

# Housegroup Study – January 17<sup>th</sup> 2018

## Leaders Notes

### Matthew 6:1-4, 19-34

Theme: A disciple of Jesus Christ gives anonymously; prays privately; fasts while nobody notices; lives for eternity and does not worry. How does this work?

#### Sermon on the Mount

*"From the beginning of the sermon, when Jesus describes those who belong to the kingdom, to the end of the sermon when he challenges us about our own relationship to the kingdom, he does not deviate from his theme. But his teaching is characterised by progression of thought.... [In chapter 6] Jesus is directing attention to motives. **Why** we do something is significant as well as **what** we do... self-discipline, and self-denial are called for – that our lives will be properly structured... **Jesus does not assume that these things will come naturally.** Rather he sees them as quite deliberate activities in the life of his disciples."* Sinclair B. Ferguson



Matthew 5:3–12 the Beatitudes: the character of the people of the Kingdom of Heaven – its "blessing" or "happiness".

Matthew 5:13–16 salt and light.

The longest discourse in the Sermon is Matthew 5:17–48, Jesus fulfils and reinterprets the Old Covenant and in particular its Ten Commandments, contrasting with what "you have heard" from others.

**In Matthew 6 Jesus condemns doing what would normally be "good works" simply for recognition and not from the heart, such as those of alms (6:1–4), prayer (6:5–15), and fasting(6:16–18). The discourse goes on to condemn the superficiality of materialism and call the disciples not to worry about material needs, but to "seek" God's kingdom first.**

Matthew 7:1–6 deals with judging. Jesus condemns those who judge others before first judging themselves.

Matthew 7:7–29 Jesus concludes the sermon by warning against false prophets, and emphasizing that we are unable to do right ("bear fruit") apart from God.

This term continues the study of Matthew's gospel started in Spring 2017.

January 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Matthew 5: 38-48
<b>January 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Matthew 6: 1-4, 19-34</b>
January 31 <sup>st</sup>	Matthew 6: 15-18
February 14 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew 7: 1-14
February 21 <sup>st</sup>	Matthew 7: 15-29
March 7 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew 8: 1-22
March 21 <sup>st</sup>	Matthew 8: 23-34, 9: 1-17
April 4 <sup>th</sup>	Matthew 9: 18-34

Jesus' sermon is not about an ideal life in an ideal world, but kingdom life in a **fallen world**. How can we encourage each other to live like this?

In today's study, we don't want theoretical discussions and we don't want boasting unless it boasts in what God has done.

### **Matthew 6:1-4 "How not to.... Give"**

1. "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.
2. "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
3. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
4. so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

#### **Q1. (In groups) Is there anything in this passage that you don't understand?**

What is the source of the word hypocrite?

What is meant by left hand and right hand here?

#### **Q2. Can we think of any examples of people "blowing their own trumpet" when giving?**

Corporate donations to charity

Donate by x in memory of y

Telethons

Dropping hints of support for a "worthy cause"

#### **Q3. Why is this wrong?**

Because we are tempted to give for the wrong motive.

We give for the recognition of being given, rather than because it is pleasing to God that we should give.

#### **Q4. What motivates us to give? Think of some personal examples.**

Thanks. Thanks for something good that has happened to us.

Personal need. An act of love towards an individual or family that has a real need.

Group need. A charitable group is unable to achieve its goals. St. Mary's → Love Trust

Gospel need. To support the praise of God and the spread of the Gospel.

#### **Q5. Practically, how CAN we give WITHOUT boasting?**

Give in secret. Giving at St. Mary's is secret. Clive has hinted that some people donated large sums of money for the building of the auditorium, but their identity is known to very few people. (Obviously there are practical considerations such as gift aid.)

Examine your motive. Are you looking for praise from others.

Don't keep a diary of "good deeds". We don't need to perform a minimum number of good deeds to receive God's grace.

### **Matthew 6:19-24 "How not to.... Save"**

19. "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,
20. but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys 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. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,
23. but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!
24. "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

#### **Q6. (In groups) Is there anything in this passage that you don't understand?**

What is meant by treasures in heaven?

Does this mean that we need to accumulate "credits" to get into heaven? Clearly not .. we are assured that we achieve eternal life through Faith, not works. This is about our attitude to life and God. If we have faith, then this is how we will want to behave.

What is meant by if the eye is healthy? Refer back to the start of v22 and the AMP. "Spiritually healthy"

**Q7. What is the key phrase that says this is a good investment opportunity? (verses 19-21)**

Jesus says that investing in God's kingdom will not be subject to failure. Earthly investments will suffer earthly decay. Heavenly investments won't fail. Might be interesting to compare insurance policies against moth, rust and thieves

**Q8. How can we tell where our heart is? (verse 21)**

Examine what you treasure to find out where our hearts are.

What are our priorities? How do we spend our time? What keeps us awake at night?

In spare moments where do our thoughts stray to?

