

BibleSanity.org – Remote Bible Study

The Sermons, Parables, and Teachings of Jesus Christ

Session 6 – The Sermon on the Mount, Part One, September 20, 2022

Same or Different?

There are some reasons which indicate that the **“Sermon on the Mount”** of Matthew (Ch 5-7) and the **“Sermon on the Plain”** of Luke (Ch 6) are varying accounts of a single event. Both have very similar content, both occur early in Jesus’ ministry, one occurs ‘on a mountain (Matthew 5:1) and for the other they went ‘down to plain/level place’ (Luke 6:17), but reasonably still on a mountain (look back to Luke 6:12).

Some also speculate that both Gospels record a single particular event, but that the teachings included in the sermon were repeated.

There are good reasons to consider these to be accounts of separate, but similar events. Just as modern speakers repeat themselves from appearance to appearance, there is no reason to think that Jesus would not repeat his teachings. Also, in spite of the relative brevity of the Luke account, there are several unique aspects in the content.

A primary consideration of multiple sermons is that even though Matthew is not a strictly chronological account, the Matthew sermon seems to have occurred very early, while the Luke account seems to be a bit later, but still early on. Events which occur in the same order, but **after Matthew’s sermon and before Luke’s sermon** include:

- Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law (Matthew 8, Luke 4),
- Healing of the Palsied let down thru the roof (Matthew 9, Luke 5),
- The call of Matthew (Matthew 9, Luke 5)
- Plucking grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12, Luke 6)
- Curing the withered hand on the Sabbath (Matthew 12, Luke 6)
- Jesus selects disciples (Luke 6) – Matthew does not relate the selection, but names disciples in Matthew 10

Presumably therefore, the **“Sermon on the Mount”** of Matthew (Ch 5-7) and the **“Sermon on the Plain”** of Luke (Ch 6) are not varying accounts of a single sermon, but they are accounts of the teachings of Christ which were repeated continuously as Christ traveled about, especially during the first half of his ministry.

A specific example indicating that these teachings were **continuous in nature** is that when disciples question Jesus about prayer in Luke 11 (Late in his ministry, after the Mount of Transfiguration and the Sending of the 70), Jesus quotes himself, not from words recorded in the Luke 6 sermon, but from words recorded in the Matthew 6 sermon.

Luke 11:1-4

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Matthew 6:9-13

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Luke 6:20-49

The Sermon on the Plain, from start (the Beatitudes) to end (the parable of the house built on the rock), does not include instructions in prayer.

Primarily in Matthew

We will be studying primarily from the Matthew sermon, because the Matthew account is MUCH longer (3 chapters vs part of 1 chapter), but we will include content from Luke as we go.

Introduction: In both accounts, the Disciples are directly addressed, but in the presence of the multitudes. This is important specified context, that he is directly addressing his followers, but in the presence of the general multitude (“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” – Matthew 11:15).

Matthew 5:1-2

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...

Luke 6:19-20

And the whole multitude sought to touch him... And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said...

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:3-12

Blessed are the poor **in spirit**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst **after righteousness**: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Luke 6:20-21 (variant)

...Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled...

Luke 6:24-26 (additional content)

But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger.

Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

First off, in general, the Beatitudes clearly reflect the very similar promises of Isaiah 61, especially vs 1-3, making the Beatitudes a link to this well-known Messianic prophecy. Jesus is sharing the same and similar promises.

- Good news to the afflicted (Isaiah 61, v1)
- Liberty to captives (v1)
- Comfort to those who mourn (v2)
- Praise instead of fainting (v3)
- The year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of God (v2)

Secondly, the Beatitudes cannot be taken as unconditional promises to all of mankind. Jesus is addressing his disciples, and the characteristics described are Christian characteristics, not evident in unregenerate mankind. See the examples of this principle below:

Poor in Spirit	1 Peter 3:4	...the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit , which is in the sight of God of great price
Mourn	James 4:9-10	Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep : let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.
Meek	Titus 3:2	...be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.
Hunger after righteousness	1 Peter 2:24	...that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness...
Merciful	Romans 12:8	...he that sheweth mercy , with cheerfulness.
Pure in Heart	1 Timothy 5:22	...keep thyself pure .
Peacemakers	James 3:17	...wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable...

Jesus meets people where they are – He starts with the harsh reality where these people are living, and by juxtaposition, He is showing spiritual truths of blessing, of those who will trust in Him. Consider the Beatitudes as a call to action; Become poor in spirit, repent with mourning, become meek, hunger after righteousness: as characteristics cultivating a right spirit for saving faith.

Second Set – Jesus follows the first set of promised blessings with warnings of prosecution to his followers (Matthew 5:10-12), but promising that these too will end in blessing.

Finally – Luke adds 3 verses of woes (Luke 6:24-26) to those who are content and prosperous now. It is not evil to be prosperous, but those who live in joy of their prosperity are not inclined to repentance, and their wealth and status is a transient thing of no value in the face of eternity. Consider Matthew 19:23-24 (hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven).