

Guidelines for Godly Living - Part 1

The Sermon on the Mount - Overview



- Should a believer behave better than a non-believer? Should the citizens of Christ's kingdom live on a higher standard than the kingdoms of this world's?

The gospel of **Matthew** was written to the **Jews** to show that Jesus was (is) the promised Messiah and the King of the Jews (as well as the Universe). Matthew sought to prove that Jesus is the King in several ways: (1) Document how Jesus fulfilled the Messianic Old Testament prophecies. (2) Referred to Jesus as the "**Son of David**" (Matt. 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; etc.). (3) Document **the genealogy of Jesus Christ** as a descendant of Abraham and King David. (4) Record the supernatural **virgin birth** of Jesus as foretold of the coming Messiah (Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:18-25). (5) Repeatedly connected Jesus to the coming "**Kingdom**" which was anticipated by the Jews as promised in the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:8-16).

The **MANIFESTO** of King Jesus

The **Sermon on the Mount** is a major section of the gospel of Matthew, covering chapters 5-7. Large crowds were following Jesus and he stopped at a hillside near Capernaum to teach them **how the people of his Kingdom should live**. The Sermon on the Mount is **the most complete overview or summary** of the **teachings of Jesus** contained in the New Testament. Some have called it the **Magna Carta of Christ's Kingdom**.

Bible scholar, John Stott, stated, "The sermon on the mount is the most complete delineation anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counter-culture. Here is a Christian value-system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, life-style and network of relationships—all of which are totally at variance with those of the non-Christian world." (*Christian Counter-Culture*, 19). John Stott added that the Sermon on the Mount "...is the nearest thing to a **manifesto** that he ever uttered, for it is his own description of what he wanted his followers to be and to do." (*Christian Counter-Culture*, 15).

Internal **CHARACTER**, Not External Conduct

The focus of the Sermon on the Mount is about everyday life and its problems. It is about character. It is about the heart condition of the citizens of Christ's Kingdom.

Warren Wiersbe explained: "The religious leaders had an artificial, external righteousness based on the law. But the righteousness Jesus described is a true and vital righteousness that begins internally, in the heart. The Pharisees were concerned about the minute details of conduct, but they neglected the major matter of *character*. Conduct flows out of character." (*The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*, 18).

John MacArthur, adds, "The thrust of the Sermon on the Mount is that the message and work of the King are first and most importantly internal and not external, and spiritual and moral rather than physical and political. Here we find no politics or social reform. His concern is for what men are, because what they are determines what they do." (*Matthew*, 133)

Central Lesson:

The followers of Christ should live like citizens of Christ's Kingdom.

WHY We Must Live By the Teachings of Jesus?

1. Experience A Life That Is **BLESSED**.

"God **blesses** those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." Matthew 5:3 (5:3-11) NLT.

2. Reflect Genuine **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

The importance of having genuine righteousness that exceeds the religious hypocrites. "But I warn you—unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!" Matthew 5:20 (5:17-20) NLT.

3. Spiritual Life **FOUNDATIONS**.

How to build a strong spiritual foundation for your life. "Anyone who **listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock.**" Matthew 7:24 NLT.

4. Prepared for Life's **STORMS**.

How to be prepared to survive the storms of life. "...²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, **it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock** [Christ's teachings]." Matthew 7:25 NLT.

WHAT Are the Teachings of Jesus?

Jesus taught about a number of various everyday life issues. He often contrasted how the world lived with how the citizens of his Kingdom should live.

1. **The Beatitudes**—A life blessed by God (5:3-12).

2. **Teaching about Salt and Life**—Christ's followers should have a spiritual influence on others (5:13-16).

3. **Teaching about the Law**—Christ's followers should live what they teach, or stated another way, walk the talk (5:17-20).

4. **Teaching about Anger**—Christ's followers should resolve their anger and restore broken relationships (5:21-26).

5. **Teaching about Adultery**—Christ's followers should guard against both physical and mental adultery and its damaging consequences (5:27-30).

6. **Teaching about Divorce**—Christ's followers should avoid divorce. It is a life-long commitment. Otherwise, remarriage would be adultery, unless the spouse was guilty of unfaithfulness (5:31-32. Also 19:1-12).

7. **Teaching about Vows and Promises**—Christ's followers should tell the truth, avoid vows, and keep their word (5:33-36).

8. **Teaching about Revenge**—Christ's followers should avoid revenge and respond with goodness. Realize that this is not a natural reaction—it is supernatural (5:38-42).

9. **Teaching about Hate**—Christ's followers should not hate and retaliate against those who mistreat them. Rather, love them & pray for them. However, Jesus is not prohibiting his followers from protecting themselves against physical harm. In such situations, self-protection is necessary. Jesus told his followers that there is appropriate times when they should buy and carry a sword (Luke 22:35-37). Nehemiah told Israel to work with a sword on their side (Nehemiah 4:13, 18) (Matthew 5:43-48).

Central Lesson:

The followers of Christ should live like citizens of Christ's Kingdom.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.