



Sermon on the Mount

The Beatitudes

Content Summary

In God's Kingdom, the ostracized and hurting move from vulnerable to valuable. They get the love and attention normally reserved for self-promoting celebrities.

This doesn't mean we need to *pursue* mourning, being poor in spirit, etc... It simply means that when God's Kingdom is working the way it's supposed to, powerless people who've been excluded from privilege find welcome.

Those who pursue compassion over corruption and peace over conquest find a happy home in God's family.

Conversation Starters

When you think of the people on the margins of society, who comes to mind for you?

What could you do, practically, to satisfy the needs of the powerless and unimportant around you?

Action Challenge

Many categories of people could be said to be on the margins of society, but people experiencing homelessness are no doubt among them. Today, your action challenge is to connect with someone on the streets. Your goal is not just to give them money but to have a conversation. How did they end up there? How long have they been there? Make space to listen, offer food if you have some, and pray if they're willing to receive it. (Note: Please only attempt this particular challenge in a group that includes a trusted adult!)

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them. He said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

MATTHEW 5:1-12



Sermon on the Mount

Salt and Light

Content Summary

Jesus tells his followers to “shine” by doing good deeds, so that other people can get a glimpse of God’s kindness and generosity.

He also uses the symbol of salt to show that he is making his covenant of faithfulness with the everyday, normal people who make up his followers.

Jesus commissions those who follow him to help show the world who God is.

Conversation Starters

Does the idea of “letting your light shine” sound easy or hard for you? Why?

What kind of “good deeds” really show people how great God is? Why?

Action Challenge

Finally, today’s action challenge is to pick out one way you could do good to those around you. Could you sit by the kid who eats lunch all alone? Could you visit a senior living center and lead an activity to show them they matter? Could you tell one of your teammates at work what you appreciate about them? Loving people that are often overlooked is one way to treat people the way God treats us. If asked why you’re doing it, you can tell them you are just doing for them what God has done for you.

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

MATTHEW 5:13-16



Sermon on the Mount

The Fulfillment of the Law

Content Summary

In a world where the religious leaders often bent God's rules to suit their self-centered preferences, Jesus came to show the world what God was really like.

Jesus insisted that our righteousness must surpass that of the "Pharisees and teachers of the law." In other words, it has to be about more than just looking spiritual and holy to others—but about truly loving God and our neighbors.

Jesus's fiercest criticisms are for the religious Pharisees and the teachers of the law.

Conversation Starters

Have you ever purposefully changed the meaning of a rule to excuse what you were doing?

What religious activities do we do to excuse ourselves from really loving people?

Action Challenge

Finally, today's action challenge is about caring for your aging parents or grandparents. Since it's always a good time to call your mom, why don't you pick up the phone and call your mother or grandmother? Ask them about their life. Ask them what makes them feel the most loved and then do it. Even if it costs you time or money, God created us to radically care for each other, not to devise religious ways to make ourselves feel spiritual while excusing ourselves from loving others.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

MATTHEW 5:17-20



Sermon on the Mount

Murder and Anger

Content Summary

People who say Christianity isn't relevant anymore should consider what would happen if people actually followed Jesus's teachings here. School shootings, for one, would be a thing of the past.

Jesus's audience would have taken it for granted that murder was wrong, and so his main purpose here was to take his listeners deeper into the root of the problem: anger.

Jesus says that we should rid ourselves of the emotions of anger and hatred before they turn into actions—and that we should even go out of our way to help others not stay angry with us.

Conversation Starters

Is there anyone you're currently angry with? What would it take to resolve that anger in a healthy way?

Is there anyone you know who's currently angry with you? Is there anything you could do to resolve it?

Action Challenge

There are a few different options for today's action challenge. You could go apologize to someone you were mean to. You could go to a therapy session to start processing some of your anger issues. You could take a conflict resolution workshop to learn skills for effectively processing anger (and practice your peacemaker skills). You could even volunteer with an organization that promotes healing from gun violence, like Students Demand Action. Whatever you do, the goal of today's challenge is to push back against the tide of hatred, anger, and violence in our culture by becoming one less person in whom toxic feelings can grow.

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

MATTHEW 5:21-26



Sermon on the Mount

Adultery and Lust

Content Summary

In an age when consent is often invoked as the gold standard of sexual morality, our culture sometimes frames adultery as more permissible and understandable. But in Jesus's day, having sex outside of marriage was widely considered an egregious offense.

