Lessons from the Mountaintop 2017

Lessons from the Mountaintop: Seven Christian Life Lessons from the Sermon on the Mount

Lesson 1: The Beatitudes – Believers are Different

1. Introduction -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus’ longest, most famous and popular message; the most quoted of all His teachings
* Most people associate the sermon only with Matthew 5:3-10, a portion of the scriptures called the Beatitudes
* The Sermon on the Mount starts in Matthew 5:1 and ends at Matthew 7:29
* There are several distinct sections of the Sermon on the Mount covering a variety of subjects; for this study, we are using the following outline:
1. **The Beatitudes: Believers are Different -- Matthew 5:1-16**
2. **Christ and the Law: A Higher Standard – Matthew 5:17-48**
3. **The Inner Life: Secret Service – Matthew 6:1-18**
4. **God versus Mammon: Christians and Their Money – Matthew 6:19-24**
5. **Worry is a Sin: Learning to Trust God – Matthew 6:25-34**
6. **Salvation and Souls: Looking at Eternity – Matthew 7:1-14**
7. **Counterfeit Christians: Discerning Your Walk – Matthew 7:15-28**
8. The Beatitudes
	* **Matthew 5:1-2** – The location of this mountain is unknown; most believe it was on a ridgeline that parallels the shore of the Sea of Galilee; the traditional site is Mount Eremos, a large hill near Capernaum where the Catholic Church has erected a chapel. There is a space near the top for a crowd to gather thus suggesting it may have been used by Jesus.
	* **Matthew 5:3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10** – This is the classic Beatitudes text that is considered a great work of poetry and is incorporated into songs. Who is it speaking about?
	* Jesus is using a literary device describing those in the Kingdom of God in the third person; but in the next part, **Matthew 5:11-12** He changes the subject of the sentence to who?
	* Remember, the breaks that were added to your Bible are not in the original text; verses 11-12 are part of the main “Beatitudes” text… but they are not as “pretty.”
	* Compare this to Paul’s testimony and exhortation to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:10-12**
	* So, what or who are the Beatitudes describing? **1 Peter 2:1-3**, **4-5**
	* How do we know, this text is about Jesus’s followers?
	* Because He explains things in the next part, which is also part of the Beatitudes:
	* **Matthew 5:13, 14-16** – What is Jesus saying about His followers?
	* What does it mean that His followers are *salt* and *light*?– explain these analogies
	* Bottom Line: *God’s people are called to be different, to live different and to have radically different values than people in the world.*
	* This is the only way the Church can influence the World
	* What is the only reason why any Christian would be persecuted? **Matthew 10:21-22, 24-26, 28**
9. Questions or Comments?

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**Lesson 2: Christ and the Law -- A Higher Standard**

1. Review -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* Why do we call Matthew 5:1 to Matthew 7:28 “The Sermon on the Mount?”
* Do we know exactly where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered?
* When religious people talk about the Sermon on the Mount most people are talking about a specific portion called The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (What?)
* What are the first 16 verse of Matthew 5 really all about?
* What is the only way that God’s people can influence the World?
1. The Law is Good for the Christian Soul
* **Matthew 5:17** -- The Hebrew word for the law is *torah.* This is derived from the Hebrew root word *yareh* which means to aim and shoot an arrow at a target.
* Conversely, the most common Hebrew word for sin is *chata’ah* which means to aim and miss the target, to miss the mark or to be off track.
* To a Jew, the entire Law is a guideline for living a life pleasing to God. How would Jesus fulfill this in the life of a Believer? **John 14:6** **Luke 9:23** **Galatians 2:20-21**
* For Gentiles, this idea of the law is incorrectly conveyed; Roman and Greek concepts of law convey the idea of controlling or being a burden to people. This miscommunication between Gentile and Jewish culture has created an unnatural rift between Christianity and Judaism.
* **Matthew 5:18-20** -- Christ never removed the moral law from Christian conduct
* The sacrificial law and the Temple ordinances were removed from the law by Christ’s finished work on the cross: **Hebrews 9:11-14**
* The cultural law, particularly food laws, which have no moral power, were removed from Gentile/Church culture by Jesus, Himself: **Matthew 15:10-11** **Acts 10:9-16**
* What about Grace? How does Grace operate in the life of a believer? **Ephesians 2:8-9**
* Salvation is by faith, not works: **Galatians 2:15-16**
* This was always God’s plan from the beginning, for both Jews and Gentiles: **Habakkuk 2:4**
* Yet we are saved to PERFORM good works: **Ephesians 2:10**
* Because living the Christian life means making lifestyle choices: **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**
* In this way, the rest of our Sermon on the Mount portion shows that Jesus RAISED the standards of morality for His followers – unlike modern pastors who lower the standards to attract bigger crowds. Such modern pastors are false shepherds.
* By raising the moral standards, Jesus challenges His followers to put more faith and trust in Him to sustain their Christian walk:
* **Matthew 5:21-22, 23-26, 27-28** – How do these verses force us to rely more on Christ?
* **Matthew 5:29-30** – Is this literal? How would you apply this to your Christian walk?
* **Matthew 5:31-32**, **33-37**, **38-42**, **43-48** – How do our Matthew verses in this lesson contribute to our understanding of the previous lesson on the Beatitudes?
1. Questions or Comments?

