweh.

**Qal vahomer:** the basic idea of "how much more", if God cares for the lilies of the field, then how much more will He care for His children

**Selah *Selah*** is thought to be a time of silence for the purpose of reflection. This word occurs 71 times in the Psalms and three times in Heb. 3.

**Sitz im leben:** "setting in life" is a scholarly term which refers the reader to the life-setting of the text; emphasis on context

**Stich or colon:** the line or completed thought segment of poetry

**Strophe:** a larger thought segment in Hebrew poetry, made up of multiple stichs

**Syncretism:** the [amalgamation](#) or attempted amalgamation of different [religions](#), cultures, or schools of thought.

Religious syncretism often takes place when foreign beliefs are introduced to an indigenous belief system and the teachings are blended. The new, heterogeneous religion then takes a shape of its own.

Therein lies the problem, for syncretism relies on the whim of man, not the standard of Scripture. The Bible makes it very clear what true religion is. Think on just a few things stated in Scripture: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" ([Deuteronomy 6:5](#); [Matthew 22:37](#)); "Jesus replied, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" ([John 14:6](#)); "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" ([John 20:31](#)); and "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](#)).

Religious syncretism is simply not compatible with true Christianity. In fact, any modification to biblical law and principle for the sake of a "better" religion is heresy ([Revelation 22:18-19](#)).

<https://www.gotquestions.org/syncretism-religious.html>

**Cultural syncretism** is the process through which different cultures are combined to create a new subculture. Cultural syncretism is characterized by the forsaking or altering of a group's ethnic identity or primary status in their community. The main characteristics of cultural syncretism are:

- Alterations in a community's ethnic identity
- Alterations in a community's expression of identity
- Alterations of cultural priorities and practices, including cessation of previous traditions or introduction of traditions from other cultures

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-cultural-syncretism-definition-examples-quiz.html#:~:text=Cultural%20syncretism%20is%20the%20creation%20of%20a%20new%20culture%20by,te mples%2C%20and%20the%20Ghost%20Dance.>

**Targum**, (Aramaic: "Translation," or "Interpretation"), any of several translations of the [Hebrew Bible](#) or portions of it into the [Aramaic language](#). The word originally indicated a translation of the [Old Testament](#) in any language but later came to refer specifically to an Aramaic translation. The earliest Targums date from the time after the [Babylonian Exile](#) when Aramaic had superseded Hebrew as the [spoken language](#) of the Jews in Palestine.

**Tehillim**: the Hebrew word which designates the Book of Psalms; it means "praises"

**Torah**: the revelation of God's character and covenant which is recorded in the first five books of the Bible. At its heart is the law, which God gave to Israel on Mt. Sinai; the focus being that God's will for human life is divinely revealed and historically evidenced in the story of Israel and mankind. The discussion of law or Torah in the Psalms takes on at least three forms: God's ways, God's works and God's words

**Typology:** an interpretive method that notes the historical and textual relationship between two matters of revelation and then more fully understands the separate parts on the basis of the whole.

