

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

April 17, 2019

Rev. Philip Amerson

The Jesus Prayer

I. **Matthew 6:16-34**, fasting, along with giving alms and prayer, is a place to break from the vicious cycle. **From *Traditional Righteousness* past *Vicious Cycle* to *Transformative Initiative*.**

a. Alms, Prayer, Fasting:

i. Transformative Initiatives:

1. When you give to the poor (6:2)
2. When you pray (6:5,7)
3. When you fast (6:16)

ii. Ordinances (From Elaine Heath: Prayer, Study Scripture, Holy Communion, Fasting, Conferencing).

b. Treasures and Two Masters, 6:19-24

- i. “All life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. No man can serve two masters. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire.” Thomas Merton
- ii. *Herein lies the deep irony of human existence. According to Jesus’ teachings, when people seek to keep everything together and provide for themselves apart from God, the result is not the sought-after peace, but rather anxiety.*
(Jonathan Pennington, *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, p. 252, 2017).

c. Anxiety: Birds, Barns, Lilies and God's Kin-dom, 6:25-34

- i. God's Care for Creation;
- ii. *God actively cares for birds and animals, and for the flowers and the vegetables, and for the humans who depend on God's caring for the creation in order to live. So we need to be part of God's caring. And where our financial incentives are, there our hearts will follow, and our eyes are motivated to see what our hearts care about. So, realistically, we must change the financial incentives so conservation replaces consumption. In a hurry.* (Glen Stassen, *Living the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 143, 2006)
- iii. *Living totally without worry sounds, to many people, as impossible as living totally without breathing. Some people are so hooked on worry that if they haven't got anything to worry about they worry that they have forgotten something. Here, at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount, is an invitation that surprisingly few people even try to take up. Why not learn how to share the happiness of Jesus himself?* (N.T. Wright, *Matthew Vol. 1*, p. 67, 2004)

II. Remembering and Practicing the Jesus Prayer:

- 1) Jesus Prayer: The Organizing Center
- 2) ON EARTH
- 3) The *Abba* Prayer or the Kingdom Prayer
 - a. God the Householder,
 - b. A Gift, A Command, An Assurance,
 - c. Kingdom Manifesto,
 - d. "Essential" Bread or "Bread Necessary for Life",
 - e. Shepherd's Prayer,
 - f. Anointing all Around.
- 4) Preaching Jesus cannot be separated from preaching the Kingdom.

III. Memorable Quote on the Jesus Prayer

St. Basil the Great (Fourth Century): *The Bread that is spoiling in your house belongs to the hungry. The shoes that are mildewing under your bed belong to those who have none. The clothes stored away in your trunk belong to those who are naked. The money that depreciates in your treasury belongs to the poor.*" (Found in Leonardo Boff's, *The Lord's Prayer*, p.84.)

II. Notes for Inductive Study Approach:

1. See things whole—get a bird's eye view, before a worm's eye view.
2. Questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
3. Comparisons or Contrasts
4. Recurrence/repetition
5. General and Particular
6. Interrogations
7. Conclusion and/or Climax

2. Schedule, Spring 2019 Bible Study Hour:

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 (6:1-16)
April 17	Paying Attention (6:16-34)
April 24	Review Week – <u>No Bible Study Meeting</u>
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)