

Date: 2.16.25 | Title: The Sermon on the Mount | Scripture: Matthew 5

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING

Middle School Students:

Jesus is fully God and fully man, and He is altogether Holy
Jesus lived for the glory of the Father and taught that we should do the same through lives of worship
Jesus is the only way people can connect with God
Because Jesus is God, He had the power to perform miracles

High School Students:

From the beginning, God planned that Jesus would save people from their sins.
Jesus is fully God and fully man, and despite being tempted while on earth, remained altogether free from sin.
Because of Jesus, we who were once separated due to sin are now accepted into His presence due to Christ's righteousness
Whereas many claim that Jesus was a good man or a great teacher, the truth is that Jesus is God



**MEMORY
VERSE**

"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45



INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

Divide the students into smaller groups of 4. Ask each group to think of as many characteristics and uses of salt and light as they can. After a few minutes ask each group to feedback their ideas and write these on a whiteboard or piece of paper.

For example:

Salt

- Needed to maintain health**
- Preserves things**
- Brings out flavour**
- Prevents infection and heals**
- Makes you thirsty**

Light

- Removes darkness**
- Causes growth**
- Gives life**
- Transmits messages**
- Lights the way**

Explain that today we'll be talking about Jesus' first teaching, where he compared and commanded believers to be "Salt and Light". Using the characteristics and uses listed, talk about why Jesus used that metaphor.



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

The Sermon on the Mount is the first of five major discourses, or sermons, in the Gospel of Matthew. This text provides instructions for those already committed to following Jesus, teaching what it means to live as a genuine community of disciples. The “disciples” referred to in Matthew 5:1 are those who have pledged allegiance to Jesus as the Messiah, while the “crowds” are simply neutral or uncommitted groups who are curious and amazed by His teachings (Matthew 7:28-29). To prepare and train His disciples to live as kingdom citizens, Jesus dedicates much of His ministry to teaching them the challenging yet practical ethic that Jesus expects His followers to embody. God’s people are called to live differently from the world around them (Matthew 6:7-8).

In this sermon, Jesus expounds the true meaning of the law, showing that its demands are impossible to fulfill by human effort alone (Matthew 5:48). No one can earn salvation through their own merit which leaves sinners entirely dependent on God’s grace (Romans 3:19-20; Galatians 3:23-34).

Matthew 5:1-16, known as the Beatitudes, contains pronouncements for the crowds and religious leaders, alongside instructions for Jesus’ disciples. These statements summarize the nature of life in the kingdom and the virtues that should define those who belong to it. When Jesus says “blessed,” He refers to a deep, enduring joy that goes beyond fleeting happiness or surface emotions. This described joy comes from living in God’s favor, a well-being belonging to those who respond to Jesus’ call. The Beatitudes emphasize that the path to heavenly blessedness is the opposite of the worldly ways people typically pursue happiness. They describe the character of true faith.

The “poor in spirit” are those who recognize their need for God’s help, the opposite of self-sufficiency. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who acknowledge their spiritual bankruptcy. These are individuals aware that, apart from God’s grace, they are lost and hopeless.



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Those who “mourn” (Matthew 5:4) experience sorrow over sin—spiritual, emotional, or even financial loss due to sin. This mourning leads to a longing for God’s forgiveness and healing, and it produces godly sorrow leading to repentance and salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10).

The “meek” (Matthew 5:5), or gentle (Matthew 11:29), are not those who assert themselves over others but those who trust God to direct the outcomes of life. Meekness is the embodiment of supreme self-control empowered by the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:23). They will inherit the earth, as promised in Psalm 37:11.

Those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matthew 5:6) are those who seek God’s righteousness, rather than trying to establish their own as the Pharisees did. God promises to satisfy those who long for His righteousness.

The “pure in heart” (Matthew 5:8) are those whose desire for purity and uprightness affects every area of their lives. This is crucial in the kingdom of God, where internal purity is valued above outward appearances.

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus uses two metaphors—salt and light—to illustrate the impact His disciples should have on the world. Salt preserves and enhances flavor, and pure salt cannot lose its effectiveness. A godly life is a testimony to the saving power of God, glorifying Him (1 Peter 2:12). Jesus intends for His people to have a transformative influence on the world.



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

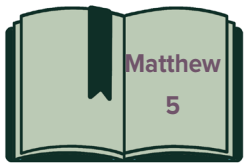
In Matthew 5:17-20, Jesus explains the relationship between His teaching and the Old Testament law. He does not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it in its entirety—morally, ceremonially, and judicially. Jesus emphasizes that Scripture is divinely inspired and authoritative, affirming the inerrancy and absolute authority of the Old Testament. Those who enter the kingdom must embrace Jesus's righteousness, which far exceeds the outward piety of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:20). Jesus calls for an internal righteousness that surpasses mere external compliance, stressing that true righteousness is a heart transformation that leads to holiness from the inside out.

