

THE MESSIAH'S MANIFESTO
Matthew 5–7
Banská Štiavnica, 29th January 2017

ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἦλθεν διακονηθῆναι ἀλλὰ διακονῆσαι καὶ δοῦναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν

Mt 20:28 the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many

νυνὶ δὲ ἀποκατήλλαξεν ἐν τῷ σώματι τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ διὰ τοῦ θανάτου παραστήσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ

Col 1:22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him

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0. INTRODUCTION

- **Mt 7:28-29** ...his teaching made a deep impression on the people ²⁹ because he taught them with authority, unlike their own scribes. (ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων)
- “Manifestos”: *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933). *II* (1973), *III* (2003)
- [BACON] The average thoughtful man (New York, 1902), if asked to define the representative teaching of Jesus, will reply instinctively: *The Sermon on the Mount*.
- [GAEBELEIN *Matthew*] The saddest of all is that many preachers of various evangelical denominations fall back upon it as the most important document of Christendom; for them it seems to become more and more *the Gospel*... → ethics
- SCHULLER, R. *The Be Happy Attitudes: Eight Positive Attitudes that Can Transform Your Life*,

0.1. THE CHRISTIAN: SAVED FROM AND FOR WHAT?

- “God with us” OR “Us with God”?

- a *disciple* → a *follower* → a *Christian* (1Cor 11:1 Be **imitators** of me, as I am of Christ. Mt 10:25 It is enough for the **disciple to be like his teacher**)

0.2. THE MESSIAH – WHY DID HE COME?

- **1 John 3:8** The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.
- **Heb 2:14** he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil.
- **John 18:37** [to Pilate] ...for this purpose I have come into the world – to bear witness to the truth
- **Mt 5:17** "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them
- **Mt 7:24-25** "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

0.3. THE PURPOSE OF A MANIFESTO

- "Manifesto" A public declaration or proclamation, usually issued by or with the sanction of a sovereign prince or state, or by an individual or body of individuals whose proceedings are of public importance, for the purpose of making known past actions, and explaining the reasons or motives for actions announced as forthcoming.¹

[WINKIEL] Short, spirited, and straddling the boundary between theory and practice, the manifesto communicates an experience of crisis and a conceptual break with the past. As its urgent tone pushes ongoing debates and practices to new realms of possibility, it seizes the present moment in order to intervene in history.²

- JUDGMENT → **Mt 7:22-23** **On that day** many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'
- **“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt 5:17-20)**
[SELBIE] – If the Sermon on the Mount is to be regarded as a Manifesto of the Kingdom of God, then these words have a natural place in it. Every new teacher in the world has, so to speak, to find his own footing, and to relate himself to those who have gone before.
- [Stanley Jones] This is not a sermon it is a portrait, **a portrait of Jesus himself**, and of the Father and of the man-to-be.
- [GORE] What is the Sermon on the Mount ? It is **the moral law of the kingdom of Christ**, or in other words it occupies in the New Testament the place which in the Old Testament is occupied **by the Ten Commandments**.

0.4. INTERPRETATIONS

- Clarence BAUMAN *The Sermon on the Mount the Modern Quest for its Meaning*:

The Sermon on the Mount is an enigma to the modern conscience. Many enlightened minds admire what it says without affirming what it means. They assume, albeit regretfully, that its message does not apply to contemporary life and that the ethic of Jesus is therefore essentially irrelevant – a beautiful, irresistible impossibility, a conspiracy to ensure our failure.

(1) Leo TOLSTOY *The Moral Challenge of Literal Interpretation*, (2) Wilhelm HERRMANN *The Sermon on the Mount as Gesinnungsethik*, (3) Leonhard RAGAZ *The Sermon as the Magna Charta of Christian Socialism*, (4) Friedrich NAUMANN *The Irrelevance of an Oriental Impossibility*, (5) Johannes WEISS *The Apocalyptic Understanding of the Sermon*, (6) Albert SCHWEITZER *The Sermon on the Mount as Interim Ethic*, (7) Johannes MULLER *The Sermon as Nature's Law of Humanization*, (8) Otto BAUMGARTEN *The Sermon on the Mount and Contemporary Culture*, (9) Karl BORNHAUSER *A Historicist View of Its Relevance*, (10) Georg Wunsch *Creation Ethic versus Jesus' Ethic*, (11) Carl STANGE *Lutheran Paulinizing Exegesis*, (12) Gerhard KITTEL *The Sermon on the Mount as Praeparatio Evangelica*, (13) Rudolf BULTMANN *The Sermon on the Mount in Existentialist Perspective*, (14) Hans WINDISCH *Historical Exegesis versus Theological Interpretation*, (15) Martin DIBELIUS *The Sermon on the Mount as Eschatological Stimulus*, (16) Dietrich BONHOEFFER *The Sermon on the Mount and Paradoxical Obedience*, (17) Eduard THURNEISEN *Christological Interpretation*, (18) Joachim JEREMIAS *The Sermon on the Mount as Gospel, Not Law*, (19) Walter STADEL *The Cultic Interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount*,

- [ALLISON] "...again and again interpreted Matthew 5-7 as though the chapters were complete unto themselves, as though they constituted a book rather than a portion of a book."
- [GAEBELEIN *Matthew*] A good deal in the sermon on the mount appears mostly in connection with the earth. The meek are to inherit the earth. The church, however, is heavenly.

