

Sermon on the Mount Introduction

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Preacher: Lee Roberts

[0 : 00] We'll start off with the quote and see if this quote sounds like it can describe current events.

! Question is asked on every hand, and here are some of those questions.

How good does a man have to be to get to heaven? If I join a church and am baptized and pay tithes, will I go to heaven? What is wrong with losing my temper because repressing anger does damage and expressing anger is healthy?

We love each other, so why is a marriage ceremony necessary? Why shouldn't we enjoy each other now? Isn't a little white lie allowable? What is my responsibility to my neighbor?

Why must I love my enemy? Does God permit a man to take up arms in defense of his country? If I pray the Lord's Prayer daily, haven't I satisfied God?

[1 : 15] Is there any merit in fasting? Is it contrary to a life of faith to have a bank account and to take out life insurance? Must I ignore the sins that I see in others?

Or do I have a right to judge when I see sin in them? How can a man be saved? Aren't there many different ways to God? And of course, the one we hear a lot, Won't the sincere heathen as well as the Christian be accepted by God?

Does that sound like it was lifted out of today's headlines? Actually, that quote was written by J. Dwight Pentecost in 1975, so getting close to 50 years now since he wrote that quote.

And he went on to say, These questions being asked today are not new. They are as old as the ages. The multitudes who came face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry were asking them.

It was those specific questions that Christ answered in the Sermon on the Mount. In a day when the moral fiber of our nation is rotting and the foundations are being undermined, we need to be grounded in the standards of the Word of God.

[2 : 26] We need to know the demands that the holiness of God makes upon those who would walk in fellowship with him. For that reason, the portion of the Gospel of Matthew that we call the Sermon on the Mount is of great importance today.

So listen to part of that quote again. He says, In a day when the moral fiber of our nation is rotting and the foundations are being undermined, we need to be grounded in the standards of the Word of God.

If that was true in 1975, how much more so is that true today? Tonight we'll begin a study through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5 through 7.

John Stott says, 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 my mind, no two words sum up its intention better or indicate more clearly its challenge to the modern world than the expression, Christian counterculture.

[3 : 42] We'll use the first two verses of Matthew 5 as a starting point, and this lesson will serve as an introduction. Next week we'll actually start digging into the sermon in more detail.

So let's read Matthew 5, 1 and 2. They say, Seeing the crowds, he, talking about Jesus, went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, And I'll leave you in suspense to what he said for now.

You know, the hardest part about teaching the Bible verse by verse is deciding what portion of Scripture to do next when one study ends.

We know from 2 Timothy 3.16 and from our own experience that all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. But let's be honest, some Scripture is more edifying and more exciting than other passages. I'd planned to teach a different book of the Bible, but my thoughts kept coming back to teaching something that Jesus himself spoke.

[4 : 51] That's why I initially thought about doing the Sermon on the Mount. When I started digging into the verses and the commentators that we trust, an even better reason to study this passage emerged, and that is that the Sermon on the Mount demonstrates that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings.

That's the main idea for this lesson. The Sermon on the Mount demonstrates that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings. We also could translate the word blessings as happiness. A lot of your Bibles probably say happiness, starting in verse 3 of chapter 5. Most of us know some people who seem like they would rather be miserable than happy, but in general, people want to be happy.

Before you start thinking that all this blessings and happiness talk means that we've taken a leap into the prosperity gospel camp, look at the word just before blessings in the main idea.

The Sermon on the Mount teaches us how to obtain true blessings. Those are blessings or happiness as Jesus defines it in the Bible. Here's a warning up front.

[6 : 04] When we start working through the text and see how we measure up to the standard for happiness that Jesus describes in the Sermon on the Mount, we'll be miserable if we try to achieve that standard on our own.

And that's why we'll see that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings. Here's another John Stott quote. He said, That should sound familiar.

It matches what we saw in Genesis when we studied Joseph's life. It matches what we've been seeing in Exodus. And now as we jump to the New Testament for a while, we see the same theme in Matthew.

And as we look at verses 1 and 2 to help us deal with three things about the Sermon on the Mount tonight, we'll look at those three things and then talk about what we'll start covering next week.

The first thing we will see is the context. So let's look at the context first. Verse 1 says, Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

[7 : 36] Understanding the proper context is key to understanding the Scripture's meaning. Jumping into a book at the fifth chapter increases the risk of taking a passage out of context.

So we'll spend a little bit tonight talking about who Matthew is, talking about his purpose for his gospel, and also talking about what happened in the first four chapters.

