

VICTOR FROST

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Seven motets for unaccompanied mixed chorus, op. 19

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The Sermon on the Mount: Seven Motets for mixed chorus, unaccompanied; op. 19

The first of this music to be composed was the G-sharp Phrygian setting of the "eye for an eye" passage which opens the present third number. It was designed at first as a brief choral response. I liked the melody (in the tenor) a lot, and tried to use it instead in a Lord's Prayer setting for men's chorus, where having the tenor singing the melody does not constitute a novelty. It did not take me long, however, to realize that the music occurring to me next was actually much better suited to a continuation of that segment of the Sermon on the Mount I had briefly treated in the original response. So, I followed my muses' lead, and completed "Therefore Become Perfect" later in 1979 in Miami. (The incipit still functions just fine as a response, by the way, as do some of the shorter motets here I composed later.) Although the continuation of the music I am speaking of was in A-flat major, the Phrygian mode periodically asserts itself as the motet unfolds. In fact, there exists a clash between the two modes in the bi-tonal (really bi-modal) passage to the words "causes his sun to shine upon the good and the bad," but in the final evocation of the Godhead's immanence, it is A-flat which prevails.

I naturally took it upon myself to address the Lord's Prayer for real next. This SATB setting was completed in 1980, by which point I had moved here to New York. Having treated these two sections from Sermon on the Mount, I marked off five other excerpts from this address Jesus made to his followers, and turned to these intermittently during the intervening years. I have just now finished the last of these, The Beatitudes. Last, I mean, in terms of the tortuous creative project I have undertaken. It is of course heard first in a complete traversal of these seven motets, which naturally follow the Matthean order.

The Beatitudes is basically homophonic, melody with isorhythmic accompaniment, except for a few short imitations of the sopranos by the tenors. "The Light of the World" and The Lord's Prayer are each in ternary form. The basses take the lead in the B-section of the former, while the altos ask the Father for "our daily bread" (in the better known phrase out of King James) in the fourth number. They also have the main melody which opens the following "Where Your Treasure Is," yielding to the sopranos only when the line soars too high. The last two motets I regarded as a prelude and double fugue. The basses sing a pedal E-flat throughout "Seek, And You Shall Find," breaking loose to launch the fugue "Upon a Rock." The altos announce the second subject of this fugue, at the words "And the rain fell." As part of its episodic development, onomatopoeically stormy sixteenths buffeting from voice to voice literally overturn (invert) both fugal subjects. The asseveration of faith that is the main theme returns, rightside-up, first in combination with the "rain" theme, then in a clinching stretto with itself. Confidence of safe-keeping in our Father/Mother's care has been restored.

I used the Lamsa translation of Scripture, for its accuracy as much as its suitability for musical treatment. I dedicate the cycle to my dear friend Stephen Holleran.

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The Sermon on the Mount

Seven motets for unaccompanied mixed chorus, op. 19

music by Victor Frost
Lamsa translation of Scripture

1. The Beatitudes

♩ = 44

p

Soprano
Bles - sed are the hum - ble, for theirs is the king - dom of hea - ven. Bles - sed are they who

Alto
Bles - sed are the hum - ble, for theirs is the king - dom of hea - ven.

Tenor
Bles - sed are the hum - ble, for theirs is the king - dom of hea - ven.

Bass
Bles - sed are the hum - ble, for theirs is the king - dom of hea - ven.

