

Gift of a Promise: His Word and His Body

Lesson 7

Unit Two

The Master Teacher

Here I Am, Lord

Lord, open our eyes to the true meaning of your powerful teaching. Your words are life-giving and life-changing. We know that the Kingdom of Heaven can be realized here on earth when we live and breathe what you taught. Help us be true disciples by believing deeply and living what we believe. Amen.

The Sermon on the Mount

This well-known event features many of Jesus' best-known teachings on prayer, fasting, charity, loyalty, generosity and a lot of very specific advice on what it means to aim for perfection in the heavenly model of God himself: to be "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."



His earthly ministry had only recently begun with his formal baptism by John (the Baptist or Forerunner). Jesus had been travelling and teaching throughout the province of Galilee.

Included as well are the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, considered the most profound insight into what it means to be a true disciple, a true follower of Christ.

The Beatitudes: From Letter of the Law to Spirit (Matthew 5: 3-11)

These amazing "guidelines for Christian living" might sound difficult at first. But if we remember Jesus' own words "I have come to fulfill the law not to destroy it," then it's easier to see that these are all a matter of taking rules and regulations deeper – to the next level. It's about absorbing godly living right into your heart and acting accordingly. Here's a rewording of these 8 beatitudes that might make it simpler to understand.

1. Depend on God. Don't let material things get in the way of loving God and others.
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Share other people's sorrows and joys. Don't set yourself apart from others.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
3. Learn to be gentle with people and things. Don't try to get your way by violence or bullying.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
4. Work hard to make sure that all people are treated justly. Do what you can to change unjust conditions.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be fulfilled.
5. Forgive others and ask their forgiveness.

Let compassion, not anger, rule your life.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

6. Turn your attention only toward what is good and right. Be faithful to God and God's ways.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

7. Work to bring people together. Don't contribute to quarrels and fights. Look for ways to solve problems peacefully.

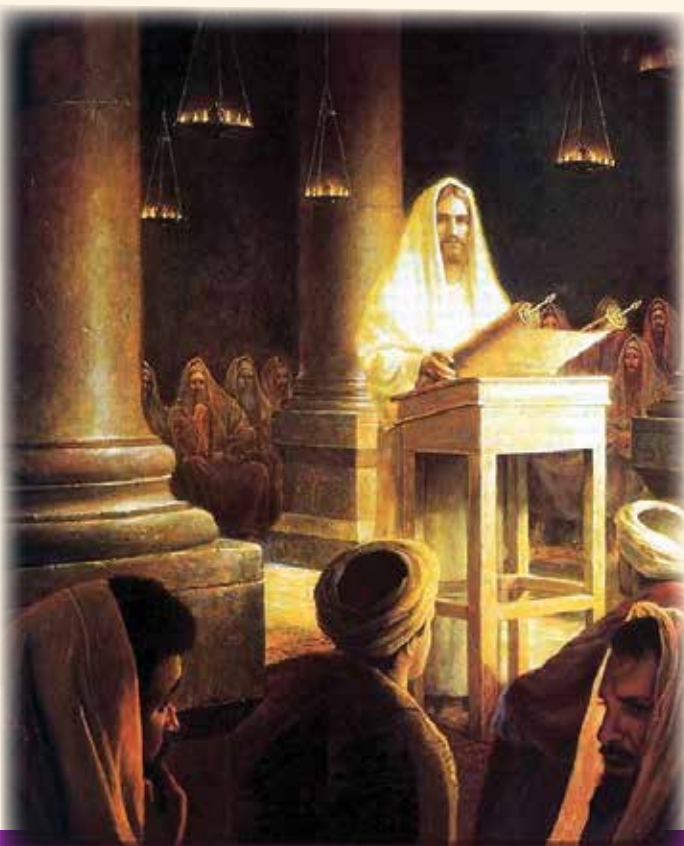
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

8. In difficult times, keep trusting in God and standing up for what is right.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The Master Teacher

The greatest teachers breathe life into their lessons and in doing so they inspire and challenge others. Jesus was the Master Teacher in his time and remains a role model for every teacher of Christianity. Jesus not only taught lovingly but imparted a message that actually offers us the key to happiness. Most importantly, Jesus walked his talk—meaning that he not only taught the people of his time, but showed them by his example how to live. He taught that the Kingdom of God is



realized when people live in peace, righteousness and joy in the Holy Spirit.

One way of thinking about the Kingdom of God is with the phrase “*God first.*” In Armenian, that’s “*arach Asdvadz.*” This occurs when God reigns over people’s hearts and minds, and actions. When it’s “*God first*” it does not mean that the individual person disappears or is not important. What it does mean is that people regularly seek what God wants them to do with their lives and then they do it. Often though, the messages around us say, “*it’s all about me.*”

- Where do you see signs of “it’s all about God” and “it’s all about me” in our culture?
- Can you think of any characters on TV, sports figures, or other famous people who are living out “it’s all about God” the best they can?
- Can you think of people who live out “it’s all about me”?



