Jesus' Sermons

KEY VERSES

Matthew 7:13–14

Lesson Overview (TEACHER)

TRANSITION

In Lesson 7, Jesus confronted the Pharisees' hypocrisy and hard-hearted opposition. Lesson 8 focuses on His pronouncement of solemn woes on the religious leaders, teaching His disciples the truth in the Sermon on the Mount, and revealing future events awaiting the nation of Israel.

CENTRAL TRUTH

True faith comes from the heart, not works.

KEY TEXTS

Matthew 5:1–7:29; 18:1–35; 23:1–25:46

SPOTLIGHT ON THE GOSPEL

Jesus exposed the Pharisees' outward religion as empty and condemned their hypocrisy, showing that no one can reach God's perfect standard by rules or effort. Only Jesus lived the righteous life we need. He died on the cross to take our sin and give us His righteousness. Trust in Him today and receive true forgiveness and a transformed heart.

Family Devotional (PARENT)

This section explains what the Family Devotional covers for parents to use with their children each day of the week. Each devotional reinforces the lesson taught in Sunday School.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

Day 1 **Jesus' Sermons** (Sunday School review)
Matthew 5:1–7:29; 18:1–35; 23:1–25:46

Day 2 **The Sermon on the Mount: Beatitudes**
Matthew 5:1–7:29

Day 3 **The Sermon on the Mount: True Piety**
Matthew 5:1–7:29

Day 4 **The Faith and Life of a Believer**
Matthew 18:1–35

Day 5 **The Olivet Discourse: The Tribulation and Second Coming**
Matthew 24:1–24:44

Day 6 **The Olivet Discourse: Parables and Conclusion**
Matthew 24:45–25:46

Day 7 **Woes on the Religious Hypocrites and the Faithless City**
Matthew 23:1–39

LAST WEEK

NEXT WEEK

Jesus' Sermons

NOTE: Do not read this commentary aloud to the children. The commentary is designed to help educate and prepare the teacher for the lesson. The teacher's goal in studying the commentary is to better understand the lesson.

JESUS' INDICTMENT OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Jesus was the Messiah, but the religious leaders in Israel opposed Him and His message; so Jesus responded to them. Jesus told the crowds and disciples to practice what the scribes and Pharisees taught as long as it was from the Word of God. But, His hearers were not to follow the example of the scribes and Pharisees because they did not practice what they preached (Matt 23:1–3). Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees put extra burdens on people through their traditions—and even they did not carry them (v4); all they did was public and meant to be praised and honored by others (vv5–7). Jesus told His followers not to accept the title rabbi ("teacher") because there is only one Father in heaven and one teacher—Christ (vv8–10). Jesus told His followers that they should be humble servants of others (vv11–12). Jesus then pronounced woes (condemnations) on the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy and false piety (vv13–15), for their spiritual blindness and empty oaths (vv16–22), for their scrupulous observance of religious minutia while they neglected weightier matters (vv23–28), and for their feigned veneration of the prophets (even though they were the sons of those who killed the prophets, and persecuted the prophets sent to them) (vv29–36). Jesus concluded with a lament over Jerusalem in which He expressed that He had desired to gather them together as a hen gathers her chicks, but because they had rejected Him, they would be desolate until they were ready to believe in Him (vv37–39).

