

REGENT COLLEGE
Distance Education

BIBL 524 LIVING IN SYNC:
STUDIES ON THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matthew 5-7)

Professor Darrell Johnson

Grader: Beth Stovell

Course Tutor: Peter Coelho, de-bibl524@regent-college.edu

2 or 3 Graduate Credit Hours

Main source for guidelines, resources, extra handouts:

www.regent-college.edu/classesonline

Your due date: _____

(See the last page of your Student Handbook for setting your due date)

A course may be dropped within two weeks of the course start date for a 100% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between two and four weeks of the course start date for a 75% refund (less a \$25 drop fee). A course may be dropped between four and eight weeks of the course start date for no refund; after this time the student is committed to receiving a grade for the course. All course materials must be returned in original condition before a drop or refund will be approved.

Course Description

What are we to make of the collection of sayings in Matthew 5-7 we call “The Sermon on the Mount”? Some have argued that Jesus’ words describe the eschatological Kingdom of God and are not to be lived in this present era; others argue that the words have relevance only for the immediate period of the middle first century for those alive in the expectation of the immanent end of history; still others argue that the words are either for a special, “holy” class of disciples, or are given to drive all disciples to their knees before such “exceeding righteousness.” In this course we will work with the pre-supposition that “the Sermon on the Mount” naturally, inherently flows from Jesus’ first “sermon,” His one-sentence announcement of the Gospel of God (as Mark calls it), “Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has come near” (Matthew 4:17). In Matthew 5-7, Jesus is describing what happens when His Gospel of the in-breaking rule of God grabs hold of an individual or community. In His Sermon Jesus is describing “kingdom-ized” people, “Gospel-ized” humanity. This course is, therefore, an exegetical, hermeneutical, theological, spiritual grappling with how Jesus’ words are lived out in this and any age.

Students will

- gain a greater appreciation for the original context in which Jesus preached
- gain a greater understanding of Jesus’ “Gospel of the Kingdom”
- gain an understanding of how the Sermon is structured and the implications for interpretation.
- gain a working understanding of how Jesus’ words work themselves out in the various relational contexts of our lives, especially in a post-modern, post 9/11 world
- gain a desire to see the character-traits and relational dynamics of the Sermon be manifested in one’s life.

Class Outline

- Session 1 Introduction to the Sermon
 Context – Gospel and authority (“exousia”)
 Introduction to the Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12)
 History of Interpretation
 Structure of the Sermon
- Session 2 Poor in spirit (Mt. 5:3)
 Blessed mourners (Mt. 5:4)
 The gentle/meek (Mt. 5:5)
- Session 3 Holy hunger and thirst (Mt. 5:6)
 Merciful (Mt. 5:7)
 Pure in heart (Mt. 5:8)
- Session 4 Peacemakers (Mt. 5:9)
 Happy subversives (Mt. 5:10)

 Salt of the earth, light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16)
- Session 5 “Not to abolish but to fulfill” (Mt. 5:17-20)
 1st Fulfiller: Murder and anger (Mt. 5:21-26)
 2nd Fulfiller: Adultery and lust (Mt. 5:27-30)
- Session 6 3rd Fulfiller: Marriage and divorce (Mt. 5:31-32)
 4th Fulfiller: Oaths and integrity (Mt. 5:33-37)
- Session 7 5th Fulfiller: No longer an Echo, an Eye for an Eye (Mt. 5:38-42)
 6th Fulfiller: Loving your enemies (Mt. 5:43-48)
- Session 8 Hidden righteousness (Mt. 6:1-18)
 The Lord’s Prayer (Mt. 6: 9-13)
- Session 9 Kingdom righteousness (Mt. 6:19-34)
 Golden rulers (Mt. 7:1-12)
- Session 10 The Great Divide (Mt. 7:13-27)
 Where do we go from here?

Academic Requirements and Time Investment

	<u>2 cr hrs</u>	<u>3 cr hrs</u>
Lectures	20 hrs	20 hrs
Reading	25 hrs (500 pp)	35 hrs (700 pp)
Book Review/Reading Log	5 hrs (625 wds)	7 hrs (875 wds)
Journal	5 hrs	5 hrs
Project	35 hrs (4500 wds)	35 hrs (4500 wds)
Exegetical Paper	-----	<u>33 hrs (4125 wds)</u>
TOTAL	90 hrs	135 hrs

Assignments

1. Book Review and Reading Log – **2 cr hr students**

- a. Read two of the course texts.
- b. Submit a book review (625 words) of one of the texts with a brief note naming the other text & how many pages you read.

Book Review and Reading Log – **3 cr hr students**

- a. Read three of the course texts.
- b. Submit a book review (875 words) on one of the texts with a brief note naming the other two texts & how many pages you read.

2. Reflective Journal – **both 2 & 3 cr hr students**

Journal-keeping can serve as a tool for honest reflection about everyday issues, cultivating the discipline of prayer and attentiveness to Christ, and gaining a deeper integration of Christian faith and daily life by engaging with questions that are included in your course manual. You are encouraged to view your journal entries as prayers – written with the constant awareness of God's presence as you write.

