LESSONS FROM THE

Sermon on the Mount

PARTS THREE & FOUR

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Near the start of his Gospel, Matthew summarizes Jesus' public ministry into a single focus: *"proclaiming the good news of the kingdom."*

The Kingdom of God—the central thread woven through Jesus' teaching and all of Scripture—is anywhere God's good, wise, and gracious rule reigns. If we want to envision what it looks like for the Kingdom to come *"on earth as it is in heaven,"* there is no better guide than Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Often called "Jesus' manifesto," this sermon reveals a countercultural way to be human—one where the poor in spirit are blessed and love for one's enemy is actually practiced. More than simply teaching an ethical code, Jesus is forming a distinct community around the upside-down values and practices He Himself embodied. In short, He is inviting the crowds to become His apprentices.

Following Jesus is rooted in the first-century tradition of rabbis and their apprentices. An apprentice spends intentional time with their master to learn to live, think, and act as they do. A disciple, therefore, is simply Jesus' apprentice in Kingdom living—someone learning to inhabit the Kingdom of God the way Jesus modeled. To paraphrase Dallas Willard, discipleship is the process of learning from Jesus how to live my life as Jesus would live it if He were me. And Jesus proves to be a brilliant, holistic teacher across every dimension of human life: finance, relationships, love and sex, emotional health, and conflict.

This discussion guide is designed to help us apprentice ourselves to Jesus together. As John Mark Comer has helpfully distilled, to apprentice under Jesus is to organize your life around three core rhythms: **Be with Jesus**, **Become like Him**, and **Do as He Did**. Each week, we will sit under the Sermon on the Mount and listen for the Holy Spirit through this threefold lens.

Be with Jesus

"Jesus appointed twelve that they might be with him." — Mark 3:14

The heart of discipleship is a personal relationship *with Jesus.* It means spending time in His presence, conversing with Him, and getting to know Him deeply.

Jesus invites us to "abide" in Him. One indispensable way we abide in Jesus is by immersing ourselves in His Word. This is why habits of personal silence and solitude as well as corporate small groups are critical—these create intentional and distraction-free spaces of listening to and speaking with Jesus. When we open the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reveals both who He is and the good news of His Kingdom. As we spend time with Jesus in His Word and prayer, we gaze upon His wisdom, beauty, and power, encounter His love, and are filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19).

Become Like Him

"A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher." — Luke 6:40

Presence inevitably shapes pattern. As we spend time *with* Jesus, we become *like* Jesus. The purpose of discipleship is heart-level transformation: becoming the kind of person—and together, the kind of community—who think, feel, and love like Jesus. Spiritual maturity is not measured primarily by knowledge or behavior, but by Christlike character.

In truth, we are all abiding in something—whether our smartphones, newsfeeds, or career ambitions—and those rival masters shape who we are becoming. But as we meditate on Jesus' love and grace, the Holy Spirit changes our thinking, reorders our heart's affections, and produces in us the fruit of the Spirit.

Do as He Did

"Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." — James 1:22

To abide in Jesus and His Word is not merely to study His words, but to put them into practice. Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with a vivid invitation: *"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock"* (Matthew 7:24).

Whether you are apprenticing under a master plumber, electrician, or rabbi, the end goal is always to practice the craft. Jesus' craft is Kingdom living. As His disciples, we seek to inhabit our daily lives—our unique jobs, neighborhoods, families, and schedules—as participants in the unfolding story of God's Kingdom. Because our lives are constantly shaped by the stories and crafts of alternate kingdoms, heart-level transformation requires intentional spiritual practices. These holy habits open our lives to the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live and love like Jesus right here in our city.