



The most famous sermon ever preached, delivered by Jesus to his disciples and the surrounding crowd. Some sermons change your mind, this sermon changes your life, if you let it.

January 31: “God Bless 'Em”

Matthew 5:1–16

February 7: “The Law According to Jesus”

Matthew 5:17–48

February 14: “Rewards”

Matthew 6:1–18

February 21: “What's in Your Wallet?”

Matthew 6:19–34

February 28: “Trust the Provider”

Matthew 7:1–12

March 7: “Don't Be A Fool”

Matthew 7:13–29

Week 1, “God Bless ‘Em” (Matthew 5:1-16)

Get acquainted:

What is your name? Where did you grow up?

Watch the week 1 Video

1. *Have you ever been poor? What was it like? Was there any way that you felt blessed?*
2. *With your discussion of #1 in mind, what do you think Jesus meant when he said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”?*
3. Why do you think the poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, and the persecuted are all called “blessed”?
4. Matthew makes many references to the Old Testament. Look up the following passages. Describe the connection between each of these and the Beatitudes:
Isaiah 66:2

Isaiah 66:5

Psalm 37:10-11

Isaiah 55:1-2

Isaiah 49:8-10

Psalm 24:3-5

Psalm 34:14
5. Take a moment to rank yourself on each of these (scale of 1 to 5 with 1 low, 5 high). Then share and discuss with your group.

Poor in spirit	Merciful
Mourn	Pure in heart
Meek	Peacemakers
Hungry/Thirsty for righteousness	Persecuted because of righteousness
6. What does it look like to be salt? light? Do people know you are a Christian?

Assignment: Read Matthew 5 a few times this week. Read it all through once. Then take it more slowly. Mark or underline what seems to apply most to you.

Week 2, “The Law According to Jesus” (Matthew 5:17-48)

Get acquainted:

What is your name? What is your favorite hobby?

Watch the Week 2 video

The questions below will guide you through answering the questions from the video.

Note: Like other rabbis, Jesus taught God’s law, the Torah. One of the things the rabbis often did was construct “fences” around the Torah. It was a way of keeping people from sin. That is what we see Jesus doing in this section.

1. Read Exodus 20:13 & Matt 5:21-26. What is the heart attitude behind murder? How does avoiding that attitude help prevent murder?
2. Read Exodus 20:14 & Matt 5:27-30. What is the heart attitude behind adultery? How does avoiding that attitude help prevent adultery?
3. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4 & Matt 5:31-32. What is the heart attitude behind divorce? How does avoiding that attitude (plus anger and lust) help prevent divorce?
4. Read Leviticus 19:12 & Matt 5:33-37. What is the heart attitude behind making of oaths? What is Jesus’ point about oaths?
5. Read Exodus 21:23-25 & Matt 5:38-42. “Eye for eye” was never taken literally. It means that the punishment must fit the crime. What heart attitude is Jesus calling for in this section? How will that attitude affect your pursuit of personal justice?
6. Read Leviticus 19:18 & Matt 5:43-49. Does God actually command us to hate our enemy? What heart attitude is Jesus calling for? How will that affect your treatment of your enemies?
7. Imagine you’re at the top of a cliff. Imagine sin like falling off the cliff. What is the best way to stay safe? Jump off the cliff? Get as close as possible to the edge to see how far you can get without falling? Or stay back from the edge? When dealing with sin, do you place boundaries on yourself? What are some fences you should construct for yourself to keep from sin?

Assignment: Read over next week’s section, Matthew 6:1-18, a few times this week.

Week 3, “Rewards” (Matthew 6:1-18)

Watch the Week 3 video. The questions at the end of the video are incorporated below.

1. Read Matt 6:1-4. *When do you give to needy?* (Note: River Rock’s “Tithe fund” and “Benevolence Fund” are funds to help the needy)
2. Maimonides, a medieval rabbi, listed charity in the following ascending levels:
 - a. Lowest: he who gives sadly and reluctantly.
 - b. He who gives less than is fitting, but gives it cheerfully.
 - c. The one who gives only after having being asked to give.
 - d. The one who gives before being asked.
 - e. The one who gives in such a way that he doesn’t know who is receiving it.
 - f. The one who gives in such a way that the receiver doesn’t know who is giving it.
 - g. The one who gives in total anonymity, so that he does not know who will receive it and the receiver does not know who gave it. (This seems to most parallel Jesus’ “left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing”.)
 - h. The highest form of charity is to not give charity at all, but to help the poor to rehabilitate themselves by lending them money, taking them into partnerships, employing them, or giving them work, for in this way the end is achieved without any loss of self-respect at all.

