

A Study of the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5-7

True Character

Matthew 5:17-20

How to Interpret the Sermon

- Works Theology?
- Extreme Dispensationalism?
- A Collection of Jesus' Teachings?
- The Sermon on the Mount reveals (1) our need of grace, (2) the culture of heaven, and (3) how to live out these principles today as by the Spirit and the Word.

Philip Yancey:

“The Sermon on the Mount proves that before God we all stand on level ground... We are all desperate, and that is in fact the only state appropriate to a human being who wants to know God. Having fallen from the absolute Ideal, we have nowhere to land but in the safety net of absolute grace.”

Oswald Chambers:

“If Jesus is a teacher only, then all He can do is to tantalize us by erecting a standard we cannot come anywhere near. But if by being born again from above we know Him first as Savior, we know that He did not come to teach us only. He came to make us what He teaches we should be.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“It is possible to understand the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways. But Jesus knows only one possibility: simple surrender and obedience ... He does not mean for us to discuss it as an ideal. He really means for us to get on with it.”

Christ's Introduction to the Sermon

- The Coming of Christ – why did Christ come?
- The Continuity of the Word of God – how is the Word linked together?
- The Content of the Word of God – how should we receive the Word?
- The Character of Christians – how should we follow and obey the sermon?

1. The Coming of Christ, 5:17

- He came with authority: “He taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law” (Matt. 7:29).
- He came not to correct or abolish the Law and the Prophets but to complete them, fulfill them.

Christ's Authority

- Christ fulfilled the Old Testament. “[In Christ God is] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1:9-10).
- We respond to Him and not just His teachings.

2. The Bible's Continuity, 5:18

- Christ is the subject of the whole Bible: “They testify of me” (John 5:39)
- Christ, His Word, and this world are interconnected: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away” (Matt 24:35).
- An Eschatological focus: All of time is wrapped up in the authority of Christ and God's Word.

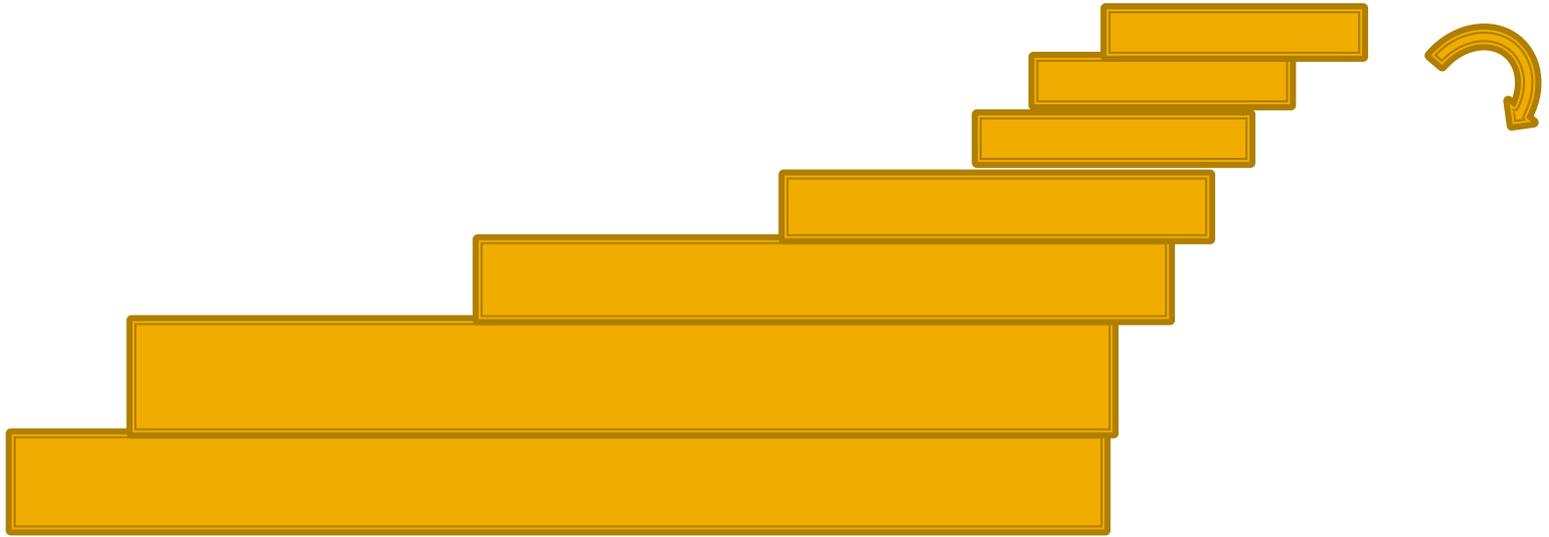
God's Word and our World

“But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water ... By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly” (2 Peter 3:5-7).

3. The Bible's Content, 5:19

- **“Do not go beyond what is written” (1 Cor. 4:6).**
- **All scriptures are equally inspired: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful” (2 Tim. 3:16).**
- **All commands are important: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (James 2:10).**

Legalism's Toppling Tower



Building on God's Foundation

“... the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:13-15)

4. The Christian's Character, 5:20

- A Superior Righteousness in God's Eyes: "But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe" (Rom. 3:22).

4. The Christian's Character, 5:20

- A Superior Righteousness in our Experience:
“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

4. The Christian's Character, 5:20

- A Superior Righteousness in Others' Eyes: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

The Christian Response:

- **Humility:** “Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4)
- **Surrender:** “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand” (Jer. 18:5).