Rehearsal piano

mf *f*

mourn, _____ for they shall be com - for - ted. Bles - sed are the meek, _____ for they

mf *f*

Bles - sed are they who mourn, for they shall be com - for - ted. Bles - sed are the meek, for they

mf *f*

Bles - sed are they who mourn, for they shall be com - for - ted. Bles - sed are the meek, for they

mf *f*

Bles - sed are they who mourn, for they shall be com - for - ted. Bles - sed are the meek, for they

mf *f*

7 *ff*
 shall in - her - it the earth. Bles - sed are those who hun - ger and thirst for jus - tice, for

8 *ff*
 shall in - her - it the earth. Bles - sed are those who hun - ger and thirst for jus - tice, for

8 *ff*
 shall in - her - it the earth. Bles - sed are those who hun - ger and thirst for jus - tice, for

ff
 shall in - her - it the earth. Bles - sed are those who hun - ger and thirst for jus - tice, for

10 *dim.* *p*
 they shall be well sat - is - fied, sat - is - fied. Bles - sed are the mer - ci - ful, for

dim. *p*
 they shall be well sat - is - fied, well sat - is - fied. Bles - sed are the mer - ci - ful, for

8 *dim.* *p*
 they shall be well sat - is - fied, well sat - is - fied. Bles - sed are the mer - ci - ful, for

dim. *p*
 they shall be well sat - is - fied, sat - is - fied. Bles - sed are the mer - ci - ful, for

10 *dim.* *p*
 they shall be well sat - is - fied, sat - is - fied. Bles - sed are the mer - ci - ful, for

13

mf

they shall have mer - cy. Bles - sed are the pure in heart, for they

mf

they shall have mer - cy. Bles - sed are the pure in heart, for they

8

mf

they shall have mer - cy. Bles - sed are the pure in heart, for they

mf

they shall have mer - cy. Bles - sed are the pure in heart, for they

13

mf

16

f

shall see God. Bles - sed are the peace - mak - ers, for they shall be called sons of God. Bles - sed are those who are

f

shall see God. Bles - sed are the peace - mak - ers, for they shall be called sons of God. Bles - sed are those who are

8

f

shall see God. Bles - sed are the peace - mak - ers, for they shall be called sons of God. Bles - sed are those who are

f

shall see God. Bles - sed are the peace - mak - ers, for they shall be called sons of God. Bles - sed are those who are

16

f

19 *ff* *dim.*
 per-se-cut-ed for the sake of jus-tice, for theirs is the king-dom of hea-ven.

19 *ff* *dim.*
 per-se-cut-ed for the sake of jus-tice, for theirs is the king-dom of hea-ven, the king-dom of hea-ven.

8 *ff* *dim.*
 per-se-cut-ed for the sake of jus-tice, for theirs is the king-dom of hea-ven, the king-dom of hea-ven.

ff *dim.*
 per-se-cut-ed for the sake of jus-tice, for theirs is the king-dom of hea-ven, the king-dom of hea-ven.

19 *ff* *dim.*

23 *mp* *f* *mp*
 Bles-sed are you when men re-proach you and per-se-cute you and

23 *mp* *f* *mp*
 Bles-sed are you when men re-proach you and per-se-cute you and

8 *mp* *f* *mp*
 Bles-sed are you when men re-proach you and per-se-cute you and

mp *f* *mp*
 Bles-sed are you when men re-proach you and per-se-cute you and

23 *mp* *f* *mp*

27 *ff* *mf*

speak a - gainst you ev - 'ry kind of e - vil, false - ly, for

speak a - gainst you ev - 'ry kind of e - vil, false - ly, for

speak a - gainst you ev - 'ry kind of e - vil, false - ly, for

speak a - gainst you ev - 'ry kind of e - vil, false - ly, for

27 *ff* *mf*

32 *mp* *dim.* *p*

my sake, Then be glad and re - joice, — for your re - ward is in - creas - ed in

my sake, Then be glad and re - joice, for your re - ward is in - creas - ed in

my sake, Then be glad and re - joice, — for — your re - ward is in - creas - ed in

