

# Summarizing the Sermon

## **BIG IDEA:**

**Jesus invites us to see God's work as the transformation of the inner person. Religion as a system of external conformity is insufficient for bringing about a right relationship with the God who created us and loves us.**

*“If you were to take the sum total of all authoritative articles ever written by the most qualified of psychologists and psychiatrists on the subject of mental hygiene -- if you were to combine them and refine them, and cleave out the excess verbiage - - if you were to take the whole of the meat and none of the parsley, and if you were to have these unadulterated bits of pure scientific knowledge concisely expressed by the most capable of living poets, you would have an awkward and incomplete summation of the Sermon on the Mount. And it would suffer immeasurably through comparison. For nearly 2,000 years the Christian world has been holding in its hands the complete answer to its restless and fruitless yearnings. Here ... rests the blueprint for successful human life with optimism, mental health, and contentment.”*

Psychiatrist J. T. Fisher  
in *A Few Buttons Missing*



# Chapel Scripture

## Thursday, August 26

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### MATTHEW 5:27-32 (NIV)

1 Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

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

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

7 Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

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

9 Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called sons of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

# Notes:

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**Jesus invites us to see God's work as the transformation of the inner person. Religion as a system of external conformity is insufficient for bringing about a right relationship with the God who created us and loves us.**

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**READ**

In your own Bible, read through Matthew 5-7. If you're looking for a fresh look at the passage, try reading through it in *The Message*, a pseudo-translation that is written in an updated language. Read through the entire passage in one sitting (It'll take you about ten minutes) and then pause and reflect on the passage as a whole.

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Commonly referred to as “The Sermon on the Mount,” these three chapters represent the longest uninterrupted teaching of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels. In all likelihood, this teaching took place over several days, and we’re now reading the abridged version. While there’s so many different topics contained in the sermon, a common thread binds it all together. As the gospel writer narrowed down all that Jesus said into a few pages of our Bibles, the thrust of the sermon remains undiminished. Jesus was making a pronouncement about the residence of His blessing, his kingdom, even His power and authority. External standards of rule and measurement will not suffice, but rather the true mark of a follower of God is the internal transformation that occurs as we enter into a trusting relationship with God. Be encouraged! The very real God has somehow seen fit to make camp in your soul. Relax! No amount of hard work will be able to make you into what you need to be. God has done, and continues to do it in you.

# Reflect

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What themes from Jesus' sermon stand out to you? Why do they catch your attention?

What do you think that Jesus may be trying to tell you, specifically, a couple thousand years after he spoke to his disciples from the mountainside?

In what ways do you tend to make the spiritual life an external practice? How have you made a ritual out of walking with Jesus?

What do you think it would take for the life of God to penetrate deeper within you?

## **Where do we go from here?**

*Pause and pray. Ask God to reveal areas of your life that remain hidden from His power of redemption. What's the real state of your heart? Confess to Him the ways that you have emphasized external conformity at the expense of internal transformation.*