

The Context of the Sermon on the Mount

Chapter 1

Audio lesson: Sermon on the Mount 1



Objective: To understand the context of one of Jesus' greatest sermons, the Sermon on the Mount. (Text: Matthew 4:23–5:12)



Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

—Matthew 4:23-24

The Sermon on the Mount is considered to be one of Jesus' most important discourses and one of His most foundational teachings, considered to hold the essence of Jesus' teaching. Even many who are not Christians believe this sermon is one of the most important messages ever taught. There is perhaps no passage in the Bible that is quoted more and understood less than this teaching in Matthew 5-7.

Many people had followed Jesus because of His teaching, preaching, and healing. He preached the Sermon on the Mount when a crowd had gathered around Him near the Sea of Galilee. He went up on a mountain and invited some of His disciples to go with Him. This divided the multitude into two groups: those at the bottom of the mountain, who represented all the problems of humanity, and those at a higher level who wanted to be part of His solution to the problems. Jesus began to teach and train His followers so they could go into the world with His message and in His strength.



1. True or false? None of the other gospels mentions Jesus teaching on a mountain.
2. True or false? After preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commissioned His twelve disciples.
3. True or false? In Jesus' time, those with physical and mental problems were put away in institutions, hidden from everyday life.
4. True or false? The Sermon on the Mount can be considered "the first Christian retreat."

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. How did Jesus respond when He saw the multitudes?
 - a. He grew discouraged and depressed.
 - b. He grew proud because of His popularity.
 - c. He was bothered by so many asking for attention.
 - d. He began training followers to meet their needs.
6. Who did Jesus preach to in the Sermon on the Mount?
 - a. The entire multitude
 - b. Only the hurting and hungry people at the bottom of the mountain
 - c. Only the disciples who came to a higher level
 - d. Only to Matthew, who wrote all His words down
7. Why did Jesus teach a select group of followers?
 - a. So they could impress others with their knowledge
 - b. To train them to be a part of His answer for the world
 - c. To test His message to see if it was popular
 - d. Because His message is not meant for everyone
8. Which of the following were important parts of Jesus' ministry?
 - a. Preaching
 - b. Healing
 - c. Training
 - d. All of the above
9. What kinds of problems did Jesus address?
 - a. Mental
 - b. Physical
 - c. Spiritual
 - d. All of the above



What kind of disciple or “deputy” of Jesus do you want to be? Would you rather be one of the many who hears Jesus or one of the few who joins with Him to be part of the solution?



Thank God for His Word and for the teaching of Jesus, and for His mission to meet the needs of all people. Ask Him to teach you how to be part of His solution for the world.



Going Deeper

1. Why were so many people following Jesus to this mountain? What were their needs/desires?

2. Why was Jesus seated teaching His disciples when there were so many other people there?

3. What was the strategy of Jesus when He taught the Sermon on the Mount? _____

4. What kinds of problems did Jesus address with this teaching? _____

5. What are the principle differences between those who are “part of the problem” and those who become “part of the solution”? _____

6. Summarize your personal application or “takeaway” from this lesson. _____

7. Considering your personal issues and relationships, how can you become one who really “hears” and becomes part of the solution? _____