To meet Matthew, we're actually going to go to Luke, though. So flip over to Luke chapter 5, and we'll start in verse 27. Luke 5, verses 27 and 28 document when Jesus called Matthew.

Luke 5, verses 27 and 28 say, After this, he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth.

And he said to him, Follow me. And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. Tax collectors were hated by nearly every Jew.

[8 : 41] They made their living by collecting money for the Romans who were occupying Israel. The Romans allowed the tax collectors to charge as much tax as they wanted. The only catch was that Rome had to get its fair share first.

And because the tax collectors worked with the Roman government, most Jews considered the tax collectors to be traitors. For biblical evidence of what the Jews thought about tax collectors, just look at the next two verses in Luke chapter 5.

Luke 5, 29 and 30 say, And Levi made him, talking about Jesus, a great feast in his house. And there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at the table with them.

And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? So tax collectors were even worse than sinners in the legalist minds.

In verse 31, Jesus jumps in to answer the question. Verse 31 says, And Jesus answered them, Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

[9 : 54] And then, of course, we see these famous words from Jesus in verse 32. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Matthew's gospel was written at a relatively early

date, prior to the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.

Some people think he wrote it as soon as A.D. 50, so not all that long after Jesus was on the earth. Matthew wrote his gospel for a Jewish audience.

We'll see the reasons why in just a minute, but the first one goes back to the very opening of Matthew, where he has the genealogy. He traces the genealogy only as far back as Abraham. If you look at Luke's gospel, he wants to show Christ as the redeemer of humanity, and Luke goes all the way back as far as Adam's. But Matthew's purpose is somewhat narrower. He wants to demonstrate that Christ is the king and messiah of Israel. Matthew's gospel quotes more than 60 times from the Old Testament prophetic passages, and he emphasizes how Christ is the fulfillment of all those passages.

[11:07] Matthew usually cites Jewish custom without explaining it, and when we see Jewish custom in the other gospels, they consistently explain what that custom means.

Matthew constantly refers to Christ as the son of David, and Matthew even guards Jewish sensibilities regarding the name of God. We'll see Matthew refer to the kingdom of heaven, where the other gospels speak of the kingdom of God.

All of Matthew's major themes are rooted in the Old Testament and set in light of Israel's messianic expectations. So let's look at the genealogy that starts Matthew's gospel.

Matthew 1.1 says, The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. So notice how he stops with Abraham and doesn't go back any further.

Then if you look a little bit farther down, in chapter 1, verse 18, starts the story of Jesus' virgin birth. Then verses 22 and 23 of Matthew 1 have the first instance of Matthew quoting Jewish prophecy.

[12:19] Listen to Matthew 1, verses 22 and 23. He says, All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Moving to chapter 2, chapter 2 documents the visit of the wise men, along with Herod's plot to kill Jesus, and Joseph's decision to depart for Egypt because of that threat.

Chapter 2 ends with Joseph bringing the young family back to Israel after Herod's death. So look at Matthew 2, verses 19 through 23.

Matthew 2, verses 19 through 23 say this, But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.

And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.

[13:35] And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

In Joseph's mind, Joseph took the family to Nazareth to avoid Archelaus. Matthew makes it clear that Joseph's actions were another fulfillment of Jewish prophecy.

Then when we jump to Matthew chapter 3, we see that several years have passed. In the opening verses of chapter 3, John the Baptist begins telling people that Old Testament prophecy about the kingdom is being fulfilled.

Listen to Matthew chapter 3, verses 1 and 2. In those days, John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord, make his path straight.

[14:44] Chapter 3 ends with Jesus' baptism, And listen to verses 13 through 17 of Matthew 3. Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him.

John would have prevented him, saying, I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? But Jesus answered him, Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him.

And behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. This brings us to chapter 4 in Matthew.

Chapter 4 starts with the devil's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. In verse 4-12, Matthew begins documenting Jesus' ministry. Look at verses 12 through 16 of Matthew 4.

[15 : 53] Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled, the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them light has dawned.

Are you catching all the references to how Jesus fulfilled Jewish prophecy? In verse 17 of chapter 4, Matthew makes his first citation of Jesus' preaching.

Matthew 4-17 says, From that time, Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Then in verses 18 through 22 of Matthew 4, Jesus begins calling his disciples. After that, Jesus' ministry turns to the crowds for a time. Listen to the last few verses of the chapter, starting with verse 23.

And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every affliction among the people.

[17 : 21] So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures and paralytics, and he healed them.

And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from the Jordan. That's a whirlwind overview of what we're skipping by starting this study in chapter 5, but we need to get that picture.

