

Comparing Sermons

Compare Matthew's account of Jesus's teachings with Luke's account. In Luke's account Jesus emphasizes a point that is not as prominent in Matthew's. What is this theme? How can we apply Christ's teachings, both from Matthew 5 and Luke 6?

Matthew 5:3, 6, 42–48	Luke 6:20–21, 27–28, 30, 32–35, 38
<p>³ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁶ Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. ⁴² Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. ⁴³ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; ⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? ⁴⁷ And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? ⁴⁸ Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.</p>	<p>²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹ Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. ²⁷ I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, ²⁸ Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. ³⁰ Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. ³² For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. ³³ And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. ³⁴ And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. ³⁸ Give, and it shall be given unto you.</p>

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

His name shall endure for ever:
his name shall be continued as long as the sun:
and men shall be blessed in him:
all nations shall call him blessed.
Blessed be the Lord God,
the God of Israel,
who only doeth wondrous things.
And blessed be his glorious name for ever:
and let the whole earth be filled
with his glory. (Ps. 72: 17-19.)

Come, ye blessed of my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world.
(Matt. 25:34.)

The Sermon on the Mount: “A More Excellent Way”

Matthew 5

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The Sermon on the Mount

At some time very near that of the ordination of the Twelve, Jesus delivered a remarkable discourse, which, in reference to the place where it was given, has come to be known as the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew presents an extended account occupying three chapters of the first Gospel; Luke gives a briefer synopsis. Circumstantial variations appearing in the two records are of minor importance; it is the sermon itself to which we may profitably devote attention. Luke introduces in different parts of his writings many of the precious precepts given as parts of the sermon recorded as a continuous discourse in the Gospel written by Matthew. Some portions of this comprehensive address were expressly directed to the disciples, who had been, or would be called to the apostleship and in consequence be required to renounce all their worldly interests for the labors of the ministry; other parts were and are of general application. Jesus had ascended the mountain side, probably to escape the crowds that thronged Him in or near the towns. The disciples gathered about Him, and there He sat and taught them.

The Sermon on the Mount-Its Nature and Delivery

The Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, the Sermon in Bountiful-for they are all one; all contain the same truths; all fell from the same lips: all were spoken by the power of the same Spirit. We shall not hear the whole sermon, for no man, of whom we know, has been so privileged since the holy words fell from the lips of Him who chose in his own right, rather than by the mouths of his servants the prophets, to present such a wondrous compilation of the divine truth in a single sermon. But we shall both hear the words and feel the spirit of the portion that has come down to us in Holy Writ.

There may have been greater sermons preached to selected congregations of spiritual giants-as, for instance, at Adam-ondi-Ahman when the first man assembled together the high priests and patriarchs of his dispensation, along with other righteous saints of like spiritual capacity-there may have been other sermons preached to spiritual giants who could comprehend more of the truths of eternity-than, the general run of mankind. The Sermon on the Mount, however, was preached to instruct and counsel the newly ordained apostles; to open the door of spiritual progress for all newly called members of the Church and kingdom of God on earth; and to stand as a beacon inviting men of good will of every doctrinal persuasion to come to the Fount of Wisdom and learn those things which will assure them of peace in this world and eternal glory in the world to come.

This sermon is a recapitulation, a summary, and a digest of what men must do to gain salvation; and the eternal concepts in it are so stated that hearers (*and readers*) will get out of it as much as their personal spiritual capacity permits. To some it will point the way to further investigation; to others it will confirm and reconfirm eternal truths already learned from the scriptures and from the preachers of righteousness of their day; and to those few whose souls burn with the fires of testimony, devotion, and valiance, it will be as the rending of the heavens: light and knowledge beyond carnal comprehension will flow into their souls in quantities that cannot be measured. Every man must judge and determine for himself the effect the Sermon on the Mount will have upon him.

As the words of the sermon, are spoken, anew, as it were, in our ears, there are some basic and simple realities of which we must be aware. The Sermon on the Mount has never been recorded in its entirety as far as we know; at least no such scriptural account is available to us. What has come to us is a digest; the words in each account. that are attributed to Jesus are, in fact, verbatim recordings of what he said, but they are not all that he said by any means. He may have expounded on each point at extended length, with the Gospel historians who preserved his sayings being guided by the Spirit to write only those words which, in the infinite wisdom of Him who knoweth all things, should have been incorporated into their scriptural accounts. It may well be that the most perfect and elaborate sermon was delivered to the Nephites, for their congregation was composed only of spiritually attuned souls.

Without question, when Matthew records a thought in one set of words and Luke does so in different language, both are preserving the verbatim utterances of the Lord. He said what both of them attribute to him as part of the whole sermon. The recording witnesses of his words simply chose to preserve different spoken sentences to present the eternal concepts involved.

And finally, in this connection: The Sermon on the Mount is not an assemblage of disjointed sayings, spoken on diverse occasions, that have been combined in one place for convenience in presentation, as some uninspired commentators have speculated. It is rather selected sayings, all spoken by Jesus on one day, following the ordination of the Twelve; it is that portion of his words, spoken on that occasion, which the Spirit knew should be preserved for us and for all men who seek truth. It may well be that the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon contains more of the sermon than is now found in Third Nephi, and it may well be that future revelations-accounts of others of the apostles, for instance-will bring to light more that was said on the mountainous plain near Capernaum where Jesus spoke the Spirit guided words to his Jewish friends.

No doubt what we receive in the future-as to this and all other scriptural expansions-will depend upon our spiritual maturity. When we exercise faith like unto the brother of Jared, we will learn by revelation what he knew, and feel by the power of the Spirit what he felt. Until then let us start with what we have, the glorious truths recorded in Matthew 5, 6, and 7; in Luke 6; and in 3 Nephi 12, 13, and 14; and let us lay the foundation for that knowledge and that perfection of life which it is ours to receive because we have what we-have-the glorious Sermon on the Mount as now constituted.

Clarifications Concerning the Sermon on the Mount

“One of the problems which sectarian gospel harmonists cannot resolve with certainty is whether Matthew’s account of the Sermon on the Mount and Luke’s version of the Sermon on the Plain are records of the same or of different sermons. It is clear that the Sermon on the Plain, as given by Luke, was delivered immediately following the selection and ordination of the Twelve. Those who maintain that two different sermons are involved assert that Matthew is recounting an occurrence prior to the call of the twelve, and also that he is assembling from many different sermons some of Jesus’ greatest ethical teachings, so that by presenting them as one continuous sermon a better concept of our Lord’s teaching may be had.

“Actually Matthew does not tell of the call and ordination of the Twelve. He merely names them when he records the instructions which Jesus gave at the time they were sent forth to preach and heal the sick (**Matthew 10.**) Further, with some major additions, corrections, and improvements, the Sermon on the Mount as preserved by Matthew was given over again by Christ to the Nephites (**3 Nephi 12: 13; 14**), showing that the materials recorded in **Matthew 5; 6; 7** is all one continuous discourse.

The Nephite version was given after the call of the Nephite Twelve, and portions of the sermon are addressed expressly to those apostolic ministers rather than to the multitude in general. (**3 Nephi 13:25.**) In Matthew’s account, as found in the Inspired Version, the Prophet adds a considerable amount of material that applies to those called to the Twelve rather than to people in general.

(Inspired Version Matthew 5:3-4; 6:25-27; 7:6-17.)

The Beatitudes

The opening sentences are rich in blessing, and the first section of the discourse is devoted to an explanation of what constitutes genuine blessedness; the lesson, moreover, was made simple and unambiguous by specific application each of the blessed being assured of recompense and reward in the enjoyment of conditions directly opposite to those under which he had suffered. The blessings particularized by the Lord on this occasion have been designated in literature of later time as the Beatitudes. The poor in spirit are to be made rich as rightful heirs to the kingdom of heaven; the mourner shall be comforted for he shall see the divine purpose in his grief, and shall again associate with the beloved ones of whom he has been bereft; the meek, who suffer spoliation rather than jeopardize their souls in contention, shall inherit the earth; those that hunger and thirst for the truth shall be fed in rich abundance; they that show mercy shall be judged mercifully; the pure in heart shall be admitted to the very presence of God; the peacemakers, who try to save themselves and their fellows from strife, shall be numbered among the children of God; they that suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness shall inherit the riches of the eternal kingdom. To the disciples the Lord spake directly, saying: “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

It is evident that the specified blessings and the happiness comprised therein are to be realized in their fulness only beyond the grave; though the joy that comes from the consciousness of right living brings, even in this world, a rich return.

An important element in this splendid elucidation of the truly blessed state is the implied distinction between pleasure and happiness. Mere pleasure is at best but fleeting; happiness is abiding, for in the recollection thereof is joy renewed. Supreme happiness is not an earthly attainment; the promised "fulness of joy" lies beyond death and the resurrection. While man exists in this mortal state he needs some of the things of the world; he must have food, and clothing and provision for shelter; and beside these bare necessities he may righteously desire the facilities of education, the incidentals of advancing civilization, and the things that are conducive to refinement and culture; yet all of these are but aids to achievement, not the end to attain which man was made mortal.

The Beatitudes are directed to the duties of mortal life as a preparation for a greater existence yet future. In the kingdom of heaven, twice named in this part of the Lord's discourse, are true riches and unfailing happiness to be found. The kingdom of heaven was the all-comprising text of this wonderful sermon; the means of reaching the kingdom and the glories of eternal citizenship therein are the main divisions of the treatise.

The Sermon on the Mount is Our Constitution for Perfection

"In that matchless Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has given us eight distinct ways by which we might receive this kind of Joy. Each of his declarations is begun by the word 'Blessed.' Blessedness is defined as being higher than happiness.

Happiness comes from without and is dependent on circumstances; blessedness is an inward fountain of joy in the soul itself, which no outward circumstances can seriously affect.' (Dummelow's Commentary) These declarations of the Master are known in the literature of the Christian world as the Beatitudes and have been referred to by Bible commentators as the preparation necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

Be ye therefore perfect

Perfection is an ultimate goal that can be achieved as we draw upon the power of Christ. Perfection is a word that causes different reactions from many people. Some people say, "Perfection? Why, that is impossible!" Others say, "Perfection? I get discouraged just thinking about it!"

Yet, would the Lord give a commandment that was impossible for us to keep? And when he gives a commandment, doesn't he, as Nephi said, prepare a way for us to accomplish what he commands? The Sermon on the Mount is the Lord's blueprint for perfection. Of this sermon Elder Harold B. Lee said:

“Christ came not only into the world to make an atonement for the sins of mankind but to set an example before the world of the standard of perfection of God’s law and of obedience to the Father. In his Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of his own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be ‘an autobiography, every syllable of which he had written down in deeds, and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives.’ (Decisions for Successful Living. Pp. 55-56.)

The Doctrine of Becoming Like God

We have been promised by the Lord that if we know how to worship, and know what we worship, we may come unto the Father in his name, and in due time receive of his fulness. We have the promise that if we keep his commandments, we shall receive of his fulness and be glorified in him as he is in the Father. (D&C 93:11-20,26-28.)

“This is a doctrine which delighted President Snow, as it does all of us. Early in his ministry he received by direct, personal revelation the knowledge that (*in the Prophet Joseph Smith’s language*), ‘God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens,’ and that men ‘have got to learn how to be Gods...the same as all Gods have done before...’ (Teachings, pp.345-46.)

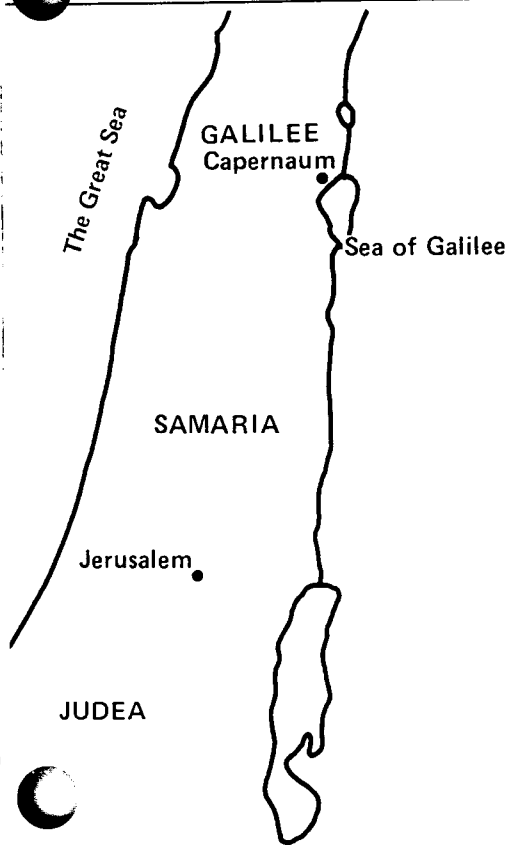
After this doctrine had been taught by the prophet, President Snow felt free to teach it also, and he summarized it in one of the best known couplets in the Church in these words:

***“As man now is, God once was;
As God now is, man may be.”***

(Address by Joseph Fielding Smith at Snow College, 14 May 1971, pp. 1-8.)

***The above information was taken from the following sources:
The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles; The Mortal Messiah From
Bethlehem to Calvary Book 2 By Bruce R. McConkie; Jesus The Christ By James E.
Talmage***

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THE GALILEAN MINISTRY	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Place and Audience	5:1, 2*		6:17-19	
Beatitudes	5:3-12*		6:20-26	
Obligation of Discipleship	5:13-16*			
Righteousness of Christ's Disciples to Exceed the Righteousness of Pharisees	5:17-20*			
The Law of Moses Fulfilled by the Law of Christ	5:21-48*		6:27-36	
Almsgiving	6:1-4*			
Prayer	6:5-13*			
Forgiving Others	6:14, 15*			
Fasting	6:16-18*			
Lay Up Treasures in Heaven	6:19-23*			
Ye Cannot Serve Two Masters	6:24*			
Special Instructions to the Twelve	6:25-34*			
Judge Righteous Judgment	7:1-6		6:37-42	
Earnestness of Prayer	7:7-11*			
Golden Rule	7:12*		6:31	
Two Gates and Two Ways	7:13, 14*			
Final Test of Character	7:15-27*		6:43-49	
Effects of the Sermon	7:28, 29*			

*In italics, emphasis.

8

“BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT”

*“Stems Red. Famous!
Dr. saying on
Perfection!”*

THEME

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INTRODUCTION

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Before proceeding, read all the scriptural references in the reading block.

*Chas
Windy*

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTARY

(8-1) To Whom Was the Sermon Given?

It was given to members of Christ's church. In the opening verses of a parallel sermon delivered to the Nephites in

America, the Lord is clearly addressing this sermon to members of the church. Cross-reference Matthew 5:1 with 3 Nephi 12:1-3.

