

An online portion of *Sermon on the Mount: The Jesus Manifesto* (2008). You may purchase this book online for access to a detailed exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. www.jesuswalk.com/ebooks/manifesto.htm



Appendix 4: Readers Theater Readings for the Sermon on the Mount

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Source: <http://www.jesuswalk.com/manifesto/manifesto-readers-theater-scripts.pdf>

Readers Theater is an approach to reading scripture that I learned from Dr. Barry Liesch of Biola University. These readings require three or four readers. The readings are based on the New International Version, but you'll see that it is not all directly from scripture. It is somewhat interpretative, in the manner that the Amplified Bible is interpretative. Feel free to use it orally in your groups and worship and to reprint enough copies for such at no charge -- just make sure each copy includes the copyright information at the bottom of the page.

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The Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-12

READER 1 Now when he saw the crowds,
READER 2 When he looked at all the people who had gathered to hear him
READER 3 he went up on a mountainside and sat down.
READER 4 He sat down, they sat down
READER 2 His disciples came to him,
READER 3 and they sat down
READER 1 and he began to teach them, saying:
READER 2 Blessed
READER 3 Blessed
READER 2 To be considered honored and fortunate
READER 3 And enriched
READER 4 Yes, enriched
READER 1 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
READER 2 Blessed are those who understand and are aware of their spiritual poverty
READER 1 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven
READER 3 They are citizens of the kingdom
READER 4 God's Kingdom
READER 3 And have the Christ as their King.
READER 1 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
READER 2 Mourn
READER 3 Are grieved with the wicked
READER 4 The wickedness of this world
READER 1 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
READER 2 God himself will soothe away their tears
READER 3 And there shall be no more crying any more

READER 4 Any more

READER 2 for they will be comforted.

READER 1 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

READER 2 Blessed are those who don't push themselves into first place.

READER 3 Blessed are those who aren't violent or self-absorbed

READER 4 Yes, they are blessed

READER 3 Blessed, Jesus says,

READER 1 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

READER 2 Their hunger isn't for me, for more, for much

READER 3 But they thirst to be right with God

READER 4 To be forgiven and reconciled to Him

READER 1 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

 Blessed are the merciful,

READER 2 Blessed are those who show mercy

READER 3 Who can say, "I forgive you,"

READER 1 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

READER 2 They who forgive will be forgiven

READER 3 God will not hold any sin to their account

READER 2 Not one

READER 4 For they will be shown mercy.

READER 1 Blessed are the pure in heart,

READER 2 Those whose heart isn't distracted with many loves

READER 3 But who have a heart with a single love,

READER 4 A love for God

READER 2 A love that consumes their heart and soul

READER 3 And mind and strength

READER 4 A single love

READER 3 A pure love

READER 1 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
 Blessed are the peacemakers,

READER 2 The reconcilers

READER 3 Those who bring together the estranged and help them to become one,

READER 4 Like Jesus did,

READER 3 Yes, like Jesus did

READER 1 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

READER 2 Daughters of God

READER 3 Those who are like God and understand his mission for this world

READER 4 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs
 is the kingdom of heaven.

READER 1 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all
 kinds of evil against you because of me.

READER 2 When they spit on you

READER 3 When they go out of their way to put you down

READER 2 When they see enough of Jesus that they have to either say yes to him or
 reject him outright

READER 3 Say yes to him

READER 4 Or reject him outright

READER 1 Blessed are you when people falsely say all kinds of evil against you
 because of me.

READER 2 Because of me

READER 3 Because of Jesus.

READER 1 Rejoice and be glad,

READER 2 Yes rejoice

READER 3 Be glad

READER 4 Say "Hallelujah"

READER 2 Sing in jubilation

READER 3 Rejoice

READER 1 Rejoice because great is your reward in heaven,

READER 4 In heaven

READER 3 In God's presence

READER 2 for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

READER 3 You receive a prophet's honor

READER 4 You receive Jesus' honor

READER 2 That people see so much of Jesus in you

READER 3 That they get the point

READER 4 That it isn't hidden

READER 2 That they can see what you stand for.

