

Devotional for January 25, 2026

This is written in such a way that you can either do it on your own or with a group of people.

Introduction:

- We're going to use Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" in Matthew 5-7 as our sermon for today. It only takes about 10-12 minutes to read, so it's probably an abridged collection or summary of Jesus' teachings rather than a complete, full-length sermon of his, but it's packed with practical guidance on how to live according to the ways of Christ and his "upside-down kingdom," which is a term we sometimes use to describe how Jesus' kingdom appears to operate in a way that is upside-down or reversed from the way earthly societies normally operate. In case it's helpful to know what to listen for as you read through this message from Jesus, here's a very basic overview:
 - **Matthew 5** introduces the upside-down nature of his kingdom in which ultimate blessing comes to those who seem to be the least in this world rather than those who are the greatest in this world. Most of the chapter, however, focusses on what true righteousness looks like, and one thing that may have stood out to Jesus' audience was that righteousness wasn't attained through merely following the Old Testament commands but rather through being inwardly pure.
 - **Matthew 6:1—7:12** also highlights the upside-down nature of Jesus' kingdom by highlighting additional practical teachings on what it looks like to live with an eternal perspective focused on the kingdom of heaven rather than living with a normal earthly perspective.
 - **Matthew 7:13-27** ends Jesus' message with a series of final warnings that help drive home the eternal significance and eternal consequences of following—or not following—Jesus' teachings.

Scripture reading:

- Matthew 5-7 (To listen to it like a sermon, you could consider listening to an audio recording of Matthew 5-7 or even watching this video reenactment dubbed into English:
 - https://youtu.be/QbYzEnYmATM?si=hxPYeuS0m4Qe-mf_&t=1028

Possible questions to ponder/discuss:

- Which of these teachings of Jesus do you think are the most at odds with the beliefs of non-Christians in our society today?
- How does having faith in Jesus and his eternal kingdom affect one's ability to live out Jesus' teachings in Matthew 6-8?
- Which of these teachings do you personally struggle with the most?
- What do you think are the primary factors that make it difficult for you to follow those teachings? (Habit, fear, past experiences, earthly mindset, peer pressure, apathy, other?)
- What practical steps could you take to train yourself to live with more of an eternal and "upside-down" perspective as Jesus taught?

Pray