

# LETTERS TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Vol. I No. 2

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## Heavenly Life in a Fallen World

### The Sermon on the Mount

**Text: Matthew 5:1-7:29**

In the next few issues, we will be studying the Sermon on the Mount as recorded for us in **Matthew 5:1-7:29**. Everyone is encouraged to read through the Sermon on the Mount at least once before the end of the year. Meditate upon what is written and hide the words in our hearts. God's Word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths (Ps 119:105).

In this issue, we begin with an introductory survey of the Sermon on the Mount.

#### **I. The Preacher of the Sermon**

The preacher of the sermon is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully man. Unlike the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus teaches with boldness and authority because He is the Living Word Himself (Jn 1:1), and the Master Teacher from God as confessed by Nicodemus (Jn 3:1,2). Hence, it will surely profit us to take heed of the sermon that was preached by Jesus.

*"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" – Hebrews 2:1-4.*

#### **II. The Setting of the Sermon**

In Matthew 5:1-2, it is recorded for us that Jesus preached on a mountain. However, in a similar account in Luke 6:17-49, Jesus preached the sermon after a healing session on a plain. Some regard this as a contradiction and a proof that the Bible has mistakes.

Is such an assertion reasonable? Not at all! William Hendriksen<sup>1</sup> points out that it is easy to reconcile this apparent discrepancy in two ways:

1. Jesus taught on mountain-plain.

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<sup>1</sup> W.Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew*, Edinburgh, 1974, p.260

2. Jesus went down from the mountain to the plain to heal the people. After seeing how large the multitude was, Jesus retreated back up to the mountain where he taught the disciples.

I hold to the latter view as I believe it is consistent with the sequence of events in both Matthew 4:23-5:2 and Luke 6:17-49. In any case, we have clearly shown that the apparent contradiction in the two passages can be easily resolved.

Dear YPFers, the Bible has no mistake! “**All** scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16). “**Every** word of God *is* pure: he *is* a shield unto them that put their trust in him.” (Proverbs 30:5). God is perfect and makes no mistake! All His Words are truth. Every jot and tittle of the Words is preserved even unto today (Ps 12:6-7; Matt 5:18; Matt 24:25). If there is any part of the Bible that appears to contradict, it is because our finite minds fail to understand the deep things of God. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Rom 11:33). Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar (Rom 3:4).

When Jesus preached, many gathered to hear. The people were astonished at His doctrine (Matt 7:28). However, few believed and followed Christ after the sermon. Many fled when trials and temptation came. They are like stony ground where the gospel seed has fallen upon and sprung up, only to wither away when the sun comes up and dries the ground (Matt 13:5-6). Others get choked by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches (Matt 13:22). Such are present to hear Jesus only to let the words tickle their ears, no different from the Athenians (Acts 17:21). Let us not follow their example. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” (Jam 1:22).

### III. The Theme of the Sermon

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the King of the Jews – the King of kings. The phrase “Son of David” appears ten times in the entire book – more than any of the other 3 Gospels. The word “kingdom” also appears 54 times in the entire gospel. Hence, the theme of Matthew is about Jesus coming as the Son of David to establish the kingdom of heaven. This is clearly in fulfilment of Jeremiah 23:5, “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

Of the 54 occurrences of the word “kingdom” in Matthew’s Gospel, 8 of them appear in the Sermon on the Mount. Hence, like the Gospel of Matthew, its key theme is about the kingdom of heaven. It speaks about what it means to be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and the means of entering into the kingdom of heaven.

Thank God for preserving for us the wonderful Words of Jesus. Let us study His Word diligently, rightly dividing the Word of truth (2 Tim 2:15). May the Holy Spirit be our teacher and our guide, teaching us to live a **heavenly life in a fallen world**. Amen.

*Sing them over again to me – Wonderful words of Life;  
Let me more of their beauty see- Wonderful words of Life;  
Words of Life and beauty, Teach me faith and duty:*

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<sup>2</sup> See J. Khoo, Unpublished notes of the Far Eastern Bible College on *New Testament Introduction*, Singapore, 2005, p.22

*Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life;*  
*Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life*  
(Philip P. Bliss, 1838-1876)

C Chew  
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## **OUTLINE: THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matthew 5:1-7:29)**

- I. The Setting of the Sermon (Matt 5:1-2)
- II. What is a Citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven? (Matt 5:3-16)
  - (a) Their Blessedness and Their Character (5:3-12)
  - (b) Their Relationship to The World (5:13-16)
- III. The Need for True Righteousness (Matt 5:17-20)
- IV. The Description of True Righteousness (Matt 5:21-7:6)
  - (a) True Righteousness – In the Spirit, Not in the Letter (5:21-5:48)
    - i. Applying the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment (5:21-5:26)
    - ii. Applying the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment (5:27-32)
    - iii. Applying the 9<sup>th</sup> commandment (5:33-37)
    - iv. Applying the law of meekness (5:38-42)
    - v. Conclusion: Love is the fulfilling of the law (5:43-48)
  - (b) True Righteousness – In Sincerity, Not in Hypocrisy (6:1-7:6)
    - i. A right attitude when giving alms (6:1-6:4)
    - ii. A right attitude when praying (6:5-15)
    - iii. A right attitude when fasting (6:16-18)
    - iv. A right attitude towards riches (6:19-34)
    - v. A right attitude towards judgement (7:1-6)
- V. The Way to True Righteousness (Matt 7:7-12)
- VI. Conclusion: Who Will Enter the Kingdom of Heaven? (Matt 7:13-29)
  - (a) Few Will Follow The Way of Righteousness (7:13-14)
  - (b) Warning Against False Prophets (7:15-23)
    - i. Their deception (7:15)
    - ii. Their identification (7:16-20)
    - iii. Their judgement (7:21-23)
  - (c) The Way to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven is to Do God's Will (7:24-19)