**Unit:** the basic words or phrases that make up the larger thought segment of a poetic line or stich

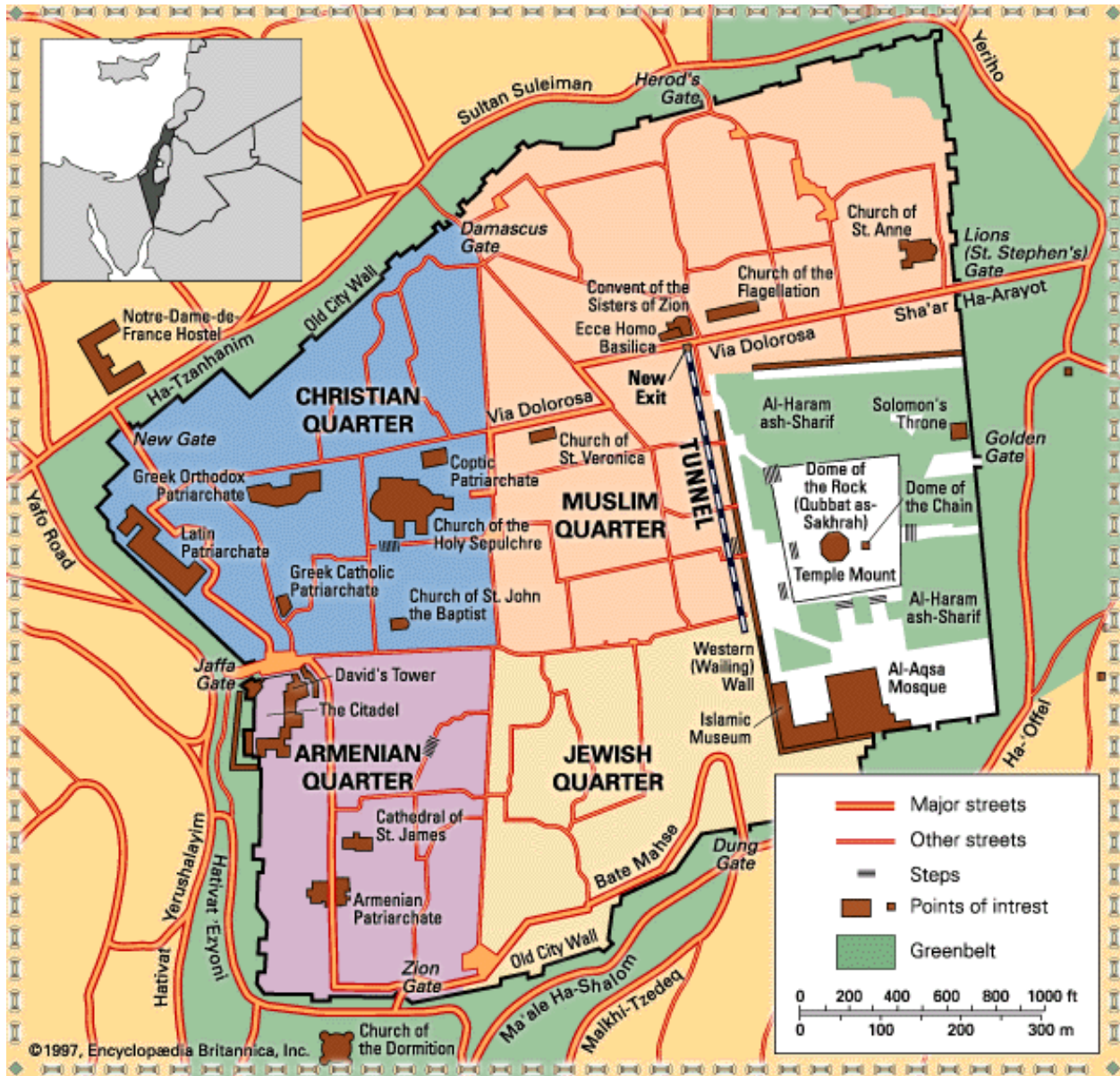
**Wisdom motifs:** themes concerning the two contrasting ways of life: good and evil; also practical advice on living, including the fear of the Lord

**Writings:** the third division of the Hebrew canon in which the Book of Psalms is contained. Separate from Torah and Prophets, this division is sometimes referred to by its Greek name, the Hagiographa.





# JERUSALEM CITY



© 1997, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

# MATTHEW 1

**1** The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

<sup>2</sup>Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.

<sup>3</sup>Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez was the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.

<sup>4</sup>Ram was the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon.

<sup>5</sup>Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab, Boaz was the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.

<sup>6</sup>Jesse was the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah.

<sup>7</sup>Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa.

<sup>8</sup>Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah.

<sup>9</sup>Uzziah was the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah.

<sup>10</sup>Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, and Amon the father of Josiah.

<sup>11</sup>Josiah became the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to

Babylon.

<sup>12</sup>After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, and Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel.

<sup>13</sup>Zerubbabel was the father of Abihud, Abihud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor.

<sup>14</sup>Azor was the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud.

<sup>15</sup>Eliud was the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob.

<sup>16</sup>Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called <sup>16</sup>the Messiah.

<sup>17</sup>So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus <sup>18</sup>Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>19</sup>And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

<sup>20</sup>But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has

been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>21</sup> She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”

<sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took *Mary* as his wife,

<sup>25</sup> but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

**2** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,  
<sup>2</sup>“Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

<sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

<sup>4</sup>Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

<sup>5</sup>They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup>‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,

Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah;  
For out of you shall come forth a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup>Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared.

<sup>8</sup>And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found *Him*, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.”

<sup>9</sup>After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over *the place* where the Child was.

<sup>10</sup>When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

<sup>11</sup>After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup>And having been warned *by God* in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

<sup>13</sup>Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord \*appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.”

<sup>14</sup>So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. <sup>15</sup>He <sup>(ab)</sup>remained there until the death of Herod. *This was* to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called My Son.”

<sup>16</sup>Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.

<sup>17</sup>Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup>“A voice was heard in Ramah,  
Weeping and great mourning,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
And she refused to be comforted,  
Because they were no more.”

<sup>19</sup> But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said,

<sup>20</sup> “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.”

<sup>21</sup> So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

<sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned *by God* in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee,

<sup>23</sup> and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. *This was* to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

**3** Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,

<sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

<sup>3</sup> For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness,  
‘Make ready the way of the Lord,  
Make His paths straight!’”

<sup>4</sup> Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

<sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and

all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;

<sup>6</sup> and they were being baptized by him

in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

<sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;

<sup>9</sup> and do not suppose that you

can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

<sup>10</sup> The axe is already laid at

the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “As for me, I baptize you <sup>[a]</sup>with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is

mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you <sup>[a]</sup>with the

Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus \*arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him.

<sup>14</sup> But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?”

<sup>15</sup>But Jesus answering said to him, "Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he permitted Him.

