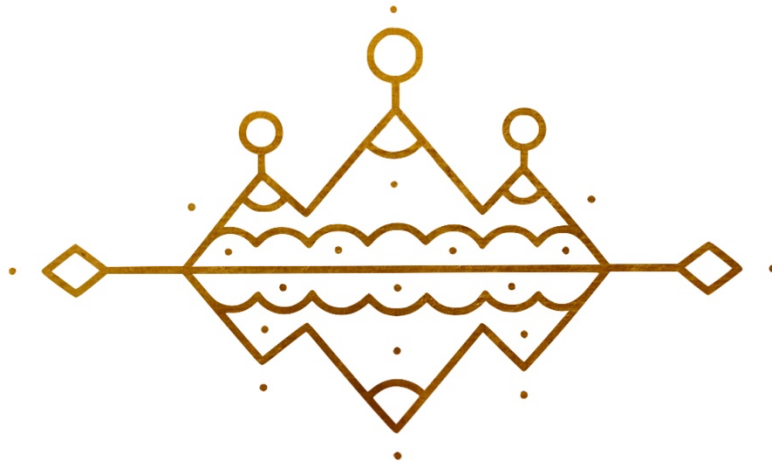


# KINGDOM CALLING



SERMON  
ON THE  
MOUNT

WORLD  
ON THE  
SERMON



## **Kingdom Calling: The Sermon on the Mount Group Member Guide**

# Kingdom Calling: Introduction

The *Sermon on the Mount* is probably the most famous chunk of Jesus' teaching. Its pithy maxims like "turn the other cheek", "judge not" and "do unto others" are well-known well beyond the walls of the church. But just because the *Sermon on the Mount* is well-known doesn't mean that it is well understood, and it certainly doesn't imply that it is roundly obeyed!

Many have proffered theories about how to properly understand this celebrated part of Scripture, but it is best to understand it as Jesus' exposition of living as member of the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew 4, the chapter immediately before the *Sermon* begins, Jesus resists the allure of all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour (4:8) in favour of preaching the coming of the kingdom of heaven (4:17, 23). It is an upside-down kingdom, so different in nature to the kingdoms of this world that it requires Jesus' distinctive instructions for all those who would occupy it. This is first evident in the beatitudes with which Jesus opens the sermon, but it flows throughout the whole message.

So, the *Sermon on the Mount* is really about our *kingdom calling*, or what it means for us to live as authentic members of the kingdom of heaven. It is a masterclass in Christian discipleship. But it is also an invitation to us to join the kingdom, so in a sense the kingdom calls out to us, bidding us to be a part of it by adopting a posture of spiritual poverty, distinctive living, and prayerful dependence upon God.

We trust that our time in Matthew 5 to 7 this term will aid you in renewing your own kingdom calling, as well as remind you of the great blessing it is to be part of the kingdom of heaven, even though it is not without its challenges.

Grace and peace in the King!

# Study timetable

Use these studies in your group as you see fit, but here's a suggested timetable.

<b>Sunday Sermon Date</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Midweek (growth group)</b>	<b>What?</b>
		<b>Wed 12 October: Term 4 Leader Session</b>	
Sunday 16 October	Matthew 5:1-12	17-20 October	Study 1: Renewed hearts
Sunday 23 October	Matthew 5:13-20	24-27 October	Study 2: City on a Hill
Sunday 30 October	Matthew 5:21-26	31 October to 3 November	Study 3: Renewed relationships #1
Sunday 6 November	Matthew 5:27-37	7-10 November	Study 4: Renewed relationships #2
Sunday 13 November	Matthew 5:38-48	14-17 November	Study 5: Renewed relationships #3
		<b>Wed 16 November: Celebration Dinner</b>	
Sunday 20 November	Matthew 6:19-24	21-24 November	Study 6: Kingdom treasures
Sunday 27 November	Matthew 6:25-33	28 November to 1 December	Study 7: Kingdom focus
Sunday 4 December	Matthew 7:1-6	5-8 December	Study 8: Renewed relationships #4

# Study 1: Renewed hearts

## Start

How would you define “blessed”? Write your answer on a slip of paper, collate the responses, then read out the definitions, letting the group guess who wrote each one. Any surprises or revelations in the responses?

