

Bring It On!



The Sermon on the Mount is not a set of rules and regulations – It is a picture of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His unhindered way with us.

(My Utmost for His Highest, July 25)

When I was a young teacher and Principal in Salt Lake City, not all my decisions reflected the maturity I now have – for better or worse.

There was a student I had for a couple of years who was one of the most talkative students I've ever had. One day I had had enough and taped his mouth shut – something I would no longer advocate. He made more noise with His mouth taped shut than any other student who's mouth was free to move.

When he was in 10th grade, he was as tall as I am, and heavier than I was at the time – not because he was fat. One day he announced in front of the class that he could easily beat me up if he wanted to.

Without much thought I said, "Bring it on. We'll get down the gymnastics mats and have Mr. Reeder (the 7th & 8th grade teacher) act as the referee. We'll settle this right now"

You know the feeling you have when you're listening to yourself speak and you can't believe what you're hearing? That's the feeling I had.

I maintained a posture of confidence, of course, but I started looking closer at this young man and realized that this may not have been the wisest option – for my own safety. Later I realized it was not wise from a number of other perspectives as well – an example to my students for instance.

He looked shocked and took a couple of steps backwards. He looked me up and down – I was in much better shape then – and said, "I was only kidding" and went back to his seat a bit deflated.

I breathed a sigh of relief and we went on with our school day.

And who has not heard the classic line from the 1983 movie *Sudden Impact*, where Clint Eastwood's character, Dirty Harry, said: "Go ahead, make my day."

A classic way of saying "Bring it on!"

Have you ever noticed how two people who are scheduled to fight have this kind of bravado?

They both project an attitude of confidence and say in one form or another, "Bring it on! I can handle the best you can throw at me."

Of course, the fight often ends with one of them crumpled on the mat, bruised and broken.

So, what does all this have to do with the Sermon on the Mount?

Jesus on Judging – “Don’t!”

In Matthew 7, right after He talked about seeking God first and not worrying about tomorrow because today’s worries were enough to handle, Jesus said:

“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.” (Matthew 7:1-2, NLT)

Did you catch what Jesus said there? He said the way you judge others will be the way you are judged. In essence, when we judge others, we are saying to God, “bring it on!”

I’m not sure this is the best message to send God.

Have you noticed that often times those who are most vocal in condemning others are guilty of the same thing.

We tend to point out the faults of others in an attempt to make ourselves look better. And even if we are not guilty of the same thing we criticize others for, there is plenty of dirt in our lives.

But, the problem is much bigger.

It is hard to love someone you judge. And, we have noted many times through the past several years, Jesus said:

“... Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” (John 13:34-35, NLT)

The defining characteristic of those who are really following Jesus will be a sacrificial love for one another patterned after His love for us.

Jesus also said:

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:16-17, NLT)

Advancing Satan’s Agenda

God’s goal is not our judgement, but our salvation. When we judge others, we seriously mis-represent Him.

Satan is the accuser. He tempts you to do wrong. And then if you give in He tattles on you. He is the one trying to keep you, and everyone else, out of Heaven. (See [Revelation 12:7-12.](#))

When you claim to be a Christian and are judgmental of others, you are attributing Satan's attitude to God. Your actions say God is the accuser and wants to keep people out of Heaven.

Literally, nothing is further from the truth!

When you judge others, you're not only saying to God, "bring it on!" – but, by your actions, are advancing Satan's cause.

This is not just a little problem you need to work on a bit – it's a serious problem that can keep you, and other people, away from God and will lead to your destruction, as well as the destruction of other people.

It's a serious misrepresentation of God bordering on rebellion. It's doing what God has said you must not do!

And it is giving God this message: "Judge me like this too! Bring it on!"

I'm real sure I don't want God to get this message from me. And, I would guess this is not really what you want either.

Jesus then drove the point home with a rather humorous illustration:

"And why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5, NLT)

Our judgmental attitudes make about as much sense – and are about as helpful – as going to a blind ophthalmologist to get a splinter removed from your eye. Or to use a phrase from a [Rich Mullins'](#) song – "it's about as useless as a screen door on a submarine!"

