

Major Themes & Questions of the Mountain Message

**Why the initial emphasis on the poorest? The grieving? The most vulnerable? Peace workers? The persecuted?
(social and personal human needs; human rights)**

How is this emphasis “religious”? Does it need to be?

What does the Teacher do with the concept of power?

What does it mean to say someone is “blessed” (“happy,” “especially honored”)?

How does one teach or live the “heart” of ancient scriptures?

How does this lecture challenge the handing down of instructions (tradition)?

How can someone who has no known sexual experience offer guidelines for sexuality, relationships, divorce?

What is the best way to handle injustice and hatred?

What is prayer and should it ever be public?

How do we respond to possessions we treasure and stresses we feel?

What about slavery?

Who can be the judge of another person?

What is the major lesson about self-righteousness?

Is the “Golden Rule” still viable, relevant for our time? How?

What does the Mountain Message say about what to build a life upon?

Apart from what any Religion says, what is the image of “God” presented here?

What guidelines are suggested for “the good community/a just society”?

How is this outdoor lecture an “ethical teaching”?

Is this “wisdom literature”? (compare Koheleth)