

The Sermon on the Mount

A Daily Devotional Plan



FIRST WAYNE STREET

United Methodist Church

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount Devotional

The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew chapters 5-7, is one of the most well-known and transformative teachings of Jesus. In these three chapters, Jesus paints a picture of what it means to live as a citizen of God's Kingdom—a life rooted in humility, love, justice, and grace. For followers of Christ, these teachings are not just ideals but a way of life. They challenge us to see the world differently, calling us to embody God's values in every aspect of our lives.

As United Methodists, we believe that God's grace is both personal and social. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, emphasized the need for holiness of heart and life—seeking personal transformation through a relationship with God and working for social justice in the world. The Sermon on the Mount offers a roadmap for living this kind of life, where our love for God flows naturally into love for others.

This three-week devotional is designed to help you engage with the Sermon on the Mount in a deeper way. Each day, you'll explore a portion of Jesus' teaching, reflect on its meaning in your life, and consider how to live it out in practical ways. The reflections are grounded in United Methodist theology, with an emphasis on God's grace, social holiness, and the ongoing call to discipleship. You will be challenged to rethink common assumptions, embrace spiritual disciplines, and pursue a life of mercy, justice, and love.

Whether you are familiar with the Sermon on the Mount or reading it closely for the first time, this devotional will guide you in reflecting on its truths and applying them in your daily life. As you journey through these scriptures, may you be inspired to live more fully as a disciple of Jesus, rooted in the values of His Kingdom.

How to Use This Devotional

Each day includes a scripture passage, a reflection, and a question for personal or group reflection. Take your time with each reading, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in your heart and mind. Consider journaling your responses to the reflection questions or discussing them with a friend or small group. Most importantly, pray that God would give you the grace to live out the teachings of Jesus in a way that brings glory to God and blessing to others.

May this devotional strengthen your faith, deepen your love for God and neighbor, and inspire you to live out the radical call of the Sermon on the Mount.

Week 1: The Beatitudes and the Kingdom of God

Day 1: The Blessed Life

Read Matthew 5:1-3

Key Verse: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Reflection:

In the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to reframe our understanding of blessing. Contrary to worldly assumptions, true blessing isn't about wealth, success, or status. It's about humility and recognizing our deep need for God. In the United Methodist tradition, we understand that God's grace is freely available to all who acknowledge their need for it. By being "poor in spirit," we align ourselves with the values of God's Kingdom—receiving God's grace and offering it to others.

Reflection Question:

How can you embrace spiritual humility in your daily life?

Use this space for personal reflection and journaling.

Day 2: Mourning and Comfort

Read Matthew 5:4

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

Reflection:

Grief is part of the human experience, but in this verse, Jesus promises that mourning will not have the final say. Through God's grace, those who mourn are blessed with the comfort of God's presence and the hope of resurrection. In the United Methodist faith, we believe in God's transformative power, which brings healing and hope in times of sorrow. The church is called to be a community of support, offering comfort and care to one another in times of loss.

Reflection Question:

How can you offer comfort to someone who is mourning today?

Day 3: Meekness and Inheritance

Read Matthew 5:5

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."

Reflection:

Meekness is often misunderstood as weakness, but in the biblical context, it refers to gentleness and humility. Jesus teaches that those who are meek, who do not seek to dominate others but live with humility, will receive God's inheritance. This aligns with Wesleyan beliefs about servant leadership and love for others. As we follow Jesus, we are called to live gently, trusting that God's kingdom is coming in fullness.

Reflection Question:

How can you practice gentleness and humility in your relationships today?

Day 4: Hunger and Thirst for Righteousness

Read Matthew 5:6

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."

Reflection:

The desire for justice, righteousness, and right relationships with God and others is a hallmark of Christian discipleship. The United Methodist Church is committed to social justice and living out the gospel in ways that seek to right wrongs and heal brokenness. Jesus promises that those who seek justice will be satisfied—not by their own efforts but by God's action in the world.

