



STUDY ONE

Gospel, Kingdom & Discipleship

Matthew 5-7; 5:1-2; 7:28-29

Introduction

Matthew 5-7 is a weighty passage of Scripture containing several well recognized teachings on Christian discipleship and ethics, such as the Lord's prayer and the Golden Rule. Due to its prominence in Christian literature, people have wrestled with its interpretation throughout the history of the church in the context of that culture and society. The aim of this study series is to wrestle anew with the words of the Lord Jesus to contextualize and respond to the message today.

Since this first study guide covers the entirety of Matthew 5-7 – future studies will delve into specific sections – the focus will be on familiarizing ourselves with an overview on these chapters and having higher-level discussion.

Group Study

1. Take some time in the group to slowly read aloud Matthew 5-7 and imagine being one of the disciples and hearing these words for the first time. What feelings come up after reading this passage? Which sections are particularly encouraging or challenging?
2. Matthew 5-7 has been traditionally called the Sermon on the Mount since at least the time of Augustine of Hippo in his commentary *De sermone Domini in monte* (Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount) written in 393. The mount is a reference to Matthew 5:1-2 where Jesus goes up to a mountain and then sits down to teach. Read Exodus 24:12-18. How does Matthew 5:1-2 echo Moses receiving the Law on Mount Sinai? How is Jesus different from Moses? Is Jesus adding more laws to the Torah or is something else happening?
3. The sweet spot of the gospel is that Jesus is the Christ / Messiah (both mean *anointed*), the King of the Kingdom of Heaven. From Matthew 5:1-2, Jesus is teaching his disciples in the presence of the crowds about kingdom living and the

lifestyle expected of those that follow him. Read John 1:17. How are Jesus' words a radical departure from legalism, a call to authentic discipleship, and an invitation to embrace the grace of God?

4. From Matthew 7:28-29, what are the reasons that the crowds are astonished? In what ways does Jesus' words reveal his authority and identity?

Personal Reflection

1. Do the words of Jesus bring me astonishment today? How do I maintain the sense of awe over the Kings' teachings?
2. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenges the conventional religious practices as taught by the scribes, revealing that true righteousness surpasses mere external observance. How do I continue living out a heart-level righteousness that flows from genuine faith?
3. Some would say that Jesus is offering a depiction of "the Good Life" or the true kingdom life in Matthew 5-7. That is a counter story to what the present culture offers and what parts of my story must be reframed to Jesus' narrative?

Prayer

