

Sincere but Wrong

Misconceptions from the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5–7 (selected passages)

Key Thoughts

1. **Jesus used topical teaching to correct misconceptions.** The Sermon on the Mount addresses ideas and cultural distortions that had grown around the Law—not a verse-by-verse exposition of Moses—and that method is thoroughly biblical.
2. **Cultural drift quietly reshapes theology.** First-century Jews and modern believers alike allow tradition, familiarity, and convenience to distort what Scripture actually teaches. The danger is not rebellion; it's familiarity.
3. **God's economy doesn't match the world's metrics.** Wealth, size, and visible success are not reliable indicators of God's favor, blessing, or salvation—not for individuals and not for churches.
4. **Suffering is not evidence of sin.** From Job to the apostle Paul to Jesus on the cross, the greatest spiritual victories have often looked like failure through human eyes.
5. **Sincere belief does not guarantee accurate belief.** The invitation is not to defend what we already think, but to let the unchanging Word of God correct us where drift has occurred.

Discussion Questions

1. Read Matthew 5:17. What misconception was developing about Jesus and the Law? How does His statement “I did not come to destroy but to fulfill” correct it?
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2. In Matthew 15:1–9, Jesus confronts the Pharisees for elevating tradition over God's commands. Where might we be guilty of the same thing in modern church culture?
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3. The disciples were “greatly astonished” when Jesus said it was hard for a rich man to enter heaven (Matthew 19:25). What does their reaction reveal about the cultural assumptions they held? Do we hold similar ones today?
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4. Read Acts 2:42–45 and Ephesians 4:11–16. What does a biblically functioning church actually look like, and how does that contrast with what we often chase—size, programs, and flash?

5. Jesus says “Judge not, that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1), yet 1 Corinthians 5 calls believers to judge one another. How do you reconcile these passages? What distinguishes righteous judgment from the kind Jesus condemns?

6. Personal: The sermon stated that “sincere belief does not guarantee accurate belief.” Is there an area of your faith where you’ve been operating more on tradition or assumption than on what Scripture actually says? What would it look like to let God correct that this week?

Applications

1. **Audit your assumptions.** Pick one belief you’ve held for years and trace it back to Scripture. If it doesn’t hold up under the Word, be willing to let it go—even if you’ve held it for decades.
2. **Reject the world’s metrics.** Resist measuring your spiritual health—or your church’s health—by size, wealth, comfort, or applause. Measure instead by the Acts 2 markers: doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.
3. **Submit to correction.** Come to Christ this week not as a defender of what you already believe, but as a disciple willing to be taught. Ask the Lord to reveal one area of drift and obey what He shows you.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for not abandoning us to our misunderstandings. Forgive us for the times we have allowed culture, tradition, and comfort to quietly reshape what Your Word actually teaches. Give us humble hearts—hearts that are moldable and pliable in Your hands. Help us lay down the need to be right and pick up the willingness to be corrected. Where we have been sincere but wrong, bring us back to Your truth. Make us a church that measures itself not by the world’s metrics but by Your Word—devoted to doctrine, deep in fellowship, generous in love, and faithful in prayer. Conform us to the image of Your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.