

Pastor's Bible Study
Spring 2019
SERMON ON THE MOUNT
March 13, 2019
Rev. Philip Amerson

John Stott: *"The Sermon on the Mount is the most complete description anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counterculture. Here is a Christian value system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, lifestyle and network of relationships—all of which are the total opposite of the non-Christian world. The Sermon presents life in the kingdom of God, a fully human life indeed but lived out under the diving rule."* (p.6)

Richard Rohr: *"Jesus didn't want his community to have a social ethic: he wanted it to be a social ethic. Their very way of relating was to be an affront to the system of dominance and power; it was to name reality in a new way. They were to live in a new symbolic universe. This radical idea is given in a simple clue found through the New Testament, a clue biblical scholars overlooked until only recently: Jesus' presence with others at table. That theme is so constant in the New Testament that scholars today see it as central to Jesus' message."* (Rohr, Richard, *Jesus' Plan for a New World*, p.77)

John Wesley: *In a word: Let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Let it lie deep in thy inmost soul. Be thou little, and base, and mean, and vile (beyond what words can express) in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the dust by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Be serious. Let the whole stream of thy thoughts, words, and actions flow from the deepest conviction that thou standest on the edge of the great gulf, thou and all the children of men just ready to drop in, either into everlasting glory or everlasting burnings! Let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering towards all men; -- at the same time that all which is in thee is athirst for god, the living God; longing to awake up after his likeness, and to be satisfied with it! Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind! In this spirit do and suffer all things! Thus show thy faith by thy works; thus "do the will of thy Gather which is in heaven!" And, as sure as thou now walkest with God on earth, thou shalt also reign with him in glory!"* (John Wesley, p 198-199.)

- I. Assumptions for the class:
 - a. Pray
 - b. Read
 - c. Observe, Interpret, Apply (Inductive Study)
 - d. Join in discussion and discernment being mindful of others.

- II. First Notes:
 - a. Who was the writer? What difference does this make?

 - b. Is this aspirational or countercultural?

 - c. Baptism, Temptation and the critical word – *Repent*

 - d. Good News of the Kingdom of God.

 - e. Key texts: 6:8 "Do not be like them."

 - f. Christian Counter Culture

III. The Options (Rohr, p. 98):

- a. The old self on the old path: Non-conversion or non-enlightenment.
- b. The old self on a new path: Where most religion begins and ends: new behavior, new language and practices that are sincere, but that underlying myth/worldview/motivation and goals is never really changed. My anger, fear and ego are merely transferred to now defend my idea of God or religion.
- c. The new self on a new path: The total transformation of consciousness, worldview, motivation, rewards and goals that characterizes *one who loves and is loved by God*. This is conversion according to Jesus.

I. Schedule:

March 13	Overview: Matthew and the Gospel's Core (5:1)
March 20	Salt and Light, Blessed and Honored (5:2-16)
March 27	Fulfilling Commandments (5:17-37)
April 3	Maturity on Display: Love Your Enemies (5:38 – 48)
April 10	Now, About Prayer (6:1-18)
April 17	Paying Attention (6:19-34)
April 24	Review Week
May 1	Summing Up: Straight Forward and Simple (7:1-12)
May 8	Summing Up: Being and Doing (7:13-27)
May 15	Summing Up: Our Response (7: 28-29)

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