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**Lesson 3: The Inner Life: Secret Service**

1. Review -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* Why do we call Matthew 5:1 to Matthew 7:28 “The Sermon on the Mount?” Explain
* What is the only way Christians can truly influence the World?
* Did Jesus put an end to the law? How do we “keep the law” as Christians?
* What did the Law mean to a Jew that is different from Gentile thinking?
* What parts of the law are still valid? How can one know which parts of the law are still in effect?
* Now that we are under grace, what has happened to the standard of conduct for a New Testament believer?
1. Things we do and keep to ourselves
* The next part of the Sermon on the Mount was intended to show the folly of public displays of religiosity and good works that characterized Judaism under the Pharisees.
* Read and consider the following portions and explain what Jesus is addressing:
	+ **Matthew 6:1-4** – Explain; How do people violate this principle all the time?
	+ **Matthew 6:5-7** – Explain; Consider verse 7. What does this sound like?
	+ **Matthew 6:8-13** – Explain; What does the phrase, “in this manner” [NKJV] mean?
		- How is this prayer form ironic given the guidance in verse 7?
		- Explain verse 10.
		- How is this prayer very different from the way most human beings pray? **John 14:14** **James 4:3**
	+ **Matthew 6:14-15** – Explain; What does withheld forgiveness do to a person?

 **Hebrews 12:12-17**

* + **Matthew 6:16-18** – Explain; Did Jesus’ disciples fast? **Mark 2:18-20 Matthew 17:19-21**
		- Why do we fast at all? **Matthew 26:41**
* How would we sum up the teaching of Jesus in this portion of the Sermon on the Mount? **Ephesians 6:6**
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**Lesson 4: God versus Mammon: Christians and Their Money**

1. Review -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* Why do we call Matthew 5:1 to Matthew 7:28 “The Sermon on the Mount?” Explain
* When religious people talk about the Sermon on the Mount most people are talking about a specific portion called The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (What?)
* Name some of those things we must do as Christians without drawing attention to ourselves – things we might call “secret service.”
* Is the Lord’s Prayer something we should memorize and repeat from memory when praying? Explain your answer.
* How is forgiveness a kind of secret service?
1. The Problem with Money
* Jesus’ teaching on money in the Sermon on the Mount is very short yet also very profound
* Read and Discuss each of these scripture portions:
* **Matthew 6:19-20** – What is Jesus saying about our money and about life itself?
* How does a Christian “store up treasures in Heaven?”
* These two verses go very well with one of Jesus’ most important parables about money and material possessions: **Luke 12:13-15, 16-19, 20-21**
* How do most people completely miss the mark on this area?
* **Matthew 6:21** – How is this principle played out in real life?
* **Matthew 6:22-23** – This may seem inappropriate given the money theme in the previous and next verse but how does our eye cause us to sin? **Deuteronomy 5:21 Colossians 3:5**
* **Matthew 6:24** – What is “mammon?”
* Knowing what you know about idolatry, when does money become “mammon?” **1 Timothy 6:9-10** **1 Corinthians 6:12** **1 Corinthians 10:14**
* So, is the problem with money itself or something else? **Matthew 15:19**
* What is the correct attitude of the Christian toward money and material possessions? **James 1:16-17** **1 Timothy 6:6-9 Acts 20:35 Luke 6:38**
* Keep in mind what Jesus taught about *giving* – How can giving cure the Christian of the curse of mammon worship? **2 Corinthians 9:6-8**
* What about the *tithe*? What is it? What did Jesus teach about it? **Hebrews 7:1-4, 8** **Matthew 23:23 Acts 4:32, 36-37**
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**Lesson 5: Worry is a Sin: Learning to Trust God**

1. Review -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* When religious people talk about the Sermon on the Mount most people are talking about a specific portion called The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (What?)
* What exactly is the Sermon on the Mount teaching?
* What is mammon?
* How does a person serve mammon instead of God?
* How does a person store up treasures in heaven?
* What is the cure for mammon worship and covetousness?
* What did Jesus teach about the tithe?
1. The Problem with Worry
* Most people think you need faith to trust God and that faith is what you believe; But what really keeps a person from trusting God? **Acts 4:17-18**
* **Matthew 6:25-27** – How would worry about these things hinder our ability to walk in faith?
* What is worry really? **1 John 4:18**
	+ What is so illogical about worry?
	+ What are the things we SHOULD worry about?
	+ Worry is often an excuse to do nothing: **Proverbs 26:13**
* What is God’s answer to our worry about these things? **Philippians 4:19**
	+ What is the key part of that verse that makes it all a reality?
* **Matthew 6:28-30** – We are of more value to God than plants and animals. This goes against human reasoning. Most people trust in who/what to meet their needs? **Daniel 6:7**
* **Matthew 6:31-33** – According to Jesus, who is expected to worry about their needs?
* What does it seem like Jesus means in the second sentence of verse 32?
* Verse 33 is a world of theological thought. What is all that is implied by this verse?

