



# Sermon on the Mount

Living for the Kingdom

## LIFE GROUPS | LEADERS GUIDE

February 15-21, 2026 | Winter Week 5

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well leaders, we're over halfway through the season!

#### 1. YOUR FIFTH MEETING:

- As we enter the back half of our season of Life Groups, we start to think about the coming season, which will be in the Fall – so it feels like it's *years* away – but it actually sneaks up on us quickly. We hope you leaders can help us, as we always desire the ministry of Life Groups to grow, **we're always looking for recommendations of leaders, both facilitators and hosts.**
- Who are you seeing in your group's activity, who might be exuding those gifts? We are aware that these are hard recommendations to make, as you're essentially giving us permission to invite away some valuable members of your group. Think about it this way – you can certainly maintain a relationship with them as they might leave your group, there is then a new opportunity for someone looking for a group like yours, to join, while you also commission someone from your group to exercise their gifts given by the Lord, and continue to grow the ministry of Life Groups!
- If you have any names, share them with pastor Adam.

#### 2. SERVE PROJECTS:

- Here's a little update with where our groups are serving this season.
  - **Dykshoorn/Arends** are planning with a Life Recovery Home for maintenance projects
  - **Unrau** are making arrangements with the Life Recovery Thrift store.
  - **Hilderman** have been trying to book a different time slot at the Food Bank.
  - **Baars/Dejong** are booked in at the Food Bank on March 20<sup>th</sup>.
  - **Gorer/Luymes** are hosted the Date Night comedy tour on February 9<sup>th</sup>.
  - **Langelaar** are providing some meals for a family in need.
  - **Feenstra/Beerda** took it upon themselves to clean all the signs in our church parking lot.
  - **Roos** will be working with serving meals with 5and2 Ministries.
- Don't see your group in the list? Bring up the serve ideas this coming week to plan a time to contribute to the life and times of our city.
- Send in your pics as you serve our city! We love seeing you all in action – *and look at all this empty space here that we can fill??*



## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**LEADER NOTE:** These are the lowest risk questions and are great ways to get everyone in your group talking – from those who love sharing stories, to those who feel a little uncomfortable in this new space. Low risk questions have their way of breaking the ice and getting everyone a little more comfortable sharing. It also gives a chance for everyone to share in an easy, approachable way.

1. Do you have a favourite plant/tree/shrub? Why?

**LEADER NOTE:** We've had a few weeks of more topic relevant ice breaker questions, for this week, let's take it easy, and talk about things around us that we love and cherish – especially with the hope of spring on its way, let's dream together of what is to come!

2. When you're away from home for long periods, what helps you feel a sense of home or connection to it?

**LEADER NOTE:** Here's a more topic-relevant-leaning-ice-breaker-question, as we're digging more and more into how the world around us, experiences us, and how God's grace is being extended to everyone around through our actions, and through our postures towards them. This question will have your members reflect on where they feel safe, and where they feel the most comfortable. The fun part about this, is that even when away from home, we can feel the comforts of home. Largely, we experience those comforts in the people we're with, and within the people we interact with – and how we are treated.

## QUICK REVIEW

**LEADER NOTE:** These following two questions aim to have your group reflect upon Sunday's message. The first question will always be the same, and the second one is provided from our teaching pastor from the service. One thing that we want to be clear as we approach this section, is that this isn't to be a time to evaluate the message or the one delivering it – but it's to be a time when we talk about what we have learned or how we've been challenged by God's Word.

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

**LEADER NOTE:** Taking notes and interacting with the message that we hear shared on Sunday mornings is a very helpful practice. As you engage both the listening mind, and the physical act of writing, content is more readily solidified in memory!

2. When you think about someone who has hurt you deeply, which is harder for you: (1) Entrusting them to God's justice? (2) Praying for their good? Or (3) Letting go of your "*right*" to be vindicated??

**LEADER NOTE:** As a reminder – forgiveness is never condoning another's actions, and forgiveness is never forgetting.

## SCRIPTURE REVIEW

**LEADER NOTE:** Reading scripture together is one of the most important practices in our Life Groups, so never shirk away from reading the following passage, always making time to interact with the Word of

God and its message for us. By now, you know the practice that is working well for your group – keep it up! But don't be afraid to change up the patterns too – just don't skip this!

### **READ Matthew 5:38-48**

1. How does this passage highlight God's presence in our world?
2. What does this passage say about our broken human condition?
3. How does this passage call me to make change in my life?

