



# Authentic

We are starting a new series on the Sermon on the Mount. This is Jesus' teaching to his disciples about the kingdom of heaven and what it means to be an authentic disciple of Christ. In Matthew 4:23, we read that "Jesus went throughout Galilee, *teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom*, and healing every disease and sickness among the people." That is what Jesus is doing in the Sermon on the Mount, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom.

It can be easy for Christians to read this passage and conclude that these are requirements for us to receive salvation. However, Jesus is not talking about how we receive salvation. Earlier on, Jesus has already called his disciples to follow him (4:18-22). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is teaching them about what it means to be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and the blessings that come with it. In other words, Jesus is talking about what it means to be an authentic follower of Christ, and the wonderful privileges that come with it.

So, as we come to study the Sermon on the Mount in this series, let us be challenged and encouraged, to be convicted and comforted by the teaching of Jesus. These are words to build our lives upon, like the wise builders in Matthew 7:24-25.

## Launch

- 1) Do you think there are inauthentic followers of Christ? Why do you think that is the case?

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

**Read Matthew 4:18 – 5:3**

- 2) Who are the people that Jesus called to follow him in 4:18-22?
  - a. What did Jesus say that these followers will do? (4:19)
  - b. What did these disciples give up to follow Jesus? (4:20, 22)
- 3) What did Jesus do according to Matthew? (4:23)
  - a. What happened when news about Jesus spread? (4:24-25)
  - b. What does this show about who Jesus is?
- 4) What did Jesus do when he saw the crowds? (5:1-2)



- 5) Based on the context thus far, who do you think the Sermon on the Mount is written for?
  
- 6) Who do you think are the poor in spirit? (5:3)
  - a. What do you think it shows about who Jesus is if he is teaching them about the kingdom of heaven? (cf. Matt 7:28-29)
  
- 7) Read Matthew 7:24-27. Based on the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, what do you think is the purpose of the Sermon?
  
- 8) What are some things that the world is asking us to build our lives upon? In what way are these things similar to building a house on sand?
  
- 9) What are some things that even Christians are tempted to build their lives upon?
  
- 10) What are some practical ways that we can build our lives upon the words of Jesus? What kind of opposition do you foresee in your own lives as you do that?

## Conclusion

The Sermon on the Mount is Jesus' authoritative teaching on the kingdom of heaven and what it means to be citizens of that kingdom. He can be authoritative in his teaching because he is the king of that kingdom. By hearing and putting his words into practice, we are building our lives upon his word that lasts for eternity (5:18), and not on earthly temporary things.

The Sermon on the Mount is not teaching us on how we can be saved, but rather it is teaching us about what life is like once we are followers of Christ. Matthew recounts the incident of Jesus calling his disciples just before the Sermon on the Mount to indicate that this is about what it means to follow Christ. It is written for disciples of Christ. There were large crowds from many cities that followed him (4:25 – 5:1), but an authentic follower of Christ listens and obeys the words of Christ.

Unfortunately, just like the "followers" of Christ in his day, there are still inauthentic followers of Christ today. These are people who hear Jesus' word but do not put them into practice (7:26-27). True and authentic followers of Christ listens and obeys him. Let us be true and faithful followers of Christ, who knows and obeys his words. Let us be wise builders of our own lives as we build our lives on the solid rock of Jesus' words.