

Lesson 1

Matthew 5:1-2

Introduction: What is this sermon?

Textbook pages 15-29

1. Introduction
2. Christian Counterculture
 1. Lev. 18:1-4 – I am the Lord your God
 2. Matt 4:17 – Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand
 3. Matt 6:8 – Do not be like them
 4. Lev 18:3 – You shall not do as they do.
 5. Underlying and uniting theme – Contrast between Christian and non-Christian
3. Is the sermon relevant?
 - A Christian's character – 5: 3-12
 - A Christian's influence – 5:13-16
 - A Christian's righteousness – 5:17-48
 - A Christian's piety – 6:1-18
 - A Christian's ambition - 6:19-34
 - A Christian's relationships – 7:1-20
 - A Christian's commitment – 7:1-27
4. Is the sermon attainable?
 - Think of goals that you might have?
 - Ones that you have attained
 - Ones you want to attain
 - Ones that you have found out that you cannot attain
 - The standards of the Sermon on the Mount
 - Neither readily attainable by every man
 - Not totally attainable by any man
 - Only the belief in the necessity and the possibility of a new birth can keep us from reading the Sermon on the Mount with either:
 - Foolish optimism, or
 - Hopeless despair.

6. Four ways that the Sermon on the Mount has been interpreted:
- A *perfectionist* code, consistent with the legalism of rabbinic Judaism. According to this view the sermon is merely a series of wise laws.
 - An *impossible ideal*, meant to drive sinners to despair, then to trust in God's mercy. Hence the sermon is a preparation for evangelism.
 - An *"interim ethic,"* meant to apply to a brief period before the end of time, which Jesus thought was coming in a few years. Here the sermon is a law that people can keep only briefly, in a crisis situation. .
 - A *description of life in the kingdom*, which presupposes that those who hear and follow Jesus' message are already converts and disciples. Here the sermon describes a Christian's way of life.