

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 1: March 6, 2022

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-11

Connect:

Describe a time when you experienced God's unexpected grace and blessings.

Engage:

The Beatitudes are the eight "blessed" sayings found in Matthew 5:1-11. In them, Jesus offers us a workbook to a transformed life and continues to bless those disciples who are pursuing the kingdom of God. The blessings are available now. They are ours to claim when we commit to and act in accordance with the Sermon on the Mount.

Read Matthew 5:1-11

1. Underlying each of the sayings is a negative experience. For example, to mourn means you have suffered loss. To be merciful means you have been wronged. Yet, even in distressing circumstances, Jesus expects us to enact his values: poor in spirit, humble, etc. How does your faith enable this?
2. How do you see the Beatitudes relating to one another?
3. Which one of these "blessed" statements is the most challenging for you? Which one seems easy?

Apply

The unexpected blessings of the Beatitudes come for those pursuing the kingdom of God right now – particularly those they are poor in spirit, humble, pure in heart, mournful, thirsting for justice, extending mercy and making peace.

Of the eight Beatitudes, which one can you focus on this week? What practical steps can you take?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 2: March 13, 2022

Salt and Light

Matthew 5:13-16

Connect:

Who has challenged you the most in your Christian life? What was the result of their influence?

Engage:

While salt is the great preservative, an element essential for life, it also functioned as a catalyst for fires in the ancient world. In the absence of firewood, animal dung was collected and formed into patties, which were salted to dry them out. Peasants used these salted disks as fuel for ovens. Once the dung was spent, all that was left was ashy salt in the bottom of the oven. Jesus possibly refers to this "fire starting" function of salt when he states that when salt has lost its flavor (its catalytic role), it is thrown underfoot because it is useless.

Read [Matthew 5:13-16](#)

1. Explore the meaning of salt as a preservative and as a fire starter. What do you glean from these two different meanings? How does this change your understanding of what it means to be a Christian witness?
2. Jesus speaks of the foolishness of hiding a lighted lamp. The purpose of a light is to shine brightly. Bearing the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-11) in mind, how are we to display that unique character as we pursue the kingdom? What effect will that have on our witness to others?

Apply

We are called to be salt and light in the world, not to withdraw from it. Christians should stand out for their exemplary characters, humble spirits and thirst for justice.

Where are you hiding your light, shrinking from being a catalyst for the faith? How can you be humble and bold at the same time as you beam like a beacon for Christ?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 3: March 20, 2022

Yes be Yes!

Matthew 5:33-48

Connect:

When have you been disappointed or betrayed by a broken promise? How did that influence your view of the person who broke the promise?

Engage:

Oaths in the ancient world were not considered empty promises. They were contractual in nature. The low rates of literacy meant that the spoken word carried more weight. If you made a promise, you were legally bound to follow through. But humans back then seemed to "fudge" their promises as often as we do today. As a result, to emphasize one's truthfulness and purity of intention, one promised by swearing on something spiritual. It is not unlike when we say "I swear to God" or "I swear on a stack of Bibles" to mean we are telling the truth or will do what we promise.

Read [Matthew 5:33-48](#)

1. If you were teaching Sunday School to a bunch of 5th graders, how would you explain Matthew 5:22-37 to them? How would you explain why we fudge on promises? What would you tell them to do instead?
2. Why is it essential to treat enemies with generosity, respect and even love?
3. How does what you have learned in the Sermon on the Mount equip you to be a person who keeps promises and is gracious to enemies?

Apply

We can lose possessions, people and position but integrity is something no one can take away from us. Be trustworthy in what you say and do.

All of us have enemies. So how can you have integrity and make progress toward loving those who hurt you?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 4: March 27, 2022

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:1-15

Connect:

Growing up, were you encouraged to keep religion or faith a private matter or was it discussed more publicly?

Engage:

In the first century, Jews prayed three times a day using prescribed prayers such as the Shema (Hear of Israel, the Lord is one... love God with your whole heart, mind and strength). Instead of rote prayers, Jesus modeled a type of prayer that drew him into an intimate relationship with God.

Read [Matthew 6:1-15](#)

1. Why is Jesus concerned that overtly public acts of righteousness, gifts to the needy and prayers can corrupt one's spirituality?
2. How does calling God "father" effect your understanding of God? Is calling God "father" more helpful or harmful?
3. Praise, petition and forgiveness are central to Jesus' prayer. Which of these do you struggle with in your daily prayers?
4. How can prayer catalyze forgiveness? Why do you think our forgiving others is tied to God forgiving us?

