

Small Group/Sermon Notes for The Greatest Sermon Ever: Part 1

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- **The Greatest Sermon Ever: Part 1**
- This isn't the first sermon Jesus preached, but it is early in his ministry. Jesus started with **Matthew 4:17** because John was put in prison so Jesus had to finish that part up himself!
- Then Jesus drew crowds by showing the power of God! **Matthew 4:23-25**.
 - That would be very effective! What role do you think miracles have in evangelism?
- And then, Jesus began to teach.
- The Beatitudes. Read through **Matthew 5:1-12**.
 - General observations:
 - There is more going on than our current situation. God will rescue us!
 - Jesus is showing us his expectations of Godly character and its rewards.
 - Discuss the Beatitudes verse by verse. What are your thoughts about these verses?
 - **Matthew 5:3** in light of **Luke 18:9-14**.
 - **Matthew 5:4**. The blessing isn't that you mourn, but that there is a comforter that sees you and loves you.
 - **Matthew 5:5**. I don't know the fullness of this...now? Afterlife? Thoughts?
 - Same word in **Matthew 11:28-30**, **Matthew 21:5**.
 - **Matthew 5:6**. Oh yes! Are you hungry and thirsty?
 - If not, how do you get hungry and thirsty??
 - **Matthew 5:7**. This will be made more clear later in this series!
 - **Matthew 5:8**. This verse has always stopped me in my tracks...
 - **Matthew 5:9**. We are peacemaker warriors! The weapons of our warfare are different! Check out **Matthew 10:34-36**.
 - **Matthew 5:10-12**. This world has its troubles! God knows and he will reward those who fight the good fight!!
- Salt and Light.
 - This was said to the masses. If it was true for them, it is true for us as well. **Matthew 5:13-16**.
 - Salt is a preservative and it symbolized that to the Jews.
 - Light symbolizes truth and goodness.
 - We are to preserve the truth of God and show the world His goodness.
 - This wasn't said to the preachers, but to the masses that followed him.
 - When salt loses its saltiness it is only fit to be trampled. (v13)
 - Let us be the ones who honor and preserve the ways of God!
 - Don't resist the ways of God. That is where the trampling comes in...
 - Show the world some good deeds! Not like a hypocrite though. More on that later in this series!
- Called to a higher standard. **Matthew 5:17-20**.
 - Jesus raised the bar. We will see examples of that in the weeks to come.
 - Are you willing to rise to his standard or would you rather pull Jesus down to your standard?
 - Jesus isn't looking for legalistic religious followers. He is looking for humble, gentle, merciful, pure, peacemakers who hunger and thirst for God's ways and who will persevere when other people don't understand them. (That is the righteousness that surpasses the teachers of the law.)
 - When Jesus finds people like that he brings them into his Kingdom.
 - When Jesus finds people who WANT to be like that, but who know they aren't, he breaks the darkness off of us and makes us new. That can be a process. Stay hungry!!
- Pray for each other before you finish up!