## Read

Matthew 5:1-12

## Think & talk

- 1. If you were to come up with 8 indicators of a “blessed” Northern Beaches life, what would they be? How appealing or devoted to these characteristics are you? Why are Jesus’ 8 beatitudes so striking?**
  
- 2. To be “poor in spirit” is to acknowledge our spiritual poverty before God—we bring nothing to the table. Why is this so hard but so important for life in God’s kingdom? Is there a connection between v.3 & v.5?**
  
- 3. Why would the poor in spirit feel the need to mourn? Is there sin—either within you or outside of you—that has caused you to mourn recently? How will those who mourn be comforted?**

4. **If biblical righteousness has a legal dimension (we are declared not guilty by God), a moral dimension (we aim to live godly lives) and a social dimension (we want to treat people justly), what might it look like to hunger for each of these? And how does Jesus envisage that such hunger would be filled?**
  
5. **What might it look like to be merciful in your life? What might it look like to be pure in heart? What might it look like to be a peacemaker in your household, church and community?**
  
6. **Is it surprising that someone who adopted the first 7 beatitudes into their life might experience persecution because of them? What encouragement is there for us to continue in light of any persecution?**

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father,  
Forgive us for adopting the values of our culture.  
Help us to incorporate the ethics of your kingdom like poverty of spirit,  
humility, mercy, purity, and more.  
We praise you that Jesus embodied all of these.  
And we thank you that he forgives us when we don't.  
Amen.



4. Verse 17-20 form a bridge between the beatitudes and the ethical instructions that follow. Why might some people think that Jesus came to abolish the Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets)? How does Jesus fulfil the Old Testament?
  
5. How do these words of Jesus prepare us for his instructions that follow? Is the New Testament a contrast or a continuance of the Old Testament?
  
6. How can Jesus' words about surpassing righteousness and entry into the kingdom in v.20 be reconciled with his statement in v.3 about the poor in spirit entering the kingdom?

### **Pray**

Dear Lord,

We praise you for Jesus, who fulfilled the law in every way.

We understand that he wants us to live in light of the spirit of the law, to be salt and light in our community and culture, living distinctive Christian lives.

We recognise that we are unable to do that perfectly, and certainly not in our own strength.

But equip us for this task, and keep us humble and joyful.

That people may see us but praise you.

Amen.





4. **How does Jesus point us to a better way in v.23-24? What is the foundation of biblical reconciliation?**
  
5. **Verses 25-26 draw out the importance of a quick settling of disputes. Why is speed such an important factor in these matters? When have you experienced a speedy reconciliation, or suffered under a long-awaited one?**
  
6. **Are there limitations to what forgiveness and reconciliation can achieve? What steps have you found to be important in the process of reconciliation?**

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father,

We recognise that relationships can easily fray, so forgive us our part, especially where we have spoken or acted out of anger.

Give us the grace to admit where we have been wrong, and to grant forgiveness where apologies have been offered.

Help us to do this as quickly as possible, for blessed are the peacemakers.

For Jesus' sake,

Amen.



- 4. How do we prepare ourselves for a marriage that meets God's design? What can married people do to refresh and renew their marriages now? How can we aid people who are struggling in their marriages? How can we support people who are going through divorce or have been divorced?**
  
- 5. In v.33-37 Jesus addresses the matter of oaths. How might this issue be connected to the topic of marriage and divorce?**
  
- 6. It appears that the religious teachers of the day were obsessed with vows, but Jesus seems opposed to them. Why? And what does it mean for us?**

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father,

Forgive us for our lust. Forgive us for our wayward eyes and wayward minds.