A Generous Attitude

In Luke's account of this sermon, he records Jesus' message this way:

"Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."
([Luke 6:37-39](#), NLT)

We often use this passage as a call for bigger offerings. And while it does state a sound Biblical principal supported elsewhere in Scripture; here, it's not about money at all. It's being generous in our attitudes towards people.

This is the flip side of being judgmental. This underscores what Jesus said earlier in this passage where He was commenting on the sample prayer He gave us.

"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15, NLT)

God is generous with His forgiveness. He will forgive us for anything we ask Him too. He doesn't hold our mistakes over our heads to remind us of how bad we are.

He is anxious to redeem us and to have a good relationship with us. He wants us to be with Him for eternity. He sacrificed His only Son, Jesus, as a way to save us, not as a way to condemn us. There is no greater gift He could have given. His generosity knows no bounds!

When we are generous in our attitudes with people – especially in terms of forgiveness, assuming the best, loving them in spite of the pain they have caused – we are sharing a picture of what God is like.

This gift we give others, which is simply an extension of the gift God has given us, will come back and enrich our lives in ways we can hardly imagine – both from God and from others.

This is a characteristic that will cause others to sit up and take notice – it will point them to a God of love.

In Luke's Gospel, He sums it up with this thought:

"A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs are never gathered from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart." (Luke 6:43-45, NLT)

Sinful acts and words are simply the result of a sin-filled, or evil heart – a heart that is not under God's control. Being judgmental is an attribute of Satan and when you exhibit this attitude, it shows that Satan is more in control of your heart than you would like to think.

When God has control of your heart, you will be generous with forgiveness, acceptance, and love.

What are You Supposed to Do?

So this brings us to a point we often arrive at. You know what you are supposed to do, but it's real hard. More often, you find your actions based on selfish motives.

What are you supposed to do?

Jesus gave the answer to this question in the middle of the sermon, where He said:

“... Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ...” (Matthew 6:33, CSB)

A little later in His ministry, Jesus elaborated on this:

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29, NLT)

This is where victory over any temptation begins. This is where the solution for any problem you are dealing with starts. This is how our attitudes are redirected.

Coming to Christ just involves a simple prayer where you simply ask Him to take control of your life.

Learning from Him happens as you spend some quality time with Him every day telling Him about your life (both the good and the bad) and letting Him speak to you through His Word, the Bible.

This simple routine of coming to Jesus and staying with Him day by day is how He changes your life. There is no shortcut.

Getting to know anyone takes time and effort. Getting to know Jesus is no different.

But, there is nothing that brings greater returns. It brings peace, rest, and joy in this life along with an eternity where there will be no more sadness, sorrow, pain or death – only love!

A wonderful benefit of allowing Jesus to change your life is expressed in this passage from Luke we looked at earlier:

“... Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap ...” (Luke 6:37-39, NLT)

When Jesus gives you the gift of a changed life, it is a gift that keeps on giving. Our changed life says to God, bring it on! Bring on a life more in harmony with Him. Bring on more blessing to share. Bring on a greater, broader love to give away.

And as we continue growing closer to Him, our life continues to say, “Bring it on!”

And He does – “pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap”!

Bring it on, Lord!

Notes

Text you find in [this color](#) is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](#). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

Previous Sermons in this Series

- July 20, 2019: [Seek Ye First \(The Sermon, Part 1\)](#)
- July 27, 2019: [Blessed \(The Sermon, Part 2\)](#)
- August 24, 2019: [Salty Light \(The Sermon, Part 3\)](#)
- September 7, 2019: [“You Have Heard ...” \(The Sermon, Part 4a\)](#)
- September 21, 2019: [“You Have Heard ... \(Concluded\)” \(The Sermon, Part 4b\)](#)
- October 19, 2019: [“When You Pray ...” \(The Sermon, Part 5a\)](#)
- October 26, 2019: [“When You Pray ...”, Continued \(The Sermon, Part 5b\)](#), you can watch it on our YouTube channel by [clicking here](#).
- November 2, 2019: [“When You Pray ...”, Concluded \(The Sermon, Part 5c\)](#), you can watch it on our YouTube channel by [clicking here](#).

