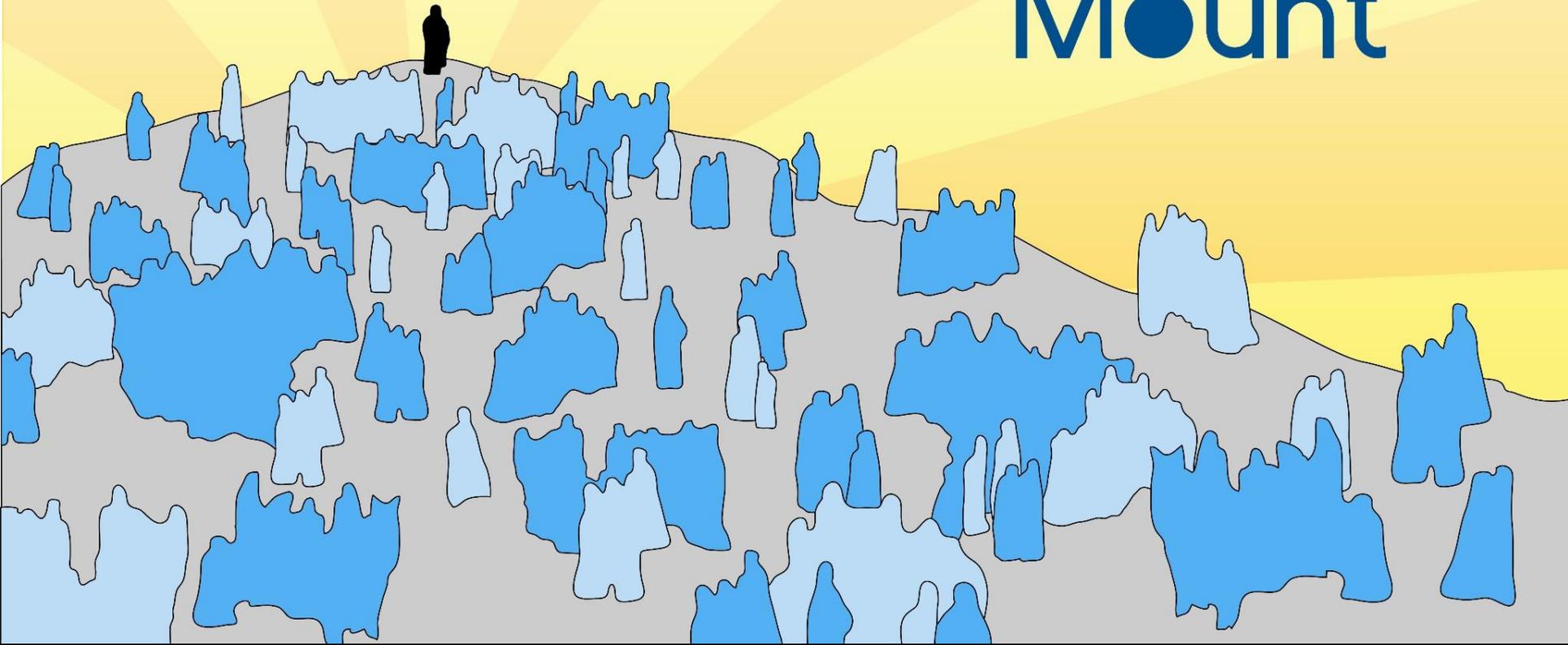


The Sermon on The Mount



Sermon On The Mount Series

Jesus' vision statement for His kingdom.

- Jesus had been contrasting Kingdom living with the negative example of the hypocrites.
- Now He focuses on “a more direct and positive presentation of the true disciple’s attitudes, the ‘greater righteousness’ which is going to make [the disciples] more conspicuous among other men.” France
- Kingdom character should make us stand out!
- Kingdom distinction prevents Kingdom extinction!

Matthew 6:19-24 NKJV

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; (20) but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (21) For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (22) "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

Matthew 6:19-24 NKJV

(23) But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! (24) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:19-20 NKJV

Jesus contrasts earthy treasure with heavenly treasure.

- Jesus is giving His disciples a Kingdom perspective on materialism.
- Then He gives two illustrations: first regarding our eyes and light; and the second regarding serving two masters.

Matthew 6:19-20 NKJV

- Disciples are not to “store up, amass, or reserve” treasures (wealth) on earth.
- But rather to “store up, amass, reserve” treasures in heaven
- Earthly wealth is consumed: moths eat clothing; “rust” literally is “eating”
- The word “Destroy” means: “to render unapparent, that is, consume, or (passively) disappear (be destroyed): - corrupt, disfigure, perish, vanish away.”