**Q9. What is the significance of our eyes? (verses 22-23)**

Jesus seems to be using a Biblical metaphor where good = generous; and bad = stingy. The Greek word translated as "good" or "clear" was often translated as generous in the Greek translation of the OT.

Proverbs 11:25 "A generous man will prosper".

Proverbs 28:22 "A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth";

Proverbs 23:6 "Do not eat the food of a stingy man" (literally a man with an evil eye).

Jesus is teaching he is talking about whether we see things with a generous spirit or with a stingy one. And that affects everything we do. Generous people see needs around them and their whole lives are one of selfless giving to share God's goodness with others. Stingy people ignore people's needs, in fact they are blind to them, being careful to keep their wealth to themselves.

Read Luke 16:19-31

**Q10. In today's society, can we avoid serving money? (verse 24)**

The grip of materialism has silenced the effectiveness of the gospel in the west. The world values success in material form and we can easily adopt their values. What expectations do we have for our children's success, for our future happiness, our comfortable retirement, our holidays, our leisure, our fulfilment?

How does that compare with our ambition for the growth of the gospel in our neighbourhood?

**Matthew 6:25-34 "How not to.... Worry"**

25. "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"
26. Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"
27. And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"
28. And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,
29. yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.
30. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"
31. Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'
32. For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.
33. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
34. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

**Q11. (In groups) What kind of things do we worry about?**

Health, wealth and happiness! Jesus says life, food, drink and clothing.

**Q12. How does Jesus show that we do not need to worry about these things?**

He contrasts our worry about food with the birds being well fed, our concern about good looking clothes with the beautiful flowers that God grows. And reminds us that he loves us, we are His family.

Does this metaphor work?

**Q13. What distinguishes us from unbelievers?**

Unbelievers seek material things because they overvalue their significance.

Without Christ they seek fulfilment with things they can see and touch. They become anxious because they do not know God's character. They think that God, if he exists is far removed from the realities of their complex lives and struggles.

We know our Heavenly Father understands our needs "all these things". God is our Father and he wants us to trust in Him.

**Q14. Does this mean that we will have a trouble-free life?**

No! Verse 34 clearly demonstrates that every day has its own trouble.

**Q15. What should be our reaction to verses 25-34**

Seek the first Kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Hand over our worries about tomorrow to God.

### **Luke 16:19-31 - The Rich Man and Lazarus**

19. "There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day.
20. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores,
21. who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.
22. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried,
23. and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.
24. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.'
25. But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish.'

Matthew 6: 1-4, 19-34

	<b>NIV</b>	<b>ESV</b>	<b>ESV Study Bible</b>	<b>AMP</b>	<b>Message</b>
	<b>Giving to the Needy</b>	<b>Giving to the Needy</b>		<b>Giving to the Poor and Prayer</b>	<b>The World Is Not a Stage</b>
1	"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.	"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.	<a href="#">Matt. 6:1</a> before other people. Public acts of obedience are valuable and honourable, but if they are done merely for the sake of public recognition, there will be no reward from God (cf. <a href="#">vv. 2, 5, 16</a> ).	"Be [very] careful not to do your good deeds publicly, to be seen by men; otherwise you will have no reward [prepared and awaiting you] with your Father who is in heaven.	"Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding.
2	"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honoured by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.	"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.	<a href="#">Matt. 6:2-4</a> Hypocrites originally referred to Greek actors who wore different masks to play various roles. Jesus criticizes the religious leaders, most notably the Pharisees, for a particular form of hypocrisy: doing right things for the wrong reasons. To give to the needy was one of the pillars of piety, but the religious leaders gave to the needy in order to be praised by others. The tragic irony was that they had received their reward of public and professional acclaim, but that was all the reward they would ever receive, and such fleeting human adulation precludes satisfaction of the deep longing of people's hearts to stand approved by their Father who sees in secret.	"So whenever you give to the poor and do acts of kindness, do not blow a trumpet before you [to advertise it], as the hypocrites do [like actors acting out a role] in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honoured and recognized and praised by men. I assure you and most solemnly say to you, they [already] have their reward in full.	"When you do something for someone else, don't call attention to yourself. You've seen them in action, I'm sure—'playactors' I call them—treating prayer meeting and street corner alike as a stage, acting compassionate as long as someone is watching, playing to the crowds. They get applause, true, but that's all they get. When you help someone out, don't think about how it looks. Just do it—quietly and unobtrusively. That is the way your God, who conceived you in love, working
3	But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,	But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your		But when you give to the poor and do acts of kindness, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is	