As you study this sermon, you should remember that “some portions of this comprehensive address were expressly directed to the disciples, who had been or would be called to the apostleship and in consequence be required to renounce all their worldly interests for the labors of the ministry; other parts were and are of general application.” (Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, p. 230. Italics added.)

(8-2) Clarifications Concerning the Sermon on the Mount

“One of the problems which sectarian gospel harmonists cannot resolve with certainty is whether Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount and Luke's version of the Sermon on the Plain are records of the same or of different sermons. It is clear that the Sermon on the Plain, as given by Luke, was delivered immediately following the selection and ordination of the Twelve. Those who maintain that two different sermons are involved assert that Matthew is recounting an occurrence prior to the call of the Twelve, and also that he is assembling from many different sermons some of Jesus' greatest ethical teachings, so that by presenting them as one continuous sermon a better concept of our Lord's teachings may be had.

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showing that the material recorded in Matt. 5; 6; 7 is all one continuous discourse. The Nephite version was given after the call of the Nephite Twelve, and portions of the sermon are addressed expressly to those apostolic ministers rather than to the multitude in general. (3 Ne. 13:25.) In Matthew's account, as found in the Inspired Version, the Prophet adds a considerable amount of material that applies to those called to the Twelve rather than to people in general. (I. V. Matt. 5:3-4; 6:25-27; 7:6-17.)" (McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:213-14.)

(8-3) Matthew 5:29, 30. "If Thy Right Hand Offend Thee, Cut It Off"

"... When the Lord spoke of parts of the body, it is evident that he had in mind close friends or relatives who endeavored to lead us from the path of rectitude and humble obedience to the divine commandments we receive from the Lord.

"If any friend or relative endeavors to lead a person away from the commandments, it is better to dispense with his friendship and association rather than to follow him in evil practices to destruction. This use of comparison or illustration was as common in ancient days as it is in the present age. We should not, in reading these ancient expressions in the New Testament, take such a statement as this referred to in the words of the Savior recorded by Mark in the literal interpretation. When properly understood it becomes a very impressive figure of speech." (Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5:79.)

(8-4) Matthew 6:1-4. How Can One Give Alms in Righteousness?

"*Almsgiving* is the contribution of free gifts to relieve the poor; the spirit that attends such a course is of God and finds its highest manifestation in the organized charitable enterprises of his earthly kingdom. . . . In modern times the major portion of the almsgiving of the saints is administered through the great Church Welfare Plan." (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 30-31.)

(8-5) Matthew 6:5-15. How Does One Pray in Secret?

"... go where you can be alone, go where you can think, go where you can kneel, go where you can speak out loud to him. The bedroom, the bathroom, or the closet will do. Now, picture him in your mind's eye. Think to whom you are speaking, control your thoughts—don't let them wander, address him as your Father and your friend. Now tell him things you really feel to tell him—not trite phrases that

have little meaning, but have a sincere, heartfelt conversation with him. Confide in him, ask him for forgiveness, plead with him, enjoy him, thank him, express your love to him, and then listen for his answers. Listening is an essential part of praying. Answers from the Lord come quietly—ever so quietly. In fact, few hear his answers audibly with their ears. We must be listening so carefully or we will never recognize them. Most answers from the Lord are felt in our heart as a warm comfortable expression, or they may come as thoughts to our mind. They come to those who are prepared and who are patient." (H. Burke Peterson, "Adversity and Prayer," *Ensign*, Jan. 1974, p. 19.)

(8-6) Matthew 6:19-23. What Are Treasures in Heaven?

"Treasures in heaven are the character, perfections, and attributes which men acquire by obedience to law. Thus, those who gain such attributes of godliness as knowledge, faith, justice, judgment, mercy, and truth, will find these same attributes restored to them again in immortality. (Alma 41:13-15.) 'Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.' (D&C 130:18.) The greatest treasure it is possible to inherit in heaven consists in gaining the continuation of the family unit in the highest heaven of the celestial world." (McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:239-40.)

(8-7) Matthew 6:24. What Is Mammon?

"Mammon is an Aramaic word for riches. Thus Jesus is saying, 'Ye cannot serve God and riches, or worldliness, which always results from the love of money.'" (McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:240.)

(8-8) Matthew 6:25-34. Should Members of the Church Really Take No Thought for Temporal Concerns?

"This portion of the Sermon on the Mount was delivered to the apostles and such of the disciples as were called to forsake their temporal pursuits and carry the message of salvation to the world. There is not now and never has been a call to the saints generally to 'sell that ye have' (Luke 12:33), give alms to the poor, and then to take no thought for the temporal needs of the present or future. Rather, as part of their mortal probation, the true followers of the Master are expected by him to provide for themselves and their families. (D&C 75.)

"However, a special rule applies to those who are called to go into the world without purse or scrip and preach the gospel. For the time and season of their missionary service

they are to have no concern about business enterprises or temporal pursuits. They are to be free of the encumbering obligations that always attend those who manage temporal affairs. Their whole attention and all of their strength and talents are to be centered on the work of the ministry, and they have the Father's promise that he will look after their daily needs." (McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:243.)

(8-9) Matthew 7:1. Must True Disciples Follow the Injunction "Judge Not"?

The element of judging and discerning is a necessary part of life. Joseph Smith's inspired revision of the Bible provides some guidelines in this regard.

"Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people.

"Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge righteous judgment." (Matthew 7:1, 2, Inspired Version.)

See also Luke 6:37.

Some forms of judgment, however, must be rendered only by the Lord. President N. Eldon Tanner, using the calling of David (1 Samuel 16:7) as an example, said:

"The reason, therefore, that we cannot judge is obvious. We cannot see what is in the heart. We do not know motives, although we impute motives to every action we see. They may be pure while we think they are improper.

"It is not possible to judge another fairly unless you know his desires, his faith, and his goals. Because of a different environment, unequal opportunity, and many other things, people are not in the same position. One may start at the top and the other at the bottom, and they may meet as they are going in opposite directions. Someone has said that it is not where you are but the direction in which you are going that counts; not how close you are to failure or success but which way you are headed. How can we, with all our weaknesses and frailties, dare to arrogate to ourselves the position of a judge? At best, man can judge only what he sees; he cannot judge the heart or the intention, or begin to judge the potential of his neighbor.

When we try to judge people, which we should not do, we have a great tendency to look for and take pride in finding weaknesses and faults, such as vanity, dishonesty, immorality, and intrigue. As a result, we see only the worst side of those being judged." ("Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged," *Ensign*, July 1972, p. 35.)

(8-10) Matthew 7:13, 14. "Enter Ye in at the Strait Gate."

"The course leading to eternal life is both *strait* and *straight*. It is *straight* because it has an invariable direction—always it is the same. There are no diversions, crooked paths, or tangents leading to the kingdom of God. It is *strait* because it is narrow and restricted, a course where full obedience to the full law is required. Straightness has reference to direction, straitness to width. The gate is *strait*; the path is both *strait* and *straight*." (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 769.)

POINTS TO PONDER

THE ULTIMATE GOAL FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS IS TO BECOME LIKE GOD THE FATHER

Have you given much thought as to what your ultimate goal is? How does it make you feel when you read these words of Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? (Matthew 5:48.) Your divine potential is to become like your Father in heaven, perfect and without sin.

(8-11) The Doctrine of Becoming like God Has Been Taught by Prophets

"We have been promised by the Lord that if we know how to worship, and know what we worship, we may come unto the Father in his name, and in due time receive of his fulness. We have the promise that if we keep his commandments, we shall receive of his fulness and be glorified in him as he is in the Father. [See D&C 93:11-20, 26-28.]

"This is a doctrine which delighted President Snow, as it does all of us. Early in his ministry he received by direct, personal revelation the knowledge that (in the Prophet Joseph Smith's language), 'God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens,' and that men 'have got to learn how to be Gods . . . the same as all Gods have done before. . . .' [*Teachings*, pp. 345-46.]

"After this doctrine had been taught by the Prophet, President Snow felt free to teach it also, and he summarized it in one of the best known couplets in the Church in these words:

" 'As man now is, God once was;
As God now is, man may be.' "

(Address by Joseph Fielding Smith at Snow College, 14 May 1971, pp. 1-8.)

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WE CAN BEGIN THE CLIMB TO PERFECTION HERE AND NOW, ONE STEP AT A TIME

(8-12) Perfection Is Compared to Climbing a Ladder

"When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation. But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave." (Smith, *HC*, 6:306-7.)

(8-13) Faithfulness to the Commandments Is the Key to Growth

"How can the saints receive of his fulness and be equal with the Lord and not be as he is, that is, gods?"

"The Father has promised through the Son that all that he has shall be given to those who are obedient to his commandments. *They shall increase in knowledge, wisdom, and power, going from grace to grace, until the fulness of the perfect day shall burst upon them.* They shall, through the glory and blessing of the Almighty, become *creators*. All power, and dominion, and might shall be given to them, and they shall be the only ones upon whom this great blessing shall be bestowed. . . ." (Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:36.)

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT TEACHES US WHAT WE MUST DO IN ORDER TO DRAW UPON THE POWER OF CHRIST IN OUR QUEST FOR PERFECTION

(8-14) The Sermon on the Mount Is Our Constitution for Perfection

"In that matchless Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has given us eight distinct ways by which we might receive this kind of joy. Each of his declarations is begun by the word 'Blessed.' Blessedness is defined as being higher than happiness. 'Happiness comes from without and is dependent on circumstances; blessedness is an inward fountain of joy in the soul itself, which no outward circumstances can seriously affect.' (Dummelow's Commentary) These declarations of the Master are known in the literature of the Christian world as the Beatitudes and have been referred to by Bible commentators as the preparation necessary for entrance into the kingdom of heaven. For the purposes of this dis-

cussion may I speak of them as something more than that as they are applied to you and me. They embody in fact **THE CONSTITUTION FOR A PERFECT LIFE.**" (Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, p. 56.)

How can the Sermon on the Mount help you to become as your Father in heaven? Has it occurred to you as you read this sermon, that Jesus is actually describing the qualities of and exalted person? With this in mind, the Beatitudes become steps of perfection that enable us to truly love God and our fellowmen. Study the following commentaries on the Beatitudes:

Turning from the love of the world to the Love of God

1. Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit

"To be poor in spirit is to feel yourselves as the spiritually needy, ever dependent upon the Lord for your clothes, and your food and the air you breathe, your health, your life; realizing that no day should pass without fervent prayer of thanksgiving, for guidance and forgiveness and strength sufficient for each day's need."

2. Blessed Are They That Mourn

"To mourn, as the Master's lesson here would teach, one must show that 'godly sorrow that worketh repentance' and wins for the penitent a forgiveness of sins and forbids a return to the deeds of which he mourns."

3. Blessed Are the Meek

"A meek man is defined as one who is not easily provoked or irritated and forbearing under injury or annoyance. Meekness is not synonymous with weakness. The meek man is the strong, the mighty, the man of complete self-mastery. He is the one who has the courage of his moral convictions, despite the pressure of the gang or the club."

4. Blessed Are They That Hunger and Thirst After Righteousness

"Did you ever hunger for food or thirst for water when just a crust of stale bread or a sip of tepid water to ease the pangs that distressed you seem to be the most prized of all possessions? If you have so hungered then you may begin to understand how the Master meant we should hunger and thirst after righteousness. It's that hungering and thirsting that leads those away from home to seek fellowship with saints in sacrament services and that induces worship on the Lord's Day wherever we are. It is that which prompts fervent prayer and leads our feet to holy temples and bids us be reverent therein."

Learning to love our fellowmen

5. Blessed Are the Pure in Heart

"If you would see God, you must be pure. There is in Jewish writings the story of a man who saw an object in the distance, an object that he thought was a beast. As it drew nearer he could perceive it was a man and as it came still closer he saw it was his friend. You can see only that which you have eyes to see. Some of the associates of Jesus saw him only as a son of Joseph the carpenter. Others thought him to be a wine-bibber or a drunkard because of his words. Still others thought he was possessed of devils. Only the righteous saw him as the Son of God. Only if you are the pure in heart will you see God, and also in a lesser degree will you be able to see the 'God' or good in man and love him because of the

goodness you see in him. Mark well that person who criticizes and maligns the man of God or the Lord's anointed leaders in his Church. Such a one speaks from an impure heart."

6. Blessed Are the Merciful

"Our salvation rests upon the mercy we show to others. Unkind and cruel words, or wanton acts of cruelty toward man or beast, even though in seeming retaliation, disqualify the perpetrator in his claims for mercy when he has need of mercy in the day of judgment before earthly or heavenly tribunals. Is there one who has never been wounded by the slander of another whom he thought to be his friend? Do you remember the struggle you had to refrain from retribution? Blessed are all you who are merciful for you shall obtain mercy!"

7. Blessed Are the Peacemakers

"Peacemakers shall be called the children of God. The trouble-maker, the striker against law and order, the leader of the mob, the law-breaker are prompted by motives of evil and unless they desist will be known as the children of Satan rather than God. Withhold yourselves from him who would cause disquieting doubts by making light of sacred things for he seeks not for peace but to spread confusion. That one who is quarrelsome or contentious, and whose arguments are for other purposes than to resolve the truth, is violating a fundamental principle laid down by the Master as an essential in the building of a full rich life. 'Peace and goodwill to men on earth' was the angel song that heralded the birth of the Prince of Peace."

8. Blessed Are They Which Are Persecuted

"May youth everywhere remember that warning when you are hissed and scoffed because you refuse to compromise your standards of abstinence, honesty and morality in order to win the applause of the crowd. If you stand firmly for the right despite the jeers of the crowd or even physical violence, you shall be crowned with the blessedness of eternal joy. Who knows but that again in our day some of the saints or even apostles, as in former days, may be required to give their lives in defense of the truth? If that time should come, God grant they would not fail!"

9. Continuing Efforts to Acquire the Attributes of God

(All the above quotes are taken from Lee, Decisions for Successful Living, pp. 56-63.)

Can you see from this that the Beatitudes form the stairway to Christ by which you can receive power from him to become like him? But remember, it takes effort to climb this stairway. Some say it is impossible, but that is a false idea.

It was late one night when I was abruptly awakened out of my sleep by a telephone call. On the other end of the line was a voice of a distraught ward member. He indicated that there had been some problems in the home and wondered if I could come over.

When I walked into Richard and Jennifer's home, the atmosphere was charged with tension. Richard spoke first. He was nearly in tears. Jennifer wanted to leave him and the children. He spoke vaguely of some problems she had had

earlier during the day, obviously wanting to protect her. Jennifer then interrupted, "Why don't you quit beating around the bush, Richard. Say it. Tell him that I struck one of the children. Tell him what I've said to you and the children! Or are you afraid what the bishop might think of our 'model' home!" Richard only looked at me.

