

TERM 1, 2025

DNA BOOKLET



The world we
All want

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT
A 5-PART SERIES

SERVE

A 4-PART SERIES
FROM MEMBERS OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS PRESBYTERY

TERM OVERVIEW

Christian evangelists have at times proposed to the unbeliever that if they were to give serious thought to the 'world we all want', everyone can seemingly agree on what it would look like. The evangelist would then show the unbeliever little snippets of Jesus' ministry in the gospel accounts and reveal how through Jesus' life and ministry, that world we all want was literally breaking into the world we now inhabit!

I wonder if you see pictures of the world we all want as you read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7... It can be absolutely magical as you read along, can't it? OR, better still, begin to commit this portion of God's word to heart - it can be a breathtaking experience!

Yet, it can also leave us trembling somewhat about how to actually respond. I mean, consider Matthew 5:48 *"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect"*. Gulp!!!

However, let us move in humble confidence as we hear Jesus' gentle invitation to experience the kingdom of heaven... today.

Stew Playsted

Vision, Leadership & Community Pastor



HOW TO BE GROWING FOLLOWERS OF JESUS AS YOU STUDY GOD'S WORD...

IN COMMUNITY

It's good to study the Bible by yourself but it's even better to do it with friends. Bible study is best when it happens in the context of community. Bible study shouldn't be just an unrelated add-on to the rest of your busy life, it should be an essential part of an integrated whole—Christian friends doing what Christian friends do. There are two key ways we should be making use of God's word in community: "word to life" and "life to word".



WORD TO LIFE

When we study the Bible together we're letting God set the agenda. That's very important! We listen to God speak in the Bible, we work hard to help each other understand exactly what he's saying, and then together we apply what God is saying to our lives in the confidence that our loving Creator and Redeemer knows what's best for us. The important thing to remember is that we actually need each other throughout this whole process. It's great to study the Bible together!



LIFE TO WORD

The second crucial way that we should be making use of the Bible in community is in day-to-day conversation, starting with the everyday happenings of our lives and applying the gospel to those situations. The great thing is that the better we get at moving from "word to life", the better we'll get at moving from "life to word" and the more our communities will be shaped by the gospel of Jesus! So enjoy—make the most of it—and let's watch as God shapes us to be more and more like his glorious Son!



OFF BY HEART

MATTHEW 6:19-34

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

28 “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

01

Kick-off: before jumping into God's WORD, it's worth taking a few minutes to reflect on your own thoughts and attitudes and on the thoughts and attitudes you encounter in the WORLD...

When we think of being 'blessed' what sort of images come to mind?

Discover: the "D" in DNA stands for DISCOVER. It's now time to read God's word and discover what God wants to teach us and why it matters...



READ MATTHEW 5:1-12

1. Who is the audience for the sermon on the mount?
2. What do you notice about the blessed ones? What do they receive?
3. In what way could 'poor in spirit' be an entry into kingdom life?



READ MATTHEW 5:13-16

4. How do these verses capture the fullness of the life on display in vv. 3-10? Why is the blessed life not to be hidden?
5. How are the analogies presented a powerful display of witness?

Nurture & Apply: the "NA" in DNA stands for Nurture & Apply. These questions are designed to help us care for each other and live out God's word...

Renowned theologian Don Carson posed this reflection regarding the inordinate challenge of this passage:

The values set out in the beatitudes (verse 3-10) are fundamentally different from those of the central area of modern life, education, technological development or military might. The astonishing thing is that many people because they are vaguely familiar with them actually think they are more or less living them. Cheap familiarity has robbed these truths of their force. But renewed reflection on them not only highlights their transcendent moral stature, but forces us to examine ourselves to discover if we ourselves are heirs of the kingdom.

Are you willing for a renewed reflection on them? Why/Why not?

7. Have you been persecuted (y/n)? In the face of growing hostility in the West for Bible-believing Christians how can you maintain the attributes of the blessed even when you are mistreated?

8. Australian Christian author Stephen McAlpine suggests in his provocative work 'Being the Bad Guys', believers in this country need to be the best "bad guys" [1] we can be. Therefore, stop now and pray for one another that you might live righteous lives (and yet still find yourself being called "bad").

[1] Stephen is suggesting that Christian values are no longer seen as 'good', in fact, in a number of areas they are viewed by culture as 'bad'! McAlpine therefore creatively suggests don't lose your Christian values, hold on to them, however you will likely be seen as suspicious for holding them, but don't retaliate!! Stay calm, humble, meek, dependable, Christ-like, even an 'all round good guy/girl'!!!

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What might it mean for a law to be fulfilled?

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READ MATTHEW 5:17-48

1. How does Jesus describe his relationship to the Law and the Prophets in Matthew 5:17-20? What might he mean by the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law from verse 20?

2. Go through Jesus' teaching on various traditions and understandings from Matthew 5:21-47. What do you notice and how does this teaching inform the righteousness spoken of from verse 20?

<i>Murder</i>	<i>Divorce</i>	<i>Eye for an eye</i>
<i>Adultery</i>	<i>Oaths</i>	<i>Love for enemies</i>

3. What does Jesus mean when He says, "*You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Matthew 5:48), and how does this relate to the overall message of the Sermon on the Mount? Read Hebrews 10:14-18, how might this inform our understanding of perfect?

