

Dr. Craig Keener, Matthew, Session 7

Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Keener, Matthew, Session 7, Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Craig Keener's lecture analyzes Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount, exploring various interpretations throughout history. **He examines different approaches**, including literal, medieval, and existentialist readings, ultimately favoring an approach of **inaugurated eschatology**. The lecture also **discusses the rhetorical style** of Jesus' teachings, emphasizing the use of hyperbole and its purpose. Finally, **Keener explores the significance of Jesus' words**, highlighting their radical demands for disciples and their implications for both personal and societal transformation.

2. 18 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Matthews, Session 7 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels – Acts → Matthew).



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3. Briefing Document

Briefing Doc: Dr. Craig Keener's Lecture on Matthew 5 - The Sermon on the Mount

This briefing doc summarizes the key points from Dr. Keener's lecture on Matthew 5, focusing on the themes, interpretations, and applications of the Sermon on the Mount.

Key Themes:

- **The Sermon on the Mount as a call to repentance and kingdom living:** Keener emphasizes the importance of understanding the Sermon within its broader context – Jesus's message of repentance and preparation for the coming kingdom. This discourse outlines the ethics of the kingdom and provides a framework for living in light of its reality.
- **The radical demands of the kingdom:** Keener highlights the radical nature of Jesus's teachings, challenging comfortable interpretations that try to soften the impact of his words. He uses the examples of remarriage, forgiveness, and wealth to illustrate this point.
- **The importance of heart transformation:** While outward obedience is important, Keener emphasizes that true righteousness surpasses mere legalism. He argues that Jesus goes to the heart of the law, focusing on inner transformation rather than external compliance.
- **Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law:** Keener explains how Jesus fulfills the law, not by abolishing it but by revealing its deeper meaning and extending its implications. He uses the example of the antitheses (e.g., "You have heard it said... but I say to you") to demonstrate how Jesus elevates the moral standard.
- **Jesus as the model for kingdom living:** Keener underscores the importance of seeing Jesus as the embodiment of the Beatitudes and his teachings. By following Jesus's example, disciples can learn to live out the values of the kingdom.

Interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount:

Keener presents and critiques various interpretations of the Sermon, including:

- **Literal:** While acknowledging the value of the literal approach, he argues against a purely literal interpretation, pointing to the use of hyperbole in Jesus's teachings.
- **Medieval:** Keener rejects the notion that the Sermon represents a higher ethic solely for the clergy, emphasizing its relevance for all disciples.

- **Law vs. Grace:** He argues against viewing the Sermon as solely focused on law, emphasizing the message of grace that permeates the Gospel.
- **Liberal Social Gospel:** While acknowledging the societal implications of the Sermon, Keener cautions against attempting to impose Christian values on society as a whole.
- **Dispensational:** He refutes the idea that the Sermon applies only to a specific dispensation, affirming its ongoing relevance for all believers.
- **Interim Ethic:** He rejects the view that Jesus's teachings were based on a mistaken belief in the imminence of the kingdom.
- **Existentialist:** Keener sees some truth in the existentialist view but argues that the Sermon is more than just a demand for a decision.

He proposes **inaugurated eschatology** as a helpful framework, acknowledging the tension between the already and not yet of the kingdom.

Important Ideas and Facts:

- **Hyperbole as a Rhetorical Device:** Keener explains that hyperbole is a common rhetorical device used by Jesus to emphasize key points and challenge his listeners. He provides examples like the servant with an unpayable debt and the graphic imagery of hell.
- **The Meaning of "Yod":** Keener uses the example of the "yod" (the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet) to illustrate Jesus's affirmation of the enduring validity of the Law. He cites rabbinic stories highlighting the significance of even the smallest elements of Scripture.
- **Understanding "Raka" and "Moreh":** Keener explains the meaning of these insults used by Jesus to illustrate the seriousness of anger and contempt. He suggests that the escalating punishments represent different levels of divine judgment.
- **The Solutions to Lust:** Keener addresses the difficult passage about plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand, arguing that it should be understood metaphorically and within the context of Jewish teachings on coveting. He emphasizes the importance of guarding one's heart and thoughts.
- **The Fence Around the Law:** Keener explains how the Pharisees sought to create a "fence" around the law to avoid accidental transgressions. He contrasts this with

Jesus's approach, which focuses on transforming the heart rather than simply regulating outward behavior.

Key Quotes:

- "There's a lot of hyperbole in the Sermon on the Mount. Hyperbole is a rhetorical overstatement to drive home the point."
- "Jesus regularly uses graphic images to hold people's attention."
- "God cares who you are, not just what you do."
- "If we really long for God, if we really long for God's righteousness, what would a heart look like that really rejoices in this law?"
- "The issue isn't whether people see your good works or not. The issue is the motive of your heart."
- "You must obey all of God's word. To cast off one piece of the law... was tantamount to casting off the whole yoke of the Torah."
- "Be perfect as your heavenly father is."

