

The Gospel

ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

Week 3: Sermon on the Mount (Part 1)

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

There are four crucial components for a group to maintain its health: Word, prayer, relationships, and reaching out. In this guide, you will study the biblical passage in three steps: observation, interpretation, and application. As the group leader, you are free to use any part of this guide that can assist you in achieving this goal.

CONNECT

- Describe an experience where the reality was drastically different than your expectations.
- Can you think of an experience in a relationship where it was really hard to figure out the right thing to do? How did you decide?
- Can you recount a famous instruction from the sermon on the mount?

INTRODUCTION

Matthew has introduced us to Jesus as the Messiah who brings God's kingdom into the world. In the sermon on the mount, he explains to his disciples what life in that kingdom looks like—the benefits, the ethics, the motivation. We're not sure what they expected Jesus to say about the kingdom, but we can imagine that what he said took them by surprise. By subverting their expectations and ours, Jesus explains how the kingdom is a source of profound blessing, as well as a paradigm that totally transforms our every action.

OBSERVATIONS & INTERPRETATION

Read: Matthew 5:1-11

Why are disciples blessed, even if they face "all kinds of evil" in this age?

Read: Matthew 5:17-20, as well as one of the following paragraphs of your choice—anger (vv. 21-26), lust (vv. 27-30), divorce (vv. 31-32), oaths (vv. 33-36), or retaliation (vv. 38-42).

How does the paragraph you chose help explain what Jesus meant by saying that he came not to abolish but to fulfill the Law and Prophets?

Read: Matthew 5:43-48

This paragraph explains the rationale behind Jesus' instructions. How does this paragraph help you make sense of the commands that came before it?

APPLICATION

- What have you learned from this passage and how can you apply it to your life?
- Jesus tells us to rejoice because our reward is great in heaven. Are their painful realities you're facing right now? What aspects of our reward in heaven do you need to celebrate?
- Jesus' instructions call us to ask ourselves, Is love for God and others my motivation here? Is there an area of life right now where that self-reflection feels vital? What does it look like to lean into it?
- How can the gospel—the good news that God the Father chose to love his enemies—empower you to seek his kingdom and his righteousness?

PRAYER

- Ask God to reveal motives that are at odds with his.
- Spend time thanking God for loving us while we were still his enemies.