

The Sermon on the Mount – Part 1

Lakewood Family Church | Dr. Jonathan L. Vorce | January 11, 2026

Introduction

- **Matthew 5-7** records Jesus' most famous sermon, often called "The Sermon on the Mount."
- It has inspired countless hearts and sparked more teachings than any other message. But what's at its core? What's the main theme? What's inside it?
- As we dive into this series, we'll answer those questions. First up: the theme.

I. "The Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven"

To understand the theme, look at the context:

A. The Setting: John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus by preaching about "the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 3:1-3**).

1. Jesus started His ministry with the same focus: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (**Matthew 4:17**).
2. His teachings in Galilee were all about the "gospel of the kingdom" (**Matthew 4:23**).

B. Key Phrase Repeated in the Sermon: Jesus mentions "*the kingdom of heaven*" over and over:

1. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 5:3, 10**).
2. "Least/great in the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 5:19**).
3. "Enter the kingdom of heaven" (**Matthew 5:20; 7:21**).
4. "Your kingdom come" (**Matthew 6:10**).
5. "Seek first the kingdom of God" (**Matthew 6:33**).

C. This shows the whole sermon is about God's good news for His kingdom.

1. How to enter it,
2. Live in it, and
3. Thrive under His loving rule.

II. What God's Kingdom looks like in everyday life.

Here's a simple breakdown:

A. The Citizens of the Kingdom (**Matthew 5:3-16**):

1. Their character and blessings: The Beatitudes describe humble, merciful, peacemaking people who are truly blessed (**verses 3-12**).
2. Their role in the world: Like salt preserving goodness and light shining hope (**verses 13-16**).

B. The Righteousness of the Kingdom (**Matthew 5:17-7:12**):

1. **Beyond old traditions:** Jesus goes deeper than just following rules—it's about heart-level obedience, like turning anger into love and lust into purity (**5:17-48**).
2. **Toward God:** Focus on sincere prayer, giving, fasting, and trusting Him for needs (**6:1-33**).
3. **Toward others:** Avoid judging harshly; treat people as you'd want to be treated (**7:1-12**).

III. The Call to Enter the Kingdom (**Matthew 7:13-27**):

A. Start on the narrow path.

1. Choose the challenging but life-giving way over the easy road to destruction (**verses 13-14**).

B. Watch your steps.

1. Beware of false teachers—judge by their actions, not words (**verses 15-20**).

C. Finish strong.

1. It's not just about saying you follow Jesus, but doing what He says.
2. Like building a house on rock (doers) vs. sand (hearers only) (**verses 21-27**).

- ◆ This content is why some call it the "Magna Carta" or "Manifesto" of God's kingdom—it's the foundational charter for kingdom living.

IV. Defining "The Kingdom of Heaven"

To apply this sermon, we need to understand what *"kingdom of heaven"* means (it's the same as *"kingdom of God"* in other Gospels, like **Mark 1:14-15** or **Luke 6:20**).

- Matthew uses the term "heaven" likely to honor Jewish customs (avoiding God's name) and to stress it's spiritual, not an earthly empire.

A. Key Ideas of Jesus Teachings in the Sermon on the Mount.

1. **God's rule in our lives:** Wherever people let God reign in their hearts (**Matthew 6:10; Luke 17:21**).
2. **Spiritual, not physical:** It's about joy, peace, and righteousness in the Holy Spirit (**John 18:36; Romans 14:17**).
3. **Visible today in the church:** The community of believers who follow Jesus as King (**Matthew 16:18; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6,9**).
4. **Future hope:** A perfect "new heavens and new earth" for eternity (**Matthew 25:34; 2 Peter 3:10-13; 1 Corinthians 15:50**).

B. Present and Future: Right now, it's the rule of God in our hearts and the church (started on Pentecost in **Acts 2**).

1. God's system and ways of doing things.
2. In the future, it'll be fully realized when Jesus returns—for those who live out His will (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

Conclusion

- Grasping the *"kingdom of heaven"* helps us live out the sermon's truths:
 - embracing the beatitudes,
 - pursuing true righteousness, and
 - entering through obedience.
- Next Week, we'll zoom in on the Beatitudes (**Matthew 5:3-12**) to see the heart of kingdom citizens.

Call to Action/Prayer

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But let's make it personal—have you entered this kingdom?

- Jesus told Nicodemus: *"Unless one is born again... of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"* (**John 3:3-5**).
- It's about a fresh start through faith, repentance, and baptism.
- If you're ready, we're here to walk it through with you!