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4. How can we apply Jesus' teaching about fulfilling the Law and not abolishing it (Matthew 5:17-20) in our daily lives and our view of Scripture?

5. In what ways can the deeper understanding of the commandments challenge us in our relationships and holiness?

6. How does our perfection attained in Christ move us to greater obedience and love?

03

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Have you ever performed in a play, skit, musical etc.? What was the experience like?

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READ MATTHEW 6:1-18

1. Verse 1 highlights the key principle of the passage. What is Jesus' point?
2. In the rest of the passage Jesus applies the principle to three areas - giving (v2-4), prayer (v5-15) and fasting (v16-18). Briefly summarise what Jesus says on each of these three areas.
3. The word 'reward' is repeated frequently, what does it mean to seek a reward from God, rather than others? How do we grow a desire to do this?

4. Why don't we need to babble and use lots of words in our prayers? What does this reveal about God's fatherly character?

5. The Lord's prayer is one of the most famous parts of the Bible. How does the context help us understand it?

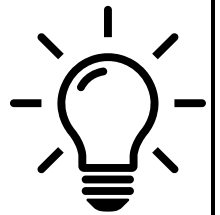
6. How does the Lord's Prayer reflect the gospel message of the kingdom?

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7. When do you find yourself tempted to seek the approval of others rather than God?

8. Which of the three areas described would you most like to see change in your heart motivation? Pray for one another about this.

What shines out from this passage? What insight did it provide?
What is an “old truth” that hit you in a new way?



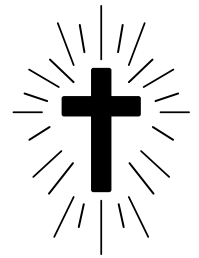
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What is the central idea, or heart, of the passage?
Can you write it in one sentence?



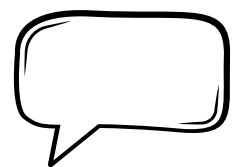
How does the truth and message in the passage point to Jesus?
How does it fuel your worship?



What can be transformed in your thinking, desires and actions from this passage?



With whom could you share what you've learned?
What do you feel led to share and how can you share it?



Pray for the people named in the speech bubble box and for help with your points of application from the arrow box.



05

Kick-off: before jumping into God's WORD, it's worth taking a few minutes to reflect on your own thoughts and attitudes and on the thoughts and attitudes you encounter in the WORLD...

What is your first reaction to the idea of judging others?

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READ MATTHEW 7:1-12

1. What does Jesus teach about judgment in Matthew 7:1-5, and how does this reflect His heart for humility and repentance in His followers? From the passage, what might godly judgment look like?
2. In Matthew 7:6, Jesus speaks about not giving 'what is sacred to dogs' or 'throwing pearls to pigs'. How does this relate to Jesus' teaching on judgment?
3. In Matthew 7:7-11, Jesus encourages His followers to ask, seek, and knock. What does this tell us about the nature of God?

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4. How does Jesus' command not to judge in Matthew 7:1-5 challenge your approach to others?

5. How does Jesus' invitation to ask, seek, and knock invite you into a deeper, more persistent relationship? What might this look like for you?

6. Jesus teaches in Matthew 7:12 to "do to others what you would have them do to you". How does this call us to live out the love and grace Jesus showed?

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When was a time you got a nasty surprise?

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READ MATTHEW 7:13-29

1. Why is following Jesus 'the narrow road' regardless of the time, culture, place etc?

2. Why do we need to watch out for false prophets? How do we do it?

3. Are verses 21-23 some of the scariest in the Bible? Why/why not?

4. What is the problem with the 'evildoers' statement in verse 22? Why are they rejected? How do we enter the kingdom?

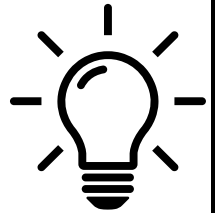
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5. Which foundation are you building on (or which path are you following)? How do you know?

6. What will it look like for you to put Jesus' words into practice (v24-27)? Take some time individually to look over chapters 5 -7 and choose three things you'd particularly like to put into practice.

Talk together about how you might do that.

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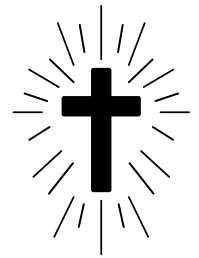
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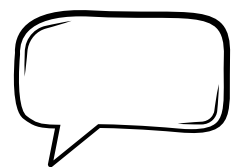
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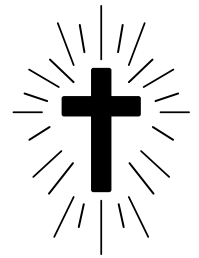
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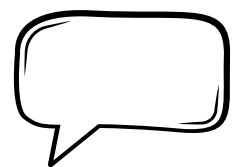
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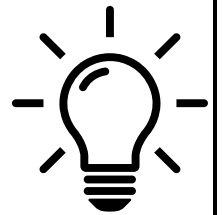
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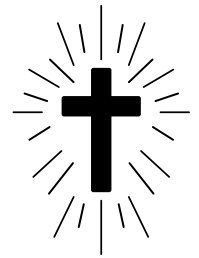
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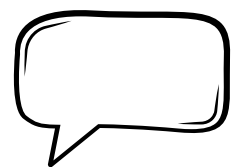
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SOUTHERN CROSS
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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