Jesus's purpose was not to explain why adultery was problematic, but to take his listeners into the root of the problem: controlling lust.

Any part of our lives in which we purposefully nourish lust and sexual fixation outside of marriage should have no place in the lives of Jesus followers.

Conversation Starters

What would submitting to Jesus's teachings here free us from?

How do you think watching porn changes us and changes our view of other people?

Action Challenge

Today, your action challenge is to take a personal inventory about how adultery and/or lust have affected your life. What role have these things played in your life and mind? Make a searching and fearless inventory of the role these vices have played in your own life, and make a plan to address them. If this feels too challenging, ask a friend to hold you accountable.

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

MATTHEW 5:27-30



Sermon on the Mount

Divorce

Content Summary

In Jesus's day and age, women were much more economically vulnerable than they are today. Some argued that men should be able to divorce their wives for "any and every reason" (and wives didn't have the power to divorce husbands), but Jesus wanted to prevent women from becoming vulnerable in this way.

Even though today women are less economically vulnerable marriage is still a sacred bond, and not one to be thrown away lightly.

Researchers have found that even in unhappy marriages, choosing to stay together will very often lead to a happy marriage. This requires redirecting energy away from comparison shopping and into investing in the relationship spouses already have.

Conversation Starters

How do Jesus's words against divorce strike you?

How has your life been impacted by divorce?

Action Challenge

Today's action challenge is to find a couple who has been married for a long time, and ask if you can interview them. If they say yes, ask them questions like, What does it take to make marriage last? What's the point of marriage? How has being married changed both of you? What's some advice you would give to young people who are considering marriage? Take notes on their answers and keep them somewhere you won't lose them.

It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

MATTHEW 5:31-32



Sermon on the Mount

Swearing Oaths

Content Summary

Ancient Jews developed an elaborate scheme to get out of commitments when they wanted to get out of them, which had to do with swearing by a whole network of increasingly sacred objects (such as the temple, the gold on the temple, etc.).

Modern versions today might include someone trying to get out of something because they didn't "pinky promise" to do something, they just *promised* to do something.

Whatever the specific excuses may be, Jesus insists that his followers be people who do what they say they're going to do.

Conversation Starters

When are you most tempted to go back on something you promised to do?

What do you think would change about the world if everyone did what they said?

Action Challenge

Today's action challenge is another journaling challenge. Your challenge is to reflect on the power of words, answering the questions, What would it look like to become someone who was trustworthy? and Why do you think doing what we say we'll do matters? And then, if you're feeling brave, ask someone you trust to rank how trustworthy you are—or, you could apologize to someone you flaked out on.

Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

MATTHEW 5:33-37



Sermon on the Mount

Retaliation

Content Summary

Jesus's message here is rooted in his cultural context. But in each example, he invites his followers to creatively, and non-violently, resist oppression and assert their dignity.

Part of Jesus's goal is that our surprising kindness and generosity will expose the shameful oppression and selfishness of our oppressors—while, again, asserting our dignity and value despite their cruelty.

This philosophy of nonviolent resistance is what powered much of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s efforts toward establishing racial equality in the United States.

Conversation Starters

How does it strike you that Jesus encouraged his followers to assert their dignity in the face of their oppressors?

What's a way today that you could creatively respond to oppression with generosity?

Action Challenge

Is there a cultural injustice that's been on your mind lately—or even a personal injustice? What's a way that you could creatively and non-violently expose its evil and create positive pressure for change? Today's action challenge is to take some time to brainstorm ideas with friends and make a plan to put them into action.

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

MATTHEW 5:38-42



Sermon on the Mount

Loving Enemies

Content Summary

The things Jesus tells us to avoid are certainly challenging. But the good things he calls us to *embrace*—love, even for our enemies—are arguably even harder.

Jesus wants us to show love, even to people who treat us hatefully. In this way, he invites us to see beyond others' harmful actions and into their humanity.

The phrase often translated as “be perfect” actually refers to being consistent in our love for unlovable people—in the same way that God is consistent in his love for us.

Conversation Starters

Who is one person you find especially hard to love?

What would it look like to love them anyway?