JESUS' MESSAGES TO HIS DISCIPLES

Most of Jesus' messages were for His disciples; one of the most famous ones is called the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1). Jesus began this message with a series of sayings that came to be called the Beatitudes (vv2–12); each saying begins with the word "Blessed", which means "fortunate" or deeply and substantially happy. ***The Beatitudes revealed the character qualities of those with genuine faith.*** Jesus also compared His disciples to salt and light in the world; as salt and light influence whatever they come into contact with, Jesus' disciples are to have a godly influence on the world to the glory of God (vv13–16). Jesus then explained that He had not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (v17). Jesus did exactly that—fulfilled the whole Law (vv18–19)—by His sinless life and atoning death. This then made it possible for His perfect righteousness to be imputed to all who—by God's grace—have faith in Him (see Rom 3:21–26); only then will they have a righteousness that "exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Matt 5:20). Jesus then explained that the Law is not just about outward obedience but is a matter of the heart. Jesus recalled the law that said, "You shall not murder" (v21), but then explained that anyone angry with another is "liable to judgment" (v22) and one should do everything possible to reconcile with others (vv23–26). The Law prohibited the act of adultery, but Jesus taught that lust is also sin (vv27–28)—one should do whatever it takes to keep from sinning (vv29–30). Jesus taught His disciples that they should not divorce their spouses (vv31–32), they should not take oaths lightly but always give an honest and truthful answer (vv33–37), they should not seek revenge but even let themselves be treated unfairly to keep the peace (vv38–42), and they should love their enemies (vv43–44) because this reflects how God treats everyone (vv45–47). The standard Jesus taught was perfection (v48), but the only one who lived up to the standard was Jesus Himself.

Jesus then taught about certain acts of piety and how they are to be done: they ought not to be done hypocritically or "to be seen" by others, but only in secret before the "Father who is in heaven" (6:1). The giving of alms needs to be done for the benefit of

the needy and in secret and not for show (vv2–4). Praying is not to be done to be noticed by others, but in sincere dependence on God (vv5–8). Jesus taught His disciples a pattern for prayer (vv9–15). Fasting is not to be done so that others would notice, but with sincere devotion (vv16–18). Jesus taught His disciples not to be overly concerned about security in this life (vv19–21), but to keep their focus ("eyes") pure ("healthy," "full of light"; vv22–23), and that they must serve God, not money (v24). Jesus taught that they should not worry about things ("do not be anxious") (vv25,31,34), but should trust that God will provide all the necessities of life (vv25–32). Jesus commanded His disciples to seek God and His righteousness each and every day (vv33–34). Jesus warned His disciples not to be self-righteously judgmental of others but to be self-aware and appropriately self-critical (7:1–5). Jesus told His disciples to be careful when dealing with others who might not receive them kindly (v6). Jesus assured His disciples that all they needed to do was ask, seek, and knock if they were in need because the Father would provide for them (vv7–11). Jesus taught His disciples, "whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them" (v12). Then, Jesus warned His disciples that the way to eternal life is narrow (vv13–14) and to be wary of false prophets who looked harmless and whose teaching seemed healthy, but they were not harmless or healthy (vv15–20). Jesus warned His hearers that not everyone who called Him "Lord" would enter the kingdom of heaven (vv21–23) and that only the life ("house") built on Jesus' teaching will prosper (vv24–27). Matthew recorded that this teaching of Jesus "astonished" the crowd because He spoke with authority (vv28–29). Jesus gave His disciples many other messages of instruction throughout His ministry (for example, 18:1–35).

JESUS' MESSAGE OF THE FUTURE FOR THE NATION

In a sermon He delivered on the Mount of Olives (just east of the temple mount in Jerusalem) (24:3a), Jesus taught His disciples important truths about the end times and His second coming. Following His lament over Jerusalem (see 23:37–39), Jesus' disciples asked Him about the future and "the end of the age" (24:3b; here Jesus appears to be speaking to His disciples as members of the Jewish nation, Israel). Jesus warned them that many would come in His name, but they should not be misled (vv4–5). Then He told them that "birth pains" would come (v8)—wars, international strife, natural disasters (vv6–7; these "birth pains" correspond to the seal judgments of Revelation 6). Jesus warned them (as members of the Jewish nation, Israel) that "tribulation" is coming for the nation (Matt 24:9–14; speaking of the Tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel; see Dan 9:24–27); this would include "the abomination of desolation" (Matt 24:15; see Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Jesus' warnings continued (Matt 24:16–28) and He informed them that "Immediately after the tribulation" (v29a) great celestial manifestations will announce the second coming of "the Son of Man" (vv29b–31). Jesus taught His disciples that these things will surely come to pass (vv32–35; the lesson of the fig tree), but that no one knows the exact time of His coming (v36). Jesus taught that His second coming will be as unexpected as the Flood was to those in Noah's day (vv37–39) or as a thief in the night (vv40–43). Because it will be unexpected (v44b), all must be ready (v44a). Jesus ended His sermon with a series of parables and a conclusion (see Matt 24:45–25:46).