<sup>16</sup>After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens

were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove *and* lighting on Him,

<sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."

**4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

<sup>2</sup>And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.

<sup>3</sup>And the tempter came and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

<sup>4</sup>But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

<sup>5</sup>Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple,

<sup>6</sup>and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written,

‘He will command His angels concerning You’;  
and

‘On *their* hands they will bear You up,  
So that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’”

<sup>7</sup>Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

<sup>8</sup>Again, the devil \*took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory;

<sup>9</sup>and he said to Him, “All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.”

<sup>10</sup>Then Jesus \*said to him, “Go, Satan! For it is written,

‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and <sup>10</sup>serve Him only.’”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left Him;

and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.

<sup>12</sup> Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; <sup>13</sup> and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.

<sup>14</sup> *This was to fulfill what was spoken*

through Isaiah the prophet:

<sup>15</sup> “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

<sup>16</sup> “The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great Light,  
And those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death,  
Upon them a Light dawned.”

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

<sup>18</sup> Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

<sup>19</sup> And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

<sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.

<sup>21</sup> Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat

with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them.

<sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

<sup>24</sup> The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

<sup>25</sup> Large crowds followed

Him from Galilee and *the* Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and *from* beyond the Jordan.

**5** When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

<sup>2</sup> He opened His mouth and *began* to teach them, saying,

<sup>3</sup> “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>4</sup> “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

<sup>6</sup> “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

<sup>8</sup> “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

<sup>9</sup> “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup> “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

<sup>13</sup> “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

<sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world. A city set on a <sup>14a</sup> hill cannot be hidden;

<sup>15</sup> nor

does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a <sup>15a</sup> basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives

light to all who are in the house.

<sup>16</sup> Let your light shine before men in such a way that

they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

<sup>17</sup> “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

<sup>18</sup> For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

<sup>19</sup> Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others *to do* the

same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>20</sup> “For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>21</sup> “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and

‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’

<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone

who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore if

you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

<sup>24</sup> leave your offering there before the altar and go; first

be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.

<sup>25</sup> Make friends

quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

<sup>26</sup> Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

<sup>27</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’;

<sup>28</sup> but I say to you

that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.


<sup>29</sup> If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from

you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

<sup>30</sup> If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and

throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

<sup>31</sup> “It was said, ‘Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce’;

<sup>32</sup> but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a  divorced woman commits adultery.

<sup>33</sup> “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’

<sup>34</sup> But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

<sup>36</sup> Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.

<sup>37</sup> But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil.

<sup>38</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’

<sup>39</sup> But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

<sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him

have your coat also.

<sup>41</sup>Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

<sup>42</sup>Give to

him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

<sup>43</sup>“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’

<sup>44</sup>But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

<sup>45</sup>so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on *the* evil and *the* good, and sends rain on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous.

<sup>46</sup>For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have?

Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

<sup>47</sup>If you greet only your brothers, what

more are you doing *than others*? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

<sup>48</sup>Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**6** “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

<sup>2</sup>“So when you ~~to~~ give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

<sup>3</sup>But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,  
<sup>4</sup>so that your giving will be in secret;  
and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

<sup>5</sup>“When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

<sup>6</sup>But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

<sup>7</sup>“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

<sup>9</sup> “Pray, then, in this way:

‘Our Father who is in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,


On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]’

<sup>14</sup> For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

<sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive  others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

<sup>16</sup> “Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites *do*, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

<sup>17</sup> But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face

<sup>18</sup> so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees *what is done* in secret will reward you.

<sup>19</sup> “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

<sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

<sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

<sup>22</sup> “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is (d) clear, your whole body will be full of light.

<sup>23</sup> But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

<sup>24</sup> “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

<sup>25</sup> “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your (d) life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

<sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?

<sup>27</sup> And who of you by being worried can add  
a *single* hour to his life?

<sup>28</sup> And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the  
lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

<sup>29</sup> yet I say to you that not  
even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

<sup>30</sup> But if God so clothes  
the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will*  
*He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith!

<sup>31</sup> Do not worry then, saying, 'What will  
we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'

<sup>32</sup> For the Gentiles  
eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these  
things.

<sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will  
be added to you.

<sup>34</sup> "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has  
enough trouble of its own.

**7** “Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

<sup>2</sup>For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

<sup>3</sup>Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in

your own eye?

<sup>4</sup>Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?

<sup>5</sup>You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

<sup>6</sup>"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

<sup>7</sup>"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

<sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

<sup>9</sup>Or what man is there among you <sup>(daz)</sup>who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?

<sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? <sup>1</sup>

<sup>11</sup>If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

<sup>12</sup>"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

<sup>13</sup> “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.

<sup>14</sup> For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

<sup>15</sup> “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

<sup>16</sup> You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they?

<sup>17</sup> So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.

<sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

<sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>20</sup> So then, you will know them by their fruits.

<sup>21</sup> “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.

<sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’

<sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

<sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

<sup>26</sup> Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

<sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

<sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching;

<sup>29</sup> for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.