So were the crowds following Jesus because they were excited about him calling them to repentance? It's pretty obvious there. The crowds were very much like people we see today.

The crowds were following Jesus because they wanted something from him. And with that in mind, look again at verse 1 of chapter 5. Seeing the crowds, he, Jesus, went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

So to whom was Jesus talking when he gave the Sermon on the Mount that comes up in the next verses? He's talking to his disciples. Some people jump to the conclusion that Jesus gave the Sermon to the crowds, but verse 1 clearly says that the audience was his disciples.

[18 : 44] Jesus' main purpose in going up a hill or mountain to teach was to withdraw from the great crowds. He had to escape not just to secure for himself the opportunity to be alone and pray, but also to give more concentrated instruction to his disciples.

That was another quote from John Stott, and he continues by saying, it seems likely that he deliberately went up on the mountain to teach, to draw a parallel between Moses, who received the law in Mount Sinai, and himself, who explained its implications to his disciples on the so-called Mount of the Beatitudes, the traditional site of the Sermon on the north shores of the Lake of Galilee.

Although Jesus was greater than Moses, and although his message was more gospel than law, he did choose twelve apostles as the nucleus of a new Israel to correspond to the twelve patriarchs and tribes of the old.

He also claimed to be both teacher and lord, gave his own authoritative interpretation of Moses' law, issued commandments, and expected obedience. He even later invited his disciples to assume his yoke or submit to his teaching as they had previously borne the yoke of the Torah.

Now that we've talked about the context, let's move to the second section of tonight's study. And in this section, we'll talk about the contrast.

[20 : 11] So we've seen the context, now we'll see the contrast. Matthew 5.2 says, And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, You might be thinking, I don't see a contrast in that verse.

Where is it? Well, the contrasts come in everything that Jesus says after he opened his mouth and started talking. So as we go through the Sermon on the Mount in future weeks, we'll see that every section includes at least one contrast between how followers of Christ should live and how the unsaved live.

If you doubt that, read ahead in the days to come, and that way you can keep me honest. Jesus emphasized that his true followers, the citizens of God's kingdom, were to be entirely different from others.

They were not to take their cue from the people around them, but from him, and so proved to be genuine children of their heavenly Father. Skip ahead to Matthew 6 for just a little bit.

Our next two cross-references come from that chapter. Verses 7 and 8 of Matthew 6 have a contrast between believers and pagans.

[21 : 26] Jesus said, And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, this theme is elaborated. Believer's character was to be completely distinct from that admired by the world. They were to shine like lights in the prevailing darkness.

Their righteousness was to exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, both in ethical behavior and in religious devotion, while their love was to be greater and their ambition nobler than those of their pagan neighbors.

Some of the contrasts compare true believers with the supposed religious elite. So for an example of that, skip up to the first few verses of Matthew 6, and we'll look at Matthew 6, 1 through 3.

Jesus said there, Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

[22 : 37] Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward.

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.

Several times, Jesus will correct or expand upon the teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees by using the phrase, You have heard that it was said, but I tell you.

And the first of those comes in Matthew 5, verses 21 and 22. So look at Matthew 5, verses 21 and 22.

Jesus said, You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says, You fool, will be liable to the hell of fire. Be looking for more of those contrasts as we go through the verses in the coming weeks.

[23 : 53] I just wanted to give you a little bit of flavor of what you can expect to see. So we've looked at the Sermon on the Mount's context. We've touched on some of its contrast.

The final section that we'll look at tonight we'll look at some of the controversies. We'll look at some of the controversies. Growing up in churches that had similar theology to what we believe, I really didn't know until I started studying some of the commentaries that there are so many differing opinions on the Sermon on the Mount and what it means.

And we'll touch on some of those tonight. But before we get to that, I want to refer back to a quote that I used in the introduction. That's where John Stott said in part, 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.

We can debate some other time whether the Sermon on the Mount really is the best known teaching of Jesus. I saw one survey out there that said they thought people called it the Sermon on the Mount because he gave it on horseback.

so we know those people really didn't know the Sermon very well. It may not be the best known but I think we're probably safe to say it may be the most misunderstood because many times people quote the Sermon on the Mount without knowing that the quote actually comes from that sermon.

[25 : 21] Even unbelievers like to toss out quotes like these, if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Judge not that you be not judged.

That's one of the favorites you'll hear from unbelievers. Do not throw your pearls before pigs.

Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.

What do we know that last quote as commonly? Right, that's what most people call the golden rule. And we'll study the real meaning of those quotes when we get to those verses.