READER 1 Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light (5:11-16)

READER 1 Blessed are you when people insult you,
READER 2 Insult you
READER 3 persecute you
READER 1 Attack you
READER 2 and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
READER 3 Tell lies about you
READER 1 Slander you
READER 2 All because of your association with Jesus
READER 3 Because of Jesus
ALL Rejoice and be glad,
READER 1 Yes, rejoice,
READER 2 because great is your reward in heaven,
READER 3 for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before
you.
READER 1 You are the salt of the earth.
READER 2 Salt of the earth
READER 3 Salt for the world
READER 1 But if the salt loses its saltiness,
READER 2 Its tang,
READER 3 Its distinctive flavor
READER 1 how can it be made salty again?
READER 2 It is no longer good for anything,
READER 3 It's worthless
READER 1 except to be thrown out and trampled by men.
READER 2 Trampled

[pause]

READER 1 You are the light of the world.
READER 2 You are salt
READER 3 You are light
READER 1 You are the light of the world.
READER 2 Light FOR the world
READER 1 A city on a hill cannot be hidden.
READER 2 You can see it from afar off.
READER 1 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl.
READER 2 Instead they put it on its stand,
READER 3 High up
READER 2 In the open
READER 3 and it gives light to everyone in the house.
READER 1 You don't hide a city
READER 2 You don't hide a light
READER 3 Only people who are afraid hide their light
READER 1 Let it shine
ALL Let it shine
READER 1 Let your light shine before men,
READER 2 Before men and women
READER 3 Before your friends and associates
READER 1 Before your school friends
READER 2 And work friends
READER 3 And neighbors
READER 2 And relatives
READER 3 Yes, relatives
READER 2 How about enemies?

- READER 3 Yes, let it shine before your enemies, too
- READER 1 Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds
- READER 2 Your character
- READER 3 Your love
- READER 1 Your unselfishness
- READER 2 Your compassion and kindness
- READER 3 Your good deeds
- READER 1 Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds
and praise your Father in heaven.
- READER 2 Praise your Father
- READER 3 Your light prompts praise
- READER 1 Your saltiness elicits worship
- READER 2 Of your Father
- READER 3 Of their Father
- READER 1 To the glory of God
- READER 2 To His glory
- ALL To His glory!
- READER 1 Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds
and praise your Father in heaven.

Fulfilling the Law (5:17-20)

READER 1	Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
READER 2	The Old Testament
READER 3	The Torah
READER 4	Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
READER 2	The Prophets
READER 3	Isaiah, Jeremiah
READER 4	Elijah
READER 1	Ezekiel
READER 2	Hosea
READER 3	Amos
READER 4	Malachi
READER 1	Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets;
READER 2	I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.
READER 1	I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter,
READER 2	A jot
READER 3	The tiny Hebrew letter "Yod" [rhythms with "road"]
READER 1	not the least stroke of a pen,
READER 2	A tittle
READER 3	<i>A tittle?</i>
READER 4	The minute hook that distinguishes one Hebrew letter from another
READER 1	Not a jot nor a tittle
READER 2	will by any means disappear from the Law

READER 3 until everything is accomplished.

READER 4 until everything is fulfilled.

READER 2 Fulfilled

READER 3 Brought to completion

READER 4 Happened as it was prophesied

READER 2 Accomplished

READER 3 Fulfilled

READER 1 until everything is accomplished.

READER 2 until everything is fulfilled.

READER 1 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments

READER 2 Disobeys

READER 3 Ignores

READER 4 Sins

READER 2 and blithely goes on his merry way

READER 1 Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments

READER 2 The tiniest

READER 3 The least command

READER 1 and teaches others to do the same

READER 2 will be called least in the kingdom of heaven,

READER 1 but whoever practices and teaches these commands

READER 2 Obeys them

READER 3 Follows them

READER 4 Instructs others to obey them

READER 2 Teaches others to follow them

READER 3 Will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

READER 1 For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of
the Pharisees and the teachers of the law,

The Faithfulness of God (based on 5:18)

Antiphonal Reading

Until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

I will sing of the Lord's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.

**I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.**

The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

**O Lord God Almighty, who is like you?
You are mighty, O Lord, and your faithfulness surrounds you.**

For the Lord is good and his love endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through all generations.

**Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.**

They are new every morning;
Great is your faithfulness.

If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Readings are selected from the New International Version of the Bible

Reconciliation (5:21-26)

- READER 1 You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder,
- READER 2 and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'
- READER 3 Don't kill
- READER 4 Don't murder
- READER 2 Don't do violence against your neighbor
- READER 1 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.
- READER 2 Angry?
- READER 3 Just angry?
- READER 1 Yes, angry. Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.
- READER 2 A little anger never hurt anything
- READER 3 Anger is healthy.
- READER 4 Anger should be vented.
- READER 1 Anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.
- READER 2 Anger!
- READER 3 Anger!
- READER 4 Anger!
- READER 1 Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' -- stupid head -- is answerable to the Council. [pronounced RAH-cah]
- READER 2 Empty head!
- READER 3 Idiot!
- READER 4 Moron!
- READER 2 Just a simple insult?
- READER 3 Is answerable to the Council?
- READER 1 But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

READER 2 Hell

READER 3 No way!