Action Challenge

For today's action challenge, think of the person you know who is the most unlike you. Maybe they resent you for some reason, or maybe they don't—but today's challenge is to figure out what you can do to proactively, intentionally show love and care to that person. It doesn't have to be a huge gesture, maybe just something as simple as getting them a coffee. Try this and see what happens. And if they ask why, say something simple, like, “I just wanted you to feel seen today.”

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

MATTHEW 5:43-48



Sermon on the Mount

Virtue Signaling

Content Summary

Across three different examples (generosity, prayer, and fasting), Jesus makes the point that he wants his followers to pursue a relationship with him for its own sake—not for the sake of looking spiritual or holy in others' eyes.

There is some tension here with the idea of “letting our light shine before others” from Matthew 5:16. We are asked to do good deeds that others can see—but not to do them solely for others to see us.

Jesus says that we will be rewarded when we pursue a relationship with him, and do righteous actions, without announcing them for the sake of getting others' attention.

Conversation Starters

Have you ever felt tempted to show off your devotion to seem spiritual to others?

Why do you think Jesus asks his followers to pursue spiritual secrecy?

Action Challenge

Your action challenge today involves trying something pretty unusual: reverse pickpocketing. Whereas in normal pickpocketing the goal is to steal something from another person without their noticing, in reverse pickpocketing, the goal is to secretly place something in another person's bag without their noticing. Take any amount of money, put it in an envelope, and write a message of your choice on the front. (It could be something as simple as, “Jesus loves you!”) Then, go to a public place, pray for God to point someone out, and try to sneakily drop the money into their bag, being careful not to let your hand drop into their private property. The number one rule is: don't get caught!

Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

MATTHEW 6:1-6, 16-18



Sermon on the Mount

The Lord's Prayer

Content Summary

Jesus invites his followers to call God "Father"—even though this was enough to warrant death threats from Pharisees when he did it in public.

The pattern for prayer that Jesus gives his followers involves centering God's desires instead of our own and trusting him to take care of us.

Jesus links God's willingness to forgive us with our own willingness to forgive others.

Conversation Starters

Does anything surprise you about the Lord's Prayer?

Which aspect of the Lord's Prayer is most encouraging? What aspect is most challenging?

Action Challenge

Today's action challenge is just to pray through the Lord's prayer sometime today, paying special attention to each phrase. How is this prayer different from other prayers you've prayed? Why do you think Jesus offered this prayer as an example of how to pray?

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

MATTHEW 6:7-15



Sermon on the Mount

Money and Anxiety

Content Summary

This entire section is a warning about money—about how the desire for it can become the controlling force in our lives.

Instead of hoarding money, Jesus invites his followers to cultivate generosity and to take care of the needs of others.

He also invites those who are anxious about money to trust that their needs will be taken care of in the resource-sharing system that he sets up as part of his Kingdom.

Conversation Starters

How often do you worry about money?

In what ways have you seen greed show up in your own life?

Action Challenge

Today's action challenge is about learning to become generous with our resources. The challenge today is simple, but not easy: think of one tangible, practical way that you can be generous with the resources you have been given. How can you share some of what you have to make a positive difference in someone else's life? Pray through what you can share and take action. You are an important part of God's plan to meet people's basic needs.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

MATTHEW 6:19-34



Sermon on the Mount

Do Not Judge

Content Summary

People love telling others not to judge—almost as much as we love judging others. If we're being honest, most of us would love *our own* words and actions to be given a pass, but we still want others to know that we disapprove of what *they* say and do.

The word “judgment” here is different from “discernment.” Jesus is not telling us to suspend our discernment between right or wrong, good or bad. He is saying, “Don't assume people have bad motives or that will come back to haunt you.”

Jesus asks us to be more preoccupied with our own shortcomings than with the shortcomings of others. We should rigorously deal with our own issues before we try to become others' healers.

Conversation Starters

When are you most tempted to judge other people's motives?

Why do you think Jesus asks us to sort ourselves out before we go try to fix others?

Action Challenge

For today's action challenge, think through an area of your life where you often find yourself tempted to judge others. First, ask yourself: are there any areas of your life where you actually have done the same thing or something very similar to them? Pray through whatever comes up, asking God for forgiveness as needed. Then, consider what these others might be seeking through their actions or words. Is there a way you can turn from judgment to empathy towards them?