"Suppose, Jennifer, you tell me what's wrong," I said.

"I've had it—that what's wrong, Bishop. I'm fed up with my husband—my kids—and this house. I'm tired of the pretense of being an ideal Latter-day Saint family when we're anything else but. I want out of this situation, the sooner the better."

And so I listened—from 1:00 A.M. until 3:00 A.M. in the morning—to a woman who had previously enjoyed the Spirit of the Lord but who was now filled with vindictive, accusing feelings. It is not necessary to attempt to recreate the sordid scene, nor the events of that day or days previous which brought about this nightmare. It is sufficient to say that the Spirit which had once attended this sister was now gone. All feelings of refinement, sensitivity, kindness, congeniality, and charity had disappeared. In their place were accusation, coarseness, abusiveness, and hatred. I prayed inwardly for the wisdom beyond my natural ability to help.

When she had finished her tirade, she said defiantly: "Now I suppose, Bishop, that you're going to try to dissuade me from leaving Richard."

"No, Jennifer, it appears to me that you have already made up your mind about what you're going to do. Neither I nor anyone else could dissuade you. So perhaps the thing for you to do is to leave." I paused and then added, "But, Jennifer, I want you know before I leave here tonight that there is a way out of your misery if you're willing to try." Though she didn't say anything, her eyes pled for help.

"Do you remember what the Savior taught those who sought to be his disciples? You have probably read or heard some of these teachings many times. You remember as a girl in Sunday School how you were asked to memorize the teachings of Jesus called the Beatitudes. Tonight as you were talking I couldn't help but think that they must apply here.

"'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' The first step, Jennifer, is to realize that you have need for the Lord's help. The Book of Mormon states: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me.' This is the way you can solve this problem—by coming to the Lord for help. But how can you come unto him?"

SECTION 3

“Blessed are they that mourn.’ We come unto the Savior by manifesting a broken heart and a contrite spirit. In other words, we mourn about the condition which prevents us from becoming his friend and having his Spirit with us always. I’m not talking about self-pity, Jennifer. I’m talking about the king of sorrow that purges ugly feelings and desires from the heart. The Savior then tells us how we may overcome this depression and despair that is such a burden for you right now.

“Blessed are the meek.’ To be meek is to humble ourselves before the Lord and ask and plead for his help to overcome our weakness. The Savior has also said, ‘My grace is sufficient for the meek.’ What does that mean? ‘If men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they be humble . . . for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.’ [Ether 12:26-27.]

“Now, Jennifer, you have discovered a weakness in your character that is preventing you from having the Spirit of the Lord. Don’t you desire the blessings that will enable you to overcome your weaknesses? Don’t you desire that joy and happiness that has been absent from your life during these past months?

“Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.’ That’s the blessing you need so desperately, Jennifer! Now let’s consider the rest of the Savior’s beatitudes.

“Do you want to be more kind? ‘Blessed are the merciful.’

“Do you really desire to overcome hypocrisy? ‘Blessed are the pure in heart.’

“Do you want peace in your own home? ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’

“And then there is the teaching about being able to bear persecution. But what about bearing up against stress and persecutions of the adversary in your own home?

“The point is, Jennifer, if you really want these attributes, they are available to you as you ‘hunger and thirst’ after them. This is the righteousness the Savior is referring to—these are the blessings that come as one is filled with the

Holy Ghost. By recognizing your need to depend daily, even hourly, upon the Lord, by fasting and prayer you can overcome this problem that is now leading you to such misery. Here is the Savior’s promise to you:

“ . . . remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.’ [Helaman 5:12.]

I then bore testimony to her of the truthfulness of these principles. Her tears, the first indication of the spirit of repentance, told me she also knew them to be true. There was a way out. There was a hope. Perhaps for the first time in her life, she began to sense how the gospel becomes a power to solve our problems, to refine our natures, and to help us become more Christlike in our disposition.

Before leaving that night we knelt in prayer together. As we arose from our knees, I knew that Jennifer would not be leaving her husband or her home.

It has been seven years since the incident of that evening. Jennifer and Richard have added three more children to their family. Overcoming her problems has not been easy; in fact, it has been an intense struggle. Gradually, however, by applying the principles of the Savior on a daily basis, she has found a strength she did not previously know.

(Based on a true experience.)

As with Jennifer, you may find your weaknesses and problems difficult to overcome. But could you feel justified before God if you failed to make the effort to climb the stairway to perfection? Can you see that it is possible for you to progress a step at a time toward your ultimate goal of perfection?

Now you might wish to review the remainder of the Sermon on the Mount, asking yourself this question: How can I apply the qualities suggested by Jesus that will help me to grow toward perfection?

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

His name shall endure for ever:
his name shall be continued as long as the sun:
and men shall be blessed in him:
all nations shall call him blessed.

Blessed be the Lord God,
the God of Israel,
who only doeth wondrous things.
And blessed be his glorious name for ever:
and let the whole earth be filled
with his glory. (Ps. 72:17-19.)

Come, ye blessed of my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you
from the foundation of the world.
(Matt. 25:34.)

Sermon on the Mount—Its Nature and Delivery

It is now our privilege to hear anew the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Plain, the Sermon in Bountiful—they are all one; all contain the same truths; all fell from the same lips; all were spoken by the power of the same Spirit. We shall not hear the whole sermon, for no man, of

whom we know, has been so privileged since the holy words fell from the lips of Him who chose in his own right, rather than by the mouths of his servants the prophets, to present such a wondrous compilation of the divine truth in a single sermon. But we shall both hear the words and feel the spirit of the portion that has come down to us in Holy Writ.

There may have been greater sermons preached to selected congregations of spiritual giants—as, for instance, at Adam-ondi-Ahman when the first man assembled together the high priests and patriarchs of his dispensation, along with other righteous saints of like spiritual capacity—there may have been other sermons preached to spiritual giants who could comprehend more of the truths of eternity than the general run of mankind. The Sermon on the Mount, however, was preached to instruct and counsel the newly ordained apostles; to open the door of spiritual progress for all newly called members of the Church and kingdom of God on earth; and to stand as a beacon inviting men of good will of every doctrinal persuasion to come to the Fount of Wisdom and learn those things which will assure them of peace in this world and eternal glory in the world to come.

This sermon is a recapitulation, a summary, and a digest of what men must do to gain salvation; and the eternal concepts in it are so stated that hearers (and readers) will get out of it as much as their personal spiritual capacity permits. To some it will point the way to further investigation; to others it will confirm and reconfirm eternal truths already learned from the scriptures and from the preachers of righteousness of their day; and to those few whose souls burn with the fires of testimony, devotion, and valiance, it will be as the rending of the heavens: light and knowledge beyond carnal comprehension will flow into their souls in quantities that cannot be measured. Every man must judge and determine for himself the effect the Sermon on the Mount will have upon him.

As the words of the sermon are spoken, anew, as it were, in our ears, there are some basic and simple realities of

which we must be aware. The Sermon on the Mount has never been recorded in its entirety as far as we know; at least no such scriptural account is available to us. What has come to us is a digest; the words in each account that are attributed to Jesus are, in fact, verbatim recordings of what he said, but they are not all that he said by any means. He may have expounded on each point at extended length, with the Gospel historians who preserved his sayings being guided by the Spirit to write only those words which, in the infinite wisdom of Him who knoweth all things, should have been incorporated into their scriptural accounts. It may well be that the most perfect and elaborate sermon was delivered to the Nephites, for their congregation was composed only of spiritually attuned souls. Without question, when Matthew records a thought in one set of words and Luke does so in different language, both are preserving the verbatim utterances of the Lord. He said what both of them attribute to him as part of the whole sermon. The recording witnesses of his words simply chose to preserve different spoken sentences to present the eternal concepts involved.

And, finally, in this connection: The Sermon on the Mount is not an assemblage of disjointed sayings, spoken on diverse occasions, that have been combined in one place for convenience in presentation, as some uninspired commentators have speculated. It is rather selected sayings, all spoken by Jesus on one day, following the ordination of the Twelve; it is that portion of his words, spoken on that occasion, which the Spirit knew should be preserved for us and for all men who seek truth. It may well be that the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon contains more of the sermon than is now found in Third Nephi, and it may well be that future revelations—accounts of others of the apostles, for instance—will bring to light more that was said on the mountainous plain near Capernaum where Jesus spoke the Spirit-guided words to his Jewish friends.

No doubt what we receive in the future—as to this and all other scriptural expansions—will depend upon our

spiritual maturity. When we exercise faith like unto the brother of Jared, we will learn by revelation what he knew, and feel by the power of the Spirit what he felt. Until then let us start with what we have, the glorious truths recorded in Matthew 5, 6, and 7; in Luke 6; and in 3 Nephi 12, 13, and 14; and let us lay the foundation for that knowledge and that perfection of life which it is ours to receive because we have what we have—the glorious Sermon on the Mount as now constituted.

Jesus Speaks the Beatitudes

(3 Nephi 12:1-12; Matthew 5:1-12; JST, Matthew 5:3-5, 8, 10-12, 14; Luke 6:17-26; JST, Luke 6:20-21, 23)

Jesus came in resurrected glory to a great multitude of the Nephites who were assembled round about the temple in the land Bountiful. At his invitation they all thrust their hands into his side and felt the print of the nails in his hands and in his feet, and all cried out with one accord: "Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God!" From among them Jesus chose Twelve, whom he ordained apostles, and to whom he gave power to proclaim his gospel, to baptize, to confer the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to do all things needful for the salvation of that remnant of the house of Israel.

To these Twelve and to the whole congregation Jesus taught his gospel, including faith, repentance, baptism of water and of the Spirit, and the keeping of the commandments of God. (3 Ne. 11.) Then, stretching forth his hand to the multitude, he began to deliver the Sermon in Bountiful, which was the Sermon on the Mount, as we conclude from Matthew's account, or the Sermon on the Plain, as we reason from Luke's recording of the same persuasive words.¹ His initial declarations in this sermon have been appropriately called the Beatitudes. To beatify is to make supremely happy or to announce that a person has attained the blessedness of heaven. Beatitude is a state of utmost bliss, and the Beatitudes are our Lord's declarations of the blessedness and eventual eternal glory of those who obey the various prin-

ciples recited in them. May we now, with beatific vision, as it were, seek to envision the meaning of Jesus' blessed pronouncements on blessedness.

Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen from among you to minister unto you, and to be your servants; and unto them I have given power that they may baptize you with water; and after that ye are baptized with water, behold, I will baptize you with fire and with the Holy Ghost; therefore blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized, after that ye have seen me and know that I am.

And again, more blessed are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.

These are the basic Beatitudes; these are the initial words of blessing; these are the beatific promises that precede all others; out of them all other blessings come. Before the blessedness of heaven; before the beatific state of supreme happiness; before the glory of utmost bliss can be gained; before we progress on the strait and narrow path leading to eternal life—before nearly all else, we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; we must give heed to the apostles and prophets who minister in his name; we must come down in the depths of humility and be baptized in his holy name; we must be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost and receive a remission of our sins; and we must then walk in the light of the Spirit. It is only after the blessings promised in these beginning Beatitudes have been received that we can obtain the things promised in the Beatitudes that follow.

Jesus' beginning beatific statements in the Sermon on the Mount, as delivered on the mountainous plain near Capernaum, were similar to those made to the Nephites. Having spent the night on the mountain in prayer, Jesus chose the

Twelve, ordained them, and gave them the same powers and commission received by their Nephite fellow laborers. Then, Luke says, "he came down with them, and stood in the plain," meaning a high plateau area near where he, alone, had communed during the night with his Father.

Assembled before him were a host of disciples and a great multitude of people. Disciples and investigators had come together "out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon." They came to hear and heed, to be healed of their diseases, to bask in the divine Presence, to be fed spiritually. It was a day of miracles. Those vexed with unclean spirits were healed; multitudes thronged near seeking merely to touch him; faith was in every heart; he responded to their pleas; and "virtue went out of him, and healed them all." The account seems to indicate that thousands were present. He healed them all! All were given health of body and enlightenment of soul. The kinds and severities of their afflictions are not named, simply that he healed them all.

On other occasions, the healing of lepers, the opening of blind eyes, the restoring of withered legs and arms, the raising of dead bodies from their biers and graves—all are recounted in detail. But the great event of this day was not the miracles, but the sermon; and so, in the setting of faith where all present were healed, in a setting where the Spirit of the Lord was present, Jesus began the Sermon on the Plain. These beginning Beatitudes then fell from his lips:

Blessed are they who shall believe on me; and again, more blessed are they who shall believe on your words, when ye shall testify that ye have seen me and that I am.

Yea, blessed are they who shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name; for they shall be visited with a fire and the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins.

Believe in Christ; believe in the words of the apostles; come down in the depths of humility; be baptized; receive

the gift of the Holy Ghost; gain a remission of sins—all of which must happen if men are to be led into all truth—and then comes an understanding of all the Beatitudes. It was in such a setting—a setting of faith, of belief in the Son of God; a setting of miracles and healings and worship—that Jesus spoke the Sermon on the Mount both in Galilee and in the land Bountiful.

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed are the poor; for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit, who come unto me; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

We'll go to the poor, like our Captain of old,
And visit the weary, the hungry, and cold;
We'll cheer up their hearts with the news that he bore,
And point them to Zion and life evermore.²

"To the poor the gospel is preached." (Luke 7:22.) "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" (James 2:5.) The poor in spirit! If they come unto Christ, salvation is theirs; and it is so often easier for those who are not encumbered with the cares and burdens and riches of the world to cast off worldliness and set their hearts on the riches of eternity than it is for those who have an abundance of this world's goods.

Blessed are they who weep now; for they shall laugh.

And again, blessed are all they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Those who are bereft of loved ones, having learned the purposes of the Lord in the brief separation called death, shall be comforted. The peace that passeth understanding shall rest upon all those who have a knowledge of the plan of salvation. What greater comfort is there than to know that lost loved ones shall be returned to the family unit, and that all the saints shall reign in joy and peace forever? And further: When He comes again whose right it is to rule, he "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be

no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev. 21:4.) They that mourn shall be comforted!

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

As things are now constituted, the meek do not inherit the earth; even He who said of himself, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29) had in fact no place of his own to lay his head. This world's goods were of little moment to him, and he had neither gold nor silver nor houses nor lands nor kingdoms. Peter was even directed to catch a fish in whose mouth a coin was lodged, that a levied tax might be paid for the two of them. The meek—those who are the God-fearing and the righteous—seldom hold title to much of that which appertains to this present world. But there will be a day when the Lord shall come to make up his jewels; there will be a day when Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the faithful of ancient Israel shall dwell again in old Canaan; and there will be also an eventual celestial day when "the poor and the meek of the earth shall inherit it." (D&C 88:17.)