Give us purity of thought and heart, and loyalty to our spouse.

Help us to work on our marriages, and restore those who have been hurt by broken relationships.

And help us to keep our promises and to speak the truth.

For you always keep your promises and speak truthfully to us.

Amen.

# Study 5: Renewed relationships #3

## Start

Consider this statement: "The real test of love does not come in how we relate to the kind and loveable but in how we relate to the cruel and despicable." Do you agree? Why, or why not?

## Read

Matthew 5:38-48

## Think & talk

- 1. Jesus' quotation of "eye for eye" etc comes from Exodus 21:24. How does this set out a principle for justice? It appears the Pharisees extended this principle from the law courts into everyday life and relationships. What consequences might have followed?**
  
- 2. What is the point of turning the other cheek or going the extra mile? How does this instruction from Jesus contrast with our natural reaction to being wronged?**
  
- 3. In v.44-45 how are we to treat our enemies and why? How does this reflect the way that Jesus treated his enemies?**

**4. Does this mean that Christians are doormats for the world to walk over? When have you seen someone practice Jesus' teaching and what was the outcome?**

**5. In what situations might these commands apply today?**

**6. Matthew 5 finishes with a command to be perfect (v.48). Why does Jesus finish this section in this way?**

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father,

We naturally seek revenge, payback, and a clearing of the air.

We thank you that you don't treat us in this way, or we'd all be lost.

Forgive us for hard hearts and replace them with a strong love which can seek the good of those who don't like us, and work for the benefit of those who want to malign us.

We need your grace to love in that way. Send some our way.

Amen.

# Study 6: Kingdom treasures

## Start

What is your most treasured possession?

How would you react if this possession was lost, stolen or destroyed?

## Read

Matthew 6:19-24

## Think & talk

1. What does it mean to “store up” treasures on earth? What’s the difference between having material things and storing up treasures on earth? Do you think Jesus would be surprised at our level of affluence?
2. What is the basic problem of storing up treasures on earth? What is the deeper problem of storing up treasures on earth?
3. Read the Parable of the Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21. Why is he called a fool? How does it connect to Jesus’ words in Matthew 6?

**4. What does it actually mean to store up treasures in heaven? How do we practically do that?**

**5. Having discussed the heart in v.21, why does Jesus move to talk about the eye in v.23? What point is he making about us?**

**6. What are you going to change, review, etc, in light of the strong teaching in this section?**

### **Pray**

Dear God and giver of good things,  
Forgive us for our addiction to money  
And our devotion to wealth and material things.  
Help us to truly believe that our lives don't consist in having more  
But in living more wholeheartedly for you  
And storing up treasures in heaven.  
Amen.







## Study 8: Renewed relationships #4

### Start

Missionary preacher Paul Washer said, "People tell me judge not lest ye be judged. I always tell them, twist not scripture lest ye be like Satan."

What tension is Washer highlighting?

### Read

Matthew 7:1-12

### Think & talk

1. Verse 1 is often quoted in wider culture. What is the basic command of Jesus in v.1-5? And why does it sound so appealing to people?

2. According to the parable in v.3-5, when are we unfit to judge others? And when might it be ok to judge others?

3. If we are permitted to judge in some circumstances, what is the attitude that Jesus is combatting here?

4. **How do we reconcile the instruction in this passage with 1 Corinthians 5 where Paul instructs us to judge those inside the church, or even the multiple places in the New Testament which call us to rebuke, correct or admonish one another?**
  
5. **How does v.6 relate to the earlier verses? How does this passage apply to us overall?**
  
6. **Is there any relationship between v.7-11 and the earlier verses? What do they tell us about God that we can put into practice today?**

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father,

We admit that we are quick to judge, and we often get it wrong.

And where we ought to say something, we often stay silent.

Forgive us for our folly.

Moreover, we thank you that you give good gifts to us, and desire relationship with us. Help us to take you up on your offer.

Amen.



**GROWTH**