



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### January 22, 2023

Worship Every Sunday at 9:30 AM

## Sermon on the Mount: Beatitudes

Sermon from January 22, 2023

Scripture: Matthew 5:7-20

I've said many times over the years that if you are only going to read a small portion of the Bible, chapters 5-7 of the Gospel of Matthew is the place to go. Known as the Sermon on the Mount, it is the foundation of Jesus' thought and the Christian faith. It is packed with meaning and we could spend weeks plumbing its spiritual depths.

Today is the first of three consecutive weeks in the Sermon on the Mount. This is great, because it gives us a chance dip into each chapter individually. It is frustrating though, because even three weeks in these three chapters feels like we're giving it short shrift. We are going to miss so much.

I know this because I could probably write a full sermon on the very first sentence of Matthew 5, before Jesus even says anything.

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him." The crowds were starting to gather because of Jesus' healing and teaching. He began his ministry at the end of chapter 4 and the buzz was beginning. The crowds were gathering, so now Jesus goes up the mountain.

One of important themes of the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus is a new Moses, leading the people to salvation. The birth story helped frame this as Jesus had to flee a violent tyrannical ruler. He, like Moses, came out of Egypt. Instead of 40 years wandering in the wilderness, Jesus spent 40 days. The five discourses that take place in the Gospel parallel the five books of Moses in Torah.

We are also reminded that Moses, when he connected to God, went to a mountain. An important difference, however, is that when Moses went up the mountain he was told to leave everyone behind. His conversation with God was private. No one else could go there. It was God and Moses and the giving of the Law. When it was over, Moses came back down to the people.

Here however, Jesus goes up to the mountain, and disciples follow him. This does not necessarily mean "The Twelve." The twelve have not been named yet. It implies however, that out of the crowds that were gathered to see the show, a smaller group followed up the mountain to be "disciples."

There, on the mountain, the disciples received the Word.

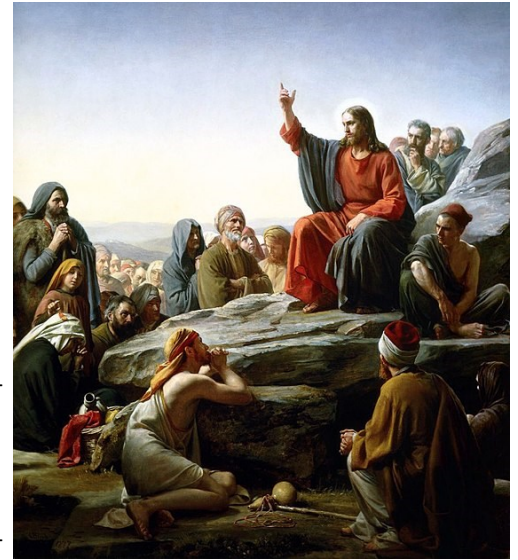
While Moses received the Word inscribed in tablets. The disciples hear receive the word of God through Christ. Just as Moses received the fundamental building blocks to the people's relationship with God, Jesus gave them the fundamental building blocks to their relationship with Christ and God. The

way to be called children of God was to be peace makers.

Going through each beatitude could be a sermon in itself. The beatitudes are the fundamentals of what it means to be a disciple. It means they do not have to be hopeless any more, even in the face of devastating poverty. Being a part of the Empire of God means that we hunger and thirst for right relationship with each other. The Empire of God finds solutions for those who lament and complain to God about unjust realities. The Empire of God includes mercy given and mercy received. The Empire of God means that pursuing peace – not the peace of Rome – will be rewarded.

Moses led the people to freedom from Pharaoh. He stopped on the way to climb a mountain to learn about their true ruler: God. Jesus led the people to freedom in a new Empire of Heaven. He climbed the mountain and a few disciples followed.

It is our role now to decide. Are we a part of the crowd, following along for the spectacle and a hope that something good might happen. Or will we be disciples, willing to climb the mountain to be with Jesus. Like them, we are called to follow him into an Empire that follows different rules, values different things, and empowers different people. The rest of the Sermon on the Mount is illustration after illustration of just how peculiar this new Empire is. In the next two weeks we will barely scratch the surface. In a lifetime of following Jesus, we may learn a little about what it all means.



*Sermon on the Mount, Carl Bloch, 1877*  
Credit: Wikimedia commons.