Scripture References

Psalm 37:1-7 (NLT): *Don't worry about the wicked or envy those who do wrong. ²For like grass, they soon fade away. Like spring flowers, they soon wither.*

³*Trust in the LORD and do good. Then you will live safely in the land and prosper. ⁴Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires.*

⁵*Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you. ⁶He will make your innocence radiate like the dawn, and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.*

⁷*Be still in the presence of the LORD, and wait patiently for him to act. Don't worry about evil people who prosper or fret about their wicked schemes. (Psalm 37:1-7, NLT)*

Psalm 147:7-11 (NIV): *Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp.*

⁸*He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.*

⁹*He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.*

¹⁰*His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of the warrior; ¹¹the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.*

(Psalm 147:7-11, NIV)

Matthew 5 – 7 (NLT): *One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, ²and he began to teach them.*

The Beatitudes

- ³ *“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*
- ⁴ *God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- ⁵ *God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.*
- ⁶ *God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.*
- ⁷ *God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
- ⁸ *God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.*
- ⁹ *God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.*
- ¹⁰ *God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*
- ¹¹ *“God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. ¹² Be happy about it! Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.*

Teaching about Salt and Light

- ¹³ *“You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless.*
- ¹⁴ *“You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

Teaching about the Law

- ¹⁷ *“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. ¹⁹ So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.*
- ²⁰ *“But I warn you – unless your righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!*

Teaching about Anger

- ²¹ *“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ (Exodus 20:13) ²² But I say, if you are even angry with someone,*

you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

²³ *“So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, ²⁴leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.*

²⁵ *“When you are on the way to court with your adversary, settle your differences quickly. Otherwise, your accuser may hand you over to the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶And if that happens, you surely won’t be free again until you have paid the last penny.*

Teaching about Adultery

²⁷ *“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ (Exodus 20:14)*

²⁸ *But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹So if your eye – even your good eye – causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰And if your hand – even your stronger hand – causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*

Teaching about Divorce

³¹ *“You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce.’ (Deuteronomy 24:1) ³²But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman also commits adultery.*

Teaching about Vows

³³ *“You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the LORD.’ (Numbers 30:2) ³⁴But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not say, ‘By Jerusalem!’ for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. ³⁶Do not even say, ‘By my head!’ for you can’t turn one hair white or black. ³⁷Just say a simple, ‘Yes, I will,’ or ‘No, I won’t.’ Anything beyond this is from the evil one.*

Teaching about Revenge

³⁸ *“You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ (Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, Deuteronomy 19:21) ³⁹But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. ⁴⁰If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. ⁴¹If a soldier demands that*

you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. ⁴² Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

Teaching about Love for Enemies

⁴³ *"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' ([Leviticus 19:18](#)) and hate your enemy. ⁴⁴ But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ⁴⁵ In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. ⁴⁶ If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. ⁴⁷ If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. ⁴⁸ But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Teaching about Giving to the Needy

6 *"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. ² When you give to someone in need, don't do as the hypocrites do – blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you the truth, they have received all the reward they will ever get. ³ But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Teaching about Prayer and Fasting

⁵ *"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get. ⁶ But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

⁷ *"When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. ⁸ Don't be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! ⁹ Pray like this:*

Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. ¹⁰ May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today the food we need, ¹² and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. ¹³ And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.

¹⁴ *"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

¹⁶ *"And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*

Teaching about Money and Possessions

¹⁹ “Don’t store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

²² “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.

²⁵ “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. Isn’t life more than food, and your body more than clothing?

²⁶ Look at the birds. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for your heavenly Father feeds them. And aren’t you far more valuable to him than they are? ²⁷ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?

²⁸ “And why worry about your clothing? Look at the lilies of the field and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, ²⁹ yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ³⁰ And if God cares so wonderfully for wildflowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

³¹ “So don’t worry about these things, saying, ‘What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?’ ³² These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. ³³ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

³⁴ “So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

Do Not Judge Others

7 “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. ² For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged.

³ “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴ How can you think of saying to your friend, ‘Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

⁶ “Don’t waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don’t throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you.