¹ *Oxford Dictionary*.

² WINKIEL Laura *Modernism, Race and Manifestos*.

- [STURZ] The most commonly held opinion among **dispensationalists** is that the people chiefly concerned in the Sermon on the Mount are those who will be the citizens of the future mediatorial kingdom which is to be established in the earth.
- [SCHWEITZER] How could the doctrinal system of Paul arise on the basis of the life and work of Jesus and the beliefs of the primitive community; and how did the early Greek theology arise out of **Paulinism**?

0.5. PERSONAL APPROPRIATION

- our reaction: "He cannot mean it ...seriously!!!"

[BONHOEFFER] Humanly speaking, we could understand and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand different ways. Jesus knows only **one possibility: simple surrender** and obedience, not interpreting it or applying it, but doing and obeying it.

[Eberhard Arnold] The Sermon on the Mount is the first step on the way of discipleship, and it is of decisive importance to me that our church consider this deeply. If we fully grasp the Sermon on the Mount and believe it, then nothing can frighten us – neither our own self-recognition, nor financial threats, nor our personal weakness.

- Sermon on the *hill* → a metaphor difficulties of *followership*(?)

[CHAMBERS] Beware of placing our Lord as Teacher first instead of Saviour. That tendency is prevalent to-day, and it is a dangerous tendency. We must know Him first as Saviour before His teaching can have any meaning for us, or before it can have any meaning other than that of an ideal which leads to despair. Fancy coming to men and women with defective lives and defiled hearts and wrong mainsprings, and telling them to be pure in heart! What is the use of giving us an ideal we cannot possibly attain? We are happier without it. If Jesus is a Teacher only, then all He can do is to tantalise us by erecting a standard we cannot come anywhere near. But if by being born again from above we know Him first as Saviour, we know that He did not come to teach us only: **He came to make us what He teaches we should be.** *The Sermon on the Mount is a statement of the life we will live when the Holy Spirit is having His way with us.*³

1. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE MANIFESTO

1.1. 5:4-16 PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION (THE BEATITUDES)

- [BETZ p. 93] "Blessed"...The old sources seem to agree on the basic meaning of the term as well: it designates a **state of being that pertains to the gods** and can be awarded to humans postmortem...

1.2. 5:17-6:18 THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- the Law → perfect obedience, image of God (→ creation)
- prayer → perfect trust, friendship

1.3. 6:19-34 THE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WORLD

- **freedom** from idolatry
- the **Kingdom** of God in the world (**Mt 6:33** ...seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.)

1.4. 7:1-29 THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE SERMON

- Judgmental attitudes (do not judge) & discernment (dogs, pigs)
- Against despair (ask, seek, knock!) → the GOLDEN RULE (7:12)
- Warnings: false prophets; formalists; the importance of DOING...

2. THE MESSIAH'S AIMS

2.1. PERFECT HUMANS

- **Mt 5:48** You therefore must **be perfect**, as your heavenly Father is perfect (ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ὡς ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν)
- **Gn 17:1** [to Abraham] Live in my presence, be perfect, (הִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תְּמִים)
- **Eph 5:25-27** ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,²⁶ that he might **sanctify** her, having **cleansed** her by the washing of water with the word,²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that **she might be holy and without blemish.**

2.2. CONSERVATION & GUIDANCE

- **Mt 5:13** "You are the salt of the earth, (τὸ ἅλας τῆς γῆς)

³ CHAMBERS, O. *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount.*

- **Mt 5:14** "You are the light of the world. (τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου)

3. THE CONDITIONS OF ADMISSION FOR TRAINING

- BE SERIOUS!

3.1. THE POOR IN SPIRIT

- **Mt 5:3** Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν)

3.2. DESIRE PERFECTION!

- **Mt 5:6** "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness
- the problem of anthropocentrism (our possibilities are our limits)
- Jesus' teaching as a *whole*!! (do not be bogged down by particulars)

3.3. EXPECT DIFFICULTIES

- the problem of entertainment → get serious!
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- repentance is painful! (2Cor 7)
- **Mt 7:14** For the **gate is narrow** and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

3.4. SURRENDER COMPLETELY

- non-resistance; giving; loving enemies...

4. THE METHODS OF EDUCATION

4.1. JESUS AT THE CENTRE

- **Mt 5:11** "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."
- **Mt 7:21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven

4.2. WHERE TO BEGIN

Matthew 5:3-11

- (1) the poor in spirit; (2) those who mourn (3) the meek → (4) those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.
 - → PASSIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS/JUSTICE
 - **Phil 3:8** I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
 - **Rom 8:15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"
- (5) the merciful (6) the pure in heart (7) the peacemakers → (8) those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake
 - → ACTIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS/JUSTICE
 - **Mt 9:13** I desire mercy, **and not sacrifice**. (ἐλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν)
 - **1Cor 13:5** Love... thinks no evil; (οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν)
- → (9) when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.
 - **Mk 8:38** For if anyone in this sinful and adulterous generation is **ashamed** of me and of my words, the Son of man will also be **ashamed** of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

5. TO REMEMBER

- Salvation means not only getting help from Jesus but also submitting one's life-goals to his.
- The "Kingdom program" of the Sermon on the Mount describes what my life should look like according to Jesus the Messiah.
- The way to start on the journey I must rely completely on the work of the Holy Spirit – for desires, decisions and actions.