

Foundations Bible Study – Sermon on the Mount  
Introduction

The Sermon on the Mount is contained in Matthew's gospel chapter 5, 6 & 7. Also Luke has a smaller version of the sermon, and the other gospels and New Testament writers have bits and pieces of the sermon in their writings.

As we begin the study of Christ's Sermon on the Mount there are a few things to keep in mind. First Matthew, the author, was not a popular person. Oh no, he was a tax collector, a turncoat of the highest degree to the nation of Israel. Yet Christ chose him as one of the twelve. In spite of his past and his misguided loyalty, in spite of his greed, in spite of his no good, no 'count ways, God choose him. I just love that story and Zacchaeus too...

Matthew would have been educated, able to read and write well. He was also good with numbers and "cooking the books." He was a man on a mission to make money and he didn't care what folks thought or how he made it. Then he met Jesus and his life took a radical change. Today we have a grand record of Christ's life and teaching because ol' Matt said "yes" to God.

Matthew is concerned about tying Christ to the Old Testament prophecies, so you read many times the phrase, "as it says in the prophets," or something along that line.

Another thing to remember as we study is when this sermon took place and what it is. This Sermon was given very early on in Christ's ministry. In Matthew's gospel only a few events in Christ's ministry have taken place. Christ has been baptized by John and went into the wilderness; there he was tempted by Satan. Next we see Jesus calling a few of his disciples and performing a few miracles of healing. Because of these factors there is not the mass appeal for Christ yet and the people listening are not informed the same way others will be a year or two later. This makes the Sermon on the Mount a statement of a new beginning, like a manifesto of the new Godly ways of living and being God's people. Read the text again and I think you will see what I mean: the old way was this... the new way is this... But I say....

It seems Christ is laying the foundation for a new way of relating and being God's children, later he calls it the New Covenant. As we study it will be important and interesting to see how far or how little we have come in this new spiritual understanding called Christianity.