

# Sermon on the Mount

## Jesus Begins His Teaching Matthew 5:1 - 2

The Sermon on the Mount opens with the following verse:

*When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the hill. And when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. Then He began to teach them. (Matthew 5:1 - 2)*

Jesus sees the crowds and deliberately moves up the mountain, separating Himself from the people. By moving up the mountain, Jesus becomes both visually and physically closer to the heavens, closer to God. Who else in the Bible went up the mountain to receive a revelation from God? Moses. Moses ascended to encounter God and descended with the Ten Commandments. By invoking that image of a divine mountaintop revelation, Jesus asserts authority and divine power into His teaching. There would have been little doubt in the minds of the Jewish people that the teaching that followed expressed God's will for His people.

In His Sermon, Jesus doesn't declare a new set of commandments or code of conduct like Moses did. Rather, in a series of "you have heard it said...but I say to you" clauses, Jesus modifies and broadens what God said through Moses:

*You have heard it said, "You shall not murder," but I tell you anyone who is angry at his brother or sister is guilty of murder. (Matthew 5:21 - 22)*

Through the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turned traditional Jewish teaching upside down and offered a different way of living, one that revealed God's vision for the world. Jesus emphasized over and over again that His disciples are to be different; they are not to take their cue from the world around them, but from Him. Jesus challenges His disciples to accept His values, His vision for the world. This is the underlying and uniting theme of the Sermon on the Mount - followers of Jesus are to be different.

This teaching continues to challenge us today.

*Reflection Question:* How can I internalize God's law deep within my heart so that it becomes woven into the very fabric of my being?