LESSON SUMMARY

Jesus warned the crowds against the Pharisees' hypocrisy and pronounced seven woes on the leaders for burdening others, seeking honor, and neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness. He lamented over Jerusalem's rejection of the truth. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught the Beatitudes, called the disciples salt and light, fulfilled the Law through obedience of the heart, and instructed on genuine piety, trust, non-judgment, and building life on His words. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus urged constant readiness through parables, described end-time events, birth pains, the great Tribulation, and His glorious second coming.

Personal Preparation

The following section is provided for you to use as a devotional. This will help you prepare for your upcoming Generations of Grace lesson time. *Check off your progress as you go.*

- ☐ **PRAY** for wisdom to understand what you are about to read and to effectively teach the lesson.
- ☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth.
- ☐ **IDENTIFY** this week's central truth along with the transition, key texts, and key verse(s) from this lesson's title page.
- ☐ **READ** this week's key texts from Scripture and choose which passages you want to read aloud to the children during your lesson time. Record on the right hand page under **READ**.
- ☐ **STUDY** the commentary and identify the italicized sentences to summarize the lesson and central truth below.

- ☐ **SUMMARIZE** your notes from above into the **LESSON OUTLINE** on the right hand page. Add any additional questions that you want to reference while teaching your lesson (one question provided per point).
- ☐ **PREPARE** your activity, craft, or coloring page for this week's lesson by visiting our website's additional resources page. Select the introduction, illustration, or application that you would like to use in your classroom along with any visual aid you may decide to use while teaching.
- ☐ **PLAN** your music time by choosing songs that pertain to this week's narrative theme. Check the additional resources on our website for recommendations.
- ☐ **RE-WRITE** this week's spotlight on the gospel in your own words on the teaching outline under **CONCLUDE** on the right hand page.
- ☐ **PRAY** about how you can apply this lesson to your life and that you would communicate the central truth and spotlight on the gospel clearly in your lesson.

Additional Resources
gracecurriculum.org

Teaching Outline

This section is designed to be used as a clean copy of your notes for teaching the lesson. Follow the teaching outline below as a step-by-step guide during your Sunday School lesson.

☐ **PRAY** with your class that the children would understand the central truth and gospel message, and that you would teach the children effectively.

☐ **REVIEW** last week's lesson and the central truth to begin your lesson.

☐ **INTRODUCE** this week's lesson and the central truth using the selected introduction, illustration, or application from our additional resources page.

☐ **READ** the key texts from Scripture you selected that connect to the central truth.

☐ **TEACH** your class using your summarized notes and questions from the **LESSON OUTLINE**. The points provided are the main headers from the commentary. Use the visual aid you selected and always connect your lesson back to the central truth.

LESSON OUTLINE

1. **JESUS' INDICTMENT OF THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS LEADERS (MATTHEW 23:1–39)**
   - Why did Jesus say it was important to be humble and do what is right?

2. **JESUS' MESSAGES TO HIS DISCIPLES (MATTHEW 5:1–7:29)**
   - In the Sermon on the Mount, what did Jesus teach about how we should treat others, even our enemies?

3. **JESUS' MESSAGE OF THE FUTURE FOR THE NATION (MATTHEW 24:1–25:46)**
   - How should people prepare for Jesus' return, since no one knows exactly when it will happen?

☐ **CONCLUDE** this week's lesson with the spotlight on the gospel and tie it into the central truth and the lesson you just taught.

☐ **PRAY** for the children hearing this lesson that they would be saved and follow the LORD.