

Matthew Chapter 5

6 studies by Roger Green

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|----------------|---------------------|--|------------|
| Study 1 | Matt 5:1-12 | A Christian's character | p 1 |
| Study 2 | Matt 5:13-16 | A Christian's influence | p 3 |
| Study 3 | Matt 5:17-20 | A Christian's righteousness | p 4 |
| Study 4 | Matt 5:21-30 | A Christian's Relationships (Anger & Lust) | p 5 |
| Study 5 | Matt 5:31-37 | A Christian's Relationships (Marriage & Speech) | p 6 |
| Study 6 | Matt 5:38-48 | A Christian's Relationships (Loving our Enemies) | p 7 |

Introduction

If you would like to study The Sermon on The Mount in more detail I would suggest you purchase one of the two following books:

- The Sermon on The Mount - An Exposition of Matthew 5-7
by Donald A. Carson
- The Message of The Sermon On The Mount (BST Series)
By John R.W. Scott

John Stott writes in his book

"The Sermon on the Mount is probably the best known part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the least understood, and certainly it is the least obeyed. It 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.

To me the key text of the Sermon on the Mount is 6:8 'Do not be like them' It is immediately reminiscent of God's word to Israel in olden days: 'You shall not do as they do' (Lev. 18:3). It is the same call to be different. And right through the Sermon on the Mount this theme is elaborated. Their character was to be completely distinct from that admired by the world (the beatitudes). They were to shine like lights in the prevailing darkness. Their righteousness was to exceed that of the Pharisees, both in ethical behaviour and religious devotion, while their love was to be greater and their ambition nobler than those of their pagan neighbours."

John Stott, The Message of The Sermon on the Mount p15,19

I hope as we look at this part of God's word together we will be challenged to live as the people of God and that our lives will be changed to be more like Christ.

Study 1 Mathew 5:1-12, A Christian's Character

Warm-Up

1. Give some examples of when someone might be described as blessed or fortunate.

Bible Study (Read Matthew 5:1-12)

2. Who is Jesus speaking to? (v1-2) Why is this context important as we come to study the 'Sermon on the Mount'?

3. What does it mean to be "poor in spirit"? (v2) Read Luke 18:9-14. Why is the tax collector a good example of someone who is "poor in spirit"?

4. Why would those who are poor in spirit feel a need to mourn (v3)? What is there in the world and in our own lives to mourn about?

5. Look at Isaiah 40:1-5, 61:1-3 & Luke 4:14-21. How does God fulfill his promise to comfort those who mourn?

6. What does a meek person look like? (v5) What does Psalm 37 teach us about those who are meek?

7. Righteousness in this passage (v6 & 10) is a longing that all things (personal or social) should be rightly related to God and each other. It is a desire to live in conformity to God's will. In what ways can you exhibit a hunger & thirst for righteousness in your life?

8. How is being merciful related to the previous four beatitudes? How are we to view others? How should we deal with resentful feelings towards others?

9. Why would the promise of seeing God be reserved for those who are pure in heart?

10. Why is it fitting that "the peacemakers" be called sons of God?

11. Why would the world hate the kind of people described in the beatitudes?

Study 2**Mathew 5:13-16, A Christian's Influence****Warm-Up**

1. In what ways have Christians had a positive influence on society?

Bible Study**(Read Matthew 5:13-16)**

2. How do you think verses 10-13 connect with verses 1-11?

3. What does Jesus mean when he says "You are the salt of the earth?"

4. Salt can only lose its saltiness when it becomes mixed with impurities. What implications does this have for us as God's people?

5. What does it mean for us to be "the light of the world"? How does this fit with Jesus claim to be the light of the world in John 8:12?

6. What Jesus mean by our "good deeds" in v16?

7. Why might we be tempted to hide our light?

8. Why would Jesus use of the words "earth" v13 and "world" v14 be so surprising to those who were listening?

9. Read John 1:1-9. As Christmas approaches how can you personally and all of us collectively shine with the light of Christ this Christmas?

