

**Re-Forming our Reactions****Matthew 5:38-48****Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 5****October 1-7****THE BIG IDEA**

We have been formed into people who love those who love us back, who lash out at those who do or wish us harm. Jesus calls us to be re-formed to love those who do not love us back, and even those who wish us harm, by giving of ourselves, refraining from retaliation, and resisting the urge to seek revenge. Jesus calls us to enlarge our circle of love to include those who wish us harm. Otherwise, our love is no different than those who don't know God.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).

OR

Discuss: In what ways does our culture promote or celebrate the idea of revenge?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 5:38-48 aloud.

- How does Jesus' call to "love your enemies" and "pray for those who persecute you" challenge our conventional understanding of justice and retaliation?
- We often think of perfection as being without blemish or making no mistakes. In the context of Matthew 5:38-48, how is "perfection" characterized?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What thoughts or questions does this passage bring to mind, either from today's reading or from personal study this week?
- Although the poorest of people in first century Palestine might have only had an inner and outer garment, most people had more than that. In this context, Jesus' example in Matthew 5:40 seems to be hyperbole. To be in a situation where even your shirt is taken off your back, would indicate that *all* your possessions have been taken from you. How does this affect your understanding of what Jesus is teaching in this passage? How might his teaching here be applied to our context today?



- In the time of Jesus, “an eye for an eye” and “a tooth for a tooth” were common Ancient Near Eastern teachings. This “law of retaliation” legalized revenge, as a way to put right what was wrong. But Jesus discouraged personal vengeance. Read Psalm 94:1-3 and Romans 12:17-21. How does God intend to put right what is wrong?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Loving those who do not love you is difficult. Brainstorm together some practical ways you can show love to someone (or a group of people) who does not show love to you.

* A note about unsafe situations

Sometimes the teaching to love your enemies is *misused* to convince those in unsafe or abusive situations to stay in those situations out of “love” for Jesus. This is not what Jesus meant. Just as forgiving someone does not always mean you will be in an intimate relationship with them again, showing love to enemies does not mean that you have to continue to allow someone who is unsafe or abusive to mistreat you. Removing yourself from those situations is often necessary for the health and wellbeing of everyone involved.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take some time to pray as a group for any needs, and for the re-forming of our hearts and minds to be like that of Jesus.



Re-Forming our Generosity
Matthew 6:1-4
Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 6
October 8-14

NOTE

Jesus starts this section of teaching with an overarching principle in Matthew 6:1 and then gives three examples of how to live it out. This week we will identify the general principle and then look at the first example.

THE BIG IDEA

We have been formed to be generous to others in order to get something in return: admiration, attention, appreciation. This is exemplified in the pharisaical practice of giving for the purpose of being seen by other people. Jesus calls us to be re-formed into the kind of generosity that is unselfconscious. This kind of generosity values secrecy (though compare this with Matt 5:16).

OPENING DISCUSSION

Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).

OR

Discuss: Share a situation in our society in which getting something in return for giving (for example, public recognition) is often expected, and why it can be difficult to give of our time, talent, or treasure without recognition.

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 6:1

- What general principle does Jesus give in verse 1? How would you state it in your own words?
- What assumptions is Jesus making?

Read Matthew 6:2-4.

- Jesus uses charitable giving as an example of how people were bringing public attention to their own good deeds. What guidelines does he give to help us live out God-centered generosity?
- What "reward" is Jesus talking about in verse 4? What might Jesus be saying?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What thoughts or questions does this passage bring to mind, either from today's reading or from personal study this week?



- How can we know if we are doing our good works and giving to be seen by others instead of by God? What are some questions we could ask ourselves?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- In theory, the idea of keeping our "acts of righteousness or piety" secret seems like a good idea. But in real life, it can be hard to do!
- In what situations are you most tempted to tell others about the good you do?
- Brainstorm together some practical ways you can put this teaching of Jesus into action.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take some time to pray as a group for any needs, and for the re-forming of our hearts and minds to be like that of Jesus.



Re-Forming our Prayer
Matthew 6:5-18
Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 7
October 15-21

NOTE

Last week we saw that Jesus started his teaching in Matthew 6:1 with an overarching principle - do what is right for God's approval, not the approval of others. He even goes so far as to suggest doing right things in secrecy (6:3). In our passage this week he uses the examples of prayer and fasting as additional examples of what this might look like in real life.

