

The Sermon on the Mount: An Introduction

Various Texts

The Audience

- Jesus' & Matthew's main audience was Jewish, but included "God-fearing" Gentiles as well
 - They were steeped in the OT
 - They were exposed to the Pharisaic & other Jewish teachings of their day
 - There were different Jewish beliefs about most theological topics
 - They lived in a culture that was in tension with their beliefs
 - There was no monolith of Jewish belief about politics or ethics
- Matthew lays out the beginning of Jesus' ministry:
 - Jesus' origins:
 - The genealogy: Highlighting His connection to David and role as Messiah (1:1-17)
 - The Nativity: The account of the events surrounding Jesus' birth and early life (1:18-2:23)
 - Jesus' preparation for ministry
 - The preparatory ministry of John the Baptist (3:1-12)
 - Jesus' baptism (3:13-17)
 - Jesus' trials in the wilderness (4:1-11)
- Jesus' ministry begins
 - Preaches repentance & the coming of the kingdom of God (4:12-17)
 - Calls the first disciples (4:18-22)
 - Teaches in synagogues & heals people (v. 23-25)
- The crowd to which Jesus teaches the Sermon on the Mount is not the masses; it is disciples! (5:1-2)
 - These lessons are for those who follow Jesus, not the world

The Purpose

- In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching & correcting His disciples about what it means to follow Him
 - How their actions reflect being His disciple
- The purpose of this way of living is to set Jesus & His disciples apart from the world as an example of godliness
 - This was always the purpose of God's commands (Ex 19:3-6)
- Walking the way of Jesus is meant to make us different from the world (1 Pet 2:4-10)
 - It shows the world that Jesus' way is what is right and leads to life
 - That cannot happen if we think, act, & react just like the world around us

The Call

- The teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are not prerequisites to becoming disciples
 - They are the call to live differently because we have repented and turned to Jesus
- They are not suggestions; they are commands
- They are a call to holiness

So What?

- Are we walking the way of Jesus?
- Are we thinking, acting, and reacting as He does?

- Are we prepared to repent and live differently from the world so others will see Him in us?

Meditation Verse: *1 Peter 2:11-12*