

Thursday

Matthew records just two long sermons by Jesus: One at the start of His ministry, the Sermon on the Mount, in chapters 5-9, and one at the end of His ministry, in chapters 23-25. They're really like bookends, because the themes are so consistent. Read Matthew 23:1-28. How is this similar to the Sermon on the Mount?

Are there any warnings in these verses that hit a chord for you? Which ones?

*Ask God to help you always stay away from performance and to be an authentic follower of Christ!
Ask Him to let our church display this kind of authenticity from the top down!*

Friday

So did any Pharisees ever change? Some sure did, and they loved the difference! Read the testimony of one of them, the Apostle Paul, in Philippians 3:4-9.

Summarize Paul's point:

Ask God to help you experience the freedom from the righteousness sought through human effort, and relax in the righteousness Jesus gives!

Saturday

Look at this week's memory verse (on the other side of this page). How is this a key to understanding everything Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount?

Ask yourself: Am I letting my light shine through good deeds? Am I focused on Christ? Am I living out the Word of God? Am I going beyond rule-keeping?

Ask for God's help in these areas. Please pray for the services this weekend. That God will be glorified!

How does Jesus want me to live?

1. Let _____

"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your **good deeds** and praise your Father in heaven." *Matthew 5:16 (NIV)*

Not _____ for _____
but _____ for _____

2. Look _____

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to **fulfill** them." *Matthew 5:17*

"Fulfill": _____

3. Live _____

"Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever **practices** and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 5:19*

Five possible goals of Bible study:

4. Learn _____

"For I tell you that unless your righteousness **surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law**, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." *Matthew 5:20*

• Go from _____ to _____

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." *Matthew 15:8*

• Go from _____ to _____

"Everything they do is done for men to see..." *Matthew 23:5a*

The bottom line:

Have simple, from-the-heart _____ for _____
and _____.

Daily Meditations

Monday

Look back over the notes from the message. How do each of these points help keep faith from getting complicated?

Which of these three points is most natural for you?

Which of these do you need the most help with?

Ask God today to help you focus on these three simple areas to keep your faith from getting complicated and legalistic!

Tuesday

Five times in Matthew chapter 5, Jesus compares the technical, legalistic rules of the Pharisees with the real, deep, heart obedience God longs for. Look up these verses and summarize his teaching:

1. Matthew 5:21,22

2. Matthew 5:27,28

3. Matthew 5:33,34

4. Matthew 5:38,39

5. Matthew 5:43,44

What would you say is the theme of Jesus' teaching here?

Why is this hard?

Why do you think some people actually prefer a system of rules to a relationship with God?

Ask God to help you be truly pure from the inside out — that's a miracle that comes only by God's grace!

Wednesday

Three times in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus Christ compares the complicated, external piety of the Pharisees to a simple relationship with God. Look up these verses and summarize their teaching:

1. Matthew 6:1-4

2. Matthew 6:5-8

3. Matthew 6:16-18

What would you say is the theme of Jesus' teaching here?

Why is it so easy to slip back into a rote religious system — in our prayers, for example — instead of maintaining a simple relationship with God?

I hope you see how the Sermon on the Mount is not just a disconnected series of instructions, but it all has one central theme: Having a simple, from-the-heart love for God and others, as opposed to a performance-oriented, external religious system.

Thank God that He wants a simple relationship with us, instead of demanding all those man-made religious rules! Ask Him to help you have such a deepening relationship!



This can be considered the key verse to understanding the entire Sermon on the Mount!

“For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”
Matthew 5:20 (NIV)

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