What do you think of his list? What do you agree with? What do you disagree with? How does your charitable giving rate compared it?

3. Read Matt 6:5-15. Jesus’ question implies that we pray. *When do you pray?* Share honestly with your group.
4. In Jesus’ prayer, what does “hallowed be your name” mean?
5. How do you suppose God’s will is done in heaven? What would that look like in our lives?
6. Read Proverbs 30:8-9. What does it mean to ask for our “daily bread”?
7. Describe the relationship between forgiving and being forgiven.
8. Read Matt 6:16-18. *When do you fast?* What is the purpose of fasting? Have you ever fasted?

Assignment: Pick one (giving to needy, praying, fasting) that you will plan to do this week.

Read Matthew 6:19-33 a few times this week

Week 4, “What’s In Your Wallet?” (Matthew 6:19-34)

Watch the Week 4 video

1. Discuss these two questions from the video:
How hard is it to avoid getting obsessed with earthly riches? Where are the difficulties for you in your work/home/social life?

How does one go about investing in the Kingdom of Heaven? Hint: You might find it helpful to think in terms of Time, Talent, and Treasure.

Read Matthew 6:19-24

2. In Hebrew, having a “good eye” is an idiom for being generous while having a “bad eye” is an idiom for being stingy. Read Proverbs 22:9. The Hebrew there literally begins “He that has a good eye shall be blessed”. In light of this, what do you take from Matthew 6:22-23?
3. What takes your focus away from God? What are your masters? Read Psalm 86:11 and discuss.

Read Matthew 6:35-34

4. How will obeying Jesus’ “treasure in heaven” challenge help you with the worrying you do?
5. What is your favorite thing to worry about?
6. Describe the relationship between worry and faith.

Assignment: Choose one thing you will do this week that is an investment in the kingdom of heaven. Read Matthew 7:1-12 a few times in preparation for next week.

Week 5, “Trust The Provider” (Matthew 7:1-12)

Watch the Nooma Video, “Kickball”

Read Matthew 7:1-12 (note: “Kickball” speaks more directly to verses 7 and following)

1. What does “do not judge” mean? Does it mean: do not judge at all, judge only yourself, seek only divine judgment, or something else?
2. Give an example of a time you advised somebody about the speck in their eye when you had a plank in yours.
3. Why does Jesus give this command about judging?
4. Have you ever asked God for something and not gotten it? Have you ever felt God is unfair?
5. When have you gotten something you really wanted and found that it wasn't really that great?
6. When has God come through and given you something extraordinary?
7. Do you believe that God really has your best interests in mind? Why or why not?

Assignment: Be aware this week of whether and how you judge others. Read Matthew 7:13-29 a few times. It is the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

Week 6, “Don’t Be A Fool” (Matthew 7:13-29)

Watch the Week 6 video

Note: The closing video question is included in #4 below.

Read Matthew 7:13-23

1. Moses’ describes a false prophet in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 18:21-22. What are the differences between true and false prophets? How do we keep from being led astray by false prophets?
2. Read Jeremiah 17:5-8, which describes two trees. What characteristics apply to each tree? Are you more like a bush in the wastelands or a tree by the water?

Read Matthew 7:24-29

3. Compare and contrast the two builders in Jesus’ parable. How do these characteristics relate to the life of a believer?
4. The difference between the two people Jesus is describing is not what they’ve heard, but what they do with what they’ve heard.
Therefore the big question is: *What have you changed in your life as a result of this study of the Sermon on the Mount? What will you change?*
5. There was a bumper sticker that read, “Christians aren’t perfect, just saved.” What is your reaction to this on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount?

Assignment: The small group series ends here, but upcoming sermons will continue to follow in Matthew – in case you want to read ahead...

March 14 – Matthew 7:28-8:17

March 21 – Matthew 16:13-28

March 28 – Palm Sunday – Matthew 21:1-27

April 4 – Easter – Matthew 28:1-15