



# can you spare 9 minutes to read a message 19 centuries old?

The Sermon on the Mount is for everyone. Anyone who reads it will be happier today. Anyone who carries it in his heart will be happier forever. Read...re-read...and understand its words. No speech ever promised...or delivered...so much.

**W**HEN he saw the crowds of people he went up on the mountain. There he seated himself, and when his disciples had come up to him, he opened his lips to teach them. And he said:

★ Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them! Blessed are the mourners, for they will be consoled! Blessed are the humble-minded, for they will possess the land! Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for uprightness, for they will be satisfied! Blessed are the merciful,



for they will be shown mercy! Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God! Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called God's sons! Blessed are those who have endured persecution for their uprightness, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them! Blessed are you when people abuse you, and persecute you, and falsely say everything bad of you, on my account. Be glad and exult over it, for you will be richly rewarded in heaven, for that is the way they persecuted the prophets who went before you!

★ You are the salt of the earth! But if salt loses its strength, how can it be made salt again? It is good for nothing but to be thrown away and trodden underfoot. You are the light of the world! A city that is built upon a hill cannot be hidden. People do not light a lamp and put it under a peck-measure; they put it on its stand and it gives light to everyone in the house. Your light must burn in that way among men so that they will see the good you do, and praise your Father in heaven.

★ Do not suppose that I have come to do away with the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to do away with them but to fulfill them. For I tell you, as long as heaven and earth endure, not one dotting of an *i* or crossing of a *t* will be dropped from the Law until it is all observed. Anyone, therefore, who weakens one of the slightest of these commands, and teaches others to do so, will be ranked lowest in the Kingdom of Heaven; but anyone who observes them and teaches others to do so will be ranked high in



the Kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your uprightness is far superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never even enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

★ You have heard that men were told "You shall not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who strays from his marriage in

thoughts of lust toward another has already committed adultery in his heart. But if your right eye makes you fall, get rid of it, throw it away, for you might better lose one part of your body than have it all thrown into the pit! If your right hand makes you fall, get rid of it, throw it away! For you might better lose one part of your body than have it all go down to the pit!

★ They were told, "Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce." But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife on any ground, except unfaithfulness, makes her commit adultery, and anyone who marries her after she is divorced commits adultery.

★ Again, you have heard that the men of old were told, "You shall not swear falsely, but you must fulfill your oaths to the Lord." But I tell you not to swear at all, either by heaven, for it is God's throne, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. You must not swear by your own head, for you cannot make one single hair white or black. But your way of speaking must be "Yes" or "No." Anything that goes beyond that comes from the evil one.

★ You have heard that the men of old were told "You shall not murder," and "Whoever murders will have to answer to the court." But I tell you that anyone who gets angry with his brother will have to answer to the court, and anyone who speaks contemptuously to his brother will have to answer to the great council, and anyone who says to his brother "You cursed fool!" will have to answer for it in the fiery pit! So when you are presenting your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother has any grievance against you, leave your gift right there before the altar and go and make up with your brother; then come back and present your



gift. Be quick and come to terms with your opponent while you are on the way to court with him, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. I tell you, you will never get out again until you have paid the last penny!

★ You have heard that they were told, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But I tell you not to resist injury, but if anyone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him too; and if anyone wants to sue you for your shirt, let him have your coat too. And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go two miles with him. If anyone begs from you, give to him, and when anyone wants to borrow from you, do not turn away.

★ You have heard that they were told, "You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for your persecutors, so that you may show yourselves true sons of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on bad and good alike, and makes the rain fall on the upright and the wrongdoers. For if you love only those who love you, what reward can you expect? Do not the very tax-collectors do that? And if you are

polite to your brothers and no one else, what is there remarkable in that? Do not the very heathen do that? So you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is.

★ But take care not to do your good deeds in public for people to see, for, if you do, you will get no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you are going to give to charity, do not blow a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do, in the places of worship and the streets, to make people praise them. I tell you, that is all the reward they will get! But when you give to charity, your own left hand must not know what your right hand is doing, so that your charity may be secret, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you.