READER 4 Not for just a simple insult.

READER 2 A creative insult

READER 3 People say things like that every day.

READER 4 Surely you can't go to hell for an angry insult.

READER 2 Can you?

READER 3 Can you?

READER 4 You can?

READER 1 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you,

READER 2 Perhaps you've insulted him

READER 3 Or offended him

READER 4 Or betrayed him.

READER 1 Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

READER 2 Interrupt your worship to repair a breach.

READER 3 Seek reconciliation before you presume to come to God

READER 4 Hypocrites can't fool Almighty God, can they?

READER 2 No, first go and be reconciled to your brother, and then come offer your gift.

READER 1 Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court.

READER 2 You mean I shouldn't just bluff my way through?

READER 3 No, settle matters quickly with your accuser

READER 1 Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

READER 2 You mean I should seek reconciliation?

READER 3 Sooner rather than later.

- READER 4 Quickly!
- READER 1 I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.
- READER 2 Reconciliation is safest.
- READER 3 Reconciliation is the point.
- READER 4 Reconciliation is the heart of the Law.
- READER 1 First go and be reconciled to your brother.
- READER 2 Reconcile first.
- READER 3 For the heart of the law is reconciliation.
- READER 4 And the spirit of the law is love for your brother.

You Shall Not Commit Adultery (5:27-30)

A creative reading from Matthew 5:27-30; Genesis 39:6-7; Exodus 20:17; 2 Samuel 11:2-4; Job 31:1; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Matthew 5:27-30; Mark 7:21-23; 2 Peter 2:14; James 1:14-15; and 1 John 2:16-17.

- READER 1 You shall not commit adultery.
- READER 2 Adultery.
- READER 3 Adultery.
- READER 1 You shall not commit adultery
- READER 2 One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful....
- READER 3 Desire!
- READER 1 Lust!
- READER 3 David sent messengers to get her.
- READER 2 She came to him, and he slept with her.
- READER 1 Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire,
- READER 2 By his own evil desire,
- READER 1 By his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.
- READER 3 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.
- READER 1 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you
- READER 2 But I tell you
- READER 3 But **I** tell you
- READER 1 that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- READER 2 Lustfully.
- READER 3 With impure intention.
- READER 2 With carnal desire.
- READER 1 That anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed

adultery with her in his heart.

READER 2 How about a woman?

READER 3 Can she sin with lust, too?

READER 1 Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"

READER 2 With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning....

READER 3 But it can't be a sin just to look, can it?

READER 2 Can it?

READER 1 From within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,

READER 2 Greed, malice, deceit,

READER 3 Lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

READER 2 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'

READER 1 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

READER 2 I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind,

READER 3 To reward a man according to his conduct,

READER 2 and according to the fruit of his doings.

READER 1 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'

READER 2 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully

READER 3 has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

READER 1 "I made a covenant with my eyes," said Job, "not to look lustfully at a girl."

READER 2 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away.

READER 3 It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

READER 1 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.

READER 3 It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

READER 1 You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

READER 2 You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,

READER 3 Or his manservant

READER 1 Or his maidservant,

READER 2 His ox or donkey,

READER 3 Or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

READER 1 You shall not commit adultery

READER 2 With your body

READER 3 Or your eyes

READER 2 Or your heart

READER 3 No, not at all.

READER 1 For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.

READER 2 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

READER 1 Purify my looking, Lord.

READER 2 Purify my desires, Father.

READER 3 Purify my heart, Jesus.

READER 1 That I might please You.

ALL That WE might please You.

In the Beginning Was No Divorce (5:31-32; 19:3-11)

- READER 1 Some Pharisees came to Jesus to test him.
- READER 2 Test
- READER 3 Trick
- READER 4 Get him into trouble.
- READER 1 They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"
- READER 2 Get him to take a position.
- READER 3 Get him to stick his neck out on a controversial subject.
- READER 4 Then turn the people against him.
- READER 2 Test him.
- READER 3 Trick him.
- READER 1 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'
- READER 2 Male and female
- READER 3 Woman and man.
- READER 4 At the beginning.
- READER 3 In the beginning.
- READER 1 And God said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?
- READER 2 One flesh.
- READER 3 The two shall be come one.
- READER 4 The two shall become one flesh.
- READER 2 United.
- READER 3 The man united to his wife.

READER 4 The wife united to her husband.

READER 2 The two become one.

READER 3 One flesh.