my sake, Then be glad and re - joice, for your re - ward is in - creas - ed in

32 *mp* *dim.* *p*

38

hea - ven, is in - creas - ed in hea - ven; for your re -

hea - ven, is in - creas - ed in hea - ven; for your re -

8 hea - ven, is in - creas - ed in hea - ven; for your re -

hea - ven, is in - creas - ed in hea - ven; for your re -

41

pp ward is in - creas - ed in hea - - - - - ven. *ppp*

pp ward is in - creas - ed in hea - - - - - ven. *ppp*

8 *pp* ward is in - creas - ed, in - creas - ed in hea - - - - - ven. *ppp*

pp ward is in - creas - ed in hea - - - - - ven. *ppp*

2. The Light of the World

45 $\text{♩} = 44$ *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

You are in - deed the light of the world; a ci - ty that is built up - on a moun - tain can - not be hid - den. —

mf sempre *f*

The light of the world; up - on a moun - tain can - not be hid - den. —

mf sempre *f*

The light of the world; up - on a moun - tain can - not be hid - den. —

mf *f*

The light, can - not be hid - den. —

45 *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

mf sempre

49 *mp* *mf* *f*

— Nor do they light a lamp and put it un - der a bas - ket, but on a lamp stand,

mp *mf* *f*

— Nor do they light a lamp and put it un - der a bas - ket, but on a lamp stand,

mp *mf* *f*

— Nor do they light a lamp and put it un - der a bas - ket, but on a lamp stand,

mp *mf* *f*

— Nor do they light a lamp and put it un - der a bas - ket, but on a lamp stand,

49 *mp* *mf* *f*

53 *dim.* *mp*

so that it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine be - fore men that they may

dim. *mp*

so that it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine be - fore men

dim. *mp*

so that it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine be - fore men

dim. *mp*

so that it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine be - fore men

57 *mf* *mp*

see your good works and glo - ri - fy your Fa - ther in hea - ven. _____

mf *mp*

that they may see your good works and glo - ri - fy your Fa - ther in hea - - - ven. _____

mf *mp*

that they may see your good works and glo - ri - fy your Fa - ther in hea - - - ven. _____

mf *mp*

that they may see your good works and glo - ri - fy your Fa - ther in hea - - - ven. _____

3. Therefore Become Perfect

$\text{♩} = 36$
mp

You have heard that it is said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth_____ for a tooth.

mp

You have heard that it is said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth_____ for a tooth.

f

You have heard that it is said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth_____ for a tooth. But I say to

mp

You have heard that it is said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth_____ for a tooth.

mp

f

mp

mp

You should not re-sist e-vil; but who-ev-er strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the oth - er

mp

You should not re-sist e-vil; but who-ev-er strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the oth - er

f

you that you should not re-sist e-vil; but who-ev-er strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the oth - er

mp

You should not re-sist e-vil; but who-ev-er strikes you on your right cheek, turn to him the oth - er

mp

f

mp

70 $\text{♩} = 58$

f *mp* *f*

al - so. You have heard that it is said, Be kind to your friend, and

f *mp* *f*

al - so. You have heard that it is said, Be kind to your

8 al - so. You have heard that it is said, Be

f *mp* *f* *mp*

f *mp*

75 *mp* stagger breathing *(mp)*

hate your en - e - my. Love your en - e -

mp stagger breathing *(mp)*

friend, and hate your en - e - my. Love your en - e -

8 *fff*

But I say to you, Love your en - e - mies,

f *mp* stagger breathing *(mp)*

kind to your friend, and hate your en - e - my. Love your en - e -

75 *mp* *(mp)* *(mp)*

f *mp* *fff* *(mp)* *(fff)*

80

cresc.

mies, _____ do good to a - ny - one who hates you, and

cresc.

mies, _____ do good to a - ny - one who hates you, and

(fff)

stagger breathing

— bless a - ny - one — who — cur - ses you.

cresc.

mies, _____ do good to a - ny - one who hates you, and

80

(mp)

(fff)

(mp)

cresc.

cresc.