Jesus clarifies that the righteousness He requires is not based on flawed human effort but on the perfect righteousness of God imputed to those who believe (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:5). Kingdom righteousness works from within, changing hearts and motivations (Romans 6:17; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 2:12; Hebrews 8:10). As a result, the lives of Jesus' followers will exceed the external righteousness of the Pharisees, who prided themselves on following extra-biblical regulations but lacked purity of heart (Matthew 23:5, 23, 27-28).

Jesus' intention to fulfill the Old Testament law is detailed in Matthew 5:21-48, where He applies kingdom righteousness to six practical areas: murder, adultery, divorce, vows, retaliation, and loving one's enemies. Through the repeated phrase, "You have heard that it was said," Jesus corrects prevalent misunderstandings of the law and highlights its deeper, spiritual intent. Scripture reflects the will and character of God, and as Christians seek to live according to it, they are pursuing the perfection of God. The Law and the Prophets are fulfilled in the perfection of the Father, which is what Jesus calls His disciples to pursue. In this way, Jesus is the culmination and fulfillment of the Old Testament.

the teachings of Jesus

LOCATE THE SCRIPTURE & TELL THE STORY



TELL
THE
STORY



Read directly from
Scripture, use The
Jesus Storybook
Bible, The Biggest
Story Bible, or the
summary provided
in the lesson



Put the events
in order, draw a
comic strip, build
it with blocks or
playdough, act it
out, etc...

Throughout the next several weeks, we will be reading Bible stories about Jesus' teachings. Jesus is an amazing teacher and taught with authority because He is the Son of God. When we read what Jesus taught, we can remember that His teachings help us know how we can live with Him forever. Today, we will learn that Jesus taught how His followers can reflect His character to the world.

Great crowds of people followed Jesus wherever He went. One day, Jesus went up on a mountain. He sat down and began to teach about the kingdom of God.

First, Jesus taught about the blessings that come to those who follow Him. He said:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the humble, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs."

Then Jesus taught how believers should live. Jesus said that believers are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. "Let your light shine before others so that they may see the good things you do and praise God."



TELL THE STORY

Then Jesus taught about God's law. Jesus did not come to get rid of the law, but to obey it perfectly. He said that to enter heaven, a person can't just look righteous on the outside-like the religious leaders. A person must be righteous on the inside too, obeying God for the right reasons.

Jesus said, "Love your enemies, and pray for them. If you do this, you will be true children of your Father in heaven. He makes the sun rise on both the good and the evil, and He causes rain to fall on both the righteous and unrighteous. If you only love those who love you, what reward will you get for that? Even people who don't know God do that. Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Jesus taught people what it means to follow Him. He taught how people should live. People who trust in Jesus live to honor God and show what His kingdom is like. As we read Jesus' teachings, we can obey His teachings by faith and seek to live like Him. Remember it is not how we live that saves us, but how we live shows that we have been saved. We can live in a way that honors God.

Sometimes we can read Jesus' teachings and find them confusing. Jesus' kingdom is very different than the world we live in. The life and teachings of Jesus show us the character of God. We must renew our minds through God's truth to better understand His ways.

Re-tell the Bible Story: Have students re-tell the story as best they can.

Share the GOSPEL:

Matthew 5:48 says, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect". Christ sets an unattainable standard, which sums up what the law itself demands (James 2:10). Though this standard is impossible to meet, God could not lower it without compromising His own perfection. He who is perfect could not set an imperfect standard of righteousness. The marvelous truth of the Gospel is that Christ has met this standard on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When we trust in Jesus, He gives us a new heart with new desires. Now, we can obey God by faith and live in a way that shows others what He is like. We can love our enemies, forgive others and endure persecution. We honor God and show our love for Him when we live for His kingdom.



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTENTIVE - God hears and responds to the needs of his children.

COMPASSIONATE - God cares for his children and acts on their behalf.

CREATOR - God made everything. He is uncreated.

DELIVERER - God rescues and saves his children.

ETERNAL - God is not limited by time. He exists outside of time.

FAITHFUL - God always keeps his promises.

GENEROUS - God gives what is best and beyond what is deserved.

GLORIOUS - God displays His greatness and worth.

GOOD - God is what is best and gives what is best. He is incapable of doing harm.

HOLY - God is perfect, pure, and without sin.

IMMUTABLE/UNCHANGING - God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

INCOMPREHENSIBLE - God is beyond our understanding. We can comprehend Him in part but not in whole.

INFINITE - God has not limits in His person or on His power.

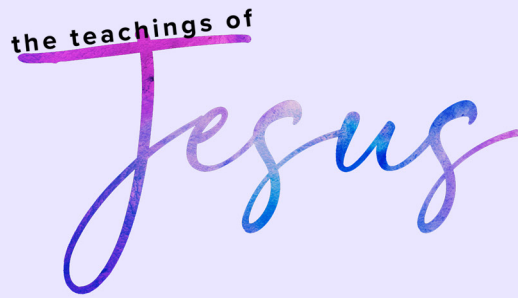
JEALOUS - God will not share his glory with another. all glory rightfully belongs to him.

