

THE GOOD LIFE

Lessons
from the
sermon
on the
mount



“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.”

- Matthew 5:43-45 -

THE GOOD LIFE

What does it mean to live a good life? Our culture seems to have plenty of answers. The good life is success, comfort, security. It's having enough money to do what you want, enough freedom to be who you want, and enough recognition to feel like you matter. It's about curating a life that looks full and feels satisfying. And yet—so often—it doesn't deliver.

We can have more than any generation before us and still feel restless, anxious, or empty. We can chase happiness and find it slipping through our fingers. The good life, as it's commonly defined, can leave us asking: is this really it, or is there something more?

Jesus speaks into that question. In Matthew 5–7, often called The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus paints a very different picture of the good life. It's not built on success, status, or self-expression. It's not about putting ourselves first or chasing whatever feels right in the moment. Instead, Jesus describes a life shaped by humility, mercy, purity, trust, and wholehearted devotion to God.

At first glance, his vision can feel upside down—even unrealistic. Blessed are the poor in spirit? Love your enemies? Seek first God's kingdom? And yet Jesus insists that this is the path to true flourishing. Not a restricted life, but a rich one. Not a diminished life, but a deeply rooted and fruitful one. A life that is whole, aligned, and anchored in God.

Over these next seven weeks, we'll explore what Jesus teaches about life in God's kingdom. As we do, we'll be challenged to examine the assumptions we've absorbed from our culture—and invited to consider a better way. Because according to Jesus, the good life isn't found in chasing more. It's found in a life shaped, grounded, and satisfied in him.

In Christ,

Rev'd Scott Windred

Holy Trinity Anglican Church Kawana Waters



Warming up:

What do you think of when you hear the phrase 'the good life'?

Read: Matthew 5:1-16

1. Where is Jesus? Who is he with? What is he doing?
2. What would it have been like to be with Jesus in this moment?
3. What does it mean to you to be 'blessed'?
4. Vv.3-10 are often called the 'Beatitudes'. Which ones stand out to you?
5. What do Jesus' Beatitudes tell us about his vision of the 'good life'?
6. What do the Beatitudes tell us about persecution?
7. How can we care for persecuted Christians today?
8. Why does Jesus call his listeners 'the salt of the world'? What is salt used for? What does this have to do with the good life?
9. How can we encourage one another to stay 'salty'?
10. How do you think the people around Jesus would have reacted to his word here?
11. Why does Jesus call his listeners 'the light of the world'? What does light do? What does this have to do with the good life?
12. Are you ever tempted to stop God's light shining from you? How?
13. Have you ever seen someone glorify their heavenly Father in the way they live? What was special about how they embraced the good life?
14. How can we encourage one another to let God's shine out from us?

Rubber hits the road:

Live out a Beatitude this week. Pick one of the Beatitudes (or as many as you like) and ask God to help you live out this quality. For instance you might pick out 'blessed are the peacemakers', then spend time each day asking God to help you become a peacemaker. Be warned: God may just give you opportunities to stretch yourself and grow.



Warming up:

How far have you gone to get something you wanted before? Was it a reasonable use of your resources? Why/why not?

Read: Matthew 5:17-32

1. When Jesus says that he has 'come to fulfil the law and the prophets' what does he mean?
2. If Jesus fulfils the law and prophets does that mean we don't need to do anything? What does Jesus say here about that?
3. Jesus indicates that to enter the kingdom of heaven our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees. Does that mean we must work our way into salvation?
4. Consider how Jesus says 'you have heard it said' and then says 'but I tell you'. What does it mean for Jesus to talk this way?
5. Why does Jesus equate murder with anger and insults here?
6. When we have something against our brother or sister what should we do? Why is it important to do it quickly?
7. Jesus also equates the entertaining of lust in the mind with adultery. Which of the Ten Commandments could we apply this logic to?
8. Does Jesus really mean that we should gouge our eyes out? If not, what is he trying to tell us here?
9. In a baptism service, the candidate for baptism is asked: 'Do you repent of your sins'? How could this passage relate to that question?
10. The fires of hell refers to Gehenna, the place of God's final judgment against human sin and wickedness. Does Jesus include this here to scare us into obedience?

