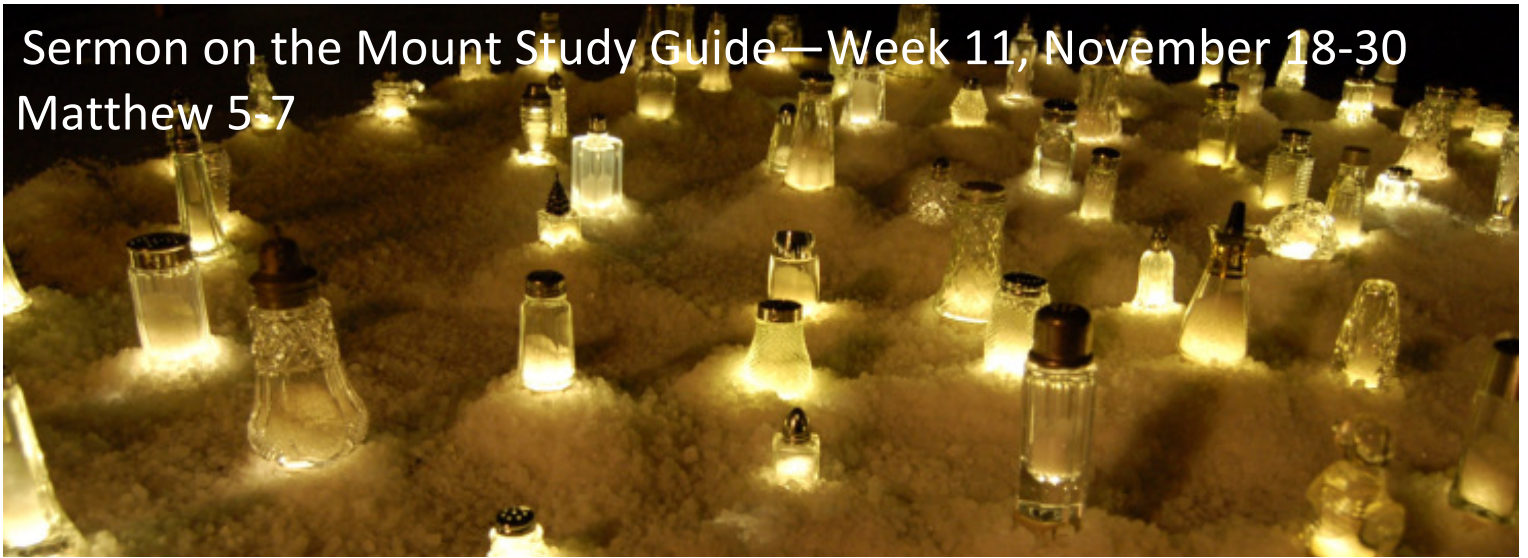


Sermon on the Mount Study Guide—Week 11, November 18-30

Matthew 5-7



- I. “Now, when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.” (Matthew 5:1-2)
- II. Opening prayer for Illumination
- III. Read Matthew 5-7
- IV. *The Divine Conspiracy*, pp. 375-400:

As part of scripture, the Sermon on the Mount is part of the historical-redemptive story of God at work in our world, redeeming his people and calling them out of the clutches of sin to new life and discipleship in his kingdom. As Dallas Willard puts it, “God’s way of moving towards the future is, with gentle persistence in unending purpose, to bring about the transformation of the human heart by speaking with human beings and living with and in them” (380).

But given this larger scope of reality, it helps to know where we’re headed. Thus, Willard ends his book with a snapshot of what life in the kingdom eventually leads us to—the restoration of all things. Willard points out that,

To live strongly and creatively in the kingdom of the heavens, we need to have firmly fixed in our minds what our future is to be like. We want to live fully in the kingdom now, and for that purpose our future must make sense to us. It must be something we can now plan or make decisions in terms of, with clarity and joyful anticipation. In this way our future can be incorporated into our life now and our life now can be incorporated into our future. (376)

But what does that future look like? Where does the Kingdom eventually bring us? What future are we building towards by living as Christ’s disciples? What can we expect? Willard answers these questions a bit surprisingly when he writes, “When we pass through what we call death, we do not lose the world. Indeed, we see it for the first time as it really is” (392). Elaborating further, he continues,

Stated in other words, our experience will not be fundamentally different in character from what it is now, though it will change in significant details. *The life we now have as the persons we now are will continue, and continue in the universe in which we now exist.* Our experience will be much clearer, richer, and deeper, of course, because it will be unrestrained by the limitations now imposed upon us by our dependence upon our body. It will, instead, be rooted in the broader and more fundamental reality of God’s kingdom and will accordingly have far greater scope and power. (395, emphasis Willard’s)

Or, to put it more simply, we will find the Kingdom fully come, and we will experience the glory of God reigning fully and completely. God’s plan for the recreation and redemption of all things will come to fruition, and we, as citizens of his kingdom, will be present to witness and take part in it.

Alleluia. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

V. Questions of 1st Importance:

1. Questions for the Text

- i. What have we learned from our study of the Sermon on the Mount this year?
- ii. How has our understanding of these three chapters changed?
- iii. What surprised us?
- iv. How has the Sermon informed the rest of what we read in the Bible?
- v. How has our study this semester changed how we view Jesus' teachings?

2. Questions for the World

- i. How have our lives changed following our study of this text?
- ii. How will we take these lessons forward in our lives?
- iii. What forms of discipleship and discipline have we tried out this semester? How did they go?

VI. "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." (Matthew 7:28-29)