

Bible Stories for Adults

The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5 - 7

Opening

Gathering: How do we recognize righteousness in others?

Today's Focus: Jesus taught on a hillside about true righteousness in the kingdom of God.

Key Verses: *Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* Matthew 5:48

Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Jesus and His Disciples (*Luke 6:1-12*)

How popular did Jesus become during His first year of public ministry?

Matthew 4:23-25

Did He have any opposition this early in His ministry, or did that come later?

Luke 6:2, 9-11

How did Jesus respond to His call to minister to the crowds in spite of ignorant opposition?

Luke 6:12

Jesus and His Apostles (*Luke 6:13-16*)

Why did Jesus spend all night in prayer at this point?

Luke 6:13 (13-16)

Why did He call them apostles (Greek for *one sent forth*)?

Luke 9:1-2 (Acts 1:8)

Were these Twelve the only ones Jesus sent out with His message and power?

Luke 10:1, 17

The Rest of the Day (*Luke 6:17-19*)

What did Jesus do with His disciples after selecting Twelve of them to be His apostles?

Luke 6:17-19

After a night without sleep, how was Jesus able to minister to the crowds?

Matthew 5:1

Did He sit down because He was tired and overwhelmed by the crowds?

Matthew 5:2

Understanding God's Kingdom (*Luke 4:43*)

What did Jesus need to teach His apostles, His disciples and the crowds?

Luke 4:43

After millennia of God revealing His kingdom to the Jews, why did Jesus need to teach about it?

Matthew 19:16, 20-22, 25-26

Why didn't the Jewish leaders and teachers help them understand?

Matthew 23:1-4, 13

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Models of Meeting God's Standards (*Matthew 5:20, 48*)

Who did the Jews consider to be shining examples of how to live to enter God's kingdom?

Luke 18:11-12

How did Jesus point out that they are inappropriate models?

Matthew 5:20

Then who should people look to as a model for what is needed to enter God's kingdom?

Matthew 5:48

The Pharisees appeared to be examples of righteousness. How could they fall short of God's kingdom?

Mark 7:5, 14-15, 21-23

The Beatitudes (*Matthew 5:3-6*)

Be-Attitudes

beatus - Latin for blessed

makarios - Greek for god-like joy

How did Jesus begin by pointing out that proud self-righteousness won't lead to God's kingdom?

Matthew 5:3

What did Jesus offer to those upset by their sinfulness separating them from God's righteousness?

Matthew 5:4-5 (Isaiah 40:1-2)

What did Jesus promise to those who looked to God for His righteousness?

Matthew 5:6 (Psalm 42:1-2)

Outward Signs of Righteousness (*Matthew 5:7-16*)

How does inner righteousness impact outward actions?

Matthew 12:33-35

If true righteousness flows from within, then how does it look on the outside?

Matthew 5:7-9

Isn't it risky to be this way? Won't others view this as weakness and take advantage of us?

Matthew 5:10-12

Should keep our righteousness hidden within so it won't lead to persecution?

Matthew 5:13-16

Notes: Salt preserves (keeps from going bad) and enhances flavor

Most salt was from evaporated Dead Sea water and contained many impurities

The salt would leach out before the impurities, leaving a useless residue

Righteousness With or Without the Law (*Matthew 5:17-18*)

Was Jesus saying that the Old Testament teachings were wrong and that He was correcting them?

Matthew 5:17

How did Jesus fulfill the Law and the Prophets?

Hebrews 4:14-15

How does Jesus' perfection and relationship with the Father help us live in God's righteousness?

2 Corinthians 5:21

Since Jesus has fulfilled God's Law for us, can we now ignore the Law?

Matthew 5:18-19 (Romans 6:15-23)

Why should we want to learn and follow God's Law if Jesus has fulfilled it for us?

Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23

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Living in God's Righteousness (*Matthew 5:20-48*)

In order to follow God's Law as His people, should we look to guidance from those who interpret it?
Matthew 5:20

The teachers and Pharisees worked to address every angle of the law. How could they be so wrong?
Matthew 23:25-28

What example did Jesus give to make this point?
Matthew 5:21-22

How should we respond when we feel anger or hatred toward someone?
Matthew 5:23-26

What example did Jesus give next to show the difference between inward and outward righteousness?
Matthew 5:27-28

How does Jesus respond to our excuse that it is only natural and we can't help it?
Matthew 5:29-30

What example did Jesus give to point out that common practices do not necessarily fit with God's will?
Matthew 5:31-32

What other example did He use to make this point?
Matthew 5:33-37 (Isaiah 66:1; Deut 23:21-23; Ecc 5:5)

If we live in God's righteousness, how should we respond to those who don't?
Matthew 5:38-42

So, should we quietly accept abuse and deal with it internally?
Matthew 5:43-47

How does Jesus summarize the ideal that should guide our actions as we live in righteousness?
Matthew 5:48

Acts of Righteousness (*Matthew 6:1-18*)

What is a risk we should be aware of when living in God's righteousness?
Matthew 6:1

Didn't we read that Jesus told us in this sermon to do acts of righteousness before others?
Matthew 5:16

So, why did He change his mind?
Matthew 6:5

We will cover these verses in more detail next week

Treasures in Heaven (*Matthew 6:19-34*)

How do we keep from having to worry about whether we do something to praise God or ourselves?
Matthew 6:19-21

How do we keep our focus on God's kingdom?
Matthew 6:22-23 (Hebrews 12:2)

Why is it important to keep focused on Jesus and God's kingdom?
Matthew 6:24

But don't we need to pay attention to the needs of this life?
Matthew 6:25-27 (25-34)

What key verse did Jesus give us to help us understand how this works?
Matthew 6:33

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I'm Just Trying to be Helpful (*Matthew 7:1-6*)

Should we watch how others act so we can help them if they aren't displaying God's righteousness?

Matthew 7:1-2

But, what if I notice something that needs attention?

Matthew 7:3-5

So should we just let our brother Christians keep sinning?

Galatians 6:1 (*Matthew 18:15-18*)

Should we try to get non-Christians to live in God's righteousness as Jesus described in Matthew 5?

Matthew 7:6

God's Gifts (*Matthew 7:7-12*)

What does God promise to us as we live in His righteousness?

Matthew 7:7-8

Why would God do this?

Matthew 7:9-11

How should we respond to this?

Matthew 7:12

Warnings (*Matthew 7:13-29*)

Is it easy to live in God's righteousness?

Matthew 7:13-14

What is one especially dangerous distraction along the road?

Matthew 7:15-20

How do we recognize these false prophets? Is it okay to listen to anyone who says Jesus is Lord?

Matthew 7:21-23

How can we be sure that we aren't deceived?

Matthew 7:24-25

What is the option to this?

Matthew 7:26-27

How did the disciples and crowds feel about Jesus' sermon?

Matthew 7:28-29 (*28:18*)

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I been humbled by recognizing my spiritual poorness, by mourning my sinfulness or by meekly realizing my position before God?
(*Matthew 5:3-5; Psalm 8; Romans 8:5-17; Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13; Revelation 3:1*)
2. How has my hunger and thirst for God's righteousness led me to grow in mercy, purity and peace?
(*Matthew 5:6-9; Hosea 6:6; Romans 1:17; 3:22-24; 14:17-19; Philippians 4:7; Jude 2*)
3. What does it mean for me to be the salt of the earth or the light of the world? How do I fulfill my calling to be salt and light? (*Matthew 5:13-16; Isaiah 60:1-3; Mark 9:50; John 3:19-21; 8:12; Ephesians 5:8-16; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11*)
4. What do I treasure most in life?
(*Matthew 6:19-24; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 12:13-21; 16:10-13; 1 Timothy 6:17-19*)
5. What causes me to worry?
(*Matthew 6:25-34; Mark 4:18-19; Luke 10:38-42; John 14:1, 27; Philippians 4:6*)