It's All About God vs. It's All About Me

Look up the verses in Matthew and complete these famous teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. Under **It's All About Me**, write how someone would turn this around to his or her point of view. See the first example.

It's All About God

1. Matthew 5:3. Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; _____
2. Matthew 5:5. Blessed are the meek; _____
3. Matthew 5:10. Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires; _____
4. Matthew 5:38-39. You have heard it said "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" but I say to you _____
5. Matthew 5:43-44. You have heard it said "You shall love your neighbors and hate your enemies" but I tell you: _____
6. Matthew 6:19-20. Do not store up treasures for yourself on earth, _____
7. Matthew 6:34. Do not worry about tomorrow, for _____
8. Matthew 7:21. Not everyone who calls me 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven but only he _____

It's All About Me

Example:

1. Happy are those who are materially rich for everything they want belongs to them
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Make a list of things that you would like to do or purchase if you had all the money you wanted.

What about you...are you ready to live in God's upside-down kingdom? In the famous Sermon on the Mount Jesus speaks about life in a way that startled his listeners. Many thought it was a sign of God's blessing to be rich, powerful and content. They thought it was justified to respond to violence and oppression with violence and oppression.

Jesus' words continue to challenge us even today. Christianity is not always easy but it is the only way for all people to live as children of God. The challenge for us is to see life more and more the way God does, and then try our best to live that vision.

What do you think Jesus meant when he said ... "for where your treasure is, there is where your heart will be also"? What does that say about the list you came up with above?

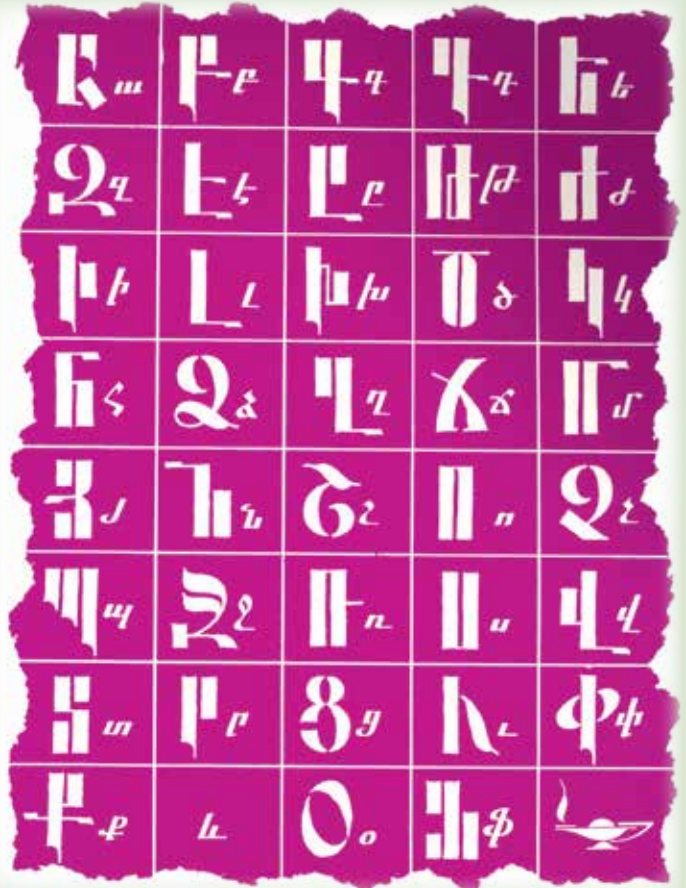


Our Armenian Way

Jesus knows that your *heart* will naturally determine where you put your effort. And so, Jesus wants you to labor for treasures in heaven so that your head, heart and soul will be in heaven, not in the stuff you own or your bank account.

The Armenian Church has made just this kind of investment on our behalf. Through the insightful dedication and contributions of our ancestors, the Armenian alphabet was created, allowing for the translation of the Holy Bible into the Armenian language. Today, despite centuries of trials and tribulation, our ancient faith and culture remain vital wellsprings in the life of the Armenian people. Additionally, the Bible has remained the unparalleled standard for Armenian language and literature and the source of inspiration for original creative works, which directly affected nearly every form of creative expression.

Each of us are rightful heirs to the deposit our ancestors made on our behalf—but, in order to receive our share, we must desire it with our heart!