Blessed are they who hunger now; for they shall be filled.

And blessed are all they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Filled with the Holy Ghost! As starving men crave a crust of bread, as choking men thirst for water, so do the righteous yearn for the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is a Revelator; he is a Sanctifier; he reveals truth, and he cleanses human souls. He is the Spirit of Truth, and his baptism is one of fire; he burns dross and evil out of repentant souls as though by fire. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the greatest of all the gifts of God, as pertaining to this life; and those who enjoy that gift here and now, will inherit eternal life hereafter, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God in eternity.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Mercy is for the merciful. In that great day of restoration

and judgment, when every man is rewarded according to the deeds done in the flesh, those who have manifest mercy to their fellowmen here will be treated mercifully by the Merciful One. Those who have acquired the godly attribute of mercy here shall have mercy restored unto them again in that bright day.³

And blessed are all the pure in heart; for they shall see God.

How glorious is the voice we hear from him! Man may see his Maker! Did not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob see the Lord? Did not Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel see the God of Israel, under whose feet was a paved work of a sapphire stone? Was it not thus with Isaiah and Nephi, with Jacob and Moroni, and with mighty prophets without number in all ages? Is God a respecter of persons who will appear to one righteous person and withhold his face from another person of like spiritual stature? Is he not the same yesterday, today, and forever, dealing the same with all people, considering that all souls are equally precious in his sight? Did not Moses seek diligently to sanctify his people, while they were yet in the wilderness, that they might see the face of God and live? Does not the scripture say that the brother of Jared had such a perfect knowledge of God that he could not be kept from seeing within the veil? Why then should not the Lord Jesus invite all men to be as the prophets, to purify themselves so as to see the face of the Lord?

It is written: "Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am." (D&C 93:1.) How glorious the concept is! What a wondrous reality! The pure in heart—all the pure in heart—shall see God!

And blessed are all the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

The gospel of peace makes men children of God! Christ

came to bring peace—peace on earth and good will to men. His gospel gives peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come. He is the Prince of peace. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them who preach the gospel of peace, who say unto Zion: Thy God reigneth! Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with his saints. By this shall all men know the Lord's disciples: They are peacemakers; they seek to compose difficulties; they hate war and love peace; they invite all men to forsake evil, overcome the world, flee from avarice and greed, stand in holy places, and receive for themselves that peace which passeth understanding, that peace which comes only by the power of the Spirit.

And these are they who are adopted into the family of God. They become the sons and daughters of him whose we are. They are born again. They take upon themselves a new name, the name of their new Father, the name of Christ. Those who believe in him have power to become his sons and his daughters. Truly the peacemakers shall be called the children of God!

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward shall be great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Blessed are all they that are persecuted for my name's sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. For ye shall have great joy, and be exceeding glad; for great shall be your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

How could it be said better? Jesus is speaking to the members of his earthly kingdom. In our day that kingdom is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It is composed of those who have taken upon them the name of Christ—covenanting in the waters of baptism to honor that

name and to do nothing that will hold it up to contempt or ridicule. It is composed of those who have forsaken the world; who have crucified the old man of sin; who have become humble, meek, submissive, willing to conform to all that the Lord requires of them.

And, of course, the world loves its own and hates the saints. The world is the carnal society created by evil men; it is made up of those who are carnal and sensual and devilish. Of course the world persecutes the saints; the very thing that makes them saints is their enmity toward the things of the world. Let the ungodly and the evildoers reproach the Lord's people; let them cry transgression against his saints; let persecution rage against those who bear the Lord's name; let true believers be reviled and evilly spoken of—all for his name's sake. So be it!

Do they face trials of cruel mockings and scourgings? Are they stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword? Are they destitute, afflicted, tormented? Are they cast into dens of lions and furnaces of fire? Are they slain in gladiatorial arenas, lighted as torches on the walls of Rome, crucified head downward? Are they driven from Ohio to Missouri, and from Missouri to Illinois, and from Illinois to a desert wilderness—leaving their Prophet and Patriarch in martyrs' graves? No matter! They do not live for this life alone, and great shall be their reward in heaven.

Such are the Beatitudes—insofar as they have been preserved for us—those blessed statements about blessedness. As with all our Lord's sayings, they were unlike and superior to the Rabbinical beatitudes of the day.⁴ No doubt Jesus made many more beatific declarations either in this sermon or on other occasions. Such of his statements as "It is more blessed to give than to receive" would take on the nature of a true beatitude if it were phrased thus: "Blessed are all they who give all they have for the building up of the Lord's kingdom on earth, for they shall receive the riches of eternity in the world to come."

Quite properly we glory in the Beatitudes, as Jesus

himself gloried in them. Edersheim says they are the New Testament counterpart of the Ten Commandments, and that they "present to us, not the observance of the Law written on stone, but the realization of that Law which, by the Spirit, is written on the fleshly tables of the heart." (Edersheim 1:529.) But as we glory in their greatness—and all the blessings thereunto appertaining—we must not overlook the fact that Jesus appended to them certain curses, curses for those who continue to live after the manner of the world and who do not walk in that course which leads to blessedness.

But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger.

Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

If there is a blessing, there must needs be a cursing. There can be no light without darkness, no good without evil, no blessed heights of glory and honor unless there are also cursed depths of despair and damnation.

If the pure in heart shall see God, those whose hearts are impure shall be shut out of his presence. If the peacemakers shall be called the children of God, those who foment war shall be the children of Lucifer their father. If those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, those whose appetites are fed on carnal and evil food shall be filled with a worldly spirit that breeds evil deeds. And so on with reference to all of the Beatitudes. All things have their opposites, and there must needs be an opposition in all things.

Woe, then, unto the rich, Jesus says, the rich whose hearts are set on the things of this world; on the gold in the mountains and the cattle on the hills; on the merchant's goods and the spices coming in on a thousand ships—for they have already received their consolation, the consolation and rewards of this life, rather than the riches of eternity.

Woe unto those whose bellies are full; who have laid up provisions in granaries and storehouses; who have been concerned only with feeding the body—for their spirits, being unfed, shall hunger.

Woe unto those who laugh now, as they rejoice in the things of this world—for they shall mourn and weep in the day of judgment.

Woe unto those who are held in high esteem by worldly and evil people; who revel in the praise of ungodly men; who gain the plaudits of carnal people—for in such manner were the false prophets treated in days of old.

"Ye Are the Light of the World"

(Matthew 5:13-16; JST, Matthew 5:15-18; 3 Nephi 12:13-16)

We repeat: The Sermon on the Mount, including the Beatitudes, was delivered to true believers; to the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb (it was their ordination sermon); to the saints of the Most High God; to members of the Church of Jesus Christ; to people who had been baptized and who were in process of seeking the riches of eternity. To them—after holding out the blessed and sanctified wonders of gospel obedience, as these are stated in the Beatitudes—Jesus now says: "Ye are the salt of the earth. . . . Ye are the light of the world." That is to say: 'Ye are the choicest and best people on earth; and ye must now be an example to all men, that others, seeing your good works, shall come unto me and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' Our Lord's words, insofar as they have been preserved for us, are:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? the salt shall thenceforth be good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.

Behold, do men light a candle and put it under a

bushel? Nay, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house.

Therefore, let your light so shine before this world, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Salt and light, symbols of the saints: salt because it has a seasoning, purifying, preserving power; light because it manifests the good works and wise words of the true believers! The saints, as the salt of the earth, are set forth to season their fellowmen, to keep society free from corruption, to help their fellow beings become wholesome, pure, and acceptable before the Lord.⁵ The saints, as the light of the world, are to set an example of good works and charitable deeds, so they may say to all men, as does their Master, 'Follow thou me; and I will lead you in sure paths here and to heights above the clouds hereafter.'⁶

That Christ is the Light of the World, no Christian doubts; what Jesus is now saying is that all his disciples should be even as he is. That upright people who keep the commandments are the salt of the earth, none question; but we might add that the Lord Jesus himself is the Salt of the Earth. The seasoning, sanctifying, edifying, preserving, uplifting influence of his gospel keeps all the obedient from corruption and decay and sorrow.

If the saints lose their seasoning power and no longer set examples of good works, they are thenceforth as other worldly people to whom salvation is denied. The saints are as a city set on a hill that is open to the view of all. Their good works lead others to the truth and to glorify their Creator, their Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit who testifies of the truth of all things.

NOTES

1. "The plain" of Luke 6:17 is better rendered "level spot," which translation brings the account into complete harmony with Matthew's statement that the sermon was delivered in a mountain, meaning on a level plateau in a mountainous area.

2. "Ye Elders of Israel," *Hymns*, no. 44.

3. This principle applies to mercy and every godly attribute, as also to carnality and devilishness and every evil thing, as Alma has so well said: "The meaning of the word restoration is to bring back again evil for evil, or carnal for carnal, or devilish for devilish—good for that which is good; righteous for that which is righteous; just for that which is just; merciful for that which is merciful. Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren: deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward: yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again. For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again, and be restored; therefore, the word restoration more fully condemneth the sinner, and justifieth him not at all." (Alma 41:13-15.)

4. This applies to all that Jesus did and said—it was unlike and superior to the prevailing preachments and performances in the same fields. For instance, there are in the Talmud many graphic statements and wise sayings that, quoted out of context, have been interpreted by some to mean that the Talmud is an inspired work comparable to the New Testament. But, as Edersheim expresses it: "Take these in their connection and real meaning, and what a terrible awakening! Who, that has read half-a-dozen pages successively of any part of the Talmud, can feel otherwise than by turns shocked, pained, amused, or astounded? There is here wit and logic, quickness and readiness, earnestness and zeal, but by the side of it terrible profanity, uncleanness, superstition, and folly. Taken as a whole, it is not only utterly unspiritual, but anti-spiritual. . . . Taken not in abrupt sentences and quotations, but as a whole, it is so utterly and immeasurably unlike the New Testament, that it is not easy to determine which, as the case may be, is greater, the ignorance or the presumption of those who put them side by side. . . . He who has thirsted and quenched his thirst at the living fount of Christ's Teaching, can never again stoop to seek drink at the broken cisterns of Rabbinism." (Edersheim 1:525-26.)

5. "When men are called unto mine everlasting gospel, and covenant with an everlasting covenant," the Lord says, "they are accounted as the salt of the earth and the savor of men; They are called to be the savor of men; therefore, if that salt of the earth lose its savor, behold, it is thenceforth good for nothing only to be cast out and trodden under the feet of men." (D&C 101:38-40. See also D&C 103:9-10.)

6. "Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you," Jesus said to the Nephites. Then of their obligation, he added: "Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do." (3 Ne. 18:16, 24.)

4

Parallel accounts: Luke 6:17–36; 12:58–59; 3 Nephi 12

Scriptural Highlights

1. The Beatitudes
2. A higher law

Many centuries after the premortal Christ had given Moses the law on Mount Sinai, the mortal Messiah ascended another mount to proclaim a higher law. On this occasion, known as the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught that we should be concerned not just with our outward actions, but also with our thoughts and hearts. The disciples knew they shouldn't kill, but Jesus taught them not even to be angry. They knew they shouldn't commit adultery, but he taught them not even to lust. They knew they should love their neighbors, but he taught them to love their enemies also. These and the other teachings in the sermon are ideals of human behavior that will help us come to Christ and be perfected in him.

Testify that the Savior is our perfect example. Encourage class members to follow his example by trying to develop the attributes in the Beatitudes.

Discussion and Application Questions

- What did you learn and feel while studying the Sermon on the Mount this week?
- Elder Royden G. Derrick said, "The Beatitudes are steps we can take to come to Christ" (*Ensign*, May 1989, p. 76). How can they help us do this? (Matthew 5:3–11; 3 Nephi 12:3–11.) How can they help us learn to love each other? How can the Beatitudes help us in times of trouble and distress?
- How does the Lord comfort those who mourn? (Matthew 5:4; John 14:16–17). How have you felt the Holy Ghost comfort you in times of mourning?
- What does it mean to be meek? How can we develop this characteristic? (Matthew 5:5; 11:29; Psalm 37:11; Mosiah 3:19.)
- Jesus taught that we should "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). What can we do to lift our appetites from the things of the world to the things of God? How will we be blessed as we do this? (Psalm 107:9.) How does the account of this sermon in the Book of Mormon clarify the nature of this blessing? (3 Nephi 12:6.)
- What important principle is taught in Matthew 5:7? Why do we need mercy from the Lord? (Alma 34:16.)
- What does it mean to you to have a pure heart? (Matthew 5:8; Psalm 24:3–4; Proverbs 23:7.) How can we develop hearts that are more pure?
- Why have the Saints of almost every dispensation been persecuted? (Matthew 5:10–12.) How should we respond to persecution? (Matthew 5:9, 38–47.) How can we ensure that we do not provoke persecution and

bad feelings toward the Church and the Saints? (Romans 12:17–21.)

- Jesus taught, "Ye are the salt of the earth" and "Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14). How can we give savor and light to those around us? (Matthew 5:15–16; 3 Nephi 18:16, 24; D&C 101:39–40.)
- What does Matthew 5:23–24 teach that we should do if we have been offended? What are the dangers of taking other approaches, such as waiting for the offender to initiate reconciliation? Why does a dispute with someone affect our relationship with God? (See David Whitmer's quotation about Joseph Smith.)
- Jesus taught that we should love our enemies. (Matthew 5:43–47; Luke 6:27–35.) Why is this important? How can we accomplish this? Why are we often unwilling to love someone who has wronged us?
- How are we to understand Jesus' command that we become perfect? (See and compare Matthew 5:48 and 3 Nephi 12:48; see also D&C 93:11–13, 19–20, 27–28, and the quotation from Elder Smith.) What must we do so that this command motivates us rather than frustrates us? (Mosiah 4:27; D&C 10:4.)

Quotations

David Whitmer: "He [Joseph Smith] was a religious and straightforward man. . . . He had to trust in God. He could not translate unless he was humble and possessed the right feelings towards everyone. To illustrate so you can see: One morning when he was getting ready to continue the translation, something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife, had done. Oliver and I went upstairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house, and asked Emma's forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and then the translation went on all right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful" (cited in B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church*, 1:131).

Elder Joseph Fielding Smith: "[Perfection] will not come all at once, but line upon line, and precept upon precept, example upon example, and even then not as long as we live in this mortal life, for we will have to go even beyond the grave before we reach that perfection and shall be like God. But here we lay the foundation . . . to prepare us for that perfection. It is our duty to be better today than we were yesterday, and better tomorrow than we are today" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:18).