Applications:

- The Sermon challenges disciples to live radically different lives marked by humility, mercy, peacemaking, and purity of heart.
- It calls for a deep inner transformation, not simply outward conformity.
- It requires recognizing and confronting the idols of our hearts, such as anger, lust, and self-righteousness.
- It emphasizes the importance of understanding and applying the deeper principles behind the Law.
- It points to the need for dependence on God's grace for true transformation and empowerment.

This briefing doc provides a concise overview of the main themes and important ideas in Dr. Keener's lecture on Matthew 5. It serves as a starting point for further study and reflection on the profound implications of the Sermon on the Mount for Christian discipleship.

4. Matthew Study Guide: Session 7, Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5

Navigating the Sermon on the Mount: A Study Guide

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Beatitudes:** The blessings pronounced by Jesus at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5:3-12. They offer a counter-cultural vision of the kingdom of God, emphasizing humility, mercy, and righteousness.
- **Christology:** The study and understanding of the person and nature of Jesus Christ.
- **Deliberative Rhetoric:** A form of rhetoric aimed at persuading an audience to take a specific course of action. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses deliberative rhetoric to encourage his followers to live according to the principles of the kingdom of God.
- **Dispensationalism:** A theological system that divides history into distinct periods or dispensations, each governed by specific divine rules and covenants. Some dispensationalists argue that the Sermon on the Mount applies primarily or exclusively to a future dispensation.
- **Eschatology:** The study of the end times, including themes such as judgment, resurrection, and the kingdom of God.
- **Inaugurated Eschatology:** The belief that the kingdom of God has already begun with the coming of Jesus but will be fully realized in the future. This view suggests that the ethical demands of the Sermon on the Mount are both present and future realities.
- **Inclusio:** A literary device in which a text or section begins and ends with similar words or themes, creating a sense of enclosure and emphasizing the enclosed content.
- **Interim Ethic:** The idea proposed by Albert Schweitzer that Jesus' ethical teachings were intended only for a short period before the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God.
- **Hyperbole:** A figure of speech involving exaggeration for emphasis or rhetorical effect. Jesus frequently uses hyperbole in the Sermon on the Mount to highlight the radical nature of his teachings.

- **Kavanah:** A Hebrew term meaning "intention" or "purpose," particularly referring to the importance of heartfelt intention in religious practice.
- **Midrash:** A Jewish method of interpreting and expounding on scripture, often involving creative storytelling and drawing out deeper meanings.
- **Pilpul:** A method of Talmudic study that involves intricate and often highly analytical discussions of legal and ethical questions.
- **Raka:** An Aramaic term of contempt, possibly meaning "empty head" or "worthless."
- **Sanhedrin:** The highest Jewish council in ancient Israel, responsible for religious and legal matters.
- **Scribe:** An expert in Jewish law and scripture, often responsible for copying and interpreting texts.
- **Torah:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), considered the foundation of Jewish law and teaching.

Quiz:

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided excerpts from Dr. Keener's lecture.

1. How does the context preceding the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel help us understand its purpose?
2. Briefly describe three common interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount.
3. What is Dr. Keener's preferred interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, and how does it address the strengths of other views?
4. How does Jesus' use of rhetorical devices like hyperbole affect the way we should understand his teachings?
5. Why should we not be overly concerned with variations in the sequence of sayings between Matthew's and Luke's versions of the Sermon on the Mount?
6. How does Jesus' teaching style differ from that of other Jewish sages of his time?
7. What does the Sermon on the Mount reveal about the nature of the kingdom of God and those who will inherit it?

8. How do the Beatitudes relate to both present and future aspects of the kingdom of God?
9. What is the significance of Jesus' statement, "I came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it"?
10. How does Jesus deepen and radicalize the understanding of the Law in his "antitheses" (e.g., "You have heard it said... but I say to you...")?

