

## **Sermon on the Mount – Mountains Lakes Series week 3**

### **June 22, 2025**

We're in week three of our series titled "Mountains and Lakes" – a series where we explore pivotal moments in the life of Jesus that took place on mountains or lakes. Mountains and pretty much any body of water are both places that I love very much.

A few months ago, I had an experience on a mountain. I was able to go to Guatemala with our high school ministry students on their spring break mission trip. It was wonderful – a powerful week of serving, working with the kids at Agua Viva; we had a ton of fun. The one day that we got to go to explore we drove an hour to Antigua, and we drove up to the top of a small mountain. It was beautiful – we could oversee the historic city; it was a very high end museum that we were at. But we weren't there to look at art – we were there to zipline.

Now, an important part of this experience is that I am very scared of heights – they make me nervous, and make my hands sweat, and I actively avoid activities that involve heights. I knew we were going ziplining, and I did have the opportunity to opt out, but I thought it would be good for me – it would get me out of my comfort zone, it would make me be brave. I thought it would set a good example to the students of conquering fears – or something like that.

So, I make it off the first platform, screaming the whole way. It wasn't wildly scary at that point because the first few platforms were high, but once I got up there and got going, it was okay. Then right before the last platform, we had had to get down and walk up the hill. And then the tower. And as we climbed flight after flight of stairs, I started getting nauseous. My hands were sweating, I was crying. And it wasn't like I was trying to cry; it was just my bodies reaction – I was scared out of my mind. It was hard. I didn't want to do it. And not only were we climbing the platform, but when we got to the top, we were ziplining from one peak of the mountain over to the other side, so we were going across the valley, or the ravine. It was wildly high. I got to the top and it's my turn and I'm crying, and my oldest son, who is right behind me in line, he

says to me “Mom, you can do it. Just think of the sermon illustration that you’ll get from this.” So I jump off the platform, and I scream and cry the whole way across. The rest of the students make it, everyone else loves it, and as we’re walking back to drop off our equipment, that same boy of mine said “What did you think?” I told him that I didn’t really like it while I was doing it because it was scary and uncomfortable and hard, but now that my heart rate had slowed and I had stopped crying, that I thought I would do it again. He said “Yeah, that’s type 2 fun.”

Now, I had no idea what type 2 fun means. So, I’ll share with you in case you don’t know either. Type 2 fun refers to an experience in which you don’t always like it during the activity, usually because it’s hard, or takes you out of your comfort zone, or makes you uncomfortable. But when the experience is over, you can look back and say, “that was worth it”. You feel accomplished, you feel thankful for the experience, and you’d likely choose to do it again. It causes discomfort, it takes boldness, and requires action and it leads to great things. It’s type 2 fun.

So my most recent mountain experience was type 2 fun. And I think that when Jesus taught his sermon on the mount, he was setting all of us up for type 2 fun in a way that only He can do.

Let’s get some details about the Sermon on the mount. In the Bible, this sermon from Jesus is just over 100 verses long, you can find it in its entirety in the book of Matthew in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

This is the longest recorded sermon by Jesus. It includes both the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer, which are two very well-known passages. It also includes the golden rule that we all learn in kindergarten – do unto others what you would have them do to you. This teaching happened on a hillside near Capernaum, at the time a hillside or a mountainside was not an uncommon place for teachings to happen.

This sermon from Jesus has gone on to be one of the most well-known teachings of the Bible. It is likely the most influential teaching from Scripture,

and it teaches us about love, humility, compassion, and gives us a moral framework to live by. One of the things that stands out about this sermon is the cultural breadth and longevity that the scripture has had. Bob Marley's first song in 1961 included parts of this scripture. Bono has a song that recites these verses. Ghandi read the entire sermon on the mount every morning and every night for the last 40 years of his life. 40 years! That's over 29,000 times. He didn't even follow Jesus, yet he knew it was important. This teaching in the Bible goes far beyond Christianity – because the teachings in it are pillars for humanity and the way that we should behave and live our lives.

Now, I was not given an easy task today, because this sermon is 100 verses long, and every single verse is powerful and important. And I have about 24 minutes left up here. So, I'm going to give you the 30,000-foot overview and then zoom in on a few specific teachings, or portions of this sermon. All of which will lead us to Jesus and to Type 2 fun.

Jesus begins the sermon by describing traits that he was looking for in his followers. There are 8 listed beatitudes, and they outline the qualities that are valued in the Kingdom of Heaven. These are the Beatitudes – this is Matthew 5, verses 3-10.

- *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.*
- *Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.*
- *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*
- *Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.*
- *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*
- *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*
- *Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Blessed. I think that we can get caught up on that word and it can make these qualities that Jesus shared a little harder to understand. Jesus would have likely preached this sermon in Aramaic, because it was the language used in Galilee and Jerusalem at this time. But his sermon would have been

translated into Hebrew and Greek. And then many translations later someone landed on the word “Blessed.” That’s not wrong. But for me, the easier way to understand these qualities is by using the phrase “The good life is for those who...”. So we would hear “The good life is for those who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The good life is for those who mourn, because they will be comforted. The good life is for those who are meek, for they will inherit the earth. The good life is for those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus begins with words that seem to contradict each other. Most people that are mourning or hurting are not feeling like they’re living the good life in the moment. But what Jesus says that when we live a certain way – that is what leads us to the kingdom of heaven. He’s saying that the good life is for those who live out these qualities and it will all be worth it.