Next Week's Reading Assignment

Study Matthew 6–7. (Parallel accounts: Luke 6:37–49; 11:1–13, 33–36; 12:22–34; 3 Nephi 13–14.)

amen
Class member

The Sermon on the Mount: Part 1

Matthew 5

OBJECTIVE

Understand, through studying the Sermon on the Mount, how to improve relationships with our fellowmen and attain perfection.

PREPARATION

1. Parallel account: Luke 6:20-36.
2. Class member report: "How Salt Loses Its Savor."

SUGGESTED LESSON DEVELOPMENT**Introduction**

Scripture discussion

Have a class member read Matthew 5:1-2.

- To whom was the Lord speaking? (His loyal followers, or disciples.)

This was not a general address to the multitudes. Jesus' audience was restricted to those who had already accepted him. This was essentially a sermon on how to perfect one's life following baptism.

Scripture discussion

Have two class members read Matthew 5:48 and 1 Nephi 3:7.

- From Nephi's statement, what can we conclude about the possibility of our reaching perfection? (The Lord has already prepared a way by which each of us can fulfill the measure of our creation and become as the Father and the Son.)

The word *perfect* is translated from Hebrew *shalem*, or the Greek *teleo*, which expresses the idea of being whole, complete, or finished. The Greek verb is in the future tense and would be better translated "then shall ye be whole, complete, or perfect even as your Father in Heaven." This suggests a *process* of diligently applying principles that lead to perfection, with a reward—perfection itself—at the end of the process.

Seen thus, perfection is achieved step by step. The teachings in Matthew 5 are steps by which disabilities, shortcomings, or defects are overcome and eliminated. Since this is absolutely necessary in order to be like God, it is little wonder the Joseph Smith Translation reads: "Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:50).

Principles of Perfection

The Sermon on the Mount contains information concerning our path to perfection. So important are these teachings in Matthew 5:3-12 that the Savior repeated them to the Nephites when he visited them. The Book of Mormon account gives some significant additional insights to these teachings.

Scripture discussion

Have two class members read, in turn, one of the beatitudes, the first from those in Matthew 5:3-12, the other from 3 Nephi 12:3-12. After each of the beatitudes is read, have the class comment on what it means. Share with the class the insights gained from President Lee's commentary, "The Beatitudes—Steps to Perfection" (Resource Material).

Christ's teachings provide steps to perfection. With the first three, man turns from the world toward God. With the next five, he acquires Christlike attributes.

As we approach perfection, we have a responsibility to share what we have attained with our fellow men. Full perfection cannot be achieved without doing so.

Scripture
Report

Have a class member read Matthew 5:13-16.
"How Salt Loses Its Savor" (Resource Material).

Fulfilling the Law on Which the Beatitudes Are Based

Discussion

- What are some of the messages Jesus taught throughout verses 21-44? (One of the messages is that men should be concerned with their *motives* for their actions rather than merely the acts themselves [Matthew 5:21-48].)
- How did Christ's ideals for human behavior—expressed in the Beatitudes—differ from the law of Moses' standards for good conduct? (Responses should include the following. List these on the chalkboard if appropriate.)

Chalkboard

LAW OF MOSES	GOSPEL IDEALS
Don't kill	Don't even be angry
Don't commit adultery	Don't even lust
Exact an eye for an eye	Turn the other cheek
Do only what's necessary	Go the second mile
Love your neighbor; hate your enemy	Love everyone

In living according to higher ideals of the gospel, man not only behaves in a Christlike manner but feels Christlike feelings. All action then springs from a genuine condition of the heart and soul.

Those who accept Christ become his children—that is, they have the powers of the Spirit helping them in their efforts to become perfect. They desire to behave as their Father behaves. As desire changes to actual behavior, they become perfect.

Likening the Scriptures unto Us

Though some may feel that the promise of perfection is nearly impossible to realize, such is not the case. Perfection comes one step at a time. The time to begin, of course, is now.

- In what things can you become perfect right now? (Paying tithing, observing the Word of Wisdom, being committed home or visiting teachers, etc.)

Scripture
discussion

Have a class member read Moroni 10:32-33.

- Who will achieve perfection? (Those who *diligently strive* and have the Spirit of the Lord to assist them. Those who *endure to the end* of the process of becoming perfect.)

Challenge

Let us evaluate how well we are living the gospel ideals discussed today and pursue the path that will lead to full and complete perfection. Such a course is possible!

ASSIGNMENT

Have the class read Matthew 6-7 and gain insight into what the Sermon on the Mount teaches us about our relationship with the Savior. (A parallel account is Luke 6:37-49.)

RESOURCE MATERIAL



The Beatitudes—Steps to Perfection

To Be Poor in Spirit

"To be poor in spirit is to feel yourselves as the spiritually needy, ever dependent upon

the Lord for your clothes, your food and the air you breathe, your health, your life; realizing that no day should pass without fervent prayer of thanksgiving, for guidance and forgiveness and strength sufficient for each day's need." (Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living*, pp. 57-58.)

To Mourn

"To mourn, as the Master's lesson here would teach, one must show that 'godly sorrow that worketh repentance' and wins for the penitent a forgiveness of sins and forbids a return to the deeds of which he mourns." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 58).

To Hunger and Thirst

"Did you ever hunger for food or thirst for water when just a crust of stale bread or a sip tepid water to ease the pangs that distressed you would seem to be the most prized of your possessions? If you have so hungered then you may begin to understand how the Master meant we should hunger and thirst after righteousness." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 58.)

To Be Pure in Heart

"Only if you are pure in heart will you see God, and also in a lesser degree will you be able to see the 'God' or good in man and love him because of the goodness you see in him. Mark well that person who criticizes and maligns the man of God or the Lord's anointed leaders in his Church. Such a one speaks from an impure heart." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 59.)

To Be Meek

"A meek man is defined as one who is not easily provoked or irritated and forbearing under injury or annoyance. Meekness is not synonymous with weakness. The meek man is the strong, the mighty, the man of complete self-mastery. He is the one who has the courage of his moral convictions, despite the pressure of the gang or the club." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 60.)

To Be Merciful

"Our salvation rests upon the mercy we show to others. Unkind and cruel words, or wanton acts of cruelty toward man or beast, even though in seeming retaliation, disqualify the perpetrator in his claims for mercy when he has need of mercy in the day of judgment before earthly or heavenly tribunals." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 60.)

To Be a Peacemaker

"Peacemakers shall be called the children of God. The trouble-maker, the striker against law and order, the leader of the mob, the law-breaker are prompted by motives of evil and unless they desist will be known as the children of Satan rather than God." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 61.)

To Endure Persecution

"To be persecuted for righteousness sake in a great cause where truth and virtue and honor are at stake is god-like." (Lee, *Decisions*, p. 61.)

How Salt Loses Its Savor

"A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination. Similarly, priesthood power does not dissipate with age; it, too, is lost through mixture and contamination.

"When a young man or older man mixes his thoughts with pornographic literature, he suffers a loss of savor.

"When a priesthood bearer mixes his speech with lies or profanity, he suffers a loss of savor.

"When one of us follows the crowd and becomes involved in immoral acts and the use of drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and other injurious substances, he loses savor.

Beatitudes directed to duties of life

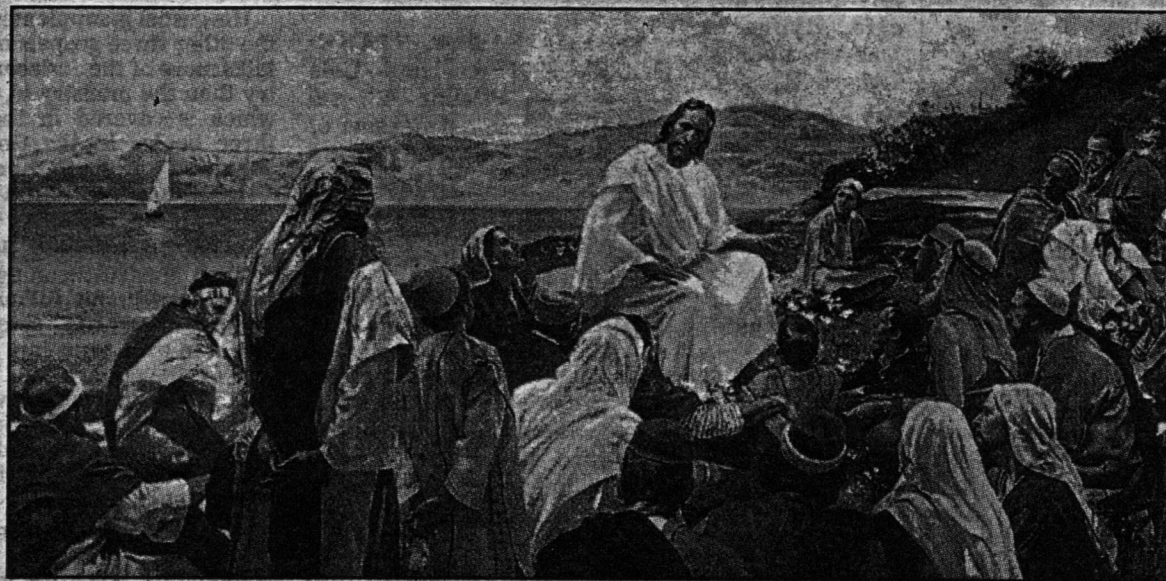
Sermon prepares individuals for a greater existence

Near the time that He called and ordained His twelve apostles, Jesus delivered a discourse that is usually referred to as "the Sermon on the Mount." (It is so called because of the mountain setting of the discourse to the crowd of people who followed Him there.)

"Blessings particularized by the Lord on this occasion have been designated in literature of later time as the Beatitudes," wrote Elder James E. Talmage in *Jesus the Christ*.

"The Beatitudes are directed to the duties of mortal life, as a preparation for a greater existence yet future. In the kingdom of heaven, twice named in this part of the Lord's discourse, are true riches and unending happiness to be found. The kingdom of heaven was the all-comprising text of this wonderful sermon; the means of reaching the kingdom and the glories of eternal citizenship therein are the main divisions of the treatise."

The teachings of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount are recorded with some detail in the Book of Matthew (chapters 5-7); Luke (6:20-49) contains a more abbreviated account. The Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew 5 provides greater insight. The Book of Mormon contains similar teachings that the Resurrected Lord delivered to the more righteous survivors of a storm and earthquake in the Western Hemisphere. (See 3 Nephi, chapters 12-14.)



Painting by Harry Anderson depicts the Savior teaching His followers during a discourse known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Courtesy
LDS Church

Some of the teachings in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon were directed specifically to His specially chosen servants — the twelve apostles in the Old World and twelve disciples in the New World — who were to devote their lives to teaching and leading the people. Other instructions were given to the masses in general.

Although much of the text in 3 Nephi is identical to that recorded in Matthew, there are significant differences.

In a chapter note, Elder Talmage wrote: "Among the Beatitudes certain differences appear, in each of which the Nephite sermon is more explicit. Thus, instead of, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt. 5:3), we read, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me' (3 Ne. 12:3). Instead of, 'Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled' [Matt. 5:6] we read,

'Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost' [3 Ne. 12:6]. Instead of, 'for righteousness' sake,' [Matt. 5:10] we have 'for my name's sake,' [3 Ne. 12:10].

"For the difficult passage, 'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' [Matt. 5:13] we have the clearer expression, 'I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt shall lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted?' [3 Ne. 12:13].

"In place of 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled' [Matt. 5:18], we have 'one jot nor one tittle hath not passed away from the law, but in me it hath all been fulfilled' [3 Ne. 12:18]. Variations in succeeding verses are incident to this prospective fulfilment (Matthew), and

affirmed accomplishment (Nephi).

"Instead of the strong analogy concerning the plucking out of an offending eye, or the severing of an evil hand [Matt. 5:29-30], we find: 'Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart; for it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell' [3 Ne. 12:30].

"Following the illustrative instances of the gospel requirements superseding those of the law, the Nephite record presents this splendid summation: 'Therefore those things which were of old time, which were under the law in me, are all fulfilled. Old things are done away, and all things have become new; therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.' (See 2 Ne. 12:46-48.)

“Whosoever Shall Do the Will of My Father”

If you had walked from Nazareth
Behind the older son,
Would you have testified of him,
The Lord’s anointed one?
Or would you have said to Him,
“I have no need of thee,
“For I can walk through heaven’s gate
Because of family!
“Your mother is the same as mine,
Our brethren, see them, three!
“Now what can be in you divine
That isn’t here in me?”
Proud head, bow down! For He is Lord,
And perfect; without sin.
The man who bore, by Mary, you,
Was not a sire to Him.
Brothers in flesh can lay no claim
To have their faults forgiven,
But must obey, as all the same,
To enter into heaven.
The water, blood, and Holy Ghost
May purge your heart, and change,
Then you’ll not just a *brother* be,
But son to Him who reigns!

(Used by permission.)

“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”

Matthew 6-7

In the Nephite account we read that “Jesus ... looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them: Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people. Therefore I say unto you” the command was to them, not to the whole congregation” take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.”

In Matthew’s account the instructions are more extended and express. To the Twelve who were with him in his personal ministry, Jesus said: “I say unto you Go ye into the world, and care not for the world; for the world will hate you, and will persecute you, and will turn you out of their synagogues. Nevertheless, ye shall go forth from house to house, teaching the people; and I will go before you. And your heavenly Father will provide for you, whatsoever things ye need for food, what ye shall eat; and for raiment, what ye shall wear or put on. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, and so on.

We hear now the eloquent reasoning of the Master Teacher. “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” He asks. Shall we concern ourselves with life itself—the life of the body and the life of the soul—or merely with the food we eat and the rags or robes we chance to use as covering raiment? Then, using words that are eloquent in their simplicity, and drawing his illustrations from the beauties of nature that surround them, Jesus continues:

*Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap,
nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are
ye not much better than they? How much more will he not feed you?*

*Wherefore take no thought for these things, but keep my commandments
wherewith I have commanded you.*

For which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

*And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field,
how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.*

And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon., in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he not provide for you, if ye are not of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

The leading servants and chief underlings of the kings of the earth dwell in palaces, command fortresses, and are waited upon by lesser servants. Robes and rich food and soft beds and lewd entertainment abound for them. Herod Antipas and his courtiers lived such a life. But not so with the great King. His disciples, dressed often in rags, eating the rough food of the poor, sleeping in guest chambers, or even with the beasts of burden when there was no room in the inn-his chief disciples, his apostles, were to travel and live as he himself did.