84

fff ————— *ffff*

pray for those who car - ry you a - way by force and per - se - cute you, _____

fff ————— *ffff*

pray for those who car - ry you a - way by force and per - se - cute you, _____

fff

fff ————— *ffff*

pray for those who car - ry you a - way by force and per - se - cute you, _____

84

fff ————— *ffff*

fff

87 *ff* *ppp*

So that you may be - come__ sons of your Fa - ther who is in hea - ven, who cau - ses his sun to shine__

ff *ppp*

So that you may be - come__ sons of your Fa - ther who is in hea - ven, who cau - ses his sun to shine__

ff *ppp*

So that you may be - come__ sons of your Fa - ther who is in hea - ven, who cau - ses his sun to shine__

ff

So that you may be - come__ sons of your Fa - ther who is in hea - ven,

87 *ff* *ppp*

91 *mfppp, cresc.* *f*

— up - on the good and the bad, _____ and who _____ pours down his

mfppp, cresc. *f*

— up - on the good and the bad, _____ and who _____ pours down his

mfppp, cresc. *f*

— up - on the good and the bad, _____ and who _____ pours down his

f

and who pours down his

91 *mf* *f*

♩ = 50 *mp*

95

rain — up - on — the just and the un - just. — Be - come per - fect, just as your

mp

rain up - on the just and the un - just. — Be - come per - fect, just as your —

(f)

rain up - on the just and the un - just. — There-fore be - come per - fect, just as your

N.B. *mp*

rain up - on the just and the un - just. Be - come per - fect, just as your —

mp

95

(f)

mp

102

Fa - ther in hea - ven — is — per - fect. —

Fa - ther in hea - ven is — per - fect. —

8

Fa - ther in hea - ven, Fa - ther in hea - ven — is — per - fect. —

Fa - ther in hea - ven is — per - fect. —

102

N.B.: "The" pronounced just as if the word "unjust" followed without any break.

4. The Lord's Prayer

$\text{♩} = 50$
pp
 108
 Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - low - ed be thy name. Thy king - dom come. Thy

pp
 Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - low - ed be thy name. Thy king - dom come. Thy

pp
 8
 Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - low - ed be thy name. Thy king - dom come. Thy

pp
 Our Fa - ther in hea - ven, hal - low - ed be thy name. Thy king - dom come. Thy

108
pp

Detailed description: This system contains five staves of music. The top four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the bottom two are piano accompaniment. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 50. The dynamic is piano-piano (pp). The lyrics are: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy'.

114
p *pp*
 will be done, as in heav'n so on earth.

p *pp* *mf subito*
 will be done, as in heav'n so on earth, as in heav'n so on earth. Give us

p *pp*
 8
 will be done, as in heav'n so on earth.

p *pp*
 will be done, as in heav'n so on earth.

114
p *pp* *mf subito*

Detailed description: This system continues the musical score from the first system. It contains five staves of music. The top four staves are vocal parts and the bottom two are piano accompaniment. The key signature and time signature remain the same. The dynamics are marked as piano (p) and piano-piano (pp), with a mezzo-forte subito (mf subito) marking in the second vocal staff. The lyrics are: 'will be done, as in heav'n so on earth. Give us'.

119 *pp sempre*

Give us bread for our needs from day to day. And for - give us our of - fenc - es, as we have for -

bread for our needs from day to day. And for - give us our of - fenc - es, as we have for -

8 *pp sempre*

Give us bread for our needs from day to day. And for - give us our of - fenc - es, as we have for -

pp sempre

119 *pp sempre*

(*mf*)

pp sempre

125 *p subito* *cresc.*

giv - en our of - fend - ers. And do not let us en - ter in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from

p *p sempre* *cresc.*

giv - en our of - fend - ers. And do not let us en - ter in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from

8 *p subito* *cresc.*

giv - en our of - fend - ers. And do not let us en - ter in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from

p subito *cresc.*

giv - en our of - fend - ers. And do not let us en - ter in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from

125 *p* *p subito* *cresc.*

p subito

131 *f* *pp*

e - vil. For thine is the king-dom and the pow'r and the glo - ry for ev - er and

f *pp*

e - vil. For thine is the king-dom and the pow'r and the glo - ry for ev - er and

f *pp*

e - vil. For thine is the king-dom and the pow'r and the glo - ry for ev - er and

f *pp*

e - vil. For thine is the king-dom and the pow'r and the glo - ry for ev - er and

131 *f* *pp*

138 *p* *pp* *ppp*

ev - - - er. A - - - - men.

p *pp* *ppp*

ev - - - er. A - - - - men.

p *pp* *ppp*

ev - - - er. A - - - - men.

p *pp* *ppp*

ev - - - er. A - - - - men.

