

- Last week we looked at events around the beginning of Jesus's ministry, including the work and teaching of John the Baptist and how he prepared the way for Jesus, including rebuking the religious leaders of the day. (Matthew 3:1-12, Mark 1:2-8, Luke 3:1-20) He even baptizes Jesus, prompting God to say publicly: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:3-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 4:1-13) We read about how Jesus was tempted three times by Satan and answers each time with scripture. (Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:1-13). We read about how He was rejected in his hometown (Matthew 13:54-58, Mark 6:1-6, Luke 4:14-30) and how He called Peter, Andrew, James, John (Matthew 4: 8-25, Matthew 8:14-17, Mark 1:16-39, Luke 4:31 – 5:11) and later Matthew (Matthew 9:9, Mark 2:13-14, Luke 5:27-28). to follow Him. We looked at two specific incidents of Jesus' healing and how they showed His knowledge of the law (Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16) and His authority (Matthew 9:2-8, Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26). Finally, we discussed the importance of fasting. (Matthew 6:16-18).
- This week, we are going to study some specific incidents which took place in Jesus' very early ministry and study the famous sermon He delivered which we call "The Sermon on the Mount." We are going to look at those incidents as recorded in the "Synoptic Gospels" ("synoptic" basically a word meaning same). Also remember that there is only one Gospel but there are four gospel accounts. We call the first four books of the New Testament "the Gospels" but that is basically our lazy shorthand, much like saying "Xerox" instead of "copy."
- Those who follow Christ are hungry, so they are picking grain to eat. It happens to be the Sabbath Day and the religious leaders question Christ about this, because the act of harvesting is considered work which is not supposed to happen on the Sabbath. Christ responds by 1) pointing out that David and his men ate unlawfully on the Sabbath when they were hungry and even the priest was complicit in this to the point of making arbitrary distinctions (referencing 1 Samuel 21:1-6) 2) the greater principle is to make mercy more important than sacrifice (quoting Hosea 6:6) and 3) that He is Lord of the Sabbath anyway. (Matthew 12:1-8, Mark 2:23-28, Luke 6:1-5) The second point seemed especially poignant to Jesus. He was fond of pointing out this point, especially since the Jewish religious leaders of the day weren't getting it. (Matthew 9:13)
- Later that same day, the religious leaders who no doubt were jealous of Jesus's ability to heal, laid a trap for him to find out if He would heal on the Sabbath day. So, they brought a man with a withered hand to Jesus and asked him if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath - because, they felt that healing would constitute work, which was forbidden on the Sabbath. We read that Jesus knew what they were up to, and He could very well have waited until the next day to heal the man, but He decided to use this as teaching moment instead. He gave the example that any of them would rescue their animal who had fallen into a hole on the Sabbath, and a person's hand was a lot more important so he healed the man. This enraged the religious leaders who apparently couldn't argue with His logic, so they started conspiring how they could get him killed somehow. (Matthew 12:9-14 Mark 3:1-6 Luke 6:6-11)

- At this point, Jesus has developed quite a following, including the five people we read about by name which he had called previously (remember the two brothers who were fisherman, Simon and Andrew and James and John, and the tax collector Matthew). After praying himself, Jesus chooses twelve people from among the following to be his inner circle of twelve people – we know them as the “twelve apostles.” These are the twelve people He would send out with the power to preach and heal in His name. Here we first read of Simon also being called Peter. In addition to the five who were named previously, he also names Philip, Bartholomew; Thomas, another James (the son of a person named Alphaeus), another Simon (not Peter) Judas (also called Thaddeus), and another Judas whose last name was Iscariot. (Matthew 10:2-4 Mark 3:13-19 Luke 6:12-16)
- Jesus was gathering quite a following. People were coming from all over to be healed. There were so many people that Jesus had trouble moving around and had to signal a boat to be ready to carry Him off. The people who were possessed with demons were bowing down and crying out that He was the Son of God. (Matthew 12:15-21 Mark 3:7-12 Luke 6:17-19)
- Jesus delivers the famous sermon we call the Sermon on the Mount. Although Luke records some of this sermon (Luke 6:20-49), Matthew covers a lot more, so we are going to look primarily at his account. Luke’s last geographic note about Christ before the sermon was that he was on “level” ground. Matthew notes that he went “up on the mountain” (Matthew 5:1-2) right before he delivered the sermon so it’s likely he went up a rise to be heard by the crowd. While some claim to know what hill this was, they are just speculating.
- Jesus starts this sermon with eight sayings we know as the “beatitudes.” They are all standalone sayings which follow the same format: a condition, and an implication. They also each reference an Old Testament situation. (Matthew 5:3-12)
- Next, Jesus talks about how Christians are to behave in the world. He explains that we are to live in such a way that it will be obvious that we are followers of Christ’s teaching. (Matthew 5:13-16)
- Then Jesus talks about the law and explains He is there to define it more fully and not to make it invalid, and He urges his followers to live according to this new definition not the old legalistic ones which the Jewish religious leaders of the day were doing. (Matthew 5:17-20)
- Christ turns his attention to several specific examples of ways He urges people to redefine the way they live under the law. He says, for example, 1) don’t just not murder, don’t even call people names; 2) don’t divorce people for no reason, only consider it if they are sexually unfaithful to you; 3) don’t just not make vows to God lightly, but don’t make light of any serious communication; 4) don’t take vengeance on people, if they do violence or steal from you, be kind to them in return; and 5) don’t just love your friends, love your enemies too. (Matthew 5:21-48)
- Although He has urged everyone to live in such a way that people will see that we live differently and our Christianity will be only display (see Matthew 5:13-16 discussion above), Christ warns not to do our offerings and prayers to be seen of men. (Matthew 6:1-6). These two are easily reconciled through two key differences: 1) the first passage talks about living and doing good deeds and the second is talking about acts of worship such as