None but the Lord would dare call upon chosen followers to live such a life and pursue such a course, and none but he could assure them that their essential needs would be met. The contrast between the courtiers of earthly kings and the disciples of the Eternal King is dramatic. The gospel standard is high and soul developing. It is no wonder that the newly called and as yet untested apostles were troubled at the prospects of the future. For their comfort and assurance, Jesus said: *“Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy words because ye have not all these things, and seek to excuse yourselves, saying that, After all these things do the Gentiles seek. Behold, I say unto you that your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.”* Then came that great and wondrous declaration:

Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

It is common among us to quote the less perfect translation of this statement, which says, *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,”* rather than the inspired rendition, *“Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness.”* Both statements are true; both are profound; both present a standard and a concept around which the saints should rally; and the Nephite account does in fact preserve the first of the two, which is, of course, the ultimate objective of true believers. To seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, in the ultimate and eternal sense; is to seek the celestial kingdom and the state of righteousness in which God dwells.

The process by which this ultimate goal is attained is to devote oneself to building up the earthly kingdom, which is the Church, and to establish the Cause of Righteousness on earth. Having so taught, and as a summary for this mid-portion of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said: "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day shall be the evil thereof."

What are Treasures in Heaven?

Matthew 6:19-23

"Treasures in heaven are the character, perfections, and attributes which men acquire by obedience to law. Thus, those who gain such attributes of godliness as knowledge, faith, justice, judgment, mercy, and truth, will find these same attributes restored to them again in immortality. (Alma 41: 13-15.) 'Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection.' (D&C 130:18.) The greatest treasure it is possible to inherit in heaven consists in gaining the continuation of the family unit in the highest heaven of the celestial world."(McConkie, DNTC, 1:239-40.)

What Is Mammon?

Matthew 6:24

"Mammon is an Aramaic word for riches. Thus Jesus is saying, 'Ye cannot serve God and riches, or worldliness, which always results from the love of money.'" (McConkie, DNTC, 1: 240.)

Should members of the Church Really Take No Thought for Temporal Concerns?

Matthew 6:25-34

"This portion of the Sermon on the Mount was delivered to the apostles and such of the disciples as were called to forsake their temporal pursuits and carry the message of salvation to the world. There is not now and never has been a call to the saints generally to 'sell that ye have' (Luke 12:33), give alms to the poor, and then to take no thought for the temporal needs of the present or future. Rather, as part of their mortal probation, the true followers of the Master are expected by him to provide for themselves and their families. (D&C 75.)

“However, a special rule applies to those who are called to go into the world without purse or scrip and preach the gospel. For the time and season of their missionary service they are to have no concern about business enterprises or temporal pursuits. They are to be free of the encumbering obligations that always attend those who manage temporal affairs. Their whole attention and all of their strength and talents are to be centered on the work of the ministry, and they have the Father’s promise that he will look after their daily needs.”
(McConkie, *DNTC*, 1:243)

Must True Disciples Follow the Injunction “Judge Not”?

Matthew 7: 1

The element of judging and discerning is a necessary part of life. Joseph Smith’s inspired revision of the Bible provides some guidelines in this regard.

“Now these are the words which Jesus taught his disciples that they should say unto the people.

“Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge, righteous judgment.”
(**Matthew 7:1, 2, Inspired Version See also Luke 6:37.**)

Some forms of judgment, however, must be rendered only by the Lord. President N. Eldon Tanner, using the calling of David (**I Samuel 16:7**) as an example, said:

“The reason, therefore, that we cannot judge is obvious. We cannot see what is in the heart. We do not know motives, although we impute motives to every action we see. They may be pure while we think they are improper.

“It is not possible to judge another fairly unless you know his desires, his faith, and his goals. Because of a different environment, unequal opportunity, and many other things, people are not in the same position. One may start at the top and the other at the bottom, and they may meet as they are going in opposite directions. Someone has said that it is not where you are but the direction in which you are going that counts; not how close you are to failure or success but which way you are headed. How can we, with all our weaknesses and frailties, dare to arrogate to ourselves the position of a judge? At best, man can judge only what he sees; he cannot judge the heart or the intention, or begin to judge the potential of his neighbor.

“When we try to judge people, which we should not do, we have a great tendency to look for and take pride in finding weaknesses and faults, such as vanity, dishonesty, immorality, and intrigue. As a result, we see only the worst side of those being judged.”

(**“Judge Not, That Ye Be Not Judged,” *Ensign*, July 1972, p. 35.**)

Judging

Trust, yield to the Lord

“It is only by yielding to God that we can begin to realize His will for us. And if we truly trust God, why not yield to His loving omniscience? After all, He knows us and our possibilities much better than do we,” said Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve at the April 1985 general conference.

“Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer in the faith of Christ...even to the ...yielding their hearts unto God.”
(Helaman 3:5.)

“Otherwise, one can be too busy promoting his own agendum: ‘For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.’ **(Romans 10:3)**

“Distinguished there from is Jesus’ clear call: ‘Wherefore seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness.’”
(JST, Matthew 6:33.)

Elder Maxwell said that while events often induce submissiveness, one’s development need not be dramatic or tied to a single moment; it can occur steadily in seemingly ordinary, daily settings.

“If we are meek, a rich and needed insight can be contained in reproof,” he said. “A new calling can beckon us away from comfortable routine and from competencies already acquired. One may be stripped of accustomed luxury in order that the malignant mole or materialism be removed. One may feel humiliated in order that pride be chipped away.

“The shaping goes on, and it is anything but merely cosmetic.”

Testing may be from successes

Often, Latter-day Saints find that the greater testing of faith comes not from the normal obstacles of mortality but from the successes of mortality, said Bishop Richard C. Edgley, then second counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, at the April 1993 general conference.

“There is a strong relationship, even a cause effect relationship, between faith and the required virtues of humility and a submissive heart, which have always been key ingredients of faith,” he said.

“So-called temporal achievements, whether materialistic or intellectual, when untempered with the principles of the gospel and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, often move a person away from the fundamental principles that foster faith.

“When our successes are received without proper acknowledgment to Him who is the grantor of all blessings, these same successes’ often lead to false pride and a deterioration of the virtues that bring us to faith. When our successes lead to self aggrandizement or the substitution of our earthly learning for Heavenly Father’s will, we jeopardize the principles upon which our faith is founded. Anything that erodes humility and submissiveness is indeed a threat to faith.

“Whatever our station in life, whatever our achievements, no matter how great, a submissive heart and a humble spirit are still fundamental to our faith. We must guard against letting our worldly successes or earthly learning become a substitution for spiritual wisdom and divine direction given through the prophets.”

Bishop Edgley said that there are the so-called learned people who have let their intellect undermine their spiritual moorings and who would also attempt to lead the faithful away from those who are appointed by the Lord to lead. “There are those who feel that our leaders are out of touch with the realities of the day,” he said. “They would attempt to lead members by substituting their own knowledge for the revelations from God to His prophets. And unfortunately there are those who would so follow. Christ warned, ‘Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.’ (Matthew 7:15.)

“In an attempt to further prepare the Saints against the inevitable threatening wolves, Paul the Apostle gave this warning: ‘For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.’ (Acts 20:29.) Where might these wolves get sheep’s clothing that is so authentic as to deceive the Lord’s flock? Could it be they are clothed with exceeding riches and fine clothing, as Mormon warned? (Alma 4:8.) The vainness and frailties and foolishness of men, the learned that hearken not unto the commandments of God, as Jacob warned? (2 Nephi 9:28.) Could it be that sometimes they may clothe themselves to appear as righteous shepherds, that even the very elect might be deceived?

The above information was taken from the following sources: The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles; The Mortal Messiah From Bethlehem to Calvary Book 2 By Bruce R. McConkie; Jesus The Christ By James E. Talmage; Church news, February 13, 1999.

“Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”

Matthew 6-7

Scriptural Highlights

- True disciples do right things for right reasons.
- True disciples follow the Savior's example of prayer.
- True disciples treat others kindly and fairly.
- True disciples serve God and do his will.

A study of this lesson should encourage us to become more dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ.

- ***Almsgiving (Matthew 6:1-4)***

- ***What are Alms?***

Bible Dictionary: Donations for the poor.

Bruce R. McConkie: “Almsgiving is the contribution of free gifts to relieve the poor; the spirit that attends such a course is of God and finds its highest manifestation in the organized charitable enterprises of his earthly kingdom. Paul, for instance, in his day, carried alms to the poor saints in Jerusalem (Acts 24:17), he having first assembled the contributions from the saints in Macedonia and Achaia. (Acts 11:29; Rom. 15:25-28.) In modern times the major portion of the almsgiving of the saints is administered through the great church Welfare Plan.” (Mormon Doctrine, p30)

- ***Prayer (Matthew 6:5-8)***
(Matthew 6:14-15)
(Matthew 6:16-18)

- ***Serving God Or Mammon***
(Matthew 6:19-21)

Neal A. Maxwell: “We can be conscientious but still be confused about our priorities. How we spend our time is at least as good a measure of us as how we spend our money. An inventory of how we spend our disposable time will tell us where our treasure is.”
(Notwithstanding My Weakness, p116-p117)

- **Judging Others**

(Matthew 7:1-2)

Bruce R. McConkie: *"This is not a prohibition against sitting in judgment either on one's fellowmen or upon principles of right and wrong, for the saints are commanded to do these very things. The sense and meaning of our Lord's utterance is, 'Condemn not, that ye be not condemned.' It is, 'Judge wisely and righteously, so that ye may be judged in like manner'."* (DNTC, 1:245)

(Matthew 7:3-5)

Bible footnotes:

Mote = speck, chip, or splinter.

Beam = The Greek work refers to a wooden beam used in constructing houses.

- **Seek To Know The Truth**

(Matthew 7:6-8)

What are the Mysteries?

•**Bruce R. McConkie:** *"Any gospel truth, however easy and simple, that is not understood, or that is beyond the present spiritual capacity of a given person to understand, is to him a mystery. Faith, repentance, and baptism are mysteries to the unbelieving Gentiles. But the mysteries of the kingdom, of which Jesus here speaks, are quite another thing. This phrase has a special meaning; it refers to the deep and hidden things of the gospel--to the calculus, as it were, which can only be comprehended after the student has become proficient in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry; it refers to the temple ordinances; to the gifts of the Spirit; to those things which can be known only by the power of the Holy Ghost. The saints are to keep the deep and more mysterious doctrines to themselves and not offer to the world more than people are able to bear."*

(Mortal Messiah, 2:164)

- **Prophets, Good Works, & Salvation**

(Matthew 7:15-20)

- **Summary**

- **Next Week**

Lesson 10: Matthew 11:28-30; 12:1-13; Luke 7:36-50; 13:10-17

Additional Reading: Isaiah 53:13-14; Matthew 11:16-19; 12:14-50; 26:6-13; Mark 2:23-3:12; 14:3-9; Luke 6:1-11; D&C 59:9-19

"Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God"

Lesson

9

Matthew 6-7

Purpose

To encourage class members to become more dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures, which are a continuation of the Sermon on the Mount:
 - a. Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21. Jesus teaches his disciples to do alms, pray, and fast in secret and to lay up treasures in heaven instead of on earth.
 - b. Matthew 6:7-13; 7:7-11. He shows his disciples how to pray and teaches that Heavenly Father will bless those who ask him for what they need.
 - c. Matthew 6:14-15; 7:1-6, 12. Jesus teaches his disciples to forgive others, to judge righteously, and to treat others as they would like to be treated.
 - d. Matthew 6:22-34; 7:13-29. He teaches his disciples that they will be blessed for serving Heavenly Father and doing his will.
2. Additional reading: Luke 6:37-49; 11:1-13, 34-36; 12:22-34; 16:13; 3 Nephi 13-14.
3. If the following materials are available, use them during the lesson:
 - a. The picture Sermon on the Mount (62166; Gospel Art Picture Kit 212).
 - b. A brief portion (no more than six or seven minutes) of "The Sermon on the Plain," part 4 of the videocassette *The Savior: Early Years* (53163). Select the portion that will best illustrate the principles you are teaching.
4. You may want to prepare to sing "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" (*Children's Songbook*, 281) with class members.
5. Suggestion for teaching: Stories can illustrate gospel principles and keep class members' attention as few other teaching methods can. Jesus often used stories to teach important lessons or clarify abstract ideas. As you prepare your lessons, consider how you could use stories to help class members understand gospel principles. When you tell a story, be sure class members understand whether it is a true account or a fictional story you have created to make a point. (See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 98-100, 127.)

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity

As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Tell the following story in your own words:

Elder William R. Bradford of the Seventy once spoke with the bishop of a ward whose youth had worked to earn money for an activity. The bishop asked Elder Bradford if he would help the youth get some recognition for what they had done. To the bishop's surprise, Elder Bradford said he would not. He said that he was

glad that the young people had worked hard, but that it was not important that they receive public recognition for that work.

When the youth decided to donate their money to the Church's general missionary fund instead of using it for the activity, they wanted to have their picture taken with Elder Bradford as they made the donation, and they wanted to have the picture and an article put into the newspaper. Again Elder Bradford surprised them by saying "no." He told the bishop: "You might consider helping your young people learn a higher law of recognition. Recognition from on high is silent. It is carefully and quietly recorded there. Let them feel the joy and gain the treasure in their heart and soul that come from silent, selfless service" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 90-91; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 75).

- What lessons can we learn from Elder Bradford's response to the youth?

Point out that one lesson we can learn is that we should do good things because we love God and want to please him, not because we want to receive recognition from other people. This is one of the characteristics of a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Write *True Disciples* on the chalkboard. As you discuss the Sermon on the Mount, list the qualities of true discipleship taught by the Savior in this sermon.

Chart
True Discipleship

Scripture Discussion
and Application

As you teach the following scripture passages, encourage each class member to consider what he or she needs to do to become a more dedicated and sincere disciple of Christ. Encourage class members to share personal experiences that relate to the principles of true discipleship.

1. True disciples do right things for right reasons.

Read and discuss Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21.

- Why did Jesus condemn some people for doing good things such as giving alms (giving to the poor), praying, and fasting? (See Matthew 6:1-2, 5, 16. They were doing these things for the wrong reason.) Jesus referred to these people as hypocrites. What is a hypocrite? (A person who pretends to have certain qualities but does not have them; a person who tries to appear righteous but is not. Footnote 2a indicates that the Greek word for hypocrite can also be translated "pretender." See Matthew 15:8; Luke 11:39.)
- What will be the reward for people who do good things to be seen by others? (See Matthew 6:2, 5, 16.) What things might we do to be seen by others instead of to please God? How can we purify our motives for serving and performing other good works?
- In this sermon, what did Jesus teach about what we should value most? (See Matthew 6:19-21.) What does it mean to "lay up . . . treasures in heaven"? What are some heavenly treasures we can seek? (See D&C 18:14-16 and 130:18-19 for two examples.)
- What does it mean that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"? How can we determine what we treasure? (One way is to evaluate the amount of time, money, and thought we devote to something.) What do people today treasure? Ask class members to think about the things they treasure and silently consider what these treasures say about where their heart is.