Sermon on the Mount Word Search

D B I Q P B D E T R O F M O C
 I R L W E R E J O I C E W I L
 N A D E R H E A V E N F F N U
 S S E N S U O E T H G I R H F
 U D H W E S M R Q I L S Q E I
 L R E H C A E T O L T Z V R C
 T A V I U S U D E Y O U Y I R
 P W Z X T M O D G N I K D T E
 P E A C E M A K E R S L R E M
 J R N O D P R O P H E T S M S



beatitudes
 blessed
 comforted
 filled
 heaven
 inherit
 insult
 kingdom

merciful
 peacemakers
 persecuted
 prophets
 rejoice
 reward
 righteousness
 teacher

5. Teach or read **The Nicene Creed**. Then distribute Liturgy books and read through the Havadamk as a group. Now write the word Nicene Creed on the board and draw a box around it. Call on students (this can be done with their Liturgy books now closed or open for reference; you might start with them closed and then – if students are stumped – have them open) to come up and write words or simple phrases from the Creed around it. (i.e. “Jesus is God; Church; one baptism, etc.) Stop when all important concepts are on the board. Review them. 10 min.
6. Then ask students to start writing the Creed (**Our Armenian Way**) in their own words. Stop after five minutes and simply discuss. 10 min.
7. Conclude with the closing prayer on the top of page 47 in the Student Text which is adapted from the prayer the priest recites at the end of the Havadamk. 5 min.

Unit Two: Gift of a Promise: His Word and His Body

Session 7: The Master Teacher

Key Concepts

1. The Ten Commandments exemplify a foundational stage of moral living, the “letter of the Law.”
2. The Beatitudes personify the New Covenant – the “spirit of the Law” which focuses on the attitudes of our hearts, rather than specific actions.
3. The Kingdom of God is realized when people live in peace, righteousness and joy.
4. In a collection of his teachings that have come to be known as “The Sermon on the Mount,” our Lord taught the epitome of discipleship.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Learn about the teachings of Jesus in “the Sermon on the Mount.”
2. Review the Beatitudes in a Bible charades game.
3. Explore the meaning of the Beatitudes.
4. Complete a reflection exercise comparing a God-centered world with a me-centered world.
5. Identify the ‘things’ they would buy if money were no object, and what this says about “treasure” as Jesus defines it.
6. Explore the faith treasures of the Armenian Church in a display, especially the role of the alphabet in transmitting the faith.
7. Complete a Word Search on the Beatitudes.

Materials Needed

Prepared Bible Charades strips (using template from the back of this manual; see procedure #2) in a paper bag or box
 Desk display items: Prints or pictures of the Armenian Alphabet, Bible. Samples of Armenian poetry, art, books, khachkars, religious artifacts, etc.

Procedure

1. Have the display items on your desk. If students have questions as they come in and look them over, comment that these are some of the Armenian “treasures” expressing the strong faith of the Armenian people over the centuries. Pray the opening prayer together. 5 min.
2. Read the **Sermon on the Mount**. Segue with “Let’s review these powerful insights of Jesus’ principles that can help us live the deepest, most meaningful life by playing a game you all know well, charades – “Beatitudes charades.” Place the cards face-down in a pile. Also write on the board the phrases “Blessed are” and “for.”

Begin by asking the students to read Matthew 5: 1-12 silently. Divide the class into two teams (or play with individual volunteers with the entire class guessing) and have them take turns drawing a Beatitude out of the

bag. Explain that the student should then perform the phrase as a charade for his or her team to guess. Draw the students' attention to the phrase "Blessed are" and "for" on the board and mention that the performer does not need to include those phrases in the charade. You can start each charade with "Blessed are" and when that is guessed, say "for." Once the first team has guessed its phrase, call a representative from the second team to act out a phrase (or continue to call on individual volunteers). 15 min.

3. Discuss the meaning of the Beatitudes in **The Beatitudes: From Letter of the Law to Spirit**. 5 min.

4. Read **The Master Teacher** and discuss the questions. Be prepared with examples and ideas of your own.

5. Have students complete the sentences in **It's All About God** by looking up the verses. Answers:

1. the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them!
2. for they will inherit the earth.
3. the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.
4. if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him.
5. love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
6. but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
7. tomorrow will worry about itself.
8. who does the will of my Father in Heaven.

Then have them imagine the **It's All About Me** responses. Discuss answers. Possible answers: 2. Blessed are the arrogant; they will impress people and get what they want, 3. Happy are those who deny their faith to save themselves; at least they will live longer, 4. Yes, it will make you feel a lot better! 5. Hating your enemies is a good thing; they deserve it, 6. Really, it's the only place where treasures count, so go for it, 7. there are lots of other things to worry about! 8. but it can't hurt to keep up the charade! 10 min.

6. Have students list items they would buy. Ask for volunteers to share their list. Continue the reading and discuss question. 10 min.

7. Re-examine the Armenian "Treasures" you have on your desk as you read or teach **Our Armenian Way**. Enjoy the **Sermon on the Mount Word Search**. End by reading the Beatitudes again by dividing the students into two groups, one group will read "...Blessed are ...," the other will read the response..."for..." 15 min.

Sermon on the Mount Word Search

