

SMALL GROUP STUDIES

SHAPED
by JESUS

TERM 4 VISION SERIES

Additional Helpful Resources

David Cook,
The Unheeded Christ
– *Jesus Demands Serious Obedience*

Don Carson,
Jesus' Sermon On The Mount

Brian Rosner,
How to Find Yourself
– *Why Looking Inward Is Not the Answer*
[https://portal.newcollege.unsw.edu.au/
StarRezPortalX/94ADAFDF/10/229/Events-Event
Details?ProgramID=115](https://portal.newcollege.unsw.edu.au/StarRezPortalX/94ADAFDF/10/229/Events-EventDetails?ProgramID=115)
(Online Lecture Oct 6th @ 7:30pm)

David L. Turner,
Matthew (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT)

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– Matthew 5:1-16
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- 14. We Love Enemies and Leave Grudges**
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How to use this book

At St Paul's we are committed to growing as disciples of Jesus, spurring each other on to know and grow in Jesus. We know that God works through His Word powerfully to teach and transform us. We therefore know the importance of seeing God's Word regularly sown into our lives, through our sermon series and also during the week. We see this process as we daily open God's Word and depend on Him in prayer. We also grow as we meet in our households and study groups to read God's Word together. Over time we've seen that as we study the same passage from God's Word, that God builds depth in our understanding, stronger application in our lives, and encouragement in our households and church as we learn together. As we together dig into being *Shaped by Jesus* this term, we are exploring the concepts in at least three ways...

Church

Keep this guide with your Bible and bring it with you to church, or keep it handy when you watch church online. Scribble down sermon notes in the space provided. Then, be ready to reflect on these personally, as you meet with someone 121, and as you meet up with your Small Group.

Small Groups

Take this guide with you to your Small Group each week. There are Bible studies for each topic within the Shaped by Jesus series, with space to write down your answers plus prayer points that arise from the study and prayer requests from the members of your group.

Family Devotions

Use your family devotions time to open up the concept of being Shaped by Jesus together as a household (keeping the devotions suitable for a range of ages). You can open up the passages at dinner time, just before bed, or as you are baby-sitting your grandchildren.

Setting the scene for our “Shaped by Jesus” series

Purpose

To speak into the lives of the family of St Paul’s in a post-covid lock down era and to look forward to 2023. The teaching received in Matthew call us to be a counter cultural community based on Jesus’ unchanging words and grace.

We also want to use this time to help us cast vision, and to consider our giving and serving possibilities in 2023.

Overview of studies

The structure of these studies is to follow the different teaching of Jesus in Matthew, particularly chapter 5-7. The break up for our teaching series will be as follows:

16 October: **We Stand Out in Our World** – Matthew 5:1-16

23 October: **We Are Not Defined By Our Urges** – Matthew 5:21-30

30 October: **We Love Enemies and Leave Grudges** – Matthew 5:38-48

6 November: **We Care For the Needy** – Matthew 6:1-4

13 November: **We Serve God With Money, Rather Than Serve Money** – Matthew 6:19-24

20 November: **We Build Our Lives Wisely** – Matthew 7:13-29

27 November: **We Are a People On Mission** – Matthew 28:18-20

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 16th October

STUDY ONE

We Stand Out in Our World - Matthew 5:1-16

Introduction

These verses make up what is a very famous passage in the New Testament. It is the beginning of some important and surprising teaching from Jesus. He is wanting us to take a fresh look at what we might already know and practice.

In the book of Matthew we are presented with a lot of Jesus' teaching in five major discourses. Part of Jesus' commission in Matthew 28:18-20 is to teach those who become disciples all that he has commanded them. These verses are the direction of the book of Matthew and therefore it is important that Matthew presents Jesus' teaching in order that this might be passed on. Parts of this teaching are hard to understand, and for some, to accept.

Jesus also sets some very high standards within his teaching - which leads some people to avoid this teaching, some to simply walk away because of it and others to take up the challenge. Jesus came to save us and to make us perfect as we read in Matthew 5:48. As C.S. Lewis said in his book *Mere Christianity*, *"Some people think this means 'Unless you are perfect I will not help you'; and as we cannot be perfect, then, if He meant that, our position is hopeless. But I do not think that He did mean that. I think He meant 'The only help I will give is help to become perfect. You may want something less: but I will give you nothing less.'*

Jesus teaches us in order to help us become more like him and to live lives that will bring him glory. This teaching is not a bunch of rules on how to make enough points on how to get into heaven nor is it meant to discourage us. It is about how to live life as people who will inherit the kingdom of God (Matt 5:3).

Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:1-16. Share any observations made with the group.
2. In Matthew 5:3 what do you think it means to be poor in spirit and why is the kingdom of God theirs?
3. It has been suggested that the list of beatitudes from verses 4-10 expand upon the first in verse 3. Do you agree with this? If so, in what ways do these expand the first idea? If not, why?
4. How do the beatitudes help us understand verses 13-16?

5. In verse 13-16 how do these metaphors of salt and light describe how believers ought to stand out?

Making It Stick

When do you find it most difficult to be salt and light?

Why do you find it hard to be pour in spirit?

What does it mean to you to be shaped by Jesus?

Prayer

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 23rd October

STUDY TWO

We Are Not Defined By Our Urges - Matthew 5:21-30

Questions

1. For all the teaching that Jesus does from Matthew 5:21ff he gives a reason for it. In Matthew 5:17-20 it is important to look at the context for which Jesus is speaking.
2. Read Matthew 5: 21-26. What do you think is the main issue here for Jesus?
3. In what ways does a person's righteousness surpass the Pharisees (Mat 5:20) by following the teaching of Matthew 5:21-26?