2. True disciples follow the Savior's example of prayer.

Read and discuss Matthew 6:7–13; 7:7–11. Point out that Matthew 6:9–13 is known as the Lord's Prayer.

Lord's Prayer

- What does the Lord's Prayer teach us about how we should pray? (See Matthew 6:9–13.)

- How does the Lord's Prayer show Jesus' reverence and respect for Heavenly Father? How can we show reverence and respect for Heavenly Father when we pray?

Elder Dallin H. Oaks commented on the kind of language we should use when we pray: "The special language of prayer follows different forms in different languages, but the principle is always the same. We should address prayers to our Heavenly Father in words which speakers of that language associate with love and respect and reverence and closeness. . . . Men and women who wish to show respect will take the time to learn the special language of prayer" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 17, 20; or *Ensign*, May 1993, 16, 18).

- How can we avoid using "vain repetitions" when we pray? (See Matthew 6:7.)
- Since Heavenly Father knows what we need before we pray (Matthew 6:8), why do we need to pray? Why are asking, seeking, and knocking (Matthew 7:7) necessary for our spiritual progress? How can we seek more diligently for Heavenly Father's help?
- How are we to understand the Savior's promise that "every one that asketh receiveth"? (Matthew 7:8). Why do we sometimes not receive what we ask for at the time we ask for it or in the way we would like it? (See 3 Nephi 18:20.) How have you learned that God knows what is best for you?

Cl out

3. True disciples treat others kindly and fairly.

Read and discuss Matthew 6:14–15; 7:1–6, 12.

- Why do you think the Savior commands us to forgive others? How can we become more forgiving?
- The Joseph Smith Translation amends Matthew 7:1 to read, "Judge not unrighteously, that ye be not judged; but judge righteous judgment" (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:2). What is righteous judgment? What harm can come to us and to those we judge if we judge unrighteously? How can we ensure that we judge righteously? (See Matthew 7:3–5; Moroni 7:14–18.)
- Jesus said a person who unrighteously tries to correct others is a hypocrite (Matthew 7:4–5). How is judging unrighteously a sign of hypocrisy?
- The teaching in Matthew 7:12 is often called the Golden Rule. What experiences have shown you the value of this principle? How does following the Golden Rule make us better disciples of Jesus Christ?

Elder Marvin J. Ashton described a meeting in which a group of Church members considered the question "How can you tell if someone is converted to Jesus Christ?":

"For forty-five minutes those in attendance made numerous suggestions in response to this question, and the leader carefully wrote down each answer

on a large chalkboard. All of the comments were thoughtful and appropriate. But after a time, this great teacher erased everything he had written. Then, acknowledging that all of the comments had been worthwhile and appreciated, he taught a vital principle: "The best and most clear indicator that we are progressing spiritually and coming unto Christ is the way we treat other people."

Elder Ashton added: "The way we treat the members of our families, our friends, those with whom we work each day is as important as are some of the more noticeable gospel principles we sometimes emphasize" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, 25; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 20).

4. True disciples serve God and do his will.

Read and discuss selected verses from Matthew 6:22–34; 7:13–29.

- Why is it impossible to serve both God and mammon, or worldliness? (See Matthew 6:24.) What blessings does God promise to those who serve him? (See Matthew 6:25–33; D&C 11:7.)
- Jesus promised that if we "seek . . . first the kingdom of God," we will be given all other things that we need (Matthew 6:33). What experiences have helped you gain a testimony of this promise?
- How does worldliness turn our loyalty and service away from God? What are some ways we might be tempted to seek the things of the world before the things of God? (Answers may include waiting to pay tithing until after we buy the things we need or want or deciding not to serve a mission because of a desire for worldly things.)
- As Jesus neared the end of his sermon, what did he teach about entering the kingdom of heaven? (See Matthew 7:13–14, 21–23.) Why is it significant that the way to eternal life is narrow, while the way to destruction is broad?
- At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the parable of the wise man and the foolish man (Matthew 7:24–27). How does this parable apply to us? What is the "rock" on which we should build? (See Helaman 5:12.) What do some people build their lives on that might be comparable to sand?

You may want to have class members sing "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" (*Children's Songbook*, 281).

Conclusion

Testify of the importance of following Jesus Christ. Encourage class members to consider what they need to do to become better disciples of Christ.

Additional Teaching Ideas

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use one or more of these ideas as part of the lesson.

1. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20)

- Jesus cautioned his followers about false prophets—people who teach false doctrine or try to lead people away from Christ (Matthew 7:15). How can we discern between false and true prophets? (See Matthew 7:16–20; see also Moroni 7:5, 10–11.) How can Matthew 7:20 apply to us as well as to prophets?

2. Video presentation

The second segment of "New Testament Customs," a selection from *New Testament Video Presentations* (53914), explains the Jews' use of phylacteries and fringes. If you show this segment, discuss how these items, once used to show obedience to God, became symbols of the Pharisees' desires to "be seen of men" as they worshiped (Matthew 6:5).

3. Finding the beam in our own eye

Share the following story about how the Prophet Joseph Smith taught one sister to look for the beam in her own eye when dealing with a personal offense:

A woman went to the Prophet Joseph Smith upset about some things another member of the Church had said about her. The Prophet told her that if what the man had said was untrue, she should ignore the matter, because truth would survive but untruths would not. The woman felt the comments were untrue, but she was not satisfied with ignoring the matter. The Prophet then told his way of handling such comments:

"When an enemy had told a scandalous story about him, which had often been done, before he rendered judgment he paused and let his mind run back to the time and place and setting of the story to see if he had not by some unguarded word or act laid the block on which the story was built. If he found that he had done so, he said that in his heart he then forgave his enemy, and felt thankful that he had received warning of a weakness that he had not known he possessed."

The Prophet told the sister that she should think carefully about whether she had unconsciously given the man any reason to say the things he did. After much thought, she decided she had, and she thanked the Prophet and left. (See Jesse W. Crosby, quoted in Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus, comps., *They Knew the Prophet* [1974], 144.)

4. Youth activity

Write each of the following phrases from Matthew 6 and 7 on a separate card:

Let not thy left hand know (6:3)
 Thy Father which seeth in secret (6:6)
 Use not (6:7)
 Forgive men (6:14)
 Lay up for yourselves (6:20)
 Ye cannot serve (6:24)
 Seek ye first (6:33)
 Cast out the beam (7:5)
 Ask (7:7)
 Seek (7:7)
 Beware of (7:15)
 By their fruits (7:20)

What thy right hand doeth (6:3)
 Shall reward thee openly (6:6)
 Vain repetitions (6:7)
 Their trespasses (6:14)
 Treasures in heaven (6:20)
 God and mammon (6:24)
 The kingdom of God (6:33)
 Out of thine own eye (7:5)
 And it shall be given you (7:7)
 And ye shall find (7:7)
 False prophets (7:15)
 Ye shall know them (7:20)

Lay the cards facedown on the table or floor. Divide class members into two teams, and have the teams take turns choosing two cards. If the cards match, the team removes them from the table or floor and takes another turn. If the cards do not match, the team replaces them in their original positions, and the other team takes a turn. Continue until all the matches have been made.

JESUS DISCOURSES ON GOSPEL STANDARDS

Good and upright is the Lord:
therefore will he teach sinners in the way.
The meek will he guide in judgment:
and the meek will he teach his way.

And all the paths of the Lord
are mercy and truth
unto such as keep his covenant
and his testimonies. (Ps. 25:8-10.)

Jesus Saith: 'Care for the Poor'

(3 Nephi 13:1-4; Matthew 6:1-4; JST, Matthew 6:1, 3)

A mighty sermon is in progress; Jesus is speaking by the power of the Holy Ghost; we are hearing wondrous words—words of light and truth and revelation. Our minds are open, our hearts are receptive, and our souls are afire with the spirit of everlasting life that attends each spoken thought. He is now counseling us to walk as becometh saints and to do the things that his disciples in all ages have always done. His next subsermon is: 'Care for the worthy poor; give alms in righteousness; impart of your substance to those in need; give generously because you love the Lord and your fellowmen.'

“Verily, verily, I say that I would that ye should do alms

unto the poor," he says. It is right; it is good; it is the will of the Master—we should care for the worthy poor among us. As long as greed and selfishness find place among us mortals, there will also be poor among us. And it is the will of the Lord that the poor among his people receive their just wants and needs. "It is my purpose to provide for my saints," he says, "for all things are mine. But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low. For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare. . . . Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." (D&C 104:15-18.)¹

"But take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven." Poverty or wealth are too often the happenstance of climate or geography or war. Some men are born to wealth, others to slavery. Today's rich may be tomorrow's paupers. And alms should not be given to exalt the giver, but to save the recipient. "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let it be unto thee as thy left hand not knowing what thy right hand doeth; That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

Jesus Teaches Men How to Pray

(Matthew 6:5-15; JST, Matthew 6:7, 10-14, 16; 3 Nephi 13:5-15;
Mark 11:25-26; Luke 11:1-8; JST, Luke 11:4-5)

Prayer and works of charity go hand in hand. Amulek, in a moving sermon, calls upon men to pray unto the Lord for

temporal and spiritual blessings; to pray in secret and in public; to pray vocally and in their hearts. Then he says: "After ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith. Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out." (Alma 34:17-29.)

Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, turns from almsgiving to prayer. Again, it is the will of the Lord that his people should pray. They are to pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, by the power of the Spirit; they are to thank the Lord for all they have received and to importune before his throne for all that in wisdom should be theirs. Jesus does not now give them the whole law of prayer, but he does chart for them a course which, if pursued, will save them from the prayer failures of the Pharisees and lead them to an eventual full understanding of the true order of prayer.

"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." Devout Jews, at set times, faced Jerusalem, covered their heads, cast their eyes downward, and ostentatiously went through the ritual of prayer. If the hour of prayer found them in the streets, so much the better, for all men would see their devoutness! To attract attention by saying one's own prayers aloud in the synagogue was not uncommon. Such were among the practices of the day.

"But thou"—who hast come into the fold of Christ, and who thereby know better than to follow these mocking imitations of true prayer—"when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." And further: "When ye pray, use not

vain repetitions, as the hypocrites do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." The repetitious chants, the thoughtless "Hail Mary's," and the memorized "Our Father's" of modern Catholicism, the repeated mouthings of the poetic phrases of the prayer book—vain repetitions!—these are included in what Jesus here condemns. Prayers that ascend beyond the ceiling, to be heard before the Throne in the sidereal heavens, must be uttered "with all the energy of heart," as Mormon's colloquial expression puts it. (Moro. 7:48.)

"Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him." How then shall the saints pray? "After this manner therefore pray ye," Jesus says:

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

Give us this day, our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.

Jesus did not say: "This is the prayer to use; memorize it; say it by rote," but he gave a pattern, a model, a type. "Pray after this manner; in such simple words as these; in this general way; without ostentation. Call upon your Eternal Father, and ask him for your needs, both great and small." And how wondrous are the words he used!

Our Father who art in heaven. God is our Father, the father of our spirits; we are his children, his offspring, literally. We lived in his presence, dwelt in his courts, and have seen his face. We were as well acquainted with him then as we are with our mortal fathers now. He is a holy man, has a body of flesh and bones, and dwells in a heavenly abode. When we approach his throne in prayer, we

think—not alone that he is the Almighty, by whose word the earth, the sidereal heavens, and the universe came into being, but that he is a gracious and loving Father whose chief interest and concern is his family, and that he wants all his children to love and serve him and to become like him. Perfect prayer manifests our personal relationship to him who hears and answers the petitions of the faithful.

Hallowed be thy name. "We approach thee in awe—reverentially—in the spirit of worship and thanksgiving, and we praise thy holy name. Thou art glorious beyond anything we can envision; all that is good we ascribe unto thee, and we desire to consecrate our life and being unto thee, for thou hast made us, and we are thine."

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. *Thy kingdom:* the earthly kingdom of God which is the Church. *Thy kingdom:* the millennial kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, which shall be when there is a new heaven and a new earth whereon dwelleth righteousness. These are the kingdoms for which we pray. After Jesus' resurrection and before his ascension, the newly ordained apostles, who by that time will be seasoned and tempered as few men have ever been, will ask him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6.) And even in our day, the faithful continue to pray: "May the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come, that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, that thine enemies may be subdued; for thine is the honor, power and glory, forever and ever." (D&C 65:6.)

"Thy kingdom come! Let it be, O Lord, for in that glorious millennial day; in that day when Zion shall cover the earth, when all Israel shall be gathered home from their long dispersion, when every corruptible thing shall have been consumed, when the vineyard shall have been burned and few men left—then shall thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. May we, O Lord, prepare for that day by living as though it were here."

Give us this day our daily bread. "But our concerns are not

alone for the promised day of triumph and glory when thy people shall prevail in all the earth. We need food, clothing, and shelter, health of body, and strength of mind.² Our daily wants must be supplied, and he who notes the sparrow's fall will also provide manna for his people from day to day. He calls upon us to sow and reap and harvest and bake and eat. The concerns of daily life, however trivial, are the concerns of Omnipotence, and we are to rely upon him in faith for all things.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Or, as it is otherwise rendered—less perfectly, we feel—“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”; or, yet again: “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.” “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.” When he judges whose judgment is just, he will, as it is written, “recompense unto every man according to his work, and measure to every man according to the measure which he has measured to his fellow man.” (D&C 1:10.) We judge ourselves; forgive and be forgiven; sow mercy and reap the same, for every seed brings forth after his own kind. “Ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.” (D&C 64:1-14.)²

And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil. “Lead us not into temptation.” The Lord does not lead us into temptation, except in the sense that he has placed us here in a probationary estate where temptation is the order of the day. We are here in mortality to be tried and tested; to see if we will keep the commandments; to overcome the world. We are here to learn how to bridle our passions and control every lustful and evil desire. None of us want to be tested beyond our capacity to resist; we want to be delivered from evil, to flee from the presence of sin, and

to go where goodness and righteousness are. The trials of life are difficult enough without any of us placing ourselves in a position where sin and evil are made attractive. Foolish indeed is that man who, intending to remain morally clean, yet exposes his mind to pornographic things that in their nature invite lustful thoughts and deeds into his life.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. All things are the Lord's. His is the kingdom—both the earthly kingdom, which is the Church, and that glorious realm of celestial rest prepared for his saints. His is the power—nothing is too hard for the Lord; he is omnipotent; he it is who will change this earth into a heaven, and he it is who will raise lowly mortals to that eternal exaltation which makes of man a god. His is the glory—that is, the dominion, the exaltation, and the endless kingdoms; and also, the light and truth and infinite wisdom and knowledge he possesses.