But the way that Jesus calls us to live usually contradicts the way that the world lives. If you want to live for God, you must be ready to say and do what seems contradictory to the world. This can be uncomfortable. (DISCOMFORT on the Screen).

You must be willing to give when others take, to love when others hate, to help when others hurt. You have to be willing to do the right thing, which is often the hard thing. But by doing things that are contradictory to the world’s terms, things that can make you uncomfortable in today’s culture and society, you will one day receive everything that God has in store for you.

Jesus starts his sermon with the Beatitudes, and then he teaches us about salt and light. This is Matthew 5, verses 13-16:

*“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? Is it no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In*

*the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Salt and light. My 10-year-old daughter likes to make this edible cookie dough at home when she wants a sweet treat. A few weeks ago, she made it, and she made one tiny little error in the recipe – she mixed up the sugar and the salt. I’ll let you guess how that turned out. She pretended like it was edible, but it wasn’t. The salt was salty. But that’s the whole point, right? If salt loses its saltiness, it’s no good. If seasoning has no flavor, it has no value. When Jesus says “You are the salt,” he means us. You and me. But if we have no flavor, if we blend in with everyone else, then we’ve missed it. Salt brings out the flavor – it makes things better (as long as you don’t use too much). We are the salt, so we should also make things better. We shouldn’t blend in with the world, but we should stand out and make others around us better.

There are several other insights on “salt” and what Jesus means here when he says “You are the salt of the earth.” Salt is one of the most universal human foods. You can find it in every culture. But since we have refrigerators, it’s easy for us to forget that salt is also used as a preservative. It was used to make meat last longer before it went bad. In the Hebrew Bible salt is described as an important element in animal sacrifices. And often times salt is connected to purity – it is used to purify things and make things clean, or edible.

It’s easy for us to just read Scripture and make some quick conclusions about what it means. But that word SALT is important – there is meaning and layers behind it. We are the salt – we are called to make the world better, to not blend in. We’re universal – we connect with all people. We help God’s word endure and last by sharing it with others. We are salt in aiming to live pure lives. It’s not just a good metaphor – it’s an important metaphor.

And the Light! Jesus tell us that we are the light. He doesn’t say “try to become the light”, or “someday you might be the light.” But He tells us who we are – we are the Light of the World.

There is a strong thread of “light” in the Bible. Again, Jesus wasn’t calling us Light just for fun – there is so much meaning here.

A quick look at this thread of light. In Genesis 1:3, the 3<sup>rd</sup> verse in the entire Bible, it says “And God said, let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”

In Psalm 119 it says, “Your word is a light on my path.”

Then in John 1:4-5 he says this about Jesus: “In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Then, also in the book of John, Jesus refers to himself as the light in chapter 8 verse 12. He says “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

As we wrap up the thread of light that we find in scripture, it brings us to Revelation 22:5. It says “There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.”

God’s creation begins with light. Jesus is the light. And we have the promise of eternal light in heaven with God. And in the Sermon on the mount Jesus tells us that we are the light of the world. We reflect the light of Jesus in the way that we live our lives. If we live for Christ, we will shine His light, showing others what Jesus is like. And in this sermon on the mount Jesus says, “*A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.*” It’s not an option to try and hide it. When you live in the light of Christ, you will be seen. The world is watching. Whether you’re in your home, at your job, on Instagram or Facebook,- your light is visible.

And Jesus tells us not to hide our light. Sometimes we may be tempted to dim our light out of fear – fear of what others think about us, fear of being misunderstood or not liked by others. But if we hide our light, if we don’t reflect the light of Jesus and who He is – it serves no one. It doesn’t serve Jesus, and it doesn’t help others see Him.

Living as the salt and light requires us to be bold. (Discomfort + Boldness on the screen). It's not easy. It will require us to be uncomfortable and brave. But it's what Jesus calls us to.

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As Jesus continues his sermon he moves into the teaching and interpretations of the laws or commandments. He covers a lot here. He talks about anger, lust, divorce, vows, revenge, and loving our enemies. He teaches on giving to those that need it, on fasting, on money. He tells us not to worry, not to judge others. Jesus also teaches about the Way to Heaven, and to be aware of false prophets.