Reflection Question:

Where do you see a need for justice, and how can you contribute to making things right?

Day 5: The Merciful

Read Matthew 5:7

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."

Reflection:

Mercy is at the heart of Jesus' teaching. As those who have received God's abundant grace, we are called to extend that same grace to others. The United Methodist Church teaches that we are saved by God's grace, not by our own works, and that grace compels us to show mercy to others. When we show mercy, we reflect the love and forgiveness of Christ.

Reflection Question:

How can you show mercy to someone who may not deserve it today?

Day 6: The Pure in Heart

Read Matthew 5:8

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

Reflection:

A pure heart reflects a life that is fully committed to God. It's not about perfection but about intention—seeking God's will and living with integrity. Wesleyan theology encourages us to seek holiness of heart and life, meaning that our love for God and neighbor becomes the driving force behind our actions.

Reflection Question:

What distractions or impurities are preventing you from fully seeking God?

Day 7: Peacemakers

Read Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

Reflection:

Peacemaking is central to the gospel message. As United Methodists, we believe in working for peace and reconciliation in our personal lives and in the world. Jesus calls us not only to avoid conflict but to actively seek peace in all areas of life. In doing so, we reflect our identity as children of God.

Reflection Question:

Where can you be a peacemaker in your life today?

Week 2: Living as Salt and Light

Day 8: Salt of the Earth

Read Matthew 5:13

"You are the salt of the earth..."

Reflection:

Salt preserves and enhances flavor, just as we are called to preserve goodness and bring the flavor of God's kingdom to the world. In the Wesleyan tradition, we understand our role as disciples to transform the world by our actions. We must engage with the world, preserving what is good and calling out injustice.

Reflection Question:

How can you be "salt" in your community today?

Day 9: Light of the World

Read Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world..."

Reflection:

We are called to reflect God's light in a world often filled with darkness. Our actions should glorify God and point others toward the hope and love found in Christ. The United Methodist Church emphasizes social holiness—our faith must shine in our love and service to others.

Reflection Question:

How can you let your light shine in a way that points others to Christ?

Day 10: Fulfilling the Law

Read Matthew 5:17-20

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets..."

Reflection:

Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. He shows us that the heart of the law is love—love for God and love for neighbor. As United Methodists, we believe in living out God's commandments through acts of love and service, guided by grace.

Reflection Question:

How can you fulfill the law of love in your relationships today?

Day 11: Righteousness from the Heart

Read Matthew 5:21-22

"You have heard that it was said to those of old..."

Reflection:

Jesus challenges us to go beyond external obedience to the law and address the inner attitudes of our hearts. Anger, hatred, and bitterness must be rooted out if we are to live as true disciples. The call to inward holiness is central to Methodist theology, as we are continually transformed by God's grace.

Reflection Question:

What attitudes in your heart need to change today?

Day 12: Reconciling with Others

Read Matthew 5:23-24

"If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you..."

Reflection:

Reconciliation is a crucial part of discipleship. Jesus teaches us that our relationship with others impacts our relationship with God. As United Methodists, we recognize the importance of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation in our spiritual lives. Before we can worship God fully, we must seek to repair broken relationships with others.

Reflection Question:

Is there someone you need to reconcile with before you come to God in prayer?

Day 13: Radical Integrity

Read Matthew 5:33-37

"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'..."

Reflection:

Jesus calls us to live with radical integrity, where our words and actions align with the truth. In the Wesleyan tradition, this integrity reflects holiness—living in a way that is consistent with God's will. Honesty, transparency, and reliability in our words and promises are foundational to our Christian witness.

Reflection Question:

How can you live with greater integrity in your commitments and promises?

Day 14: Love Your Enemies

Read Matthew 5:43-44

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies..."

Reflection:

Loving our enemies is one of the most challenging aspects of Christian life, but it is central to Jesus' teaching. The United Methodist Church teaches that all people are of sacred worth, and we are called to show love and grace to everyone, even those who oppose us. This kind of radical love reflects God's unconditional love for us and embodies the call to social holiness.