How glorious it is to address such a holy and exalted person by the greatest of all titles, Father, and to be privileged to have audience with him on our own invitation, anytime we pray in faith with all the strength and energy of our souls!

The Lord's Prayer, as we have come to call these expressive words, spoken by Jesus as part of the Sermon on the Mount (as we are aware from Matthew and 3 Nephi) was also recorded by Luke—apparently, however, as given by Jesus on a different occasion. To his account, Luke appends these instructive words of Jesus: “And he said unto them, Your heavenly Father will not fail to give unto you whatsoever ye ask of him. And he spake a parable, saying, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine has come to me in his journey, and I have nothing to set before him; And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because

Kingdom
Power
Glory

Forgive

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he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

"Lay Up for Yourselves Treasures in Heaven"

(Matthew 6:16-24; JST, Matthew 6:22; Luke 11:33-36; 12:33-34; JST, Luke 11:37; 12:36; 3 Nephi 13:16-24)

Jesus now says a few well-chosen words about fasting, about laying up treasures in heaven, and about seeking spiritual light.

In all ages the Lord has called upon his people to fast and pray and seek him with all their strength and power. Easting—the abstaining from food and drink for a designated period—gives a man a sense of his utter dependence upon the Lord so that he is in a better frame of mind to get in tune with the Spirit. Moses and Jesus both fasted for forty days as they sought that oneness with the Father out of which great spiritual strength comes. As with almost all else, however, fasting among the Jews no longer served its true purpose; it had become degenerate, self-serving, and ostentatious. Jesus expected his new followers to fast—not as the Pharisees, but in a true spirit of worship and self-effacement.

"When ye fast," he said, thus endorsing fasting as such, and thus counseling his disciples that they should so do, "be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." Their fathers—rebellious in spirit, reproachful of prophetic counsel—had fasted "for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness," and to make—ostentatiously—their voice "heard on high." (Isa. 58:1-4.) "But thou, when thou fastest," Jesus instructed, "anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto the Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

"While yet on earth men may lay up treasures in heaven.

These treasures, earned here and now in mortality, are in effect deposited to our eternal bank account in heaven where eventually they will be reinherited again in immortality. Treasures in heaven are the character, perfections, and attributes which men acquire by obedience to law. Thus, those who gain such attributes of godliness as knowledge, faith, justice, judgment, mercy, and truth, will find these same attributes restored to them again in immortality. "Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection." (D&C 130:18.) The greatest treasure it is possible to inherit in heaven consists in gaining the continuation of the family unit in the highest heaven of the celestial world." (Commentary 1:239-40; Alma 41:13-15; D&C 130:18.)

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal:

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Christ is the light; the gospel is the light; the plan of salvation is the light; "that which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day." As the light of the sun enters the body through our natural eyes, so the light of heaven—the light of the Spirit which illuminates our souls—enters through our spiritual eyes. "The light of the body is the eye," Jesus says; "if therefore thine eye be single to the glory of God, thy whole body shall be full of light." Remostato
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"But if thine eye be evil"—if we choose darkness rather than light—"And that which doth not edify is not of God, and is darkness" (D&C 50:23-24)—"thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" light
*
Darkness

"How great is that darkness!" If the saints of God cease to serve with an eye single to the glory of God; if their spiritual eyes are dimmed by sin; if their eyes, being evil, admit carnality and heresy and false doctrine into their souls; if the light that once was theirs turns to darkness, "how great is that darkness!"

Later, in Judea, teaching there what the Galileans have already heard, Jesus will express kindred concepts in these words:

No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

"A light that is hidden, whose guiding rays are covered by a bushel, is of no value to one stumbling in darkness. Similarly, the true saints must let the gospel light shine forth from them to all men, lest the saints, [like] the hidden candle, fail to fulfill their purpose in life. Jesus in effect is saying: 'No man accepts the gospel and then buries its light by continuing to walk in darkness; rather, he holds the light up before men so that they, emulating his good works, may also come to the Father.'" (Commentary 1:240.)

The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

"Through the natural eyes men see the light which guides them in their physical existence, through their spiritual eyes, the spiritual light which leads to eternal life. As long as the natural eyes are unimpaired, men can see and be guided by the light of day; and as long as the spiritual eyes are single to the glory of God—that is, as long as they are undimmed by sin and are focused solely on righteousness—men can view and understand the things of the Spirit. But if apostasy enters and the spiritual light turns to dark-

ness, 'how great is that darkness!'" (Commentary 1:240.)

Also in Judea, in connection with one's treasure being where his heart is, Jesus will say:

Sell that ye have and give alms; provide not for yourselves bags which wax old, but rather provide a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not; where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

Truly treasures in heaven are to be preferred to those stored in purses that wear out and from which earthly treasures will be lost!

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

Light and darkness cannot dwell together. It cannot be both day and night at the same time; water cannot be both sweet and salty at the same hour. No man can serve God, who is the author of light and righteousness, while he is in the employ of Lucifer, who is the author of darkness and sin. Mammon is an Aramaic word for riches. Ye cannot serve God and love riches and worldliness at the same time.'

The Lord Supplies the Needs of His Twelve Ministers
(3 Nephi 13:25-34; Matthew 6:25-34; JST, Matthew 6:25-30, 34, 36-39; Luke 12:22-32; JST, Luke 12:26, 30-34)

Now Jesus turns to the Twelve. He has something to say specifically to them about their ministerial labors. They are to forsake worldly pursuits—their fishing boats, the customs house, their fields and vineyards, all temporal enterprises—and use all of their time, talents, and means for the building up of the earthly kingdom and the establishment of the cause of Christianity. Others also, the seventies among them, will tread a like path in due course. The Lord's missionaries and ministers engage in such important labors that no worldly pursuit can be permitted to interfere; nothing pertaining to this world can be allowed to dilute and divide the energy and strength of the Lord's servants.

Other members of the Church are expected—nay, ob-

light hidden
true saints

Natural eyes
spiritual eyes

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L
M
S

same
2
manner

mammon = riches

ligated; it is a command; they must do it—to provide for their own. Work, industry, frugality—sowing, reaping, and eating our bread by the sweat of our faces—such is the royal order of life. From the beginning men have been commanded to labor in seed time and harvest and to lay up in store against times of winter and famine. Cain reaped in the fields and Abel tended his flocks; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had their flocks and herds, their fields and gardens and vineyards. This is a temporal world, and men who dwell thereon are appointed to deal with temporal concerns. The gospel law requires men to care for their own needs and those of their families. And, “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” (1 Tim. 5:8.)

But for selected ones who are called to spread the truth and minister for the salvation of their fellows, it is otherwise; they may be called to go forth without purse or scrip, to forsake houses and lands and orchards, to do whatever circumstances require, and to rely upon the Lord for food and drink and raiment and a place to lay their head—all to the end that the Lord’s work may spread and be established among all men.

In the Nephite account we read that “Jesus . . . looked upon the twelve whom he had chosen, and said unto them: Remember the words which I have spoken. For behold, ye are they whom I have chosen to minister unto this people. Therefore I say unto you”—the command was to them, not to the whole congregation—“take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.”

In Matthew’s account the instructions are more extended and express. To the Twelve who were with him in his personal ministry, Jesus said: “I say unto you, Go ye into the world, and care not for the world; for the world will hate you, and will persecute you, and will turn you out of their synagogues. Nevertheless, ye shall go forth from house to house, teaching the people; and I will go before you. And

your heavenly Father will provide for you, whatsoever things ye need for food, what ye shall eat; and for raiment, what ye shall wear or put on. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life,” and so on.

We hear now the eloquent reasoning of the Master Teacher. “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” he asks. Shall we concern ourselves with life itself—the life of the body and the life of the soul—or merely with the food we eat and the rags or robes we chance to use as covering raiment? Then, using words that are eloquent in their simplicity, and drawing his illustrations from the beauties of nature that surround them, Jesus continues:

Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? How much more will he not feed you?

Wherefore take no thought for these things, but keep my commandments wherewith I have commanded you.

For which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin.

And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he not provide for you, if ye are not of little faith?

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

The leading servants and chief underlings of the kings of the earth dwell in palaces, command fortresses, and are waited upon by lesser servants. Robes and rich food and soft beds and lewd entertainment abound for them. Herod Antipas and his courtiers lived such a life. But not so with the great King. His disciples, dressed often in rags, eating the

rough food of the poor, sleeping in guest chambers, or even with the beasts of burden when there was no room in the inn—his chief disciples, his apostles, were to travel and live as he himself did.

None but the Lord would dare call upon chosen followers to live such a life and pursue such a course, and none but he could assure them that their essential needs would be met. The contrast between the courtiers of earthly kings and the disciples of the Eternal King is dramatic. The gospel standard is high and soul developing. It is no wonder that the newly called and as yet untested apostles were troubled at the prospects of the future. For their comfort and assurance, Jesus said: "Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy words because ye have not all these things, and seek to excuse yourselves, saying that, After all these things do the Gentiles seek. Behold, I say unto you that your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Then came that great and wondrous declaration:

Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

It is common among us to quote the less perfect translation of this statement, which says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," rather than the inspired rendition, "Seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness." Both statements are true; both are profound; both present a standard and a concept around which the saints should rally; and the Nephite account does in fact preserve the first of the two, which is, of course, the ultimate objective of true believers. To seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, in the ultimate and eternal sense, is to seek the celestial kingdom and the state of righteousness in which God dwells. The process by which this ultimate goal is attained is to devote oneself to building up the earthly kingdom, which is the Church, and to establish the Cause of Righteousness on earth. Having so

taught, and as a summary for this mid-portion of the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord said: "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day shall be the evil thereof."

NOTES

1. "Blessed are the poor who are pure in heart, whose hearts are broken, and whose spirits are contrite, for they shall see the kingdom of God coming in power and great glory unto their deliverance; for the fatness of the earth shall be theirs. For behold, the Lord shall come, and his recompense shall be with him, and he shall reward every man, and the poor shall rejoice; And their generations shall inherit the earth from generation to generation, forever and ever." (D&C 56:18-20.)

2. This revelation also says: "I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men. And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds."

Parallel accounts: Luke 6:37–49; 11:1–13, 33–36; 12:22–34; 3 Nephi 13–14

Scriptural Highlights

1. Jesus' teachings on discipleship and service
2. The Lord's Prayer
3. The importance of doing the Lord's will

This lesson continues the study of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. It provides another rich opportunity for us to consider the Lord's teachings. His instructions help us live a life of true discipleship and service.

Invite a class member to sing "The Lord's Prayer." As an alternative, you could play a recording of one of the beautiful musical arrangements of this song.

Discussion and Application Questions

- Many of the Lord's teachings in Matthew 6 include warnings against hypocrisy. What is hypocrisy? (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; Luke 11:39. Hypocrisy is pretending to have virtues that we really don't have, without a true desire to be better.) Why does the Lord disdain hypocrisy? (Moroni 7:6–10.) Because all of us fall short of living up to our beliefs, does this mean that we are all hypocrites?
- The Lord has said he will not reward our service when our motive is to seek praise and honor from others. (Matthew 6:1–4.) Why do you think that even when we do the right thing, the Lord requires that we do it for the right reasons? What are proper motives for service? (Mormon 8:15; D&C 4.) How can we purify our motives in our service, prayers, and obedience?
- Why is it important to care for the poor and needy? (D&C 104:15–18.) How can the poor and needy be a blessing to those who help them? What can we do to help serve the needy in our area? (Mosiah 4:16–25.)
- What can we learn from Matthew 6:5–13 and Luke 11:1–4 to help us pray more effectively?
- What additional lessons about prayer did the Lord teach in Luke 11:5–13? Why are answers to sincere prayer not always immediate or easy to recognize?
- What did Jesus teach about forgiving others? (Matthew 6:12, 14–15; see also D&C 64:7–14.) Why are we sometimes slow to forgive? How can we develop hearts that are more forgiving?
- What does it mean to lay up treasures in heaven? (Matthew 6:19–24; Alma 41:13–15; D&C 130:18–19.) How can we increase our commitment and loyalty to God and his work?
- How can Matthew 6:33 help us set proper priorities? (See also Matthew 6:5–13.) What experiences in your life have helped you gain a testimony of Jesus' counsel and promise in Matthew 6:33?
- The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible corrects Matthew 7:1 to read, "Judge not unrighteously, that ye

be not judged: but judge righteous judgment." How does this help us better understand what the Lord taught in this sermon about judging other people? (See also John 7:24.) Why is it so difficult to judge other people correctly? What harm can come from judging improperly? How can we overcome this tendency? (Matthew 7:3–5.)

- What is the meaning of Jesus' counsel in Matthew 7:7–11? Why are seeking, asking, and knocking necessary for spiritual progress? Why do many of us not seek the Lord as we should? How can we begin to seek more diligently for his guidance and Spirit?
- How can we more effectively apply the Golden Rule in our lives? (Matthew 7:12.) What experiences can you share that show the value of living this principle?
- What is the gate to the strait and narrow way that leads to eternal life? (Matthew 7:13–14; 2 Nephi 31:17.) What does the Sermon on the Mount teach us about the way to eternal life? (See also 2 Nephi 31:18–21.)
- How can we detect false prophets? (Matthew 7:15–20; Moroni 7:17.) What evidence is there that false prophets are among us today?
- What can we learn from Matthew 7:21–23 about entering the Father's kingdom? Why is it important that we obey the Lord's commandments?
- How does Jesus' parable about building a house on rock or sand apply to our lives? (Matthew 7:24–29.) How do the insights in Helaman 5:12 affect your understanding of this parable?

Additional Ideas

1. Jesus' remarks in Matthew 6:25–32 can be confusing unless we understand that they applied most immediately to the Apostles and others who were called to full-time service in the kingdom. (See 3 Nephi 13:25.) Although the Lord doesn't expect us all to "take no thought" for what we eat or drink or wear, he has sustained many others besides Apostles who have relied on him for these things. Perhaps class members would want to tell of experiences when they have depended on the Lord for sustenance.
2. Consider using the meetinghouse library picture of Jesus teaching the Sermon on the Mount (OQ166).
3. Assign a class member to come prepared next week to share a personal experience that relates to a principle in the scripture reading assignment. This report should not exceed five minutes.

Next Week's Reading Assignment

Read Matthew 11–12; 14:1–12; Luke 7:36–50. (Parallel accounts: Mark 2:23–28; 3:1–12, 20–35; 6:14–29; Luke 6:1–11; 7:19–35; 8:19–21; 9:7–9; 11:14–32.)