

GTW Winter 2021

Discipleship According to Bonhoeffer

Week 4, January 27, 2021

Rev. Michael Thornton

First Presbyterian Church  
Colorado Springs, Colorado

## Week 4: The Sermon on the Mount

The call to faithfulness before God.

Chapter 6, “The Sermon on the Mount” in *Discipleship*.

### Weekly Devo:

Matthew 5 – 7

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

<sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God

with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

<sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

<sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

<sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

<sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

### Notes for this Week:

- GTW Content Blog: <https://my.firstprescos.org/growtogether>

## Introduction to *The Sermon on the Mount*

- See handout, “The Sermon on the Mount and Christian Ethics” by P.J. Long.
- Chapter 6 reads like a reflective, stream of conscience (lower case “C”) commentary
- How does Bonhoeffer interpret the Sermon on the Mount?
  - Is the Sermon on the Mount a set of ideals to recognize your sin and fall back on grace or a call to fix your eyes on the ethical target of the Christian walk?
- After completing his theological studies, Bonhoeffer serves a German-speaking congregation in Barcelona, Spain, from 1928–1930. (Bonhoeffer’s time at Union Theological Seminary in New York is from 1930–1931.)
  - What we observe is a developing theologian being confronted with dramatically different circumstances that lead him from stiff pacifism in Berlin (that seems to hold throughout *Discipleship*) to a willingness to take on moral guilt in order to best love those around him (we will see this development in Dietrich’s *Ethics*). Note in his writings on the Sermon on the Mount how Bonhoeffer swings heavy toward a call to strong nonviolence and, even more, *affection* for one’s enemy, which we will dive into deeper below. Does anything other than external circumstance change for Dietrich in his final years?
- Compare/Contrast these ethical systems:
  - Immanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative (18th-century German philosopher)
    - “Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”
    - “So act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, always as an end and never as only a means.”
  - Bonhoeffer’s writings on the Sermon on the Mount:
    - Necessity of relationship / personhood / union

“Do not quench the Spirit.

Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all;

hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil.

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through.”

1 Thessalonians 5:19-23

## Chapter 6, *The Sermon on the Mount*

### “...but I say to you...”

Bonhoeffer's Organization of the Sermon on the Mount:

The Great Claim: 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.  
(Matthew 6:24)

The Great Call: But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33)

- Matthew 5 (the seen, “the extraordinary”)
  - The Beatitudes
  - The Visible Church-Community (Salt and Light)
  - The Righteousness of Christ (and the place of the Law)
  - Personal Ethic / Household Code
    - Christian Unity
    - Sexual Purity
    - Integrity
    - Retribution
  - Love / Affection for Enemy
- Matthew 6 (the unseen, “the simple”)
  - The Hidden Life
    - Holiness
    - Prayer
    - Faith
  - Call to serve only one Master
  - Call to not worry
- Matthew 7 (the set apart)
  - The church as *the ones set apart*
    - In the way we judge
    - In the way we are judged
  - The Challenge of the Conclusion
    - Will you choose the wisdom of heaven?

## Reflection & Growth (Small Group Prompts)<sup>1</sup>

- Any follow-up discussion from the documentary last week?
- Continue to get to know one another and pray for one another.
- What is most challenging to you in the Sermon on the Mount?
- What does Bonhoeffer say that strikes you most?

**Personal Application:** Every week we will have a question(s) aimed directly at helping you grow toward Christ both immediately in the “now,” as well as into the future.

- What stands out to you most in chapter 6 that can aid you in your spiritual formation?
- How can you be a clearer witness for Jesus and his kingdom this week?

End your time in prayer, that the very Spirit of God would lead each of us in our walk, making us clear light and useful salt to everyone we meet.

## Final Reminders

**After this call: Do you have a small group video call to join?**

- Next Week: Baptism: Understanding themes of Union, Conformity, Death and Life from chapter 9 in *Discipleship* (our final week in *Discipleship*)
- Not currently in a small group, but would like to be? Refer to the syllabus and ...
  - Email Ina Meyer, Program Manager for Discipleship:  
[imeyer@firstprescos.org](mailto:imeyer@firstprescos.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Strive to square all your main findings with Scripture. In other words, do Bonhoeffer’s conclusions square with the “Kingdom Principles” laid to God’s People throughout all Scripture?