

Sermon on the Mount

Monday, 5/11/09 – Read Matthew 5:1-16

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: The gospel of Matthew collects some of Jesus’ best known, most admired, and least practiced teachings in a section we call “The Sermon on the Mount.” And several of these teachings help us shape our attitudes about stewardship. This week, let’s look at sampling from the Sermon on the Mount. ... Today’s verses begin with the “beatitudes” and conclude with Jesus saying “You are the light of the world.” What grabs your attention in this passage? Is something compelling? ... Can you entertain Jesus’ saying that you are the light of the world? What do you think he meant? What difference would it make to you -- how you feel about yourself, how you live your life -- if you really thought of yourself as light for the world?

Tuesday, 5/12/09 – Read Matthew 5:43-48

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: “Love you enemies.” What do you think? Is that even a reasonable goal? If we think of love as a feeling, then it’s impossible. But if love is about action -- acting for the good of someone else -- then maybe, just maybe, we could love enemies -- we could act on their behalf. What do you think? ... Jesus gives a place to start: “Pray for those who persecute you.” How about we try that today, this week: pick someone you have real conflict or tension with. Pray for them today. Will you try that?

Wednesday, 5/13/09 – Read Matthew 6:1-4

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus’ advice about giving secretly drives us to look at our motivations. Pay close attention to verse 1. If our motivation in giving is to bring praise upon ourselves, then that desire undermines the gift, and it undermines our relationship with God. Do you think that’s true? Why might Jesus be so insistent about this? Have you ever seen anyone use their giving (or their philanthropy) for egocentric purposes?

Thursday, 5/14/09 – Read Matthew 6:5-15

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Jesus’ teaching on prayer again drives us to examine our deeper purposes and motivations. Do we pray to be in communication (and communion!) with God. Or is there some other purpose? When you pray, what is your deeper motivation?

Friday, 5/15/09 – Read Matthew 6:19-24

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: What does your life serve? What values do you serve? What is your supreme loyalty? ... Jesus claims that divided loyalty doesn’t work. that we cannot serve “two masters”? Do you think he’s right? ... When is it that you notice yourself trying to serve two masters? When is it that you are living with divided loyalties? ... Has there ever been a time

when you were clear that there was a single supreme loyalty in your life? What was that like for you?

Saturday, 5/16/09 – Read **Matthew 6:25-34**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: Ponder verse 33. What is Jesus saying? ... Is worry and anxiety ever the result of divided loyalty -- of not trusting God fully? Or is this just nonsense? What do you think? ... Is it even possible to trust God for our needs? Or is that unrealistically naive? ... Think about it. Should we trust God's "providence." Should we live confidently that God will provide? What do you think?

Sunday, 5/17/09 – Read **Matthew 7:7-11**

My Observations: _____

A Question to Answer: What a claim Jesus makes! If we humans give good gifts, HOW MUCH MORE will God give good gifts to those who ask and seek and knock. ... Is that the way God is? Is Jesus' idea of God right? What do you think?

My Faith Journal, May 10, 2009

Fanning the Flame of Family

What do I hear God saying to me today?

What action do I intend to take this week?

Each day this week, take a few minutes. Begin with PRAYER. Then READ through the Bible passage indicated on the inside of this guide. WRITE down your own thoughts, reactions, observations. ANSWER THE QUESTION to begin connecting the Bible with your life. Use additional paper or your own notebook if you need more space to write.