READER 1 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

READER 2 Let not man divide.

READER 3 Put asunder.

READER 4 Split up.

READER 1 "Why then," asked the Pharisees, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

READER 2 Command? What's this command?

READER 3 Well, then, "allow," "permit."

READER 4 Allow, permit.

READER 2 With a certificate.

READER 3 A legal paper

READER 4 Legally ending the marriage

READER 2 And allowing both parties to remarry.

READER 1 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.

READER 3 In the beginning it was not so.

READER 4 No, in the beginning God desired the two to become one.

READER 2 One flesh.

READER 3 In the beginning it was not so.

READER 4 But because of your hardness of heart.

READER 2 Because of your sinfulness and selfishness.

READER 3 Because you always had to be right

READER 4 Right, if not truly righteous

READER 2 Moses permitted divorce

READER 3 Permitted

READER 4 For your hardness of heart.

READER 1 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."

READER 2 That's hard.

READER 3 Difficult.

READER 4 Hard for us, that is.

READER 2 Hard for us hard-hearted people.

READER 1 The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry."

READER 2 It's too hard.

READER 3 It's too rigid.

READER 4 It's better not to marry.

READER 1 Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given."

READER 2 We can't accept it.

READER 3 Few can.

READER 4 Our hearts are hard.

READER 2 But in the beginning it was not so.

READER 3 In the beginning God made them one flesh

READER 4 And intended them to remain together.

READER 2 Love is the key to marriage.

READER 3 Not just the ooshy-gooshy love

READER 4 Not just romantic love

READER 2 Or erotic love.

READER 3 But agape love

READER 4 Self-giving love

READER 2 Love inspired by the Spirit of God

READER 3 Love inspired by the presence of Jesus
READER 1 Not everyone can accept this word
READER 2 Not everyone can receive it
READER 3 But love is the antidote to divorce
READER 4 Love is the fulfilling of the Law.
READER 2 That loves a neighbor as one's self
READER 3 That loves a husband
ALL As one's self
READER 4 That loves a wife
ALL As one's self
READER 2 Love can do it.
READER 3 Love can bring us back full circle.
READER 4 Back to the beginning
READER 1 Where the two shall become one
READER 2 Shall remain one
ALL In the presence of their God.

Simply Tell the Truth (5:33-37)

This reading contains texts from Matthew 5:33-37 and 23:16-22.

- READER 1 You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.'
- READER 2 Yes, if you swear in court
- READER 3 Swear on the Bible
- READER 4 Swear on a stack of Bibles
- READER 3 Cross your heart and hope to die
- READER 1 The Pharisees had strange rules about taking oaths.
- READER 2 If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing;
- READER 3 But if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.
- READER 4 Sneaky
- READER 3 "Blind guides!" Jesus called them.
- READER 1 If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.
- READER 2 Deceptive.
- READER 3 "Blind fools!" Jesus said.
- READER 1 If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.
- READER 2 An elaborate cover for a lie.
- READER 3 "Blind men!" Jesus called them
- READER 4 But I tell you,
- READER 3 Jesus told his followers,
- READER 1 Do not swear at all.
- READER 2 Do not swear at all.
- READER 3 Not at all.
- READER 4 Never.
- READER 1 Either by heaven,

READER 2 For it is God's throne;
READER 1 Or by the earth,
READER 3 For it is his footstool;
READER 1 Or by Jerusalem,
READER 4 For it is the city of the Great King.
READER 2 The whole earth is the Lord's and everything in it.
READER 3 It is all God's.
READER 1 And do not swear by your head,
READER 2 For you cannot make even one hair white or black.
READER 3 Black or white.
READER 4 Or gray.
READER 1 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,'
READER 2 And your 'No,' 'No';
READER 1 Anything beyond this comes from the evil one.
READER 2 The evil one.
READER 3 Who is a liar
READER 4 And the father of lies.
READER 1 When you say "Yes," mean "Yes."
READER 2 And when you say "No," mean "No."
READER 1 Don't fancy up your speech with awesome oaths.
READER 2 "Swear on a stack of Bibles"
READER 3 "Swear on the grave of my dead mother"
READER 1 Or stupid sayings
READER 4 "Cross my heart and hope to die."
READER 1 Say way you mean.
READER 2 Or don't say it at all.
READER 3 Let your words stand for themselves.

