

“THE CHRIST OF THE MOUNT”

Dr. John Allan Lavender

Mt. 5:1-7:27

For this part of The Life of Christ series, I memorized and preached the Sermon on the Mount using the J. B. Phillips translation. The pulpit was replaced with a single straight back chair. We followed our regular order of worship up to the sermon time.

After a brief (one minute) explanation of the historical setting for “the most famous sermon ever preached,” I turned, and while quoting Mt. 5:1, sat down in the chair. Remaining seated, and speaking conversationally, *but with energy*, I preached Mt. 5:2-20.

At Mt. 5:21, I stood up. Without being “corny,” I focused on *communicating* the words of Jesus. I moved around the platform a little, maintaining eye contact with the people, and allowing my voice to rise and fall in keeping with the text. I continued through Mt. 6:14, and sat down again.

Mt. 6:15 through Mt. 6:34 were delivered from this sitting position, at which point I stood and continued through Mt. 7:1-12, always focusing on *communicating* the truth. After Mt. 7:12, I turned to sit down, inserting these words of my own --

“Finally, let me give you this word of admonition. . .”

and picked up the text at Mt. 7:13 continuing through Mt. 7:21.

At Mt. 7:22 I stood, and becoming quite animated, finished the sermon on a high note after which I stood quietly and scanned the congregation for a moment. Then, without further comment, I turned and left the platform. After a brief period of silence during which the people were able to think about what they had heard, an associate concluded the service with a short prayer and the people were dismissed. Later on, as an annual tradition, I repeated this on the Sunday *after* Easter, advertising it as The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached, always with excellent results.