Rubber hits the road:

These are hard teachings that are difficult to obey. What hope do we have for salvation? How does that equip and encourage us to obey Jesus? How far should we go to remove sin from our lives to obey Jesus?



Warming up:

Think of a relationship in your life that is strong and life-giving. What do you think makes that relationship work so well?

Read: Matthew 5:33–48

1. Jesus teaches about keeping our word. Why do you think honesty and integrity are so foundational to healthy relationships?
2. Jesus says, 'let your 'Yes' be yes, and your 'No,' no'. What might this look like in everyday life (work, family, church)?
3. The idea of 'turning the other cheek' can feel confronting. What do you think Jesus is challenging in us with this teaching?
4. When have you seen retaliation make a situation worse? How might responding with grace change the outcome?
5. Jesus speaks about going the extra mile and giving to those who ask. How does generosity shape the way we relate to others?
6. Jesus calls us not just to love neighbours, but enemies as well. Why is this both so difficult and so important?
7. What is the difference between loving someone and liking them? How might Jesus be calling us to act toward people we struggle with?
8. Jesus says, 'be perfect... as your heavenly Father is perfect'. How do these teachings reflect the heart and character of God?

Rubber hits the road:

Who is one person in your life right now where God might be calling you to take a step toward 'good relationship'; whether through honesty, forgiveness, grace, or love? What is one practical thing you can do this week?



Warming up:

If someone was to ask you if you were religious, how would you respond?

Read: Matthew 6:1-18

1. In v.1, what warning does Jesus give about practising righteousness?
2. What three examples of 'righteousness' does Jesus focus on here?
3. Which two groups of people does Jesus refer to in this passage?
4. What repeated contrasts does Jesus make between the 'hypocrites' and the ones who truly seek God?
5. What does Jesus suggest the hypocrites are seeking? Do you think their reward is worth having?
6. What does Jesus say should be the motivation for a true disciple?
7. What do you think the reward might be for those who seek God? Do you think their reward is worth having?
8. What do Jesus' instructions about prayer reveal about the kind of relationship God desires with us?
9. In the Lord's Prayer, what does Jesus suggest we should prioritise?
10. What do giving, praying, and fasting 'in secret' teach us about sincerity and devotion in our relationship with God?
11. How might you be tempted to seek approval from people?
12. Which part of the Lord's Prayer do you find most challenging to genuinely pray? Why do you think this is the case?
13. How does living for God's approval (rather than others') change what 'the good life' looks like?

Rubber hits the road:

This week, choose one act of righteousness - giving, serving, or encouraging - and do it intentionally in secret, resisting the urge to tell others. Set aside time each day to pray through the Lord's Prayer slowly. Let each line guide your thoughts and priorities rather than rushing through it. At the end of the week, take time to reflect on how these two practices re-shaped your heart.



Warming up:

If you were offered a bottomless jar of any substance known to man (besides money) what would it be? Why?

Read: Matthew 6:19-34

1. Summarise this passage in one sentence.
2. What two reasons does Jesus give for storing your treasures in heaven?
3. What does storing up treasures in heaven look like today?
4. As a lamp illuminates a room, the eye acts as the window through which light (goodness, truth, God's will) enters the heart and mind, impacting the whole person. How can we maintain healthy eyesight?
5. Have you ever tried to serve two bosses at once? How can we break up with the people, possessions, and powers that try to dominate us?
6. How can you check whether you're serving money or God?
7. What three things do you worry about most in your life?
8. What is Jesus main point about worry in vv.25-27?
9. What do people in our world today worry about when it comes to clothes, food, and drink?
10. How does Jesus call us to change the way we look at clothes, food, and drink?
11. What does it look like to 'seek God's kingdom and his righteousness' first?
12. How can Jesus' words change the way we see the 'good life' today?

Rubber hits the road:

Write down something you're worried about on a piece of paper. Give it to a member of your small group or a trusted friend and ask them to pray about that thing for you for a whole week. Next week reflect on how this changed your levels of worry during the week.



