

Lesson 1

Intro to the Sermon on the Mount

Key Scripture Readings: Matthew 5-7

Summary

- The “Sermon on the Mount” is the greatest sermon ever preached by the world’s greatest preacher. It is a sermon that reveals what following Jesus looks like in the disciple’s daily life. It specifically challenges the heart of the follower of Jesus. Throughout the sermon, Jesus urges the hearers to develop hearts for God. The person with a righteous heart will perform righteous acts!
- In this famous sermon, the Lord talks about the things that bring about true happiness and peace. He speaks about how He came to fulfill the Old Testament. He corrects many of the wrong concepts that the Jews held. He even provides powerful teaching on the subjects of love, giving, praying, and fasting.
- By the time of Matthew’s account of this famous sermon, Jesus is extremely popular in Galilee. Large crowds are following Him due to His ability to heal miraculously (Matthew 4:24-25).
- The purpose of Jesus’ miracles was to provide supernatural evidence to back up His claim to be the Messiah (John 20:30-31). The miracles also verified that His teaching about the kingdom of God was the truth (Matthew 4:23).
- Throughout much of Galilee, Jesus taught in the synagogues. Eventually, the synagogues were not large enough to hold the massive crowds who wanted to hear the Lord. Jesus, therefore, began seeking more opportunities to preach out in the open air. Another example of this can be seen when Jesus preached to a crowd in Capernaum, using Simon Peter’s boat as a pulpit (Luke 5:3).
- We should not envision this sermon being preached from the top of a mountain. Instead, we should see it as being proclaimed from a mountainous or hilly area with a flat place where multitudes of people could sit and listen to the Lord’s teaching (Luke 6:17).
- It is interesting how the text says that Jesus sat down to teach His disciples (Matthew 5:1). This was the position typically taken by rabbis in the synagogue. By teaching in this way, the Lord establishes Himself to be the Master Teacher in every place!
- The first part of the sermon is often called the “beatitudes.” It announces blessings on those who develop proper spiritual character (Matthew 5:3-12).
- In Luke 6:17-49, we find a parallel account of the same (or similar) sermon. It is very likely that Jesus took this sermon on the road and re-preached it often.

Study Questions

1. What do you expect to get out of a study of the "Sermon on the Mount?" In what ways do you want to be challenged by this sermon?
2. What parts of this sermon do you already find difficult to understand or implement in your life?
3. What is the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)? In what ways will this sermon help us understand God's kingdom better?
4. What is a disciple (Matthew 5:1)? Is "disciple" or "Christian" used more to describe God's people?
5. Where is a similar sermon recorded in the gospel? Is it the same occasion? Explain.
6. Describe how Jesus begins the sermon. Why do you think He would begin in this way?
7. List one verse that you think is critical to understanding the "Sermon on the Mount."