THE BIG IDEA

We have been formed to think that spiritual practices like prayer and fasting are techniques we can use to get what we want. This formation turns prayer and fasting into a performance or a formula. Jesus calls us to be *re-formed* into seeing prayer as a relationship with our Father where we seek his priorities, surrender to his will, seek provision, forgiveness, and protection. And fasting should be done privately, to strengthen our relationship with God.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).

OR

Discuss: This week we're looking at what is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer". Have you been a part of a church tradition that regularly prays the Lord's Prayer? How has this model prayer impacted your own practice of prayer?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 6:5-8 together.

- In verse 7 Jesus says, "And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words." What does this verse tell us about what prayer is and what prayer is supposed to be like?
- In verse 8 we learn that God already knows what we need before we ask. Why then, should we still pray? What does prayer do for our relationship with God?

Read Matthew 6:9-18 together.

- What do you observe about what and how Jesus prays?



DIGGING DEEPER

- Do your private prayers reflect the model that Jesus gave us in the Lord's Prayer (Praise, Petition, Provision, Pardon, Power, and Praise)? Are there specific parts of this prayer model that you tend to leave out or struggle with?
- What would it look like for God's will to be done in the world and in our lives? How might praying "Your will be done" change how we look at difficult situations?
- Have you noticed a connection between forgiving others and your own forgiveness? What does our resistance to forgiving others do to our relationship with God?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Although there are plenty of examples of public prayer in the Bible, here Jesus seems to suggest that much of one's prayer time should be alone. Do you have rich times of prayer with God? If not, what are some ways you can start to build toward that?
- How does giving, praying, and fasting in secret help us move past the righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the law?

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take some time to pray as a group for any needs, and for the re-forming of our hearts and minds to be like that of Jesus.



Missions Sunday
Matthew 28:16-20
October 22 - 28

THE BIG IDEA

This week we are encouraging every DGroup to sign up to serve in some capacity. This could be to serve as a group or as individuals. You may choose to skip your group meeting for this week to make time to do so. You are free to choose how you serve, but the volunteer opportunities we suggested on Sunday are:

- Rotary Food Packing Event on 10/28 at Glenkirk
- Rwanda Missions Trip with African Enterprise in March 2024
- Neighborhood Homework House in Azusa
- Shepherd's Pantry in Glendora
- Drop off used Bibles & Books for GTI Hope at the church office
- Join Threads of Joy on a Thursday morning in Room 22

OPENING DISCUSSION

Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).

OR

Discuss: Have you ever been on a missions trip? Where did you go & what was that experience like?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 28:16-20 together.

- The passage encapsulates Jesus' final instructions to his disciples before ascending to heaven. Reflecting on this "Great Commission," what does it mean for us as individuals and as a community to "make disciples of all nations"?

Read Isaiah 6:8 together.

- How can we cultivate a similar attitude of readiness and willingness to be sent by God in our own lives?
- What are some potential barriers or fears that may hinder our willingness to respond to God's call?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What do you think is the role and purpose of missions within the context of the local church?
- How does engaging in missions contribute to the overall mission of the church?



PUTTING IT TO WORK

Review the list of Glenkirk Mission Partners (GlenkirkChurch.org/outreach/).

- Which ones stand out to you?
- How can you as a group support this mission partner in this season?
- How can we improve and grow in our missions endeavors moving forward? Discuss some practical ways in which our church can actively engage in missions locally, regionally, and globally. Send any suggestions to Pastor Kate: knunneley@glenkirkchurch.org.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Spend time praying for our Missions Partners, and for God to cultivate within us a willingness to be sent by God in various aspects of life.



Re-Forming our Security
Matthew 6:19-34
Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 8
October 29 – November 4

THE BIG IDEA

We have been formed to treasure wealth and material security above all else. Jesus wants to *re-form* us into people who treasure him and the rewards that come from following him above all else. When we treasure Christ and his priorities, our anxiety eases and we are able to see life differently.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).

OR

Discuss: After encouraging his followers to practice their righteousness for the right reason, Jesus moves on to instructions about wealth and worry. What things do we tend to worry about and why? How does it help or hurt?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 6:19-21 together.

- What earthly treasures do people seek to store up?
- What are the heavenly treasures Jesus is talking about? How are these the same and/or different?

Read Matthew 6:24 together.

- How does a person serve God?
- How does a person serve Money? Why can we not serve both?