Warming up:

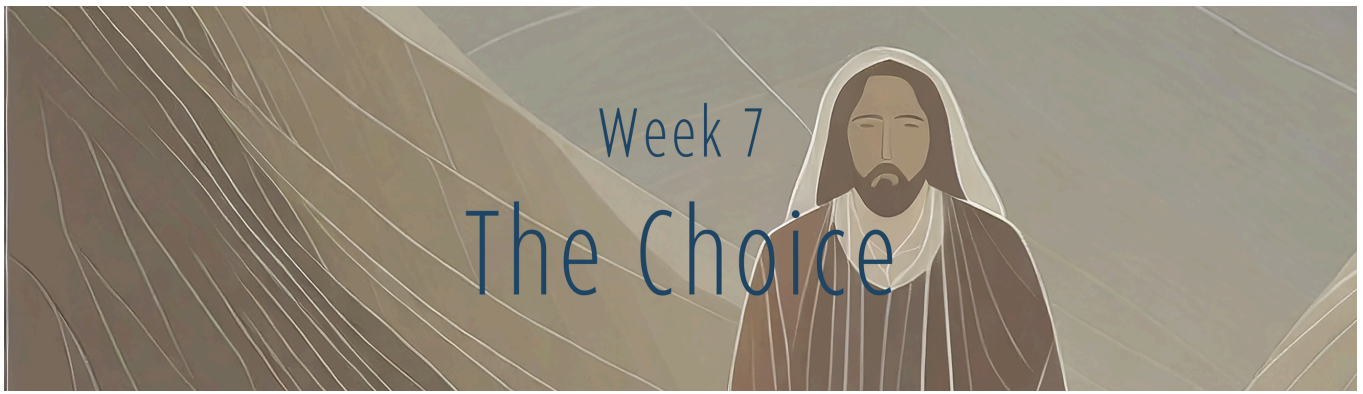
Have you ever heard someone share their 'pearls of wisdom', only to find that they were entirely out of touch?

Read: Matthew 7:1-20

1. Why does Jesus tell us not to judge other? Why are we unfit to be judges?
2. Consider the warning that Jesus gives us in v.2. How would you fare against your own standards?
3. How do we take the plank out of our own eye and guard against hypocrisy? Why is this important to do?
4. Does this passage anticipate situations where judging is possible and necessary? If so, what must we be careful to do? (Hint: v.6)
5. How would you describe the difference between judgement that is godly and appropriate, and judgement that is hypocritical?
6. How can we know when it is the right time and place to warn people about God's judgement? (Hint: v.7)
7. What does God promise to do for those who ask for this wisdom? (see also James 1:5)
8. Why would Jesus shift to talking about false prophets here? What would false prophets have to do with all the above? (see Jer. 6:13-20)
9. How do we know what these people are like?
10. Consider how v. 12, commonly called the 'Golden Rule' sums up all this wisdom. Where does the initiative lie? With us or with others?

Rubber hits the road:

It's so easy for us to point the finger, and it's dangerously easy to do so when we know God's commands. How do we protect ourselves from becoming judgmental? How does this passage teach us to behave towards our neighbours?



Warming up:

Have you ever made a decision that seemed small at the time but ended up having a big impact later? What happened?

Read: Matthew 7:21–29

1. Jesus says not everyone who calls him 'Lord' will enter the kingdom, but only those who do the will of the Father. What is the difference between saying we follow Jesus and actually living it out?
2. Why do you think it's possible for someone to appear religious on the outside but not truly know Jesus?
3. Vv.22-23 are quite confronting. What stands out to you most about Jesus' words here?
4. How do these verses challenge common assumptions about what it means to be a Christian?
5. What is the key difference between the wise and foolish builders?
6. What does it look like in practical terms to 'hear these words of mine and put them into practice'?
7. Jesus says the storms will come to both houses. What kinds of 'storms' do people face in life, and how does a strong foundation in Christ make a difference?
8. The crowds were amazed because Jesus taught with authority. What does it mean for us to recognise and submit to Jesus' authority today?

Rubber hits the road:

Where in your life might you be hearing Jesus' words but not yet putting them into practice? Consider one specific step you can take this week to build your life more firmly on him.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

- Matthew 7:21 -



HOLY SPIRIT
ALGESTER



HOLY TRINITY
KAWANA



GLADSTONE
ANGLICAN CHURCH



stanthorpe
ANGLICAN CHURCH