138 *p* *pp*

5. Where Your Treasure Is

♩ = 62

147 *p*

Do not lay up for your - selves trea - sures bur - ied in the

mp

Do not lay _____ up for your - selves trea - sures bur - - - ied in the

p

Do not lay up for your - selves trea - sures bur - ied in the

p

Do not lay up for your - selves trea - sures bur - ied in the

8

147 *mp*

p

p

151

ground, a place where rust and moth de - stroy and where thieves break through and steal.

ground, a place where rust and moth de - stroy and where thieves break through and steal.

8

ground, a place where rust and moth de - stroy and where thieves break through and steal.

ground, a place where rust and moth de - stroy and where thieves break through and steal.

151

156 *mp, cresc.*

But lay up for your - selves _____ a trea - sure in hea - ven, _____ where nei - ther rust nor moth de -

p, cresc.

But lay up for your - selves a trea - sure in hea - ven, where nei - ther rust nor moth de -

cresc.

But lay up for your - selves a trea - sure in hea - ven, where nei - ther rust nor moth de -

cresc.

But lay up for your - selves a trea - sure in hea - ven, where nei - ther rust nor moth de -

156 *mp, cresc.*

p, cresc.

p, cresc.

160 *ff* *dim.*

stroys _____ and where thieves do not break through, _____ where thieves do not break through and

f *dim.*

stroys _____ and where thieves do not break through, _____ where thieves do not break through and

f *dim.*

stroys _____ and where thieves do not break through, _____ where thieves do not break through and

f *dim.*

stroys _____ and where thieves do not break through, _____ where thieves do not break through and

160 *ff* *dim.*

f *dim.*

f *dim.*

165 *mp* *cresc.* *< ff*

steal. For where your trea- sure is, there al- so is your heart.

p *cresc.* *< f*

steal. For where your trea- sure is, there al- so is your heart.

p *cresc.* *< f*

steal. For where your trea- sure is, there al- so is your heart.

p *cresc.* *< f*

steal. For where your trea- sure is, there al- so is your heart.

165 *mp* *cresc.* *< ff*

p *cresc.* *< f*

p *cresc.* *< f*

6. Seek, And You Shall Find

$\text{♩} = 62$

171 *mf*

Ask, and it shall be giv- en to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be

mf

Ask, and it shall be giv- en to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be

mf

Ask, and it shall be giv- en to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be

mf

Ask, and it shall be giv- en to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be

171 *mf*

177

o - pened to you. For who - ev - er asks, re - ceives; and he who seeks,

o - pened to you. For who - ev - er asks, re - ceives; and he who seeks,

o - pened to you. For who - ev - er asks, re - ceives; and he who seeks,

o - pened to you. For who - ev - er asks, re - ceives; and he who seeks,

177

183

N.B.

finds; and to him who knocks, the door is o - pened.

finds; and to him who knocks, the door is o - pened.

finds; and to him who knocks, the door is o - pened.

finds; and to him who knocks, the door is o - pened.

183

N.B.: Either note may be sung, or both may be sung at once if the forces permit.