READER 4 Let your word be your bond.
READER 3 And truthfulness be your reputation.
READER 1 Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,'
READER 2 And your 'No,' 'No';
READER 3 Anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Do Not Retaliate (5:38-48)

Readings from: Matthew 5:38-48; Leviticus 24:17-21; Proverbs 25:21-22; and Romans 12:21

- READER 2 Here is justice by law
- READER 3 Before a judge
- READER 1 [Boldly] If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death.
- READER 2 Anyone who takes the life of someone's animal must make restitution -- life for life.
- READER 3 If anyone injures his neighbor, whatever he has done must be done to him: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.
- READER 4 As he has injured the other, so he is to be injured.
- READER 1 Whoever kills an animal must make restitution,
- READER 2 but whoever kills a man must be put to death.
- READER 1 This is justice
- READER 2 And it is good and holy.
- READER 3 Good.
- READER 4 Holy.
- READER 1 But judgment and condemnation are for the judge,
- READER 2 Not the individual;
- READER 3 For the court,
- READER 4 Not the vigilante.
- READER 3 It is not for individuals to take into their own hands.
- READER 1 "You have heard that it was said ..."
- READER 2 Droned the Pharisees
- READER 1 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'
- READER 2 To justify their personal hatred
- READER 3 Their personal retribution
- READER 4 Their personal vengeance

READER 2 In personal relationships

READER 3 Not in the courts!

READER 4 To justify the venom in their hearts

READER 2 Not in cases before a judge.

READER 3 Their hearts did not display justice,

READER 4 But vengeance;

READER 2 Not law,

READER 3 But license to hate.

READER 1 But I tell you, says Jesus, Do not resist an evil person.

READER 2 If someone strikes you on the right cheek,

READER 3 turn to him the other also.

READER 4 And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic,

READER 3 let him have your cloak as well.

READER 1 If someone forces you to go one mile,

READER 2 go with him two miles.

READER 3 Give to the one who asks you,

READER 4 and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

READER 1 Instead of hatred towards your enemy,

READER 2 pour out love.

READER 3 Instead of vengeance

READER 4 Blessing.

READER 1 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;

READER 2 if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.

READER 3 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head,

READER 4 and the Lord will reward you.

READER 1 Do not be overcome by evil,

READER 2 but overcome evil with good.

READER 3 You have heard that it was said,
READER 4 Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.
READER 1 But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.
READER 2 Sons of your Father,
READER 3 Daughters of your Father,
READER 4 Just like your Father in heaven.
READER 1 He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good,
READER 2 On the evil,
READER 3 And on the good
READER 1 And sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.
READER 2 On the righteous,
READER 3 And the unrighteous.
READER 2 He gives to those who love him,
READER 4 And he gives to those who hate him.
READER 1 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?
READER 2 Are not even the tax collectors doing that?
READER 1 And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others?
READER 2 Do not even pagans do that?
READER 3 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
READER 4 Be perfect?
READER 1 Mature.
READER 2 Yes, be mature.
READER 3 Grow up to maturity in your Father
READER 4 Strive for that perfect, mature love that your Father has
READER 2 For the righteous
READER 3 And the unrighteous.

READER 1 Jesus calls us beyond our childish petty hatreds
READER 2 And unforgiveness.
READER 3 Beyond retaliation
READER 4 And vengeance.
READER 1 He calls us to God's own maturity of love.
READER 2 Be perfect,
READER 3 Be perfect
READER 4 Be perfect, therefore,
ALL As your heavenly Father is perfect.

Give in Secret that You Might Receive Your True Reward (6:1-4)

- READER 1 Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them.
- READER 2 To be seen by them.
- READER 3 To be noticed and praised.
- READER 1 If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.
- READER 2 No reward.
- READER 3 No notice.
- READER 2 No notice by your heavenly Father.
- READER 3 No reward from the One who really matters.
- READER 1 So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets,
- READER 2 Ta-ta-TAAH [simulating a trumpet]
- READER 1 Do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men.
- READER 2 To be considered men of honor.
- READER 3 Honored by men.
- READER 1 I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.
- READER 2 In full.
- READER 3 Completely.
- READER 1 But when you give to the needy,
- READER 2 The poor,
- READER 3 Those without enough to eat,
- READER 1 Or enough clothes to wear,
- READER 2 Who lack what you have.
- READER 3 The needy.
- READER 2 The poor.

READER 1 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.

READER 2 Secret.

READER 3 Private

READER 2 Unnoticed.

READER 1 Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

READER 2 He sees what is done in secret.

READER 3 He notices.

READER 2 He sees.

READER 3 And will reward you.

READER 2 He will smile.

READER 3 He is pleased.

READER 1 Your Father,

READER 2 Who sees what is done in secret,

READER 3 Will reward you.