Another option with these questions, is to even more simply ask, once you've read the passage together, as in a general way, "*What strikes us about this passage?*"

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

**LEADERS NOTE:** These discussion questions generally start simple and gradually become deeper and more complex. This progression follows natural discussion patterns, but as leaders, you know your group best. Use this guide flexibly; it is not necessary to cover every question. Focus on ensuring everyone is heard and has the opportunity to contribute and ask their questions.

**1. READ Matthew 5:39-41.** Letting yourself be struck, giving up your coat, or walking the extra mile aren't about avoiding a fight. They are deliberate choices to *give up your right to get even*. Why might this kind of response matter in the way God's kingdom works?

**LEADER NOTE:** Let's review these three scenarios. Letting someone strike is about accepting being humiliated, and letting the other person dehumanize you, and too, by the posturing here, being hit on the right cheek, suggests that the offender is slapping with a back-hand – which is one of the greatest offenses in Jewish culture. Giving up your coat, leaves you naked as you've given up everything else. In Jewish culture owning a coat was one of the most basic rights of all humanity, as when it got cool at night, you were able to stay warm. And being forced to be naked in public, placed shame upon on the offender. As well, the Roman soldiers had a right to make anyone walk a mile with them carrying their bag. As the Jews despised this reality, they would count out their steps, go the maximum distance, drops the bags and run. But Jesus says, carry on. The action here deflates the authority of the soldier, and places you in relationship with your offender.

These responses all reflect the character of **King Jesus, who absorbed all offense into Himself**, all without fighting back or retaliating in any way. We also see **God's justice, rather than our own** – as we hope to respond, we must acknowledge that God's ways, are typically not our ways. His sense of justice is not ours. And as God's people respond in these ways, **situations of hurt and pain are de-escalated**. Remember that as the old way of, "*an eye for an eye*" was meant to be merciful, as people would always retaliate with a firmer hand. Moses' instruction was that was not allowed, you could only slap, if you were slapped. But Jesus takes this to a new depth, and says if you were slapped, only respond by allowing a second. This all showcases that **love is more powerful than control** – God's kingdom would only advance and grow because of these moments of sacrificial love, rather than the show of power.

- **READ Philippians 2:1-4.** Paul commends disciples of Jesus to live a life of selflessness. How do Paul's words help you further understand Jesus' words in Matthew 5:39-41? What is Paul *not* saying we should do?

**LEADER NOTE:** While the picture here is being painted of the way that disciples of Jesus should live – which, no surprise, is postured towards the needs of others – which is really what Jesus is driving us towards, it is good for us to be reminded of what Paul is not saying.

Paul is *not* saying ignore your own needs, desires, identity. Nor is he saying to ignore your own boundaries. Christian selflessness reorders our priorities.

Paul is *not* saying to think of yourself as worthless, or to let others walk all over you. Christians are called to have an honest self-assessment. Others don't have more (or less) worth. In other words, it's about posture, not value. Recall what Billy Graham is often quoted for saying, "*the ground at the foot of the cross is level.*" Paul also writes, **Romans 3:23**, "*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*"

Paul is *not* saying to suppress your thoughts or ideas simply because they conflict with someone else's. He is calling Christians to be of the same love and purpose, not ideological unity.

Paul is *not* saying be selfless so that you can be *more Christian*. The call flows out of identity and shared life in Christ. Rooted in grace, not personal moral efforts.

So, Philippians 2 helps us see that Jesus' commands in Matthew 5 are not about suppressing anger or pretending wrong doesn't matter. They are about choosing a radically different way of responding, which is shaped by humility, trust in God, and love that seeks the good of others above personal vindication.

**2. READ Matthew 5:42, Psalm 24:1, Colossians 1:15-16.** In a self-entitled culture that prizes self-preservation, Jesus calls us to give and to lend freely. How does embracing the truth that "*everything belongs to God*" reshape the way we view and use our possessions? How does that view leave you challenged?

**LEADER NOTE:** Jesus sneaks into this well-crafted message, a little nugget with a deep challenge that we in North America, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century deeply struggle with.

Sharing.

We've been led to believe that "*what is mine, is mine.*" And while we struggle too with the opposite, "*what is yours, is yours*" – as we covet and steal. God's Word to us through Jesus, through David, and through Paul, is that we've been wrong all along. Everything that we have, everything that we own – from our tools to our vehicles, to the phones in our pockets, and the coins in our cup holders – all first, belong to God. We have all that we have for the purpose of growing God's kingdom.

We are to steward our own resources for the Lord.

We are to posture ourselves in trust in the Lord for His provisions for us.

We are to live generous lives, seeking to bless and equip our neighbors.