Answer Key:

1. The Sermon on the Mount follows Jesus' call to "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). This context suggests that the Sermon is intended to explain what repentance and kingdom living look like in practice.
2. Three common interpretations include: a) the literal approach, advocating strict adherence to all of Jesus' commands; b) the law versus grace view, seeing the Sermon as revealing the impossibility of keeping the Law and driving people to grace; c) the dispensational approach, arguing that the Sermon applies only to a specific dispensation, not the present one.
3. Dr. Keener favors inaugurated eschatology, which sees the Sermon as outlining both a present reality and a future goal for kingdom living. This view acknowledges the radical demands of the teachings while also recognizing that their full realization awaits the consummation of the kingdom.
4. Hyperbole is a tool used for emphasis and to challenge the audience. While not every statement in the Sermon should be taken literally, we should allow the hyperbole to confront us with the radical nature of Jesus' demands.
5. Ancient writers did not prioritize strict chronological order in biographical narratives or collections of teachings. Sayings could be rearranged for topical or rhetorical purposes, and the authority of the teaching remained regardless of the sequence.
6. Unlike many rabbis, Jesus does not cite earlier traditions. He speaks with his own authority or directly appeals to God's authority, even hinting at his own divinity, which was unheard of among other Jewish teachers.
7. The Sermon reveals that the kingdom belongs to the humble, the merciful, and those who mourn. It challenges the idea of achieving the kingdom through force or outward righteousness, emphasizing inner transformation.

8. The Beatitudes offer both present comfort and future hope. Blessings like "comfort" and "satisfaction" are experienced in part now but find their ultimate fulfillment in the coming age.
9. Jesus affirms the enduring validity of the Law while reinterpreting its deeper meaning. He is not abolishing the Law but revealing its true intention and extending its implications to the heart.
10. Jesus goes beyond the external observance of the Law, addressing the underlying motivations and desires. He raises the bar for righteousness, requiring not just outward conformity but inner transformation and a heart aligned with God's will.

Essay Questions:

1. Analyze the role of the Beatitudes in setting forth the values and priorities of the kingdom of God. How do they challenge conventional societal norms and expectations?
2. Discuss the significance of Jesus' use of hyperbole in the Sermon on the Mount. How does it contribute to the impact and effectiveness of his message?
3. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various interpretations of the Sermon on the Mount. Which interpretation do you find most compelling, and why?
4. Explore the relationship between Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount and the Old Testament Law. How does Jesus reinterpret and radicalize traditional understandings of the Law?
5. Reflect on the practical implications of the Sermon on the Mount for Christian discipleship today. What are the challenges and opportunities presented by Jesus' call to radical obedience and love?

5. FAQs on Keener, Matthew, Session 7, Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ: The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5)

1. What is the main message of the Sermon on the Mount?

The Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5-7, focuses on the ethics of the Kingdom of God. It calls for repentance and a transformed life in light of the coming Kingdom. Jesus challenges his followers to live a radical, counter-cultural lifestyle that reflects the values of the Kingdom.

2. How should we interpret the seemingly impossible demands of the Sermon on the Mount?

Interpretations vary, but the approach of "inaugurated eschatology" is helpful. It recognizes that the Kingdom is both present and future. The Sermon sets a high standard for discipleship, a goal we strive towards as the Kingdom unfolds in our lives and is ultimately consummated in the future.

3. What are the Beatitudes and what is their significance?

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) are a series of blessings pronounced by Jesus on those who embody certain characteristics, like humility, mercy, and peacemaking. They highlight that the Kingdom belongs to the broken, the humble, and those who rely on God. They offer a counter-cultural perspective on true blessedness.

4. Jesus says we must be more righteous than the Pharisees. How is that possible?

The Pharisees were known for their outward obedience to the Law. Jesus emphasizes that true righteousness goes beyond external actions and resides in the heart. He challenges us to have a transformed heart that desires to fulfill the deeper meaning and intent of the Law, a transformation only God can bring about.

5. How does Jesus reinterpret the Law in the Sermon on the Mount?

Jesus doesn't abolish the Law but deepens its meaning. He uses a series of "antitheses," saying "You have heard it said... but I say to you..." (Matthew 5:21-48). He exposes the heart of the Law, addressing issues like anger, lust, and revenge. He moves beyond external compliance to internal transformation.

6. What does Jesus mean when he says we should “turn the other cheek” and love our enemies?

These teachings emphasize non-retaliation and radical love. They call for a response that breaks the cycle of violence and hatred. It doesn't mean passivity in the face of injustice but choosing a different way, relying on God for vindication.

7. What is the significance of the metaphors of salt and light in Matthew 5:13-16?

Salt and light represent the impact believers should have on the world. Salt preserves and flavors; light illuminates. Disciples, through their character and actions, are to be agents of preservation, transformation, and illumination in a world that desperately needs God's influence.

8. How can we live out the radical demands of the Sermon on the Mount in our daily lives?

The Sermon is a call to ongoing discipleship, a lifelong pursuit of aligning our hearts and lives with the Kingdom values. It requires dependence on God's grace and transformation. We strive to embody the Beatitudes, live out the deeper meaning of the Law, and reflect the love and character of Christ in our relationships and actions.