The Lord's Prayer: An Interpretive Reading (6:9-13)

READER 1 Our Father, who art in heaven,
READER 2 You who are a loving and disciplining Parent to us,
READER 3 You who dwell in heavenly glory,
READER 1 Hallow-ed be your Name,
READER 2 May your Name be held in awe by men
READER 3 As holy and set apart and righteous.
READER 1 Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
READER 2 May your Reign be complete
READER 3 May your purposes
READER 2 Though long-delayed
READER 3 Be finally accomplished,
READER 2 As completely here on Planet Earth
READER 3 As they are in heaven above where you dwell in glory.
READER 1 Give us this day our daily bread.
READER 2 Supply us, Lord, the food we need,
READER 3 The food we need today.
READER 2 We don't ask enough bread for the foreseeable future,
READER 3 So that we needn't be continually dependent upon you,
READER 2 But enough bread for today,
READER 3 For our daily hunger
READER 2 Today.
READER 3 And for those needs of all kinds that we experience today.
READER 2 Today.
READER 1 Forgive us our debts,

READER 2 Our sins,
READER 3 Our trespasses,
READER 2 The great unpayable debt we owe you because of our sins.
READER 1 As we forgive our debtors.
READER 3 In the same way that we forgive those who owe us greatly.
READER 2 To the degree that I forgive, O Lord,
READER 3 To that degree forgive me.
READER 1 And lead us not into temptation,
READER 2 Don't allow us to be tempted so greatly that we fall away from you,
READER 3 but deliver us from evil,
READER 2 Deliver us from the evil one,
READER 3 The tempter
READER 2 The deceiver
READER 3 The evil one.
READER 2 Help us, Lord,
READER 3 For we rely upon you.
READER 1 For Thine is the Kingdom,
ALL The Kingdom
READER 1 And the glory,
ALL All the glory,
READER 1 And the power,
ALL All the power,
READER 1 Forever
READER 2 Forever
READER 3 For ever and ever.
READER 1 Amen.
READER 2 Let it be so, Lord.

ALL

Amen.

Your Treasure's Where Your Heart Is Found (6:19-24 with Luke 12:16-21)

- READER 1 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.
- READER 2 Don't store them up
- READER 3 Hoard them
- READER 4 Stash them away
- READER 2 Seeking to become richer and richer.
- READER 3 Jesus told this parable:
- READER 1 The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.
- READER 4 Plentiful harvest.
- READER 1 He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'
- READER 2 No place to store it all.
- READER 1 This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.
- READER 2 I'll tear down my barns
- READER 3 And build bigger ones.
- READER 2 Tear down my barns
- READER 4 And build bigger ones.
- READER 3 Bigger ones.
- READER 2 Bigger.
- READER 3 More.
- READER 4 Much.
- READER 1 And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." '
- READER 2 But God said to him, 'You fool!
- READER 3 You blind man.

READER 4 You idiot!

READER 1 This very night your life will be demanded from you.

READER 2 Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

READER 3 This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself

READER 4 But is not rich toward God.

READER 3 Rich toward God.

READER 1 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,

READER 2 Where moth and rust destroy,

READER 3 And where thieves break in and steal.

READER 1 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,

READER 2 Treasures in heaven.

READER 3 Where moth and rust do not destroy,

READER 4 And where thieves do not break in and steal.

READER 1 For where your treasure is,

READER 2 There your heart will be also.

READERS 1 and 2 For where your treasure is,

READERS 3 and 4 There your heart will be also.

READER 1 The eye is the lamp of the body.

READER 2 The eye is like a window through which the light shines in.

READER 1 If your eyes are good,

READER 3 If your spiritual vision is sound,

READER 4 Your whole body will be full of light.

READER 1 But if your eyes are bad,

READER 2 Your spiritual vision is faulty

READER 3 Off track.

READER 4 Influenced by greed.

READER 1 Your whole body will be full of darkness.

READER 2 If then the light within you is darkness,
READER 3 How great is that darkness!
READER 1 No one can serve two masters.
READER 2 Two masters.
READER 3 Either he will hate the one and love the other,
READER 4 Or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.
READER 1 No one can serve two masters.
READER 2 Two masters.
READER 3 You cannot serve both God and Money.
READER 1 God
READER 2 And Mammon.
READER 1 God
READER 3 And materialism.
READER 1 No one can serve two masters.
READER 2 You cannot serve two masters.
READER 3 You cannot serve both God and Money.
ALL Serve God!

Seek First the Kingdom of God (6:25-34)

READER 1 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.

READER 2 [sing song] Worry, worry, worry

READER 3 [sing song] Fret, fret, fret

READER 2 Worry

READER 3 Fret

ALL [heavily] Sigh!

