

"The Sermon on the Mount"
September 20, 2026 | Pastor John Stickl

Now when He saw the crowds, Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, 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, for great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who are before you.

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is good for nothing, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

You are the light of the world. A city 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 men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth that until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of the pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished.

Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same 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 by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I say to you anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' will be answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fires of hell.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother; then come and offer your gift.

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Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

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

It has been said that anyone who wants to divorce his wife must give her a certificate of divorce. But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oaths, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, do not swear 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, because you cannot even make one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

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 someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other as well. If someone sues you for your tunic, give him your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go with him one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

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

Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, 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 street corners, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, 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, that your

giving may be done 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 in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

But when you pray, go into your room, and close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep babbling like the pagans do, for they think they will be heard by their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father already knows what you need before you even 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 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 the evil one.’

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

And when you fast, do not somber your face like the hypocrites do, for they love to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, 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 men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourself treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and 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 good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If that light within you is darkness, how great then is that darkness!

No one can serve two masters. He will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, about what you will eat or drink; or your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important 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? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies 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 thrown into the fire, will He not much more clothe you, O 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 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.

Do not judge or you will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged. 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 when all the while there is a plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the while there is a plank in your eye? You hypocrites, first remove the plank from your eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Do not give dogs what is sacred; and do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For whoever asks receives; to him who seeks finds; to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

Which of you, if his son asks for bread, would give him a stone? Or if he asks for fish, would 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 heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him! 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 is the road that leads to life, and only a few find 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, and a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every

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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 he who does the will of my Father 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 perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

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

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

This is the Sermon on the Mount in its entirety – from the heart. This is Jesus' great invitation to a good and beautiful life. And I wanted to start today by simply speaking this over your life so that you could hear it the way it was meant to be heard – the way the first audience would have heard it – without notes, without interpretation, without commentary, just words that were Spirit and life. Words that may go over our head, but they land deep in our heart. And my hope for today was in some way to just wash you with the Word of God – to allow Jesus' words to capture you, to captivate you, to stir something up deep inside of you.

You see, the Sermon on the Mount is probably the most important thing that Jesus ever said and yet is one of the most misinterpreted things Jesus ever said and one of the least understood things that He has ever said. And over the next few weeks, we're going to wrestle through this together. But we're going to start by just hearing and listening to the great invitation to a good and beautiful life.

My hope and prayer for you is that these words of Jesus take hold of your soul and you can't seem to shake them all week long. That it captures you and captivates you and stirs you because this is His invitation in its entirety to a good and beautiful life in His name in His kingdom.

So, Holy Spirit, thank You for the words of Jesus that were spoken so long ago, but are still so meaningful and relevant and profound today. Thank You that a word of God once spoken continues to be spoken. And thank You that Your word does not return void but will accomplish the purposes for which it's sent. So, Holy Spirit, would You take Jesus' words and stir them up in our heart? Would You use them to capture us, to captivate us, to stir us, to draw us, to

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unsettle us? May each one of us hear in our own language, in our own way, this invitation to a good and beautiful life. May all the ways where we misunderstand and all the ways where we misinterpreted Jesus' words to a good and beautiful life, may those places be healed and restored. And may our minds be renewed that we might be formed into the image and likeness of Jesus. May we have the courage and the faith to accept an invitation to a good and beautiful life. Holy Spirit, just like You were needed when it was preached on that Sermon on the Mount the first time, we need You as we look at this together as a family over the next few weeks. Do what only You can do in Jesus' name. In Jesus' name. In Jesus' name. A good and beautiful life is awaiting. Amen.