		right hand is doing,		doing [give in complete secrecy],	behind the scenes, helps you out.
4	so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.	so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.		so that your charitable acts will be done in secret; and your Father who sees [what is done] in secret will reward you.	
	<b>Treasures in Heaven</b>	<b>Lay Up Treasures in Heaven</b>			<b>A Life of God-Worship</b>
19	"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.	"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,	<a href="#">Matt. 6:19</a> moth ... rust ... thieves. See note on <a href="#">Luke 12:33-34</a> .	"Do not store up for yourselves [material] treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.	"Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.
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.	but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.	<a href="#">Matt. 6:20</a> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven implies that people often have a choice between activities that lead to greater earthly reward in the present (cf. <a href="#">vv. 2, 5, 16</a> ) and those that store up greater future reward in heaven. Elsewhere in the Gospels the consequences of making the wrong choice are shown to be eternally disastrous (see <a href="#">Mark 8:36</a> ; <a href="#">Luke 12:20-21</a> ).	But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal;	
21	For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.	For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.	<a href="#">Matt. 6:21</a> Throughout Scripture, the heart refers to the centre of one's being, involving one's emotions, reason, and will.	for where your treasure is, there your heart [your wishes, your desires; that on which your life centres] 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.	"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light,	<a href="#">Matt. 6:22–23</a> The eye (similar to the "heart" in Jewish literature) is a lamp that reveals the quality of a person's inner life. A healthy eye (clear vision) suggests loyal devotion to God, while a bad eye (impaired vision) connotes moral corruption.	"The eye is the lamp of the body; so if your eye is clear [spiritually perceptive], your whole body will be full of light [benefiting from God's precepts].	"Your eyes are windows into your body. If you open your eyes wide in wonder and belief, your body fills up with light. If you live squinty-eyed in greed and distrust, your body is a dank cellar. If you pull the blinds on your windows, what a dark life you will have!
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!	but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!		But if your eye is bad [spiritually blind], your whole body will be full of darkness [devoid of God's precepts]. So if the [very] light inside you [your inner self, your heart, your conscience] is darkness, how great and terrible 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.	"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.	<a href="#">Matt. 6:24</a> Serve (Gk. <i>douleuō</i> ) indicates the work of a slave, not an employee. Since a slave is the sole property of one master, he must give the master exclusive service. A disciple's loyalties cannot be divided—that is, one is either a slave to God or to money.	"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon [money, possessions, fame, status, or whatever is valued more than the Lord].	"You can't worship two gods at once. Loving one god, you'll end up hating the other. Adoration of one feeds contempt for the other. You can't worship God and Money both.
	<b>Do Not Worry</b>	<b>Do Not Be Anxious</b>		<b>The Cure for Anxiety</b>	
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?	"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about	<a href="#">Matt. 6:25</a> Therefore ... do not be anxious. If one makes the right choices (see <a href="#">vv. 19–24</a> ),	"Therefore I tell you, stop being worried or anxious	"If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it

		your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?	there is (“therefore”) no reason that one should be anxious. Jesus gives two <i>a fortiori</i> (“how much more”) examples—“look at the birds” (v. 26), “consider the lilies” (v. 28)—to show that, since God cares even for the birds and the lilies, how much more will he care for his own. To be anxious, then, demonstrates a lack of trust in God, who promises that he will graciously care for “all these things” (v. 33; cf. Rom. 8:32). See also Phil. 4:5–6.	(perpetually uneasy, distracted) about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, as to what you will wear. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?	follows that you don’t fuss about what’s on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied
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?	Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?	<a href="#">Matt. 6:26</a> Human beings are of more value than animals (cf. <a href="#">10:31</a> ; <a href="#">12:12</a> ) because only humans, out of all God’s creatures, are created “in the image of God” ( <a href="#">Gen. 1:27</a> ), because God gave the human race dominion over all the earth and all its creatures ( <a href="#">Gen. 1:28</a> ), and because God loved human beings so much “that he gave his only Son” to die for our sins ( <a href="#">John 3:16</a> ).	Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow [seed] nor reap [the harvest] nor gather [the crops] into barns, and yet your heavenly Father keeps feeding them. Are you not worth much more than they?	down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.
27	Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?	And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?		And who of you by worrying can add one hour to [the length of] his life?	“Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All
28	“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin.	And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,		And why are you worried about clothes? See how the lilies and wildflowers of the field grow; they do not labour nor do they spin [wool to make clothing],	this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the

29	Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these.	yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.		yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory and splendour dressed himself like one of these.	wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.
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?	But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?	<a href="#">Matt. 6:30</a> Grass was a natural source of fuel for fire and a common biblical metaphor for human frailty (e.g., <a href="#">Ps. 37:2</a> ; <a href="#">102:4</a> ). Little faith implies a deficiency rather than an absence of faith (cf. <a href="#">Matt. 8:26</a> ).	But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive and green today and tomorrow is [cut and] thrown [as fuel] into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!	“If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think he’ll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to
31	So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’	Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’		Therefore do not worry or be anxious (perpetually uneasy, distracted), saying, ‘What are we going to eat?’ or ‘What are we going to drink?’ or ‘What are we going to wear?’	relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God’s giving. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.
32	For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.	For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.		For the [pagan] Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; [but do not worry,] for 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.	But seek first the kingdom of God and his		But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive	

		righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.		after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right--the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also.	
34	Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.	"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.		"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.	"Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.