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

MATTHEW 7:1-6



Sermon on the Mount

Ask, Seek, and Knock

Content Summary

Jesus invites us to ask the Father for what we need. But we should also thank him that he knows what we really need better than we do.

The Greek terms “asking,” “seeking,” and “knocking” are all in the *present progressive* tense. Meaning, ask and go on asking; seek and go on seeking; knock and go on knocking. Jesus asks us to be *persistent* in our prayers and our requests.

God is the source of all good things, so we should ask him for them. But when we do so, we should remember that the best *thing* is always a relationship with the Creator who cares for us.

Conversation Starters

Have you ever been grateful that God didn't answer one of your prayers?

What's one thing you're currently praying for?

Action Challenge

Some of the teachings of the church father Augustine have been summarized with the phrase, “Without God, we cannot; without us, He will not.” This phrase gets at the idea that the primary way God answers people's prayers is actually through other people. Today, your action challenge is to pray for an opportunity to be the answer to someone else's prayer. It won't always be obvious what others are praying for, unless you ask them directly—but oftentimes the answer will involve some form of human action. Look for an opportunity to do that today.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

MATTHEW 7:7-11



Sermon on the Mount

The Golden Rule and the Two Gates

Content Summary

In context, we can see that the narrow gate and the “road that leads to life” come right after Jesus’s crucial summary of the Law and the Prophets, also known as the Golden Rule.

Jesus asks his followers to do for others the same kinds of things they’re hoping to have done for them.

The Golden Rule asks us to use our own soul as a reference point—and to do for others what we know deep down would be best for them.

Conversation Starters

Why do you think people want to replace the Golden Rule with the Platinum Rule?

What do you think it means to use your own soul as a reference point for how to treat others?

Action Challenge

For today’s action challenge, take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. On the left, make a list of all the kinds of things you wish others would do for you. Don’t worry about specifics, just write out general categories. On the right, write out some tangible, specific ways that you could do those same things for other people. Pick one or two to try out today, and write down what happens at the bottom of the list.

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

MATTHEW 7:12-14



Sermon on the Mount

True and False Followers

Content Summary

In this section, Jesus rejects the doctrine of “universal salvation.” He says that not everyone who calls him “Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of his Father.

He also clarifies that what he’s after is not dramatic religious actions, like “driving out demons” and “performing many miracles.” What he wants is to *know* us—and for us to *know* him.

What people do—and not just what comes out of their mouths—reveals who people really are.

Conversation Starters

Do you find anything frightening about Jesus’s words here?

What do you think it means to know Jesus, and for him to know us?

Action Challenge

Today’s action challenge has two parts. First, another journaling prompt. Ask yourself, How well do you know Jesus? Not, how many things have you done for him lately how often do you read your Bible, and how often do you pray—but how well do you know him? If you were to describe his personality, what would you say? Second, is there anything you feel like Jesus has been nudging you to do lately? Make a plan to go and do it.

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

MATTHEW 7:15–23



Sermon on the Mount

A House on Rock, A House on Sand

Content Summary

The clear emphasis of the Sermon on the Mount is about putting Jesus's teachings into practice.

Jesus says that those who put his teachings into practice are wise. He doesn't say, "That person's life is probably going to be terrible, but in the end I'll take them to Heaven." He says, that person will be someone who is actually living in accordance with how I've made human beings to live.

Much of Christian culture has tended to emphasize the importance of correct beliefs to the exclusion of correct actions. But here Jesus is saying that holding the right beliefs won't matter if they don't lead you into a changed life.

Conversation Starters

What teachings of Jesus are most challenging for you personally?

What would putting those teachings into practice free you from?

Action Challenge

The sermon on the mount is all about action. Out of all the teachings of Jesus, which sections do you feel like Jesus is leading you most right now to grow in? Today's action challenge is to spend some time praying about what they might look like and commit yourself to intentional action.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.

MATTHEW 7:24-27



Sermon on the Mount

Conclusion

Content Summary

- Typical Jewish rabbis were educated for years under a particular rabbi's tradition of interpreting and applying God's law to contemporary life.
- Jesus did something that was rare for rabbis in his day; he introduced new interpretations of scriptural passages that others believed they already understood.
- Being a disciple of Jesus means sometimes we have to (and get to) forget what we've heard, and listen to him instead.

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

MATTHEW 7:28–29