★ When you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they like to pray standing in the places of worship and in the corners of the squares, to let people see them. I tell you, that is the only reward they will get! But when you pray, go into your own room, and shut the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not repeat empty phrases as the heathen do, for they imagine that their prayers will be heard if they use words enough. You must not be like them. For God, who is your Father, knows what you need before you ask him. This, therefore, is the way you are to pray:

*"Our Father in heaven,  
Your name be revered!  
Your kingdom come!  
Your will be done on earth  
as it is done in heaven!  
Give us today bread for the day,  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not subject us to temptation,  
But save us from the evil one."*

For if you forgive others when they offend you, your heavenly Father will forgive you too. But if you do not forgive others when they offend you, your heavenly Father cannot forgive you for your offenses.



★ When you fast, do not put on a gloomy look, like the hypocrites, for they neglect their personal appearance to let people see that they are fasting. I tell you, that is all the reward they will get. But when you fast, perfume your hair and wash your face, so that no one may see that you are fasting, except your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is secret, will reward you.

★ Do not store up your riches on earth, where moths and rust destroy them, and where thieves break in and steal them, but store up your riches in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and where thieves cannot break in and

steal them. For wherever your treasure is, your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is sound, your whole body will be light, but if your eye is unsound, your



whole body will be dark. If, therefore, your very light is darkness, how deep the darkness will be! No slave can belong to two masters, for he will either hate one and love the other, or stand by one and make light of the other. You cannot serve God and money. Therefore, I tell you, do not worry about life, wondering what you will have to eat or drink, or about your body, wondering what you will have to wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body than clothes? Look at the wild birds. They do not sow or reap, or store their food in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more account than they? But which of you with all his worry can add a single hour to his life? Why should you worry about clothing? See how the wild flowers grow. They do not toil or spin, and yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his splendor was never dressed like one of them. But if God so beautifully dresses the wild grass, which is alive today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more surely clothe you, you who have so little faith? So do not worry and say, "What shall we have to eat?" or "What shall we have to drink?" or



"What shall we have to wear?" For these are all things the heathen are in pursuit of, and your heavenly Father knows well that you need all this. But you must make his kingdom, and uprightness before him, your greatest care, and you will have all these other things besides. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have worries of its own. Let each day be content with its own ill.

★ Pass no more judgments upon other people, so that you may not have judgment passed upon you. For you will be judged by the standard you judge by, and men will pay you back with the same measure you have used with them. Why do you keep looking at the speck in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the beam that is in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Just let me get that speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a beam in your own? You hypocrite! First get the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see to get the speck out of your brother's eye.

★ Do not give what is sacred to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. Ask, and what you ask will be given you. Search, and you will find what you search for. Knock, and the door will open to you. For it is always the one who asks who receives, and the one who searches who finds, and the one who knocks to whom the door opens. Which of you men when his son asks him for some bread will give him a stone? Or if

he asks for a fish, will he give him a snake? So if you, bad as you are, know enough to give your children what is good, how much more surely will your Father in heaven give what is good to those who ask him for it! Therefore, you must always treat other people as you would like to have them treat you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

★ Go in at the narrow gate. For the road that leads to destruction is broad and spacious, and there are many who go in by it. But the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few that find it.

★ Beware of the false prophets, who come to you disguised as sheep but are ravenous wolves underneath. You can tell them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes off thorns, or figs off thistles? Just so any sound tree bears good fruit,



but a poor tree bears bad fruit. No sound tree can bear bad fruit, and no poor tree can bear good fruit. Any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and burned. So you can tell them by their fruit. It is not everyone who says to me "Lord! Lord!" who will get into the Kingdom of Heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me on that Day, "Lord! Lord! Was it not in your name that we prophesied, and by your name that we drove out demons, and by your name that we did many mighty acts?" Then I will say to them plainly, "I never knew you! Go away from me, you who do wrong!"

★ Everyone, therefore, who hears to this teaching of mine and acts upon it, will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. And the rain fell, and the rivers rose, and the winds blew, and beat about that house, and it did not go down, for its foundations were on rock. And anyone who listens to this teaching of mine and does not act upon it, will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. And the rain fell and the rivers rose, and the winds blew and beat about the house, and it went down, and its downfall was complete.

★ When Jesus had finished this discourse, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them like one who had authority and not like their scribes.

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