- **READ Luke 12:13-21.** Jesus tells this parable to confront assumptions about wealth and security. What truth about possessions is He revealing? What warning, or invitation, do you hear in it?

**LEADER NOTE:** So often in the way that we live our lives, is that we think of ourselves and our own needs far before we think of the needs of our neighbors, and we stock pile for ourselves – just like this

landowner in the parable, who had plenty. This goes completely against what God said to Abraham, in how the nation of Israel would live – **Genesis 12:2-3** records God’s words to Abram, “*And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*” The implication is that the Lord was going to place His people in places of plenty, so that they’d be able to share of His love and glory to all around. Today, we continue to struggle with that very same reality.

Jesus’ warning for us becomes clear, that we tend to put up our own guards and securities for this life, suggesting that we assume our own role of being the God of provision to ourselves. It’s a question of who we have placed our trust within – God, or ourselves.

The invitation then, is to remove ourselves from our own godly pedestal, and see God almighty right where He is. Ready and waiting to provide for our needs, in His timing, and in His way.

**3. READ Matthew 5:46-47**, Loving those who love us comes naturally; loving those who do not notice us, or may not even like us, is far harder. Where have you seen this reality play out in your life?

**LEADER NOTE:** This question drives your members to think back into their own lives and reflect upon how they have loved others – which may lead to some significant quiet moments in your time together. Today, people are not so quick to name their faults in group settings like this. So be patient, and allow some of the silence to linger. Your members are likely considering their answers in their own hearts. When someone does speak up, be grateful, and understanding.

If necessary, don’t be afraid to share of your own personal journey, sharing where you have experienced these realities – this is you, leading by example.

- Have you ever felt that you were on the “*not being loved*” side of a relationship? What was that like?

**LEADER NOTE:** This follow up question strives to put us in the shoes of those we haven’t loved as we should have, and to, with empathetic hearts, to understand what it feels like. Of the many hard things in this life, in this culture, we fail to understand what other people experience, because we don’t ask, we don’t empathize, and perhaps quite honestly, we don’t care enough. Jesus’ words to us through out the whole Sermon on the Mount drives us to look at every other person, as His children, whom He loves, who He also died for. Our actions have definitive impact on all how people will experience God’s grace. Which is why, we’re asking the next question:

- **READ Luke 10:25-37**. In light of the example of the Good Samaritan, are we truly loving our neighbors? What evidence do we have, that would confirm we are?

**LEADER NOTE:** This is perhaps the most familiar parable in the Gospels, and has all kinds of relevance within this moment where we find ourselves in Matthew 5. We’re talking about forgiveness, we’re talking about being the better human, we’re talking about elevating the needs of others, we’re talking about serving the Lord by serving others. This parable covers all that. But also, we’re driving here to put ourselves in the sandals of this man who comes across the other man who was beaten, and left for dead. We might need to ask ourselves if we see ourselves as the priest and the Levite, who had this clear personal understanding that they were somehow better than the man left on the road. This question has

your members looking into their patterns in their lives to see where they have been what God has called them to be – people who choose mercy over judgement.

## TAKING IT HOME

**READ Matthew 5:48, 1 John 4:19-21.** Jesus wants to transform our hearts to reflect the perfect love of our Father. Spiritual growth begins not with flawless behavior, but with a heart shaped by His unconditional love. Where is God inviting you to grow this week? What intentional step could you take toward deeper spiritual maturity?

**LEADER NOTE:** As Jesus closes this moment, He calls His listeners to “*be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*” To be clear, Jesus knows that we’re sinful, and that we tend to selfishness more than to perfection – but it’s not just about the action and the do’s and the don’ts that Jesus is getting at. While, yes, those are the practical realities that He expects of us, He pressing on something a little deeper than just “*right living.*” He’s calling us to perfectly love others, just as His Father perfectly, unconditionally, loves all His children.

So, your members, and yourselves as leaders, are going to be challenged at how we view the lady pushing the buggy on the sidewalk, the man as he slumbers across the crosswalk, the neighbor who doesn’t mow their lawn, the boss who pushes too hard, the teacher who marks unfairly ...

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

**LEADER NOTE:** This following question is completely optional and is intended for the participants’ personal reflection. But do feel free to explore using the question within your groups meeting.

**READ 1 Peter 4:7-11.** In our very privileged corner of the world, in the Fraser Valley, we have some many things to be grateful for, but as well, we face many challenges that we might not fully realize. If we’re honest with ourselves, we’ll have to admit that loving and serving others – *whom we do not know* – doesn’t come naturally. As we grumble about being stretched, we fail to see that it’s our ultimate goal to bring God all the glory He deserves. Where have we done that? Where have we not done that?