



Carl Heinrich Bloch, "The Sermon on the Mount"

Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–7:29)

Christ, the New Moses. Marks of the Disciple; Jesus' Authority Stressed. The Beatitudes. Fulfilling the Law—Jesus and the New Moses and the Six Antitheses. "Be Ye 'Perfect.'" True Piety and the Lord's Prayer. Final Eschatological Warnings.

"Consider the Lilies of the Field" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K34a0Bk3>

"Should You Feel Inclined to Censure" (hymn no. 235)

1. Should you feel inclined to censure
Faults you may in others view,
Ask your own heart, ere you venture,
If you have not failings, too.
Let not friendly vows be broken;
Rather strive a friend to gain.
Many words in anger spoken
Find their passage home again.

2. Do not, then, in idle pleasure
Trifle with a brother's fame;
Guard it as a valued treasure,
Sacred as your own good name.
Do not form opinions blindly;
Hastiness to trouble tends;
Those of whom we thought unkindly
Oft become our warmest friends.

<https://www.hymns.org/music/library/hymns/should-you-feel-inclined-to-censure?lang=en>

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–7:29)

Matthew's First Discourse

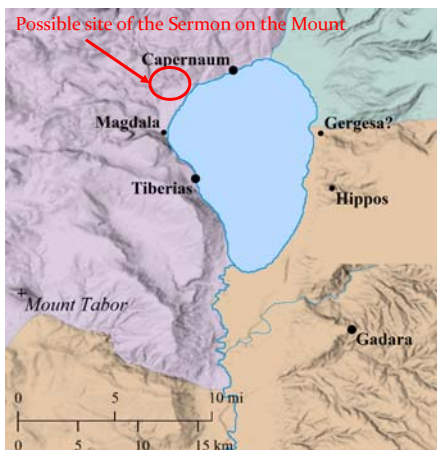
- **“The Constitution of the Christian”**
- After the Infancy Narrative (chs. 1–2), the Sermon on the Mount is the next major Matthean addition to the basic Marcan narrative
 - Ends Part 1: Proclamation of the Kingdom (3:1–7:29)
- Many of the teachings here appear in different places in Luke's gospel
- Opening Formula (5:1–2)
 - **Jesus' going up a mountain (reminiscent of Moses' ascending Sinai)**
 - **Jesus' sitting down to teach (a rabbinic posture)**; he then “opened his mouth and taught them, saying . . .”
- Concluding Formula (7:28–29)
 - “when Jesus had ended these sayings” (a formula Matthew frequently uses to end one of his five blocks of discourse)
 - notes that **the people were astonished “for he taught them as one having authority . . .”**

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Traditional Site of the Sermon on the Mount



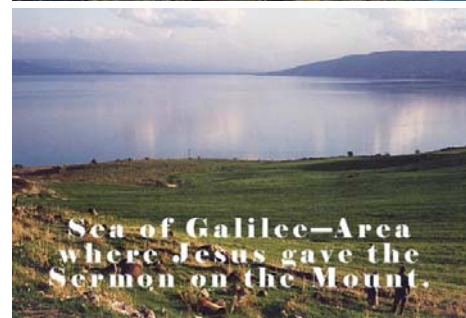
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10. Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-7:29)



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Audience

- The **Disciples**, presumably the Twelve
 - “These are the words which Jesus taught **his disciples** that they should say unto the people . . .” (Matthew 7:1 JST; see also 6:1 and 7:4 JST)
 - This affects the application of some of the teaching
- The **multitudes** remained below
 - Jesus may have repeated some of the basic teaching to the crowds when he came down the mountain
 - Cf. The “**Sermon on the Plain**” (Luke 6:17-49)
- Compare to the “**Sermon at the Temple**” (3 Nephi 12:1-17:4)
 - [Instruction to the **Disciples 1**: Commission (11:18-28)]
 - Instruction to the **Multitude 1**: Requirements of the Christian Life (12:1-13:24)
 - Instruction to the **Disciples 2**: God Will Provide (13:25-34)
 - Instruction to the **Multitude 2**: Judgment and the Will of God (14:1-15:10)
 - Instruction to the **Disciples 3**: Christ and Israel (15:11-16:20)
 - Instruction to the **Multitude 3**: Ponder and Pray (17:1-4)