Effective Prayer & the Golden Rule

⁷ “Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ “You parents – if your children ask for a loaf of bread, do you give them a stone instead? ¹⁰ Or if they ask for a fish, do you give them a snake? Of course not! ¹¹ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him.

¹² “Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.

The Narrow Gate

¹³ “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. ¹⁴ But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

The Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.

¹⁶ You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. ¹⁹ So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

True Disciples

²¹ “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ ²³ But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

Building on a Solid Foundation

²⁴ “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won’t collapse because it is built on bedrock. ²⁶ But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn’t obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. ²⁷ When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught with real authority – quite unlike their teachers of religious law. (Matthew 5 – 7, NLT)

Matthew 11:28-30 (NLT): “Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30, NLT)

Luke 6:20-29 (NLT): Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,

“God blesses you who are poor, for the Kingdom of God is yours.

²¹ God blesses you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied.

God blesses you who weep now, for in due time you will laugh.

²² What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. ²³ When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

Sorrows Foretold

²⁴ “What sorrow awaits you who are rich, for you have your only happiness now.

²⁵ What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now, for a time of awful hunger awaits you.

What sorrow awaits you who laugh now, for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow.

²⁶ What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds, for their ancestors also praised false prophets.

Love for Enemies

²⁷ “But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.

²⁸ Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on one cheek, offer the other cheek also. If someone demands your coat, offer your shirt also. ³⁰ Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don’t try to get them back. ³¹ Do to others as you would like them to do to you.

³² “If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! ³³ And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! ³⁴ And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return.

³⁵ “Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High,

for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. ³⁶ You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.

Do Not Judge Others

³⁷ “Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸ Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full – pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

³⁹ Then Jesus gave the following illustration: “Can one blind person lead another? Won’t they both fall into a ditch? ⁴⁰ Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

⁴¹ “And why worry about a speck in your friend’s eye when you have a log in your own? ⁴² How can you think of saying, ‘Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,’ when you can’t see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend’s eye.

The Tree and Its Fruit

⁴³ “A good tree can’t produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can’t produce good fruit. ⁴⁴ A tree is identified by its fruit. Figs are never gathered from thornbushes, and grapes are not picked from bramble bushes. ⁴⁵ A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. What you say flows from what is in your heart.

Building on a Solid Foundation

⁴⁶ “So why do you keep calling me ‘Lord, Lord!’ when you don’t do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what it’s like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. ⁴⁸ It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. ⁴⁹ But anyone who hears and doesn’t obey is like a person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins.” (Luke 6:20-49, NLT)

Luke 11:1-13 (NLT): Once Jesus was in a certain place praying. As he finished, one of his disciples came to him and said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

² Jesus said, “This is how you should pray:

“Father, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. ³ Give us each day the food we need, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation.”

⁵ Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this story: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You say to him, ⁶ ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ ⁷ And suppose he calls out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and my family and I are all in bed. I can’t help you.’ ⁸ But I tell you this – though he won’t do it for friendship’s sake, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you whatever you need because of your shameless persistence.

⁹ “And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

¹¹ “You fathers – if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? ¹² Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! ¹³ So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (Luke 11:1-13, NLT)

Luke 11:34-36 (NLT): “No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where its light can be seen by all who enter the house.

³⁴ “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. But when it is unhealthy, your body is filled with darkness. ³⁵ Make sure that the light you think you have is not actually darkness. ³⁶ If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight were filling you with light.” (Luke 11:34-36, NLT)

Luke 12:22-34 (NLT): Then, turning to his disciples, Jesus said, “That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life – whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing. ²⁴ Look at the ravens. They don’t plant or harvest or store food in barns, for God feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than any birds! ²⁵ Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? ²⁶ And if worry can’t accomplish a little thing like that, what’s the use of worrying over bigger things?

²⁷ “Look at the lilies and how they grow. They don’t work or make their clothing, yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed as beautifully as they are. ²⁸ And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and thrown into the fire tomorrow, he will certainly care for you. Why do you have so little faith?

²⁹ “And don’t be concerned about what to eat and what to drink. Don’t worry about such things. ³⁰ These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers all over the world, but your Father already knows your needs. ³¹ Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need.

³² “So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

³³ “Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. ³⁴ Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. (Luke 12:22-34, NLT)

Luke 12:57-59 (NLT): “Why can’t you decide for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸ When you are on the way to court with your accuser, try to settle the matter before you get there. Otherwise, your accuser may drag you before the judge, who will hand you over to an officer, who will throw you into prison. ⁵⁹ And if that happens, you won’t be free again until you have paid the very last penny.” (Luke 12:57-59, NLT)

John 3:14-17 (NLT): “And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:14-17, NLT)

John 6:28-29 (NLT): They replied, “We want to perform God’s works, too. What should we do?”

Jesus told them, “This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:28-29, NLT)

John 13:33-35 (NLT): “Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. ³⁴ So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

³⁵ Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

(John 13:33-35, NLT)

Philippians 4:4-7 (NLT): Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again – rejoice! ⁵ Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon.

⁶ Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

(Philippians 4:4-7, NLT)

Philippians 4:4-7 (the Message): Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you’re on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life. (Philippians 4:4-7, the Message)

James 4:11-17 (NLT): Don't speak evil against each other, dear brothers and sisters. If you criticize and judge each other, then you are criticizing and judging God's law. But your job is to obey the law, not to judge whether it applies to you. ¹² God alone, who gave the law, is the Judge. He alone has the power to save or to destroy. So what right do you have to judge your neighbor?

¹³ Look here, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we are going to a certain town and will stay there a year. We will do business there and make a profit." ¹⁴ How do you know what your life will be like tomorrow? Your life is like the morning fog – it's here a little while, then it's gone.

¹⁵ What you ought to say is, "If the Lord wants us to, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ Otherwise you are boasting about your own pretentious plans, and all such boasting is evil.

¹⁷ Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (**James 4:11-17**, NLT)

Revelation 3:14-22 (NLT): "Write this letter to the angel of the church in Laodicea. This is the message from the one who is the Amen – the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's new creation:

¹⁵ "I know all the things you do, that you are neither hot nor cold. I wish that you were one or the other! ¹⁶ But since you are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth! ¹⁷ You say, 'I am rich. I have everything I want. I don't need a thing!' And you don't realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. ¹⁸ So I advise you to buy gold from me – gold that has been purified by fire. Then you will be rich. Also buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness, and ointment for your eyes so you will be able to see. ¹⁹ I correct and discipline everyone I love. So be diligent and turn from your indifference.

²⁰ "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. ²¹ Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne.

²² "Anyone with ears to hear must listen to the Spirit and understand what he is saying to the churches." (**Revelation 3:14-22**, NLT)

Revelation 12:7-12 (NLT): Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels. ⁸ And the dragon lost the battle, and he and his angels were forced out of heaven. ⁹ This great dragon – the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world – was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice shouting across the heavens,

"It has come at last – salvation and power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down to earth – the one who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹ And

they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony. And they did not love their lives so much that they were afraid to die. ¹² Therefore, rejoice, O heavens! And you who live in the heavens, rejoice! But terror will come on the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you in great anger, knowing that he has little time.” (Revelation 12:7-12, NLT)

E.G. White Resources

To get some additional insights into the Sermon on the Mount, you may find the book *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* helpful, as well as the *Desire of Ages, Chapter 31*.

Desire of Ages, page 668: All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.

As Christ lived the law in humanity, so we may do if we will take hold of the Strong for strength. But we are not to place the responsibility of our duty upon others, and wait for them to tell us what to do. We cannot depend for counsel upon humanity. The Lord will teach us our duty just as willingly as He will teach somebody else. If we come to Him in faith, He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Our hearts will often burn within us as One draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. Those who decide to do nothing in any line that will displease God, will know, after presenting their case before Him, just what course to pursue. And they will receive not only wisdom, but strength. Power for obedience, for service, will be imparted to them, as Christ has promised. Whatever was given to Christ—the “all things” to supply the need of fallen men—was given to Him as the head and representative of humanity. And “whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3:22. (Desire of Ages, page 668)