But let's touch now on some of the controversies concerning the Sermon on the Mount and the incorrect teachings about it. And then we'll talk about our approach to this study. But let's consider

first why those incorrect teachings sometimes happen.

Some of the wrong teachings happen because one of Satan's favorite approaches is to cast doubt upon God's Word. He's been doing that since Genesis 3.1 in the Garden of Eden.

[26 : 26] Remember what Genesis 3.1 says. It says, Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the women, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

If Satan could speak directly to us today about the Sermon on the Mount, he might say something like, Surely a loving God would never expect you to live up to such a high standard.

That's unfair. Incorrect teaching and interpretations also happen when people who have never known God tried to interpret the Bible. Without the Holy Spirit's guidance, people draw wrong conclusions consistently.

A third reason for varying interpretations is that a lot of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount are hard. That has led even some solid Bible teachers to interpret the Sermon on the Mount differently.

Regardless of the cause, here are just a few of the incorrect teachings about the Sermon on the Mount. And keep in mind these are the incorrect teachings first. The first one is that the Sermon on the Mount is legalistic.

[27 : 36] To this way of thinking, the Sermon is essentially a carryover from the law of the Old Testament instead of being the gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and his atoning work on Calvary.

This misunderstanding of the Sermon on the Mount betrays great insensitivity to Christ's teachings. In Matthew's gospel, Jesus Christ is pictured as a second lawgiver like Moses, but the point of the comparison lies mostly in contrast.

Chapter 5 closes with the statement devastating to all attempts to exalt human righteousness as a means of salvation. Matthew 5.48 is where Jesus says, Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

That's not legalism, and it's not Old Testament law restated. It's a condemnation of all attempts to please God by legalism so that the way may be cleared for a man to come to God by faith in Jesus Christ and to receive a new life capable of what God requires.

To identify the Sermon on the Mount with legalism is to miss the entire flavor of what our Lord is saying. Christ's ethics go beyond the law of Moses in order that we might be brought to the feet of the gospel.

[28 : 55] A second incorrect teaching is that we cannot take the Sermon on the Mount seriously because of its impossible standards. So one thing is positive about this teaching.

It at least recognizes the truly high standards that are found here, but where it goes wrong is that it fails to recognize that Christians are called precisely to that impossible standard and it also doesn't recognize that we have the Holy Spirit to help us achieve that standard.

To reject the Sermon on the Mount in this way is also to take a high-handed approach to the Bible. That's the error of liberalism which feels at liberty to accept one part of Scripture while it rejects another.

The next incorrect teaching we'll look at is that the Sermon on the Mount is for the future Messianic Kingdom rather than for the current time. Several otherwise solid Bible teachers believe this, but this teaching is rather easy to debunk.

For one thing, notice the tense of the Scripture. Throughout the sermon, Jesus speaks in present tense rather than future tense. We need to work hard at reading the Bible, but we should never overcomplicate the plain reading of the text.

[30 : 13] And for more proof that the sermon applies to the current day, look at Matthew 5.11. In Matthew 5.11, Jesus says, Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Then he goes on in verse 12 to say, Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Believers will not be persecuted during the millennial kingdom. So if Jesus managed words to apply to the millennial or messianic kingdom, he would have no need to talk about persecution and how we should handle it.

The world of the Sermon on the Mount is a real and sinful world. It's a world of tax collectors, unjust officials, hypocrites, thieves, a world of those who are weak or poor, and also a world of false prophets.

It's a statement of how those who are born again by faith in Christ are to live in spite of all that. Here's another incorrect teaching about the Sermon on the Mount, and that is that the Sermon on the Mount is a blueprint for individual salvation.

[31 : 28] Some denominations, particularly Roman Catholicism, say that following the Sermon on the Mount is how an individual gets saved. Sam Storm says, According to Roman Catholicism, the Sermon on the Mount sets before us the conditions of eternal life, the stipulations for justification.

The obedience called for in the sermon, therefore, is to be understood as that which God requires if we are to merit the grace of salvation. To be sure, conduct is declared necessary for entrance into the kingdom, but the conduct demanded represents the good fruit of discipleship, not the basis or the means to achieving discipleship.

Did you catch the biggest flaw in that view? Listen to one sentence again. The obedience called for in the sermon, therefore, is to be understood as what God requires if we are to merit the grace of salvation.

If we merit something, how can it be grace? Grace, by definition, is unmerited favor. So to say that we merited grace is incorrect.

The last incorrect teaching we'll look at is this, and that is that the Sermon on the Mount solely prepares people to hear the gospel. Traditional Lutheranism is at the other end of the spectrum from the Roman Catholics.