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Structure

Our first extended example of the Master's discourse, the Sermon on the Mount is both *ethical* and *eschatological*, teaching how disciples should live and giving promises and warnings about his final coming

- Opening Formula (5:1-2)
- **The Kingdom of Heaven: The Beatitudes** (5:3-12)
- **Marks of the Disciple** (5:13-16)
- **The Fulfillment of the Law** (5:17-48)
 - Old Law not Annulled (5:21-20)
 - **6 Antitheses** (5:21-47)
 - **The Great Injunction: Be Ye Perfect** (5:48)
- **True Piety** (6:1-18)
 - Almsgiving (6:1-4)
 - Prayer and forgiveness (6:5-15)
 - The Lord's Prayer (6:9-13)
 - Fasting (6:16-18)
- **Orientation towards God** (6:19-34)
- **Proper Conduct** (7:1-12)
- **Warnings** (7:13-27)
- Concluding Formula (7:28-29)



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The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)

9 Beatitudes, from the Latin title *beatus*: "happy" or "fortunate"

- The Greek *makarios* was later translated as the Latin *beatus*, but what should it be in English?
 - **"Blessed,"** too theological
 - **"Happy,"** too psychological or emotional
 - **"Congratulations"** perhaps catches the ancient idea most fully
- Regardless of the translation, *the qualities Jesus laid out and their spiritual results were countercultural and not what was expected*
- Poor (or broken) in spirit
 - "... who come unto me" (3 Nephi 12:3)
- Mourn
- Meek (gentle < humble, powerless)
- Hunger and thirst for righteousness
 - "... with the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 12:6)
- Merciful
- Pure in heart
- Peacemakers
 - *Peace with God, peace with those around us, peace with nations, sharing the peace of Christ...*
 - Note how the ascending order of the beatitudes helps us be more effective peace makers
- Persecuted for righteousness
- **Persecuted for Christ's sake** (the only beatitude in the second person)
- **The Result: Marks of the Disciple** (5:13-16)

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Jesus' Authority Stressed

- **“Verily (*amēn*) I say unto you . . .”**
 - “*Amen* . . .”: authoritative introductory formula
 - We say “amen” to agree with a preceding prayer or to state that something is true after we heard it, but Jesus said “amen” *before* he taught
 - effectively, **“What I am about to say is true!”**
- **“For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” (7:29)**
 - See 3 Nephi 15:4-5, Behold, I say unto you that the law is fulfilled that was given unto Moses. **Behold, I am he that gave the law**, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel . . .”

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Fulfilling the Law

- “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, ***till all be fulfilled.***” (5:18)
- Fulfill:
 - to perform, execute, accomplish
 - **to fill completely, to make complete . . . i.e., to make deeper!**
 - **to fill the requirements of**, answer (a purpose), comply with (conditions)
 - **to bring to an end, finish, complete** (a period, portion of time, a work, etc.)
- Meaning of fulfilling the law here?
 - **Types and shadows of Christ would soon be fulfilled** (see 3 Nephi 12:46, 15:4, 7)
 - **Fulfilling the intent** (spirit vs. letter; principle vs. observance)
 - **Fulfilling with a higher standard** (lower speed limit example)

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Jesus and the Law of Moses

- Remember, the Law of Moses was **not** just about sacrifices, rituals, and seemingly picky rules!
 - The main thrust of the law was loving God and loving others and living correctly (being at peace) with each*
- The law included many eternal principles that existed before and continued in effect afterwards
- How Jesus fulfilled the law
 - With his sacrifice, certainly
 - Yet when the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, Jesus had not yet accomplished his atoning sacrifice (contrast with the Nephite Sermon at the Temple)
 - Also with his teachings
 - He began to “fulfill” or complete the meaning of many important commandments **during this very sermon** by calling people to **live a higher standard** and **accomplish the intent of all divine law**
 - This is seen in the following pericopes, the so-called “Six Antitheses” (5:21–47)

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Six Antitheses (Matthew 5:21–47)

See Huntsman, “The Six Antitheses,” *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture*, 93–109 (packet)