JUST - god is fair in all his actions and judgements. He cannot over-punish or under-punish.

LOVING - God feels and displays infinite, unconditional affection toward his children. His love for them does not depend on their worth, response, or merit.

MERCIFUL - God does not give his children the punishment they deserve.

OMNIPOTENT/ALMIGHTY - God holds all power. nothing is too hard for God. What He wills He can accomplish.



ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

OMNIPRESENT - God is fully present everywhere.

OMNISCIENT - God knows everything, past, present, and future - all potential and real outcomes, all things micro and macro.

PATIENT/LONG-SUFFERING - God is untiring and bears with His children.

PROVIDER - God meets the needs of his children.

REFUGE - God is a place of safety and protection for his children.

RIGHTEOUS - God is always good and right.

SELF-EXISTENT - God depends on nothing and no one to give him life or existence.

SELF-SUFFICIENT - God is not vulnerable. He has no needs.

SOVEREIGN - God does everything according to His plan and pleasure.

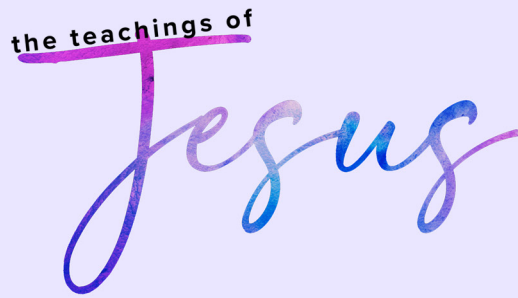
TRANSCENDENT - God is not like humans. He is infinitely higher in being and action.

TRUTHFUL - Whatever God speaks or does is truth and reality.

WISE - God knows what is best and acts accordingly. He cannot choose wrongly.

WORTHY - God deserves all glory and honor and praise.

WRATHFUL - God hates all unrighteousness.



QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

“Storying” Questions: As you ask these questions, have your students find the answers in the actual verses of scripture instead of recalling them from your re-telling of the story. We always want to encourage all of our students to go directly to God’s Word over a commentary on or summary of scripture. Use the Bible Study Bookmark Questions as well as these questions to help students understand the text:

- 1. As Jesus taught, He told the crowd that there are blessings for those who follow Him. Who were some of the people that will be blessed? (Matthew 5:3-11)**
- 2. Jesus said that we are like salt and light to a world that does not know Him when our works follow His commands. Are our good deeds enough to save us?**
- 3. What did Jesus say He did with the law? Jesus said He came to perfectly obey the law and do all it commanded. Jesus lived a perfect life.**
- 4. What is the right reason for obeying God? What are some wrong reasons for obeying God? Why is it important that we obey God for the right reasons?**
- 5. In today’s Bible story, what teaching of Jesus is hardest for you to obey? Why?**
- 6. What are ways you can be a light for Jesus so that others can give glory to God?**



QUESTIONS TO REBUILD THE STORY

7. Can we do good things and glorify God without trusting in Jesus? Why not?
8. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
9. What does the story teach me about myself?
10. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
11. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
12. How does this story help me live on mission?



PRAYER PROMPTS

Lord, thank You for Your Word and how it teaches us to be more like You. Thank You for loving us and for sending Jesus to live the perfect life for us. Help us live to honor You. Amen.

IF TIME ALLOWS:

Play a game of Bible drill using the gospels.

MISSIONS EMPHASIS:

Talk with your class about which church mission partners you would like to work with over the course of the year.

REVIEW UNIT VERSE:

Spend time reviewing memory verse with students.

FETSOMCNTBSBT SATGHLAARFM - Mark 10:45

the teachings of

Jesus



Application Questions

LOOK UPWARD



- How does this story apply to your relationship with God?
- What does it teach you about Him- His will and His heart?
- What aspect of His character is He inviting you to experience and enjoy?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your relationship with God?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in your relationship with God?

LOOK INWARD



- How does this story apply to your heart and your own spiritual growth?
- What does it teach you about yourself, your needs, or your goals in life?
- In what aspects of your personal life is God inviting you to grow and mature?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story inwardly?
- How will those around you benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to allow these truths to help you grow spiritually?

LOOK AROUND



- How does this story apply to your relationship with others?
- What does it teach you about how to see others and relate to them?
- What is god inviting you to do differently in your relationships?

the teachings of
Jesus



Application Questions

LOOK OUTWARD »»

- How does this story apply to your ministry and mission in life- to your role in God's kingdom, in society, and in the world?
- What does it teach you about God's purposes for the world?
- What part of His mission is He inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit by applying the truths of this story in your ministry?
- How will the world benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to live out these truths in the world?

LOOK FORWARD »»»

- How does this story apply to your future, both in this age and in eternity?
- What does it teach you about God's plan for your life, now and forever?
- What aspects of eternity is God inviting you to participate in?
- How will you benefit in the future by applying these truths now?
- How will God's kingdom benefit?
- What practical steps can you take to impact eternity now with these truths?