[32 : 59] In this view, the Sermon on the Mount simply expounds the law so that people see their need for the gospel. This view is partially true.

The Sermon on the Mount does show people their need for the gospel, but it does much more than that. The Sermon on the Mount also shows how God's people are to conduct themselves.

The Sermon on the Mount portrays the pattern of conduct under kingdom authority, a pattern that demands conformity now, even if perfection won't be achieved until the kingdom's consummation. Now that we've talked about some of the incorrect teachings about the Sermon, let's talk about how we'll approach it during our studies. Put simply, we'll use the standard evangelical approach.

Sam Storm summarizes that approach like this. He says, the standard evangelical approach is to recognize that the kingdom of God has come in the person and work of Jesus.

[33 : 58] It is fulfilled in him, but will not be consummated until his second coming. The stipulations, standards, exhortations, warnings, and promises of the Sermon, properly interpreted, of course, are a model for how the citizens of God's kingdom are to live here and now.

Listen to that last sentence one more time. The stipulations, standards, exhortations, warnings, and promises of the Sermon, properly interpreted, of course, are a model for how the citizens of God's kingdom are to live here and now.

That brings us full circle to the main idea. The Sermon on the Mount demonstrates that the new birth is essential to obtain true blessings. For believers, true happiness and blessings are possible only when we live as God expects us to live.

Only those who are born again can begin to live up to that standard. Here's another John Stott quote. The standards of the Sermon are neither readily obtainable by every man nor totally unattainable by any man.

To put them beyond anybody's reach is to ignore the purpose of Christ's sermon. To put them within everybody's reach is to ignore the reality of man's sin.

[35 : 20] They are attainable, all right, but only by those who have experienced the new birth which Jesus told Nicodemus was the indispensable condition of seeing and entering God's kingdom.

The righteousness Jesus described in the sermon is an inner righteousness. Although it manifests itself outwardly and visibly in words, deeds, and relationships, it remains essentially a righteousness of the heart.

It is what a man thinks in his heart and where he fixes his heart which really matter. And here's a quote from James Montgomery Boyce.

He says, Show me a man who claims that he is living up to the standards of the Sermon on the Mount and I will show you a man who has either never read it, does not understand what it is teaching, or who is lying.

The Sermon on the Mount does not encourage righteousness in man apart from Christ. It condemns him for falling short of God's righteousness and it drives him in desperation to the cross. [36 : 24] We know about our sinfulness from Romans 3.23. That's where Paul wrote for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But we have this assurance from Romans 10 verses 9 through 12.

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him.

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Many passages in the Sermon on the Mount will be difficult to study because we'll see how far we fail to measure up to God's standard.

Ultimately, we'll see the keys to true blessings, the blessings or happiness that can be found only through the new birth in Christ. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones preached 60 sermons on Matthew 5 through 7.

[37 : 37] We'll likely take less time to go through these verses, but listen to what he had to say at the end of his introduction. He said, the more we live and try to practice this Sermon on the Mount, the more shall we experience blessing.

Look at the blessings that are promised to those who do practice it. The trouble with much holiness teaching is that it leaves out the Sermon on the Mount and asks us to experience sanctification.

That is not the biblical method. He goes on to say, if you want to have power in your life and to be blessed, go straight to the Sermon on the Mount. Live and practice it and give yourself to it and as you do so, the promised blessings will come.

Jesus says in Matthew 5, 6, blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be satisfied. If you want to be filled, don't seek some mystic blessing.

Don't rush to meetings hoping that you will get it. Face the Sermon on the Mount and its implications and demands. See your utter needs and then you will get it. It is the direct road to blessing.

[38 : 44] He then challenged his congregation with these words. He said, the world today is looking for and desperately needs true Christians. I am never tired of saying that what the church needs to do is not to organize evangelistic campaigns to attract outside people, but to begin herself to live the Christian and life.

If she, the church, did that, men and women would be crowding into our buildings. They would say, what is the secret of this? That's a challenging quote, but true believers know that the secret really is no secret.

The Bible contains the answer for how we can live a blessed life. God has provided that answer. Remember Romans 8, verses 1 through 4. That's where Paul wrote, There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemns sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the opportunity to study your word tonight and as we get into the Sermon on the Mount in the following weeks, help us realize that the path to true blessing lies in following your word and what you ask us to do.

[40 : 24] Also, help give us the power through the Holy Spirit to live up to your standard. We thank you also that when we fail to meet that standard and we will, that you will forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.

Help us be more and more willing to spread that message to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.