7. Upon a Rock

190 $\text{♩} = 60$

f deciso
There - fore who - ev - er hears these

f deciso *mf*
There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does them, he is like a wise man who built his house up -

f deciso *f* deciso *mf*

193

mf
words of mine, and does them, he is like a wise man who built his

f *mf*
on a rock, who built his house up - on a rock, who built his house up - on a

193 *f* *mf*

195

f deciso

There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does them, he is

f

house up - on a rock. There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of

f

rock. There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does — them, — he is like a wise man

195 *f* deciso

f

197 *f* deciso

There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does them, he is

mf *f*

like a wise man who built his house up - on a rock, who built his house up - on a rock, who

mf *f*

mine, and does — them, he is like a wise man who — built

mf *f*

who — built his — house up - - - on a — rock, up -

197 *f* deciso

mf *f*

199 *mf* like a wise man who built his house up - on a

f

mf built his house up - on a rock, up - on a rock. And the rain fell and the ri - vers

f

mf his house up - on a rock, his house up - on a rock.

f

mf on, up - - - on a rock.

f

201 *dim.* rock. And the rain fell and the ri - vers ov - er - flowed, ov - er - flowed, and the ri - vers

dim. *mp* ov - er - flowed and the winds blew and beat up - - - on that

dim. *mp*

203 *mp* *cresc.*

ov - er - flowed, ov - er - flowed and the winds__ blew and__ beat_ up - on_____ that__

house, blew and beat up - on that house, the

f And the rain__ fell and the ri - vers

f *dim.* And the rain__ fell and the ri - vers ov - er - flowed__ and the winds_____ blew and

203 *mp* *cresc.*

f *dim.*

205 *f*

house;

cresc. *f* winds_____ blew__ and__ beat__ up - on that house, up - on that house; but it did not____ fall, be -

dim. *mp, cresc.* ov - er - flowed, ov - er - flowed and the winds__ blew_ and__ beat_ up - on_ that_ house, the winds blew_ and__ beat_ up -

mp *f* beat. And the rain__ fell and the ri - vers

205 *cresc.* *f* *mp, cresc.*

dim. *mp* *f*

207 *f*

There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does them, he is
 cause its foun - - - - da - - - - - tions were laid up - on a
f
 on_ that_ house,_ the winds blew_ and_ beat_ up - on_ that_ house, up - on that house; And the rain_ fell and the ri - vers
 ov - er - flowed, ov - er - flowed and the winds_ blew_ and_ beat_ up - on_ that_ house,_ blew and beat_ up - on_ that_

209 *p, cresc.*

like a wise man who_ built his house up -
 rock, up - on a rock, up - on a rock.
p, cresc.
 ov - er - flowed, ri - - - - vers ov - - - - er - - - -
p, cresc.
 house, up - - - - on that house;

209 *p, cresc.*

211 *f*

on a rock, it did not fall, be - cause its foun - - - da - tions

f

There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does them, he is

f

8 flowed.

f

And the rain_ fell and the ri - vers ov - er - flowed and the winds_ blew and_ beat_ up - on_ that_

211 *f*

N.B.

213

were_ _ _ _ laid up - on a_ _ _ rock. There - fore who - ev - er hears these

like a wise_ _ _ man who built his house, There - fore he

f

8 There - fore who - ev - er hears these words of mine, and does them, he is

house, _ _ _ blew and beat up - on that house, _ _ _ blew and beat _ up - on that house; but it did_ _ _ not

213

N.B.: Elide the "n" from "up-on" with the "a" here (up-o-na).

215 *cresc.* *ff* *mf*

words of mine, who built his house up - on a rock, his

cresc. *ff* *mf*

is like a wise man who built his house up - - - - on,

cresc. *ff* *mf*

like a wise man who built his house up - - - - on,

cresc. *ff* *mf*

fall, be - cause its foun - da - tions were laid up - - - - on,

215 *cresc.* *ff* *mf*

N.B.

217 *ff* *mf* *cresc.* *fff*

house up - on a rock, who built his house up - on a rock.

ff *mf* *cresc.* *fff*

up - - - - on a rock.

ff *mf* *cresc.* *fff*

up - - - - on a rock.

ff *mf* *cresc.* *fff*

up - - - - on a rock.

217 *ff* *mf* *cresc.* *fff*

N.B.: The full-sized notes must be sung. If the forces permit, any or all of the smaller ones may be added thereto.