Study 3**Mathew 5:17-20, A Christian's Righteousness****Warm-Up**

1. What are some of the benefits & difficulties of reading the Old Testament?

Bible Study**(Read Matthew 5:17-20)**

2. Why might people think that Jesus had come to abolish the Old Testament (the Law & the Prophets)?
3. How does Jesus fulfill the law? Is v18 saying that all the Old Testament law is binding on us today?
4. The Pharisees & the teachers of the law were meticulous in their law keeping. How is it possible for our righteousness to surpass theirs?
5. What is the relationship between 'the law' and 'grace' for the Christian? To help you explore this question look up the following passages:

Romans 3:19-24, 6:8-14, 8:1-9

Galatians 3:19-25

Titus 2:11-14
6. In what way(s) has this study challenged you to grow in your relationship with Jesus?

Study 4**Mathew 5:21-30, A Christian's Relationships (Anger & Lust)****Warm-Up**

1. What sorts of things make you angry?

Bible Study**(Read Matthew 5:21-30)**

2. What does this passage teach us about Jesus authority?
3. In verses 21-22 Jesus connects murder and anger. How are they related?
4. Is anger a sin? Is there ever a right anger? Consider Ex 34:6 & Eph 4:26-27 in your answer.
5. What do verses 23-26 teach us about broken relationships & reconciliation?
6. What according to Jesus is the full meaning of the seventh commandment: "Do not commit adultery"? v27-28
7. Some Christians have taken verses 29-30 literally and have mutilated their bodies. How do you think Jesus intends for us to understand his warnings?
8. How does Jesus challenge a shallow view of righteousness in this passage?
9. In what specific areas do you feel the need for a deeper righteousness?

Study 5**Mathew 5:31-37, A Christian's Relationships (Marriage & Speech)****Warm-Up**

1. What constitutes a good marriage?

Bible Study (Read Matthew 5:31-37 & 19:3-9)

(While this subject can be an extremely painful one for some it is important to try and understand what the Bible has to say and to apply it sensitively.)

2. Rabbi Shammai taught that divorce was permitted only in extreme cases. Rabbi Hillel taught that it was permitted for any and every reason. How does this help to understand the Pharisees "test" question?(19:3)
3. In replying to their question on divorce Jesus points back to the first marriage in Genesis. What do we learn about God's original design for marriage? (v4-6)
4. The Pharisees refer to Moses instructions about divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) as a "command" (19:7). What does Jesus reply teach us about divorce?
5. What similarities & differences are there between 19:9 & 5:31?
6. Christians differ on their opinions about divorce. Some say no divorce under any circumstances, some say the only basis for divorce is adultery, others argue there may be other grounds for divorce (e.g. desertion 1 Corinthians 7:10-16) What do you think?
7. In what ways can we individually and as a church uphold the marriage commitment and also exercise grace to those who have experienced the pain of divorce?
8. The Pharisees had elaborate formulas for oaths, with some being binding and some not (see Matthew 23:16-22). Why is Jesus opposed to oaths?
9. Why should oaths be unnecessary for Jesus' followers?

Study 6**Mathew 5:38-48, A Christian's Relationships (Loving our Enemies)****Warm-Up**

1. Share something that has challenged you from Matthew Chapter 5. How has it made a difference in your life?

Bible Study**(Read Matthew 5:38-48)**

2. In verse 38 Jesus quotes from Exodus 21:24, what was the original intent of "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth"?
3. The Pharisees had taken this principle of just retribution from the law court (where it belonged) and used it as a justification for personal vengeance. What consequences may have resulted?
4. Describe briefly the 4 examples Jesus gives?
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii)
 - (iv)
5. What is the principle common to all four examples? Is Jesus using exaggerated language here like in v29-30?
6. Does this mean that Christians should be pacifists in our relationships and in our society? Is there ever a time when we should resist an evil person?