our offerings and prayers; and 2) it's all about motives - the first is talking about just living out lives that way because that's just how we are and the second warning us against doing things just to be seen.

- Christ then gives us an example of the way we should pray. The important thing he is communicating is the simple pattern of 1) recognition and praise of God's power, 2) Alignment with His will 3) requests and thanksgiving, and 4) Closing in His name. (Matthew 6:9-13) This is famously known as "The Lord's Prayer." And even though Christ begins by urging that we not use "meaningless repetition" right before this prayer example as the very reason He is doing it (Matthew 6:7), many people still think it a good idea to memorize, recite, and blindly repeat this very prayer example, making it exactly the opposite of what Christ intended. Interestingly, Christ emphasizes the request for forgiveness part as the way to obtain forgiveness from God. (Matthew 6:15). We also read this in later scripture. (Ephesians 4:32)
- Next, Christ teaches us a lesson about fasting and how to do it. He assumes that his followers will fast, and not to make a big deal out of it. (Matthew 6:16-18)
- Christ notes that his followers are to make their priorities heavenly, not the accumulation of earthly things. (Matthew 6:19-24)
- Therefore, Christ says, don't worry about things on earth and especially the future because God knows we need basic things and each day will have enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:25-34)
- Christ also says not to pass judgement on other people because we should be focusing on your own problems instead. (Matthew 7:1-6)
- Next, Christ says to petition God in prayer for what we need. This is interesting because He has already said God knows what we need. The value to us is in the asking. (Matthew 7:7-11) And, as we find out later, we are to ask in faith without doubting it will come true (James 1:5-8) James is talking specifically about wisdom here, but if it is true for wisdom we can only assume it is even more true for other things.
- There is one verse that stands alone and it known as the "Golden Rule" – treat others like you want to be treated. (Matthew 7:12)
- Christ also says there is only one way to the Kingdom of Heaven – He uses a narrow gate to illustrate this. (Matthew 7:13-14)
- Christ says a lot of people will be surprised to find that they aren't making it into heaven. He says there will be a lot of folks who seem religious but really aren't. He gives an example of a fruit tree and says, "By their fruit you will know them" – essentially saying you can recognize who to follow by what they do, not what they say. (Matthew 7:15-23)
- Christ uses another illustration of this same concept. The illustration is that of a house – a house with a solid foundation (representing the person who acts) will withstand storms, whereas a house with a weak foundation (representing the person who says but doesn't act) will not survive a storm. (Matthew 7:24-27)
- When Christ finished His sermon, people are amazed at His teachings because they far surpass anything they have ever heard, including from their own religious scholars. (Matthew 7:28-29)

20171015 Sunday AM

Lord of the Sabbath and the Sermon on the Mount

p 4 of 4

1. What does the term "Synoptic Gospels" mean?
2. Why is the term "Gospels" semantically inaccurate?
3. Why do the religious leaders question Christ about his followers harvesting grain?
4. How does Christ defend his followers who were picking grain?
5. Which point was Christ especially fond of pointing out to the Jewish religious leaders?
6. How do the Jewish religious leaders try to entrap Christ with healing?
7. How does Christ react when confronted with the question of healing on the Sabbath?
8. What is the Jewish leaders' reaction when Christ heals on the Sabbath?
9. From what population did Jesus call the twelve men we now know as apostles?
10. Who were the twelve men he named as this inner circle?
11. What did these twelve have the power and authority to do?
12. What happened when Jesus got famous for His healing power?
13. Why did Jesus most likely go up to a high place before He delivered His "sermon on the mount?"
14. What are the beatitudes and how are they best described?
15. How does Jesus say Christians are to live in the world?
16. What does Christ's say His relationship to the law is?
17. What are some examples Jesus gives of redefining the law?
18. How do we reconcile Christ teaching about living publicly as a Christian with His warning against doing things publicly?
19. What is important about the example prayer Jesus gave us?
20. What is wrong with memorizing and repeating the Lord's prayer?
21. What does Christ teach about fasting?
22. What does Christ say about priorities?
23. What does Christ say about worrying about earthly things?
24. If God already knows what we need, why do we need to ask Him?
25. What is the "Golden Rule" Christ teaches?
26. What does Christ use an example of the fact that not many will make it into Heaven?
27. How can we tell if someone says they are religious but really aren't?
28. What does the illustration of house with a solid versus weak foundation tell us?
29. What is the reaction of the crowd when Jesus is finished speaking?