READER 1 Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

READER 2 Look at the birds of the air;

READER 3 Little birds.

READER 1 They do not sow or reap or store away in barns,

READER 2 and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

READER 3 Are you not much more valuable than they?

READER 1 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

READER 2 Who can add a foot to his stature?

READER 3 Or even a day to his span of life?

READER 1 And why do you worry about clothes?

READER 2 What'll I wear?

READER 3 My clothes are getting worn out.

READER 1 See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

READER 2 Toil or spin.

READER 3 Spin or toil.

READER 1 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

READER 2 In splendor!

READER 3 In glory!

READER 1 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today
and tomorrow is thrown into the fire,

READER 2 Here today.

READER 3 Gone tomorrow.

READER 1 Will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

READER 2 So do not worry, saying,

READER 3 'What shall we eat?' or

READER 2 'What shall we drink?' or

READER 3 'What shall we wear?'

READER 1 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father
knows that you need them.

READER 2 But seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness, and all these
things will be given to you as well.

READER 1 Seek first

READER 2 Seek diligently

READER 3 Before anything else in your life

READER 1 The Kingdom of God

READER 2 God's Reign

READER 3 God's righteousness

READER 1 And all these things will be given to you as well.

READER 2 Given to you,

READER 3 Added to you.

READER 1 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow,

READER 2 Tomorrow

READER 3 Tomorrow

READER 1 For tomorrow will worry about itself.

ALL

Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Righteously (7:1-6)

READER 1	Judge not
READER 2	That you be not judged.
READER 1	Judge not?
READER 2	Don't discriminate?
READER 3	Don't use your eyes?
READER 1	Your ears?
READER 2	Your senses?
READER 3	Your intuition?
READER 2	What do you mean, "judge not"?
READER 1	Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
READER 2	For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged,
READER 3	and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.
READER 1	If you measure accurately
READER 2	You will be measured accurately, too.
READER 1	If you measure critically,
READER 3	That will be your lot, as well.
READER 1	If you're a fault finder,
READER 2	That will be the way you're measured, too.
READER 1	Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye.
READER 2	Tiny
READER 3	Small
READER 2	Infinitesimal
READER 3	Teensy, weensy speck
READER 1	Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?
READER 3	A plank?

READER 2 A beam?

READER 3 A heavy log?

READER 1 How can you examine your brother's speck when your log looms so large that it fills your own eye.

READER 2 When it keeps you from seeing straight.

READER 3 When it keeps you from judging accurately.

READER 2 When it keeps you from rendering appropriate judgment.

READER 1 How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

READER 3 You hypocrite,

READER 1 First take the plank out of your own eye,

READER 2 And then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

READER 1 Do not judge, or you too will be judged.

READER 2 Do not be hypercritical

READER 3 Or judgmental

READER 2 But merciful

READER 3 And even-handed

READER 1 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged,

READER 2 But we must make judgments.

READER 3 We must discriminate between right and wrong

READER 2 Between what is false

READER 3 And what is genuine.

READER 1 Jesus said,

READER 2 Do not give dogs what is sacred;

READER 3 Do not throw your pearls to pigs.

READER 2 If you do, they may trample them under their feet,

READER 3 And then turn and tear you to pieces.

READER 1 Woe to you if you can't tell a scoffer
READER 2 From a hungry soul,
READER 1 Or an inquirer
READER 3 From a cynical unbeliever.
READER 2 Do not give dogs what is sacred;
READER 3 Do not throw your pearls to pigs.
READER 2 If you do, they may trample them under their feet,
READER 3 And then turn and tear you to pieces.
READER 1 Yes, judge.
READER 2 Judge rightly.
READER 3 Judge with open eyes.
READER 1 Judge with clear eyes.
READER 2 Free from planks.
READER 3 Free from spiritual myopia.
READER 2 Like the hypocrites.
READER 1 Yes judge,
READER 2 But do not be judgmental.
READER 1 Yes, judge,
READER 3 But judge with clear-eyed mercy.
READER 2 Judge the way you'd like to be judged.
READER 1 Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
READER 2 For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged,
READER 3 And with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Ask, Seek, Knock (7:7-12 with Luke 11:5-8)

READER 1	Ask and it will be given to you;
READER 2	Seek and you will find;
READER 3	Knock and the door will be opened to you.
READER 1	For everyone who asks receives.
READER 2	He who seeks finds.
READER 3	And to him who knocks, the door will be opened.
READER 1	Ask.
ALL	Keep on asking.
READER 2	Seek.
ALL	Keep on seeking.
READER 3	Knock.
ALL	Keep on knocking.
READER 1	Suppose one of you has a friend,
READER 2	A friend.
READER 1	And he goes to him at midnight and says,
READER 3	'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have nothing to set before him.'
READER 1	Then the one inside answers,
READER 2	'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children are with me in bed.
READER 3	I can't get up and give you anything.'
READER 2	I tell you, though he will not get up and give him the bread because he is his friend,
READER 1	Yet because of the man's boldness
READER 2	Persistence
READER 3	Continued knocking
READER 2	He will get up and give him as much as he needs.