Read Matthew 6:25-34 together.

- What does Jesus say our life focus should be? What should it not be and why?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What might it mean for you to seek first the kingdom of God?
- What might it mean for our church to do so?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- What has been your biggest struggle when it comes to worrying about material things?
- What are some strategies that can help us defeat worry?



PRAYER REQUESTS

Take some time to pray as a group for any needs, and for the re-forming of our hearts and minds to be like that of Jesus.

**Re-Forming our Judgments****Matthew 7:1-6****Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 9**

November 5-11

THE BIG IDEA

We are formed to become people who are overly harsh with others and overly easy on ourselves. Jesus calls us to develop just judgment that first admits our own faults before pointing out the faults of others. This calls for humility, self-awareness, and continual emotional and spiritual growth. Only then will we be able to speak into other people's lives.

OPENING DISCUSSION

Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).

OR

Discuss: Who is the least judgmental person you know? How does it feel to be around them?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 7:1-6 together.

- What do you think Jesus means by his statement in verse 1?
- How does Jesus' statement in verse 2 challenge your own perspective on judging others?
- How might verse 2 build on what was taught in Matthew 6:12?
- Verse 6 mentions not giving "holy things to dogs" and not casting "pearls before swine". What do you think Jesus is trying to convey with this analogy?

DIGGING DEEPER

- In verse 5, Jesus instructs us to first remove the plank from our own eye before attempting to remove the speck from someone else's eye. What are some practical ways we can apply this principle in our relationships and interactions with others?
- How can we cultivate humility and self-awareness in addressing our own faults and biases?
- In what ways can we balance the command to not judge with the need for discernment and accountability in our relationships and communities?

PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Reflecting on your own life, are there areas where you tend to judge others unfairly? How can you work towards showing more grace and understanding instead?
- Discuss practical ways we can apply Jesus' teachings in this passage in our interactions with others, both inside and outside the church.





PRAYER REQUESTS

Take some time to pray as a group for any needs, and for the re-forming of our hearts and minds to be like that of Jesus.



Re-Forming our Desires
Matthew 7:7-12
Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 10
November 12-18

THE BIG IDEA

We are formed to become people who rely on ourselves. Jesus calls us to be *re-formed* into people who trust God to give us good gifts, because God is good and can be trusted. When we are convinced of God's goodness, we will naturally turn to God for our needs.

OPENING DISCUSSION

1. This is the final week of our 7-week Discipleship Season. What have you learned? What has impacted you the most? Where have you seen God at work?
2. Watch this week's Discussion Video and discuss (GlenkirkChurch.org/Dgroups).
OR
Discuss: What is the best gift you were ever given? Who gave it to you? What made it special?

ENGAGING WITH SCRIPTURE

Read Matthew 7:7-12 together.

- In verses 7 and 8, Jesus tells his disciples to “ask,” “seek,” and “knock”. What do these three words have in common? How are they different from one another?

Read Luke 11:5-13, Luke 18:1-6, & James 4:1-3 together.

- How do these passages inform your view of what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:7-12?

DIGGING DEEPER

- What thoughts or questions does this passage bring to mind, either from today's reading or from personal study this week?
- Matthew 7:11 states that God gives good gifts to those who ask God for them. How do we hold this promise in tension with experiences where we have asked for things and not received them?
- In verse 12 Jesus encourages treating others the way we would like to be treated. This is often referred to as the “Golden Rule”. How does the Golden Rule guide your interactions with people in your daily life?



PUTTING IT TO WORK

- This passage teaches that God is just as concerned with our needs as we are. It also contains the bold promise that if we ask, God will meet our needs. For some of us this promise brings us joy, but for others it causes discomfort. How does this promise make you feel?
- What would you ask God for if you knew God would provide it for you? Take some time to think about this & write it down.

PRAYER REQUESTS

We don't always get what we pray for, and we cannot know for certain why, this side of heaven. But what we can know is that God loves us like good parents love their precious children. God is just as concerned with our needs as we are, and that fact should influence how we pray.

In his "Matthew for Everyone," theologian NT Wright says, "Treat God as a father, and let him know how things are with you! Ask, search and knock and see what happens! Expect some surprises on the way, but don't expect that God will ever let you down. This, indeed, is the underlying message of the whole Sermon on the Mount..."

In the spirit of children coming before their loving parent, take some time as a group to bring before God the requests you wrote down.