**Mark 12:29-30 2 Corinthians 9:7-8 Matthew 7:21 James 4:13-17**

* **Matthew 6:34** – This is great doctrine. **Proverbs 3:5-6**
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**Lesson 6: Salvation and Souls: Looking at Eternity**

1. Review -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* Why do we call Matthew 5:1 to Matthew 7:28 “The Sermon on the Mount?” Explain
* What is the only way Christians can truly influence the World?
* According to Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, why can worry sometimes be a sin?
* What is so illogical about worrying?
* Worry is sometimes an excuse to do -- what?
* What did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about how God cares for us?
* What did Jesus teach us about our needs?
* What scripture from last week’s portion of the Sermon on the Mount contains all we need to do to live the Christian life while trusting God to meet our needs?
1. The Eternal Perspective: Considering He who is above, *God;* and those who are around us, *others*
* **Matthew 7:1** – This is one of the most abused verses in the Bible. What does it NOT mean?
* How do we know? **Matthew 7:4-5** – So what are verses 1 and 4-5 all about? **John 7:24**
* How do we know that Christians can and do judge things? **1 Corinthians 6:2-3** **Matthew 7:16-17, 20 1 Corinthians 5:1-5**
* There is an Eternal/Godly perspective to all this -- **Matthew 7:2-3** – What does it mean?
* This portion not only teaches us how to judge righteously but it reminds us that we are being judged by the WAY we judge others. **James 2:12-13**
* Why do you think so many people, including church members who call themselves Christians, say that Christians are “not supposed to judge others?” Discuss – **John 3:19-21**
* For this reason the next verse is so true – When you judge someone to help them pull a plank from their eye, some people will not appreciate it: **Matthew 7:6**
* **Matthew 7:7-11** – What is this about?
* Why does Jesus have to tell us what He says in verses 9-10? Explain your answer. **James 1:17**
* Now read the next verse, **Matthew 7:12**. How does this fit with the previous 5 verses?
* The next portion of the text caps off the previous verses by reminding us that by judging righteously and treating others as we desire God to treat us, we are “entering the narrow gate” -- **Matthew 7:13-14** – What do these verses imply about salvation?
* If salvation is by faith, then why does Jesus teach us in the Sermon on the Mount that we will be judged by how we behave? **James 2:17-20** **Philippians 2:12**
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**Lesson 7: Counterfeit Christians: Discerning Your Walk**

1. Review -- Main Text: **Matthew 5:1**
* Do we know exactly where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered?
* When religious people talk about the Sermon on the Mount most people are talking about a specific portion called The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (What?)
* What is the only way Christians can truly influence the World? Explain your answer.
* Can Christians judge others? Explain Matthew 7:1 and what it really means.
* “Ask and you shall receive” isn’t just about expecting God to answer prayer, it has to do with how we treat others. Explain how.
* Most people call this “the Golden Rule” but what is the context of **Matthew 7:12**?
* How does a believer “enter by the narrow gate?”
1. The Great Concern of Jesus: The Problem of False Prophets and Fake Christians
* **Matthew 7:15-20**. Jesus taught much on the problem of false shepherds: **John 10:7-13**
* Remember Matthew 7:1-6 about judging others? How do we know from what we just read that Christians must judge?
* How do we judge “false prophets?” **Galatians 5:22-26**
* Who is a candidate for a false prophet (who might deceive you about your faith)? **1 John 4:1**
* What is the final authority? **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
* What is the end for those who “bear bad fruit?”
* We know this isn’t just about church leaders because of the next verses: **Matthew 7:21, 22, 23** – How do those verses compare to what some people in the Church world say today about Christianity? What have you heard people say?
* Jesus uses the word “Therefore” in the next verse to create a preference. “Therefore” means “As a result of that…” i.e. whoever wants to be a real Christian needs to be like the person who… **Matthew 7:24-25, 26-27**
* Based on what you just read, how do you know if someone is a real Christian? **James 1:22**
* What does this tell you about much of what passes for “Christianity” today?
* **Matthew 7:28-29**
1. Questions or Comments?

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Outline:

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