READER 1 Ask and it will be given to you;

READER 2 Seek and you will find;

READER 3 Knock and the door will be opened to you.

READER 1 For everyone who asks receives.

READER 2 He who seeks finds.

READER 3 And to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

READER 1 Which of you, if his son asks for bread,

READER 2 For bread

READER 1 will give him a stone?

READER 3 A stone.

READER 1 Or if he asks for a fish,

READER 2 For a fish.

READER 1 will give him a snake?

READER 3 A snake.

READER 1 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to
your children,

READER 2 How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those
who ask him!

READER 1 Ask

READER 2 Seek

READER 3 Knock

READER 1 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you,
for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

ALL The Golden Rule

READER 1 Do to others

READER 2 What you would have them

READER 3 Do to you.

READER 1 Ask

READER 2	Seek
READER 3	Knock
ALL	And it shall be given unto you.

Narrow and Wide Gates (7:13-29)

READER 1 Enter through the narrow gate.

READER 2 The narrow gate.

READER 3 Where you may have to suck in and squeeze through.

READER 1 Enter through the narrow gate.

READER 2 For wide is the gate

READER 3 Plenty of room for you and all your baggage

READER 1 And broad is the road

READER 2 Spacious

READER 3 Plenty of room for the crowds and masses

READER 1 Wide is the gate and broad is the road

READER 2 That leads to destruction,

READER 3 And many enter through it.

READER 1 But small is the gate

READER 2 And narrow the road that leads to life,

READER 3 And only a few find it.

READER 1 Only a few

READER 2 Only a few

READER 3 Find it

READER 1 Search for it

READER 2 And so find it

READER 3 And pass through on their way to eternal life.

READER 1 Watch out for false prophets.

READER 2 False teachers.

READER 3 False leaders.

READER 2 Who have their own agendas.

READER 3 And want to build their own followings.

READER 1 They come to you in sheep's clothing,

READER 2 They look like sheep.

READER 3 But inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

READER 1 Outside they look like others in the congregation,

READER 2 But inside brews trouble

READER 1 Greed

READER 2 Pride

READER 3 Rebelliousness

READER 2 Selfishness

READER 3 Unteachableness

READER 1 Trouble for them

READER 2 And trouble for the congregation.

READER 1 By their fruit you will recognize them.

READER 2 Do people pick grapes from thornbushes,

READER 3 Or figs from thistles?

READER 1 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit,

READER 2 But a bad tree bears bad fruit.

READER 1 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit,

READER 2 And a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

READER 1 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

READER 3 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

READER 1 By their words.

READER 2 By their actions.

READER 3 By their statements and slips.

READER 1 For our words betray what's in our heart.

READER 2 And what is in our heart will come out in our actions.

READER 3 By their fruits you will know them.

READER 1 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,

READER 2 But only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

READER 1 Lord, Lord.

READER 2 I am a Christian

READER 3 I am a believer

READER 2 I believe in Jesus.

READER 1 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name,

READER 2 And in your name drive out demons

READER 3 And perform many miracles?'

READER 1 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you.

READER 2 Away from me, you evildoers!'

READER 3 You evildoers.

READER 1 You doers of evil.

READER 2 You doers of your own plans

READER 3 Rather than the plans of Jesus.

READER 1 Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine

READER 2 And puts them into practice

READER 3 Is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

READER 1 The rain came down,

READER 2 The streams rose,

READER 3 And the winds blew and beat against that house;

READER 1 Yet it did not fall,

READER 2 Because it had its foundation on the rock.

READER 3 On the rock.

READER 1 But everyone who hears these words of mine
READER 2 And does not put them into practice
READER 3 Is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.
READER 1 The rain came down,
READER 2 The streams rose,
READER 3 And the winds blew and beat against that house,
ALL And it fell with a great crash.
READER 1 Hearers and doers.
READER 2 Doers and hearers.
READER 1 Which am I?
READER 3 Which are you?
READER 1 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed
 at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as
 their teachers of the law.