- Dialectic (Classical logical reasoning)**
 - thesis** (proposition: here, the Mosaic Law)
 - antithesis** (counterproposition: here, the law of Christ)
 - Synthesis** (logical conclusion arising from thesis and antithesis: *here no synthesis because Jesus’ counterpropositions are authoritative and stand!*)
- On Murder and Anger (5:21–26)**
 - Extends the Sixth Commandment to the feelings and motivations behind anger killing
 - without a cause: the JST and 3 Nephi 12:22 omit this “escape clause”
- On Adultery and Lust (5:27–30)**
 - Extends the Seventh Commandment to the feelings and motivations behind sexual sins
- On Marriage and Divorce (5:31–32)**
 - A “hard saying” of Jesus about the sanctity of marriage (but with a clarification of Mark 10:11–12)
- On False Witness and Swearing (5:33–37)**
- On Resisting Evil (5:38–42)**
 - Rejected OT ideas of retribution and retaliation (Lev. 24:20), which are replaced with **forgiveness and love**
- On Enemies (5:43–45)**
 - Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you**

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“Be Ye ‘Perfect’ . . .”

- **The Great Injunction:** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven” (5:48)
 - *teleios*: Greek for “complete, whole, mature, full-grown”
 - For Aristotle, the *telos* or “end” for which something was meant is its purpose (the full-grown oak tree is the *telos* of the acorn)
- **Even Christ, though “perfect” morally, is not perfect (i.e., mature and fully the measure of his creation) until *after* the resurrection (see 3 Nephi 12:48)**
 - Jesus’ mortal ministry among the Jews
 - morally perfect, in the sense of completely flawless in choosing right over wrong, being sinless, etc.
 - Still subject to death, pain; not yet glorified
 - Jesus’ Nephite visitation
 - Morally perfect
 - Resurrected, a body like the Father’s
 - Spiritually complete, full-grown
 - **Physical completeness or wholeness will come with the resurrection**
 - **We must seek to obtain the moral and spiritual stature of the Father and the Son**

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True Piety (Matthew 6:1–18): Proper Actions

Ethics: doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason

- **True worship and righteous acts come from the heart**
 - Cf. the Beatitudes and being persecuted not only for righteousness but for Jesus—i.e., having him in our hearts as our example and our motivation
- Almsgiving (6:1–4)
- Prayer and forgiveness (6:5–15)
 - Emphasis on the omniscience of God, focus of prayer
 - **The Lord’s Prayer (6:9–13) [more next slide]**
- Fasting (6:16–18)
- Orientation towards God
- Proper Conduct (7:1–12)

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The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13)

Our Father which art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:

[For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen].'

- **Address**
 - Father image in antiquity and today
- **3 God Petitions** (sc. the Jewish tradition of blessing God, not just asking him to bless us . . .)
 - Standard Jewish prayer form: "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, king of the universe . . ."
 - Messianic expectations
 - Submission to God
- Expresses the eschatological hope for the kingdom of God to break into the world
- **3 human petitions**
 - Needs
 - Forgiveness
 - Being spared from trials (*peirasmos*, KJV, "temptation") and evil
- **Closing doxology**
 - Expression of "praise" (*doxos*)
 - "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" lacking in many early manuscripts

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Orientation towards God and Proper Conduct

- **Orientation towards God (6:19–34): Proper Attitudes**
 - **Wealth and True Treasure** (Matt 6:19–21)
 - **Dependence upon God** (Matt 6:22–24)
 - "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light" (6:22 NRSV)
 - **Mammon**, Aramaic for "wealth"; radical renunciation of the world and its concerns
- **Proper Conduct (7:1–12): More Proper Actions**
 - **Judging (7:1–5)**
 - "... Judge not *unrighteously*, that ye be not judged: *but judge righteous judgment*" (7:1–2 JST)
 - **Treatment of sacred things (7:6)**
 - **Prayer with faith (7:7–12)**

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Final Eschatological Warnings (7:13–29)

- Strait versus wide gate (7:13–14)
 - *Strait* here means “narrow”
- False teachers (7:15–20)
 - Eschatological language: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”
- False Disciples (7:21–23)
- The Wise vs. the Foolish Man (7:24–27)
 - Eschatological warning: “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock . . .” (7:24–25)
 - *The rock is Jesus! (see Helaman 5:12)*
- Jesus’ Authority (7:28–29)