

Session 6

Jesus' First Teaching: Mt 5-7 The "Sermon on the Mount"

In the opening four chapters of the Gospel, Matthew introduces us to the Jewish Jesus, confirms his insertion into Jewish history, portrays Jesus as faithful Israelite and loyal son of God, and affirms that God's "Kingdom" (*Basileia*) is present now.

Jesus calls together and appoints his first "household" of disciples. Jesus begins his ministry with deeds of healing and teaching. Now, in Mt 5-9, that teaching becomes explicit in his first teaching-discourse focussed on revealing the meaning of authentic discipleship (Mt 5-7). His deeds of healing (Mt 8-9), the focus of our next session, flow from this.

Video Session 6

As a result of this teaching video, you will:

- Analyse Jesus' instruction about discipleship in the "Sermon on the Mount";
- Discern the primary call of discipleship as Matthew's Jesus teaches;
- Understand how Jesus' teaching is grounded in the Torah.



The Lord's Prayer, in Matthew 6:9, 1500, Vienna

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Mt 5-7: Jesus' First Teaching

Context

- *The Sermon on the Mount* is addressed to Jesus' disciples and to Matthew's audience. The Sermon explicates the qualities of discipleship and how Torah teaching can be deepened by right conduct that leads to being "complete" or "whole" as God is whole (5.48). This summarises Jesus' teaching.
- *Structure*: The Sermon unfolds in the following manner:

- 4:23-5:2 Setting & Introduction
- 5:3-16 Blessed household of disciples set before the world
 - 5:3-12 Blessed community, now & hereafter
 - 5:13 'Salt of the Earth'
 - 5:14-16 'Light of the World'
- 5:17-7:12 The household of disciples living out its role
 - 5:17-47 Torah interpretation re 'surpassing righteousness'
 - 5:48 Overriding principle 'Be complete...'
 - 6:1-18 Righteousness in acts directed to God
 - 6:19-34 True 'treasure' in respect to material goods
 - 7:1-11 Righteousness in relation to others
 - 7:12 Conclusion: Golden Rule
- 7:13-27 Eschatological warnings: Action required
- 7:28-29 Conclusion: Impact of the sermon ('...not like the scribes')

Summary

There are several features about Jesus' teaching in the *Sermon on the Mount* that are worth noting:

- The "blessed person" is one who has been touched by God and whose hope is in God.
- God's reign is shaped *now* as we live, a present reality as we live. Awaits completion.
- Jesus' teaching in Matthew is Torah based and in him, the Jewish Torah is renewed in terms of 'wholeness' and personal integrity. Jesus' is

concerned, in light of this, with spiritual integrity or holiness, not “perfection”—an important translation correction.

- Pious practices have a place in the spiritual journey as a means to an end, namely communion with God. Central to this is the place of prayer, which is to be “from the heart”, not formulaic. The “Our Father” is the quintessential prayer that expresses everything about God and for what the one praying seeks.
- The life of discipleship is guided by the invitation to live critically and these two questions: Where does my heart lie? What place does God have?

For Reflection

- : What do you think is Jesus’ key teaching for you?