Guidelines for journal-keeping:

- The reflection questions are provided in the course package with each session.
- Respond to the reflection questions after each lecture session. You are not required to take longer than 30 minutes to respond to the questions. It's up to you to decide how much time you want to spend on each question.
- We encourage you to keep a journal in whatever form that's helpful for your reflection i.e. type in computer, write by hand on paper, jot things down in point form, generate mental maps, or written prayers, etc. There's no word limit.
- Select a few journal entries and submit photocopies (minimum 3 pages).
- Your journals are confidential to the grader only. (Grade is assigned as pass/fail.)

3. Project – **both 2 & 3 cr hr students**

Options (please choose one):

- a. Design a sermon series on Jesus' Sermon.
 - Show how you would break the whole Sermon down into your preaching units.

- List the texts for the series with suggested titles and brief homiletical main idea for each.
 - In greater detail:
 - Articulate the main idea and sub-points for the introductory sermon.
 - Develop the main idea and detailed outline for sermons on two of the preaching units.
- b. Design a “discipleship program” based on Jesus’ Sermon. If this was the only body of Jesus’ teaching we had what would being His disciple look like and how do we go about the work of “discipling” others into such a life? This can be a series of studies for a Sunday School class, for a small group, a notebook for small group leaders, a handbook for one-on-one mentoring, etc.
- c. Write a research paper showing how a known historical figure was influenced by or sought to live out Jesus’ Sermon. This should include a brief historical sketch of the person’s life and times, her or his understanding of the nature of Jesus’ Sermon, and a development of how the Sermon impacted/shaped her or his life and service.
- Examples:* Mahatma Gandhi (India), Martin Luther King, Jr. (United States), Ninoy Aquino (the Philippines), Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Germany), Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Dorothy Day (United States), Jim Wallis (the Sojourner Community of Washington, D.C.).
- d. The professor/grader is open to and encourages other proposals for your project depending on your context and circumstances.

**** Please Note:** You must receive approval of your proposal for the option you choose before you begin work on it. Please submit it to the Course Tutor and your course grader will assess it.

4. Exegetical Paper – **3 cr hr students only**

- a. Select one of the texts of Jesus’ Sermon which has troubled or puzzled you and about which you desire more understanding.
- b. In your exegesis consult at least six major resources (commentaries, monographs, journal articles), three of which should be significant exegetical commentaries (acceptable commentaries are noted in the Bibliography with **).
- c. The paper shall include:
 - (1) an explanation of why you are interested in the text,
 - (2) word studies, issues of context, grammar/syntax where appropriate,
 - (3) familiarity with the various historical/contemporary interpretations of your text,
 - (4) a proposed resolution of the issues raised, and
 - (5) implications for preaching and/or discipleship.

It is recommended that if you have not written an exegetical paper before, that you read *How to Read the Bible for all it’s Worth*, by Gordon Fee.

Evaluation

Book Review & Reading Log	30 %	15 %
Journal (pass/fail)	10 %	10 %
Project	60 %	40 %
Exegetical Paper	----	35 %

NB: Course Evaluation Form must be returned by your due date

Late Policy and Extensions (please read carefully!)

For every week that your course requirements are submitted late, there will be a deduction of a third of a letter grade per assignment accordingly. Only under circumstances that are both *unavoidable and unforeseeable* are extensions considered (please refer to your student handbook for specific details <http://www.regent-college.edu/academics/cstudies/documents/StudentHandbook.pdf>). Weddings and births do not count as *unavoidable and unforeseeable*. If you need to go beyond the six-month time limit, you must contact the Coordinator *first* for an extension. Contact information is provided in your **Student Handbook**. Please note that extensions are not automatically granted, and must be applied for before your original due date.

ACADEMIC HONOUR Regent College upholds the highest standards of academic responsibility as part of our commitment to Christ in all of life. Students are required to familiarize themselves especially with the discussion of “Academic Integrity” in the College Catalogue.

Bibliography

[Note: ** indicates the significant commentaries of which at least three must be consulted in the Exegetical Paper for 3 credit students]

Required Reading – choose from the following:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. London: SCM Press, 1948.

**Bruner, Frederick Dale. *Matthew, A Commentary – Volume 1: The Christbook*. Rev. Ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. pp. 150-369.

**Guelich, Robert. *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding*. Waco: Word Books, 1982.

Lapide, Pinchas. *The Sermon on the Mount: Utopia or Program for Action?* Mary Knoll: Orbis Books, 1986.

Jones, E. Stanley. *The Christ of the Mount: A Working Philosophy of Life*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1931. [Note: this book is currently out-of-print]

Stott, John R.W. *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*. Bible Speaks Today Series. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1978. [Previously published as *Christian Counter-Culture*]

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1998.

Other Important Works:

**Davies, W.D. & D.C. Allison. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*. 3 vols. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988-1997.

**Hagner, Donald. *Matthew*. 2 vols. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1993-5.

Green, Michael. *The Message of Matthew*. Bible Speaks Today. Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000.

**Gundry, R.H. *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.

**Keener, Craig. *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Kingsbury, Jack Dean. *Matthew*. Proclamation Commentary. Rev ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1981.

Kraybill, Donald. *The Upside-Down Kingdom*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1978.

Palmer, Earl. *The Enormous Exception: Meeting Christ in the Sermon on the Mount*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2001.

Schweizer, Eduard. *The Good News according to Matthew*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976.

Stassen, Glen & David Gushee. *Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in the Contemporary Context*. Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003.

Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.