

### **We live a world that seems to be driven by hate, with Xtians getting caught up in it**

- Xtians should be able to transcend the political and social strife of our day
- we continue in our exhortation to Xtians to return to the core teachings of Christianity.
- it is our desire to provide a scholarly treatment of Jesus' tour de force, the SM. The version in Luke is known as the SP
- We will present background material weekly until complete, reserving time to expound

### **First installment of background material is How to approach the text**

Sermon on the Mount is more than a Xtian text, it is a world text that even to modern readers,

- even to non-Christians, even to non-theists, is universally recognized as awe inspiring.
- As one writer put it: *"their long tradition in Christian and even in world literature has dignified them to an extent that modern readers cannot escape."*
- These sermons may seem like nothing more than the simple teachings of Jesus, but as one further explores these texts, the richness and inexhaustibility of these words become apparent.

**Studying these texts**, with the appropriate guides, reveals layers of complexity and mystery, each new discovery opening innumerable new veins to be tapped, the complexity being irreducible, with no end in sight.

### **The text is of the sermon is recorded by the Matthew the evangelist**

- The Sermon on the Mount has been preserved and became world literature along with the Gospel of Matthew and the New Testament

### **The Sermon on the Mount and Sermon on the Plain have Judaic origins**

- Jesus of Nazareth, is assumed to be the author and speaker
- the brand of Judaism produced may be called The Jesus Movement
- The intent of the sermons is to formulate an epitome of the teachings of Jesus for the purpose of instructing those who have joined the movement, the "disciples."
- The Sermon on the Mount sums up the essentials for disciples to keep in mind

### **All the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount are Jewish in theology and cultural outlook**

- It ended up recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, canonized as Christian text in the NT

### **The Sermon on the Plain ended up recorded in the Gospel of Luke**

- The Sermon on the Plain is a product of the same branch of the Jesus movement but serves a different purpose and function, while basically the same theology
- The cultural outlook is Greek rather than Jewish, which can be said of the two gospels

### **While Matthew primarily targeted a Jewish audience, Luke targeted a Gentile audience**

- The sermons in their own way are designed to establish an identity for the disciples within both the Jewish and Greek religious and cultural environment
- For this reason, some Jewish and Greek presuppositions are confirmed and rejected
- Both adaptation and polemic against some forms of Judaism and of Greek culture

### **On the whole**

- The Sermon on the Mount is more pro-Jewish, Sermon on the Plain is more pro-Greek
- One purpose is for catechetical material with consider the different cultural and religious backgrounds, as noted by church father Gregory of Nyssa *Great Catechetical Oration*
- And in the conceptual foundations of the sermons both pay attention to Greek religion though the references are mostly apologetic and polemic

### **The differences in emphasis are not exclusive,**

- but their respective purposes are clearly formed with presumed audiences in mind
- For this reason it is concluded that in spite of differences, both sermons are from the same branch of the Jesus Movement.

### **On the one hand, the Sermon on the Mount involves issues of Jewish religion**

- Attractive to Jewish readers realizing the teachings are part of their own religion thoughts which has not extended to the Gospel of Matthew or the NT as a whole with regards to the relationship between the Sermon on the Mount and Jewish scholarship
- The history of Jewish scholarship shows that this text has its own peculiar status apart from the Gospel of Matthew and the NT as a whole

### **On the other hand, the discussion of Greek cultural and religious phenomena has meant**

- That since the times of the ancient Christian church, learned fathers and philosophers have considered the teachings of both sermons
- Even in modern times, philosophers, political theorists are challenged by the teachings law historians have always discussed the legal and ethical issues of the sermons as part of serious legal debates

### **The influences of the Sermon transcends Judaism and Christianity, even Western Culture**

- The sermons have a universalistic appeal so that influences of Islam or Gandhi should not be a surprise, the sermons never were the sole property of the
- Christian churches and traditions, but have and still has separate histories within non-Xtian religions with the most prolific history within Judaism

### **The Sermon of the Mount serves as a mirror reflecting the state of the Church**

- The sermons are known only because of their canonization in the NT elevated especially the Sermon of the Mount by Augustine, to the high level of authority it has since enjoyed

### **Yet it exposes the wide contrast between the authority attributed to the sermons**

- With the reality of common church life and the history of the church
- This discrepancy has not escaped keen observers both within and outside the church
- Ideological critics have always used the Sermon on the Mount as their main weapon for pointing out hypocrisy and contradictions of the Christian religion itself which speaks to our premise that Xtianity has been perverted to a religion of empire

**The sermons have been used to justify schisms to start new movements**

- Even to those who remain faithful to their church, the sermon has and still serves as a reminder and resource in times of distress, confusion, and compromise to cultural behavior incompatible with the Christian faith

**The Sermons are not easy, except the superficial, religious or secular**

- The sermons are concerned with life, to enrich lives, live life full with meaning and with responsibility

**Our intent is to exhort Xtians to get back to the core teachings of Xtianity**

- To challenge brand chauvinism and lack of unity in the church
- To wake Xtians up to the fact that they have been successfully pandered to by politicians and by bizarre theologies that promote certain group identities over others

**We rebuke the current day practice by Xtians of participating in viscous contention**

- The practice of anathematizing and dehumanizing political and religious opponents
- Attaching hate, blame, the desire to have opponents disgraced and to be hurt
- While coveting love, praise, gain, and fame for ourselves and our own
- This disfunction only fan the flames of hate, anger, envy, covetousness, and violence

**It is our intent that the diligent study of the Sermon and the Mount leads Xtians**

- To separate themselves from the religions of empire dressed up as Xtianity in name only
- To rediscover interdependent compassion for fellow human also made in God's image
- That leads to communion with God and ultimate happiness, even amid suffering

**Reading**