4. Read Matthew 5:27-30. If the command to not murder is about valuing life what are we being told to value with the command to not commit adultery?

5. What is the connection between eyes and heart?

6. Why do you think Jesus uses exaggeration (hyperbole) in Matthew 5:29-30?

Making It Stick

How can we calm our anger?

What can we do to protect our eyes from things that might cause to look lustfully (apart from gouging it out and throwing it away)?

Prayer

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 30th October

STUDY THREE

We Love Enemies and Leave Grudges - Matthew 5:38-48

Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:38-42. What do you think is the main issue here (remember the context of Mat 5:20)?

2. Read Deuteronomy 19:15-21. How does this passage help us to understand Matthew 5:38-42?

3. When do you think Jesus is trying to teach us through his illustrations in Matthew 5:39-42?

4. Read Matthew 5:43-48. Who is your enemy? Who is your neighbour?

5. How does loving our enemy and praying for those who persecute show we are children of our Father in Heaven?

6. In what ways does Matthew 5:43-47 show that God is perfect and we are to be perfect as he is?

Making It Stick

When do you find it hard to go the extra mile for others?

What can you do to show love for your 'enemy'?

Prayer

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 6th November

STUDY FOUR

We Care For the Needy - Matthew 6:1-4

Introduction

In chapter 5:48 the reader is told to be perfect and then in 6:1 to be careful. “The question of whose approval we are seeking is thus raised in another form. Just as the beatitudes ask me if it’s God’s blessing I want, or some other approval, so the demands of righteousness, as presented by Jesus, can never legitimately be confused with forms of external piety: the righteousness in question pleases the Father and is rewarded by him.”¹ In these verses we are reminded to care for the needy which pleases God rather than developing a reputation for generosity and piety.

Questions

1. Read Matthew 6:1-4. What do you observe in these verses?
2. Read Matthew 23:1-7. Contrast this passage with 6:1-4. What do we learn about caring for the needy? Why is it important that we do not do things just to be seen?

3. Do you think it is OK to announce in a church gathering what has been done as church? How is this different to what is described in 6:2?

4. What do think it means to not let the left hand know what the right is doing?

5. How can giving to the needy be seen as hypocrisy?

Making It Stick

How do we keep our hearts from giving for self gain?

A PRACTICAL STEP YOU CAN TAKE - We invite you to participate in Toys and Tucker. We will be collecting for this in early December, perhaps you might go shopping together as a group? Keep your eyes on The Loop for more info!

Prayer

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 13th November

STUDY FIVE

We Serve God With Money, Rather Than Serve Money – Matthew 6:19-24

Introduction

In these verses we read that Jesus is addressing the accumulation of wealth. There is a bigger theme that is coming through and that is “unswerving loyalty to kingdom values”² as D.A Carson points out.

Questions

1. Read Matthew 6:19-24. What do you observe in these verse?
2. What is Jesus prohibiting in these verses when he says not build up treasure on earth?
3. What is the treasure we are building in heaven?

4. What makes money so attractive that love for it rather than God overcomes us?

5. In what ways do verses 22-23 present an “unswerving loyalty to kingdom values”?

6. How can we make sure we are serving God and not money? What things should we watch out for to ensure we are not serving money?

Making It Stick

At present the cost of living is a real threat. How can we deal with this while maintaining generosity?

Consider your giving to God's work through St Paul's. Is it time to change this?

Give thought to your attitude to your giving

Prayer

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 20th November

STUDY SIX

We Build Our Lives Wisely - Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction

D.A. Carson comments. “Nothing could be more calamitous then to mediate long and hard on Matthew 5:1-7:12 and then to resolve to improve little.”³ To live this way is counter-cultural yet wise. There are many objections to God and his way of living in our world. To follow Jesus’ teaching is not only wise but important to strive for. There will be times of failure but seeking Jesus to repent we can continue on for his glory and our good.

Questions

1. Read Matthew 7:13-27. What do you observe from these verses?
2. How do we recognise a false prophet? What examples can you give for this?

3. Verses 21-23 can cause unease in a person's assurance of salvation. What do you think it means to the will of our Father in heaven? How is it possible to be perfect (5:48) if this is also God's will?

4. In verses 24-27 Jesus combines two instructions. What are they? What makes either one difficult?

5. Why does Jesus say to "build" your house upon the rock?

6. In verses 28-29, what do you think it means that Jesus taught as one who had authority not as their teachers of the law?

Making It Stick

What can you do to recognise false teaching?

Pray for each other, that you will be able to trust and obey the Lord Jesus.

Pray that God will be working in you to build your life upon his teaching so that you may, in turn, teach others.

Prayer

SERMON NOTES

Sunday 27th November

STUDY SEVEN

We Are a People on Mission - Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction

These final verses in the gospel according to Matthew are the point of the whole book. All that has happened has been leading to this.

No doubt they are words you have heard many times and an important command for us all. As you meditate on them again together allow them to soak in.

Questions

1. Read Matthew 28:18-20. What do you observe in these verses?
2. What do you think it means they worshipped him but some doubted?

3. In verse 18 we are encouraged in how to love. Do you think John is saying action is the only way they love from this verse?

4. Why is it important that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus?

5. What do you think it means to “go”?

6. What two things does Jesus command us to do?

Making It Stick

What makes it hard to bring Jesus into conversations?

Set a goal this month to say hello and find something out about 3 people you do not really know. For example, check-out person, your barista, hairdresser, childrens teacher.

Pray for St Paul's and growth of his kingdom here. Pray also that God will raise up workers for the harvest (9:37-38).

Prayer



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