# **Sermon on the Mount Series Introduction**

Pastor Carl Van Vliet

Sermon on the Mount / Sermon on the Mount/Plain / Matthew 5–7; Luke 6

 **Matthew 4:23–5:2 NKJV**

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24 Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

1 And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

Each of the Gospels present unique different perspectives of the same event, the Life of Jesus:

**Matthew is portraying the Messiah as King**

**Mark is portraying Christ as the Suffering Servant**

**Luke is portraying Christ as the son of Man**

**John is portraying Christ as the son of God.**

Matthews audience is the Jewish people and since his focus is on Christ as King the key word used is “Fulfilled” as in large part Matthew is writing to convince the Jewish world that Jesus IS THE Messiah by revealing the fulfillment of the OT prophecies revolving around the Messiah.

Mark’s audience is the Romans and it is the gospel of action. It is fast paced and is the fullest picture of the miracles and activities of Jesus.

Luke is written to the Greek audience and his goal was to portray Jesus as the “Perfect Man” In Greek Philosophy there was this ideal or perfect man that was unachievable but continually striven after. Paul also addresses the “Perfect man” idea in [Ephesians 4:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph4.13) “till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;”

These three of the Gospels are what we call the “Synoptic Gospels” They are called “Synoptic” because they can be viewed together (syn, “with”; -optic, “see”) in a Synopsis

So these Gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark and Luke are “Seen With Each other”

The Gospel of John stands alone in its literary composition.

John is written not to a Jewish audience like Matthew is, nor is it a Roman audience like Mark. Even still it is not written to a Greek audience like Luke, But rather John writes his Gospel to the WHOLE world as his audience: (Shameless Plug - Sunday nights for our evening service we are going verse by verse through the Gospel of John)

Matthew can be described by what Jesus Said (The great Discourses, Sermon on the mount, Olivet Discourse, Parables in detail, etc)

Mark by what Jesus Did

Luke by How Jesus Felt

John’s writes to reveal who Jesus IS.

The Gospel of Matthew was written between AD 55 and AD 65, prior to the Roman destruction of the Temple in AD 70.

### The Common theme - “The Kingdom”

There is a common Theme in the Gospels and Jesus teaching: The Kingdom of God, of which Christ is King. When Christ was before Pontius Pilate at His trial Pontius Pilate asked Jesus “Are you the King of the Jews?” and Jesus answered “It is as you say” [Matthew 27:11](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt27.11) “11 Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” Jesus said to him, “It is as you say.””

The phrasing “the Gospel of the Kingdom” or the “Kingdom of God” or “the Kingdom of Heaven” is used in the Gospels 91 times.

Jesus public ministry opens with it in [Matthew 4:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt4.23) Jesus comes straight from calling His first disciples at the sea of Galilee immediately following Jesus 40 days in the wilderness where He is tempted by satan and begins “teaching in their synagogues, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom” and He closes His public ministry in [Acts 1:1-3](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ac1.1-3) “1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”

I believe, as well do many other pastors, theologians and commentators believe that the sermon on the mount content wise was what Jesus was teaching when He was traveling and teaching. Instances like:

 [Matthew 4:23](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt4.23) “23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”

 [Matthew 9:35](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt9.35) “35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”

 [Mark 1:14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk1.14) “14 Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,”

 [Luke 4:43](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk4.43) “43 but He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent.””

[Luke 8:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk8.1) “1 Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him,”

[Luke 16:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk16.16) “16 “The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.”

Why do I believe that this was the core teaching on the Kingdom that Jesus preached? Because the content of the Sermon on the mount is found elsewhere in the Gospels when Jesus is teaching:

In [Luke 6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk6) Jesus teaches much of the same content as He does in the Sermon on the Mount but [Luke 6:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk6.17) it tells us that Jesus was teaching on a level place. It is actually, in commentary circles, called the *sermon on the plain* in Luke’s Gospel and covers 33 verses from verse 17 through 49.

Luke also in [Luke 8:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk8.16) “16 “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light.” is similar in its teaching as [Matthew 5:15](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.15) “15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

[Luke 11](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk11) also Jesus teaches the same content in a different context, compare it with [Matthew 6:8-14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt6.8-14) and [Matthew 7:7-12](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt7.7-12)

Mark has much shorter instances of this teaching spread throughout his Gospel account:

In [Mark 4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk4) Jesus is teaching *“by the sea of Galilee”* [Mark 4:21](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk4.21) “21 Also He said to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand?”

Content found in the sermon on the mount is also found in [Mark 9:43-50](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk9.43-50) & [Mark 11:25](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk11.25)

Three distinct settings: On the mount here in [Matthew 5-7](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5-7), On the plain in [Luke 6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Lk6), and by the sea in [Mark 4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk4) gives us a clear picture that this topic of the Kingdom taught in the Sermon on the mount was the key teaching of Christ. Was it the only teaching, no of course not, but it was a significant portion of His teaching.