Matthew 6:19-20 NKJV

- Or thieves steal.
- Everything that is material, or earthly based will end up simply wasting away!
- Heavenly treasure is different, it is impervious to natural death and decay, and is the only treasure safe from every form of theft.

‘On earth’ contrasted with ‘in heaven’ ⁸

- Major theme throughout the sermon is this interplay between “on earth and in heaven.”
- “In heaven” does not mean “after death” but rather “with God.”
- He is not merely talking about the afterlife, but more importantly how much heavenly treasure we have available to us here and now.
- Jesus is contrasting our relationship with material goods, stuff connected to this earth, and our relationship with things heavenly.

‘On earth’ contrasted with ‘in heaven’ ⁹

So how can we obey these two commands: “don’t lay up earthly treasure” and “lay up for yourselves heavenly treasure”?

- Does it mean we don’t save for retirement?
- Does it mean we are to take a vow of poverty?
- Is Jesus saying we should give all our money away?

‘On earth’ contrasted with ‘in heaven’ ¹⁰

The answer is found in verse 21: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

- “It is not so much the disciple’s wealth that Jesus is concerned with as his loyalty. As vs. 24 will make explicit, materialism is in direct conflict with loyalty to God. And the danger of amassing possessions is that the treasure will command the disciple’s loyalty, that material affluence will breed materialism.” France

‘On earth’ contrasted with ‘in heaven’ ¹¹

- Our culture is so consumed with consumerism that it is difficult to even recognize it. We are submerged in a culture that is obsessed with stuff
- Jesus is challenging that obsession.
- Can we not only find God in the midst of all the stuff, but can we actually make our relationship with God and heavenly matters more important than every other thing that competes for our attention?

‘On earth’ contrasted with ‘in heaven’ ¹²

- It is a trap to think only wealthy people can err in this way. A poor person can be just as materialistic and obsessed with possessions he/she doesn't have, as a rich person can be with the things he/she does have.
- What is at issue, and at stake, is our heart - not our stuff!

Two illustrations to make His point

Matthew 6:22-23 NKJV "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. (23) But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

- Good eye: Literally “single”; means to be “clear” free of distractions, not obstructed, focussed on a single priority. By implication, healthy, wholesome.

Two illustrations to make His point

- Evil eye: was a Jewish expression for someone who was jealous, stingy, selfish
- It sounds disconnected and mysterious to us, but to Jesus' listeners this made perfect sense in the context of a teaching on materialism.
- Your eye, (what you look with), but also what you look at and for, lights up your life.
- If your eye is good, single-focused on heavenly treasure your whole life will be full of light.

Two illustrations to make His point

- But if your eye is evil (stingy, greedy, jealous, selfish) full of distractions, impurities, dark thoughts and desires -- your whole life will be clouded and dingy.
- Matthew 6:22-23 MSG "Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!"

Matthew 6:24 NKJV

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

- “Serve” actually means ‘be a slave of’. A person can have two employers, but not two owners.
- In Jesus’ day, this illustration would be simple and clear, almost heard as a joke.

Matthew 6:24 NKJV

- Slavery was common, some of His listeners were slaves, and some were slave owners. Of course someone could not have two masters!
- But Jesus quickly pulls the truth out of this cultural limitation, and applies it to a timeless issue.
- Mammon means: 'possessions'; treasure, wealth, Aramaic: confidence

You cannot serve God and mammon.

- Jesus boils down, into this one simple sentence, what is at the root of much if not most of humankind's struggle.
- There is a direct competition between God and possessions, and either one or the other will win your loyalty
- The result is you will love one, and in comparison hate the other. That is the description of what a choice of loyalty looks like.

Application

Do you own your possessions or do they own you?

- Do you spend more time and energy serving earthly things or heavenly?
- Do you see (with good eyes) every earthly thing from its heavenly point-of-view?
- Do you see stuff in relationship to how it fits into a heavenly mindset?
- How can your stuff, and the stuff of this world, be used to enable God's Kingdom to come and His will to be done 'on Earth' as it is 'in Heaven'?

Ultimate test: Tithing

- Tithing is the antidote to materialism and consumerism
- Tithing is the vaccine that will keep your eye good and healthy and your body full of light
- If you don't understand tithing from the New Testament, you need to listen to my series from November 2012.
- The fact is, God has used this simple measure for thousands of years to teach and to test our hearts concerning our allegiance.

Ultimate test: Tithing

- If we cannot set apart 10% as holy unto God, how can you say you are not serving “mammon” over God?
- Throughout Scripture God teaches that if we give Him a proportion of what He has put into our hands, He will exponentially reward us.
- Proportional giving = exponential return
- Jesus tackles the age old issue of materialism and reveals that it really is about who is the master of our lives = God or stuff.