And in the middle of this part of the sermon, and actually it's the center of the entire sermon, he teaches us about prayer. This is the Lord's prayer – one of the most well-known passages of Scripture. Matthew 6:9-13:

*"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today your daily bread. And forgive our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'"*

One of the things that so impactful about this passage, is that this is Jesus' prayer. He's sharing with us the prayer that he prayed. He made it very personal and we get a glimpse into how he himself prayed. My favorite line in his prayer is also a line that he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before he was crucified – he says "Your will be done." What an example he sets for us. I mean, I pray that, but I do I mean it the way that Jesus meant it? When we say that prayer, "Your will be done", we are praying that God's perfect purpose will be accomplished in this world. It's us offering ourselves to Him, allowing Him to guide, lead, and give us the means to accomplish His purpose.

At the end of all of this, Jesus teaches us about building on a solid foundation. This is the final teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, and it

addresses the most important aspect of the choice Jesus presents to his listeners. Where does the path that we choose lead us?

This is Matthew 7:24-27:

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall, because it had the foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

These two lives that Jesus compares at the end of the sermon on the Mount have several points in common: they both build, they both hear Jesus' teaching, and they both experience the same set of circumstances in life. The difference between them isn't caused by ignorance, but it is caused by ignoring what Jesus said. From the outside, their lives may look similar. But the lasting, structural differences will be revealed by the storms of life. Most of us don't deliberately seek to build a house on bad foundation. But if we aren't intentional about building our house on the rock – on the foundation of Jesus – then our foundation won't be strong. We must listen to what Jesus calls us to. This is action! In this sermon, Jesus teaches us all these things, and then he essentially gives us two options and calls us to action.

(Discomfort + Boldness + Action on the screen)

There is a scene in the Chosen, that is setting up the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus wakes up Matthew, his disciple and his friend, and the author of this book in the Bible, and Jesus says "I've got it". Matthew says, "what, the opening of the sermon?" And Jesus says "Yes, it's a map. A map – directions to where people should look to find me."



Now of course *The Chosen* is a show, and it takes creative liberties, so we don't actually know if Jesus said that. But it works. It makes sense. The Sermon on the Mount is a map for how we are to live our lives. It is directions of how we should act, how we should treat others, how we should put others before ourselves, how we should live for God and not the world. It is a map that leads us to a fork in the road where we have to make a choice – a choice to build our house on the rock or to build our house on the sand. A choice to shine our light or try to hide it. A choice to live for Jesus or for the world.

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I told you that the diving into the Sermon on the mount would lead us to Jesus – which obviously it does. But I also told you it would lead us back to Type 2 fun. In these 3 chapters in the Bible, Jesus is teaching us how to live. But nowhere in his sermon, nowhere in those 100 verses did it say “this will be easy”.

In fact, much of what Jesus calls us to will make us uncomfortable. It will stretch us out of our comfort zone. Because it's not the way that everyone lives, it's not the “norm” or it's not always “cool” to live like Jesus. It can be hard. Living the way Jesus teaches us to live requires us to be bold – we have to be different and not give into the things of the world. We have to be bold to push back against things like anger, lust, revenge, idolizing money, judging others.

And we have to live it out. It's not enough to read the sermon on the mount every morning and every night. That's nice and all. **But if we don't put action behind this – if we don't follow the map and make the right choice at the fork in the road, then it's all for nothing.**

Discomfort + Boldness + Action. That's Type 2 fun.

(Discomfort + Boldness + Action = Type 2 fun. Type 2 fun is how we live out the sermon on the mount.)

Because at the end of the activity – at the end of our lives - We'll be able to look back and say, “It was worth it”. When we get to the end, we'll be able to

say, it was hard, it was uncomfortable at times, and I had to be bold, but look what I accomplished. Look at the disciples that I made and the way that I lived for the Kingdom of God. When we hear “Well done, good and faithful servant”, we’ll know that doing the hard things, jumping off the platform while crying – it was worth it. It was Type 2 fun.

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Jesus calls us to action. During this time in our worship, we get to respond to what Jesus is calling each of us to as individuals. In this response time, I encourage you to think about type 2 fun – are you being bold in the way you are living your life for Jesus? Are you putting your faith into action? What might he be calling you to? What is your next step with Jesus? We’re always at a fork in the road – we always have a choice to follow Him or to follow the world.

During this time you can respond with action of prayer – by yourself, or with others around you, or with prayer team around the room. You can respond with worship.

And we’ll also respond during this time together with communion. Jesus lived a perfect life and then sacrificed his life for ours. He took our sins upon Him and said to God – Your will be done. And God’s will was for Jesus to die on that cross so that we could have new life in Him. There are communion tables around the room, you can come forward at anytime during this worship and get your communion. On the bottom is a piece of bread, that Jesus tells us to remember as his body that was given for us. And on the top is the juice – which we’re take and remember as the blood of Jesus that he shed for us. Jesus was bold, and he took action because he loved us and it’s what God asked him to. So that we have the promise of eternity in heaven with him.

Lastly, during this time, you can give your life to Christ. If you’re at the fork in the road, or on top of the platform and figuring out what action to take – what better choice than to build your life with Jesus and follow him with baptism.

Don’t miss out on the type 2 fun we have in front of us. Take this time to respond to Jesus and you’re next step with him.