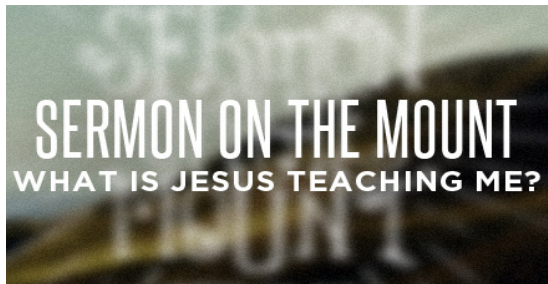


Lessons for Life



Week 3

These weekly studies are loosely based on the previous Sunday's sermon. If you missed it, you will find a recording on our website (www.knaphillbaptist.org.uk). They are designed for both Home Group discussion and/or personal reflection. Don't necessarily try to cover all the questions and discussion topics in your group at one sitting. You may like to think about them later in your own time.



Setting the Standard

Read Matthew 5:17-37

This is the third in our series of studies based on the Sermon on the Mount, (Matthew 5-7) entitled *Lessons for Life*. These chapters contain various sayings of Jesus that together form a coherent body of teaching, that are, considered to be, the blue-print for the Christian lifestyle. If we are to be true and authentic followers of Jesus we need to model our lives on what Jesus says here and allow it to shape, inform and define our identity. Jesus suggests five principles in this section of the *Sermon* that we need to adopt if we are live in a way that glories God, blesses others, and enables us to enjoy the Christian life.

Questions and pointers for discussion/reflection

1. We began our exposition of this passage by reminding ourselves that we are not on our own in seeking to implement these various principles Jesus outlines for us here. Why are Paul's words in Philippians 4:13 so helpful and encouraging here?
2. Look again at Matthew 5:17-20. What does Jesus mean when he tells us that he did not come to abolish the teaching of the Law and the Prophets (in the Old Testament) but rather fulfil them?
3. Do you agree that, as Christians, we are primarily a 'New Testament people', and especially a 'Gospels people', rather than an 'Old Testament people'?
4. Do you agree that 'some bits of the Bible are more important than other bits'? What does it mean to be 'Christ-centred'?
5. Look again at Matthew 5:21-26. Why is 'anger' so dangerous? In the light of Jesus cleansing the Temple (John 2), do you agree that it is possible that what we might call 'righteous indignation', God might actually call 'sin'?
6. In practical terms, what does it really mean to be 'a people of peace'?
7. With Matthew 5:27-30 in mind, do you agree that it is far too easy to classify various sins in (what we consider) some kind of order e.g. murder being the worst sin, whilst at the same time failing to recognise other sins may actually be more harmful e.g. anger?
8. Do you agree that 'spiritual pride' is the worst kind of sin? Why?
9. Why was Mary right, and Martha wrong (Luke 10:38-42)?
10. 'In order to become a true disciple of Jesus we need to exercise self-discipline rather than 'be disciplined' by others? Do you agree with this statement?
11. In the light of Jesus' teaching here in Matthew 5:31,32, do we take life too seriously ... or not seriously enough?
12. What do you think of the suggestion that when Jesus cites 'sexual impurity' as a ground for divorce (Matthew 5:31,32; 19:1-12), and Paul cites 'desertion' (1 Corinthians 7:15) similarly, they are giving examples of 'serious marriage breakdown' (not limiting the grounds of divorce)? What other grounds are there?
13. Look again at Matthew 5:33-37. Why is keeping our word so important? What exactly does it mean for us to say 'Yes' or 'No'? What did you learn from the story of 'Joe'?