Apply

We pray to commune with God – not for show or recognition. When words fail us, and they will, we lean into the wisdom of the Lord's Prayer. It orients us to God, assures us of God's daily provision, calls us to fix our broken relationships and pleads for God's protective care.

How can the Lord's Prayer draw you closer to God during this coming week?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 5: April 3, 2022

Disciplines of the Heart

Matthew 6:16-34

Connect:

What spiritual disciplines are valued among your friends?

Engage:

Spiritual disciplines are habits, practices and experiences designed to develop, nurture and strengthen one's spiritual life. Some spiritual disciplines are personal, inward exercises practiced alone; others require interpersonal relationships and are practiced in community. A list of common spiritual disciplines includes meditation, prayer, fasting, stewardship, solitude, self-examination, journaling, study, chastity, submission/obedience, silence, worship and simplicity.

Read [Matthew 6:16-34](#)

1. Jesus talks about disciplines of the heart and how possessions, attitudes and anxiety can impact your spirituality. What is Jesus suggesting as an alternative?
2. Fasting is a common discipline where your physical hunger fuels a spiritual hunger for God. What are your experiences with fasting and how has fasting impacted your faith?
3. What do you treasure most of all in life? Is this treasure in conflict or competition with your love for God?
4. How does one realistically follow Jesus' words to "not worry about your life?"

Apply

Jesus addresses the many ways we try to navigate the world with our limited wisdom and fleeting power. The challenge here is not to live with a divided heart but to fully trust God.

What spiritual disciplines will you employ this week to reorient your faith?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 6: April 10, 2022

Trust the Giver

Matthew 7:1-12

Connect:

What or who is the object of your most harsh judgment?

Engage:

Rabbis were expected to "walk the talk," as was Jesus. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus encouraged his followers to surpass the letter of the law and conform to the law's intention – love God and neighbor with one's whole heart, mind, soul and strength.

Read Matthew 7:1-12

1. What does this passage tell us about the consequences of judging others? How can we be less short-sighted about our foibles and more empathetic toward others?
2. Who are we to "judge" the dogs of society and why should we not extend grace to them?
3. Verses 7-11 talk about prayer. How does this description relate to your experience of answered and unanswered prayer?

Apply

Throughout this series, we have been talking about our discipleship. On Palm Sunday, we turn to look at Jesus. How does he measure up to "Sermon on the Mount" standards? How does he judge others? How does he treat the holy? Is he a good neighbor or bad? Even in the fickleness of the first Palm Sunday accolades, how does he continue to extend love to those who will very soon call for his crucifixion?

How can you live up to his standards this week?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.

Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



March 6–April 17, 2022

Lent: The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is considered the very heart of Jesus' teachings. If we want to be faithful followers of Jesus, we not only need him to disrupt our assumptions and put us on a new trajectory of faith, we need to act as well. So don't be lulled into passivity by the familiarity of this sermon. Instead, put on your crash helmets and let Jesus challenge you in all areas of your life.

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. – Matthew 7:24

Week 7: April 17, 2022

Build on the Rock

Matthew 7:24-27

Connect:

Evaluating your life, would you say your faith is built on solid rock or on the sand with a lovely view?

Engage:

In Jesus' day, the rainy season produced catastrophic flash floods that wiped out everything in their paths. So where you built a home was a strategic decision. Not only did you build on higher ground, but you built it on rock so that storms would not undermine the foundation. Jesus uses this parable to illustrate building your life on the sure foundation of his teaching.

Read [Matthew 7:24-27](#)

1. What do you imagine the floods and storms of life were for those in the 1st century? For us today?
2. Jesus said a lot of things. But, if you had to boil it down to his most essential teaching, what would you say are Jesus' core values and message? How do you make this teaching foundational in your life?
3. How does the resurrection of Jesus provide a sure footing for your faith? How is it a foundation stone in your decisions, actions and attitudes?

Apply

Jesus ends this sermon by exhorting everyone to build their lives around what is solid and trustworthy, enough to withstand the challenges that inevitably will come. As we look to Resurrection Sunday, place your faith in the foundation stone – the Resurrected One.

During Easter week, what specific things can you do to make Jesus the sure and solid foundation of your faith?

Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church and the world.