**It was the teaching of the New Testament Church**

Philip Preached the Kingdom of God in Samaria in [Acts 8](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ac8), Paul and Barnabas preached on the Kingdom of God in [Acts 14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ac14), Paul preached the Kingdom of God in [Acts 19](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ac19), [20](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ac20) and 28. Paul spoke in his epistles on the Kingdom of God in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and 2 Thessalonians. James the brother of Jesus wrote of the Kingdom in his letter and John addresses it in the book of Revelation.

### A New Ethos (Christian Ethics)

The Sermon on the mount has been dubbed in some circles as the “Constitution of Christianity” it is the “treatise of Christ on Christianity” and it is the “Law” if you will of the kingdom of God.

John Stott “I can sum up the entire Sermon on the Mount with these two words: "Christian Counter-Culture" and "The church ought to be the ultimate expression of this Counter-Culture"

Much of Christianity has simply missed this and made a Culture-War with the world over certain moral issues - to cause the world to live to Christs kingdom standards rather than living a Counter-Culture life before a lost and broken world.

In order for a thing to be ethical it requires three parts:

1. Right action - What we do must be in obedience to Christ Commands

2. Right Motivation - Why we do it - Must flow from the greatest commandment - “Love God - Love People” any other motivation is the wrong motivation

a. ANY other motivation for right action creates legalism - See [Matthew 5:20](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.20) “20 For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” The Pharisees created laws to keep you from getting close to the actual law to ensure you could never break the law - Called fence laws.

i. 248 Commands in the OT Law - 365 Prohibitions in the OT Law

ii. 1500 “Fence Laws” created by the Pharisees.

1. Jesus called them out in [Mark 7:1-23](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk7.1-23) and [Matthew 15:1-20](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt15.1-20) about their “Traditions of men (the Elders)

b. The Pharisee’s righteousness was not relational - not flowing out of a motivation of Loving God and Loving People. Ignoring the Shema [Deuteronomy 6:5](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt6.5) “5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.” The Pharisee’s placed a yoke of burden on the people through their false righteousness of legalism.

c. Our righteousness can NEVER exceed the righteousness of the Pharisee’s apart from Christ: [2 Corinthians 5:21](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Co5.21) “21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” [Romans 5:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro5.19) “19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience **many will be made righteous**.” [1 Corinthians 1:30-31](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Co1.30-31) “30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—31 that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.””

3. Right Goal - [Matthew 5:16](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.16) “16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” [Isaiah 43:7](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Is43.7) “7 Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”” The Goal is that God is Glorified

A Counter-Culture life means we as Christians should “look” and “Act” differently than the culture of the world:

[Romans 12:1-2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro12.1-2) “1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

[1 John 2:15](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Jn2.15) “15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

[2 Corinthians 6:17](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Co6.17) “17 Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.””

[1 Kings 18:21](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Ki18.21) “21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, **“How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.”** But the people answered him not a word.”

2 Kingdoms: The Kingdom of this world, which scripture refers to as the kingdom of darkness that’s the word picture contrast of “light and dark” ([2 Corinthians 6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.2Co6), [1 John 1:6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.1Jn1.6)) We just covered this in our VBS - 2 Kingdoms

### The Teachings of the Sermon on the mount cannot be seen as a list of behaviors one does “to be a Christian” But rather a list of indicatives “one is a Christian”

1. (Imperative - of vital importance; crucial in practice)

2. (Indicative - serving as a sign or indication of something.)

One must have the understanding of the Indicatives before one can walk in the imperatives just like we covered last week in Ephesians.

Imperatives without Indicatives equals works based righteousness and is no different than that of the Pharisee’s.

Imperatives that flow out of our relationship with Christ become indicatives to a lost world. That is the point - Christians are Counter-Cultural in our very lives because we are Kingdom people

[John 3:3](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jn3.3) “3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.””

[John 3:5](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Jn3.5) “5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

Any attempt to live as Kingdom people devoid of the relationship with Christ merely becomes a futile attempt to work your way into the Kingdom

[Ephesians 2:8-9](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph2.8-9) “8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 **not of works, lest anyone should boast.**”

[Romans 10:9-10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro10.9-10) “9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one **believes unto righteousness**, and with the mouth **confession is made unto salvation.”**

[Romans 10:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro10.13) “13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.””

[Romans 10:14](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ro10.14)a “14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?

The Sermon on the Mount is the call to believers to live as kingdom people. This is the defining difference between being a believer (professor) and a Disciple – That’s where we will pick it up next week.

**Matthew 4:23–5:2**