Reflection Question:

How can you extend love to someone who is difficult for you to love?

Week 3: Prayer, Trust, and Kingdom Living

Day 15: The Lord's Prayer

Read Matthew 6:9-13

"This, then, is how you should pray..."

Reflection:

The Lord's Prayer serves as a model for how we approach God, centering on God's holiness, our daily needs, forgiveness, and deliverance from temptation. United Methodists emphasize the importance of prayer in cultivating a personal and communal relationship with God. This prayer reminds us of our dependence on God and our call to participate in bringing God's Kingdom to earth.

Reflection Question:

How does the Lord's Prayer shape your understanding of God and your daily needs?

Day 16: Forgiving Others

Read Matthew 6:14-15

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

Reflection:

Forgiveness is at the heart of the Christian life. Jesus emphasizes that our willingness to forgive others is tied to our experience of God's forgiveness. As Methodists, we understand forgiveness as part of God's grace that transforms us and heals relationships. We are called to extend grace as we have received it.

Reflection Question:

Is there someone you need to forgive today, and how can you take steps toward that?

Day 17: Fasting in Secret

Read Matthew 6:16-18

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do..."

Reflection:

Fasting is a spiritual practice that draws us closer to God, but Jesus warns against doing it for show. In the Methodist tradition, spiritual disciplines like fasting are meant to deepen our relationship with God and increase our love for others, not to gain attention or approval. Our fasting, prayer, and other acts of devotion are to be done humbly, seeking God's presence.

Reflection Question:

How can you incorporate fasting or another spiritual discipline into your life to deepen your connection with God?

Day 18: Treasures in Heaven

Read Matthew 6:19-21

Key Verse: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth..."

Reflection:

Jesus teaches that where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. In our consumer-driven world, it's easy to become attached to material things, but Jesus reminds us to focus on eternal values—love, justice, mercy, and peace. The United Methodist Church encourages a life of simplicity and generosity, aligning our hearts with the things of God.

Reflection Question:

What treasures are you storing up, and how can you focus more on eternal values?

Day 19: Trusting God in Worry

Read Matthew 6:25-27

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life..."

Reflection:

Worry is a natural human response, but Jesus calls us to trust God with our needs. As United Methodists, we affirm that God is faithful and provides for our needs. Trust in God's care allows us to live with peace and purpose, knowing that God's kingdom is our ultimate security.

Reflection Question:

What worries are you holding onto, and how can you trust God more with those concerns?

Day 20: Seeking First the Kingdom

Read Matthew 6:33

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Reflection:

Jesus calls us to seek God's kingdom above all else. When we focus on living according to God's ways—seeking justice, mercy, love, and righteousness—everything else falls into place. In Wesleyan theology, we are called to live as part of God's ongoing work in the world, co-laboring to bring about the fullness of God's kingdom.

Reflection Question:

How can you prioritize seeking God's kingdom in your daily life?

Day 21: The Golden Rule

Read Matthew 7:12

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you..."

Reflection:

The Golden Rule encapsulates the heart of Christian living: love for others as we would want to be loved. In the United Methodist tradition, this commandment calls us to justice, compassion, and mutual respect in all of our relationships. It sums up the law and the prophets, pointing us toward the kind of life Jesus wants us to live.

Reflection Question:

How can you practice the Golden Rule today in your interactions with others?

Day 22: A Firm Foundation

Read Matthew 7:24-27

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Reflection:

The Sermon on the Mount concludes with a challenge: to build our lives on the firm foundation of Jesus' teachings. When we live according to the values of the Kingdom, we are prepared to weather the storms of life. United Methodists believe in living out our faith through both personal piety and social action, ensuring our foundation is not just belief but practice.

Reflection Question:

How can you build your life on the foundation of Jesus' teachings today?

This concludes the three-week devotional on the Sermon on the Mount. Thank you for joining us on this journey. We pray it has been a helpful and fruitful practice for your spiritual growth.

