

# Sermon on the Mount

A Beginner's Guide to the Kingdom of Heaven

By Amy-Jill Levine

Wednesday's at 7:00 - 8:30 pm - Book Discussion followed by Compline

## Pre-work in preparation for Session 1 - September 9, 2020

Read Matthew Chapters 5, 6 & 7

- What topics or themes did you notice most as you read these chapters?
- What parts of these chapters, if any, struck you as familiar or unfamiliar?
- AJ writes, "The Sermon on the Mount is not a sermon; it's a series of discrete teachings....Had Jesus delivered all verses in Matthew 5-7 at one time, the disciples' heads would have exploded." What do you think about this idea? Why might Matthew have collected many of Jesus's originally separate teachings into a single "sermon"?

Carefully and prayerfully read Matthew 4:23-5:12

Carefully read the introduction and chapter 1 from *Sermon on the Mount* by Amy-Jill Levine

Session 1, "Introduction and the Beatitudes," orients participants to the Sermon as an introductory guide to the kingdom of heaven; it examines Jesus's statements about blessedness (the "Beatitudes") as indications of God's will for those who gather in Jesus's name in particular and for human life in general.

Video: The Beatitudes (12:35minutes)

Compline lead by Kathleen Hogan-Garrett

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## **Pre-work in preparation for Session 2 - September 16, 2020**

Carefully and prayerfully read Matthew 5:13-48

Carefully read chapter 2 of *Sermon on the Mount*.

Session 2, "The Extensions," helps participants appreciate the utmost seriousness with which Jesus took the Torah and the Prophets--that is, the Scriptures of Israel--and examines how the "fences" he built around God's Law to protect it enhance the lives of his followers, individually and communally, then and now.

Video: The Extensions (11:15)

Compline lead by Linda Anderson

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## **Pre-work in preparation for Session 3 - September 23, 2020**

Carefully and prayerfully read Matthew 5:13-16, Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18

Carefully read chapter 3 of *Sermon on the Mount*.

In session 3, "Practicing Piety," participants will both discover Jesus's views on the right and wrong ways to engage in expressions of faith and reflect on how appropriate practices can lead to peace with one another and within themselves.

Video: Practicing Piety (10:52)

Compline lead by Ruth Merrifield

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## **Pre-work in preparation for Session 4 - September 30, 2020**

Carefully and prayerfully read Matthew 6:9-15

Carefully read chapter 4 of *Sermon on the Mount*.

Session 4, "Our Father," looks at how the Lord's Prayer is a quintessentially Jewish prayer, reveals the historical nuances of the terms in each verse, and considers how its recitation can function as personal spiritual discipline, recognition of interpersonal reconciliation, and awareness of communal political and economic concerns.

Video: Our Father (11:22)

Compline lead by Judy Joseph

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## **Pre-work in preparation for Session 5 - October 7, 2020**

Carefully and prayerfully read Matthew 6:19-7:5

Carefully read chapter 5 of *Sermon on the Mount*.

In session 5, "Finding Your Treasure," participants will reflect on and reevaluate their attitudes toward wealth, treasure, and "stuff," and will imagine how their lives and the world would be different were Jesus's teachings about these realities to prevail.

Video: Finding Your Treasure (9:37)

Compline lead by Rev Darlene Kuhn

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## **Pre-work in preparation for Session 6 - October 14, 2020**

Carefully and prayerfully read Matthew 7:6-27

Carefully read chapter 6 of *Sermon on the Mount*.

In session 6, "Living into the Kingdom," participants will identify challenges to traveling along what Jesus called the "narrow road" leading to life and will talk about ways along the journey in which the church community members can support one another as well as those who belong to other communities.

Video: Living into the Kingdom (13:24)

Compline lead by Jan Anderson