

Matthew Chapter 7 Continued

In Verses 13-29: This closing section of the Sermon on the Mount is a gospel application. Here are two gates (in last lesson covering 13-14); two kinds of trees and two kinds of fruit (verses 17-20), two groups at the judgment (verses 21-23), and two kinds of builders, building on two kinds of foundations (verses 24-28). Christ is drawing the line as clearly as possible between the way that leads to destruction and the way that leads to life.

Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

The warning "Beware of false prophets" fits appropriately with the concept of the two ways. Since many are being led in the wrong way, they are obviously being led by the wrong people. False prophets were prevalent in the Old Testament; whereas God's true prophets were often in the minority.

These deceive not by disguising themselves as sheep, but by impersonating true shepherds. They promote the wide gate and the wide way.

False prophets appear in "sheep's clothing" but are in reality "ravening wolves." This is a perfect description of those preachers who have denied or distorted the truth of the gospel. They look like lambs but act like wolves. Their description is similar to that of the great False Prophet (in Revelation 13:11).

There has never been a time, in the history of mankind, when there were more false prophets. There are even men today proclaiming they are Jesus. We have mentioned it before, but it bears mentioning again. We are not to believe these people. There will be no question whether it is Jesus, or not, when he returns. He will appear in the eastern sky and all will see Him.

I really believe the Scripture above, may not really be talking about that though. You see the people that this was speaking of, claimed to be Christians; but they were "in sheep's clothing". They were people pretending to be followers of Jesus Christ. They had an outward form of Christianity, but their hearts were wicked.

They came to a church, worked hard in it, appeared to be supporting the teachings, and then started dropping a word here and there that caused confusion. They were harder to detect than the enemy from without, because they appeared to be Christians.

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:5).

In (2 John), the lady was warned about deceivers. These deceivers did not believe that Jesus was God in the flesh.

2 John 1:7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

2 John 1:9-10 "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into [your] house, neither bid him God speed:"

Sometimes, we wonder just how we can tell who is of God and who is not. The first thing is: do they believe that Jesus is Immanuel (God with us; God in the flesh)? The second thing is: What kind of fruit do they bear?

Verses 16-20: A true test of a prophet was the conformity of his doctrine to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 14:37; Deut. 13:1-5). "Their fruits" refers not only to actions of their lives, but also to the doctrines they proclaim. The two trees are contrasted in relation to the fruit they produce. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit" consistently, while a "corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" continually.

Therefore, the normal and consistent production of fruit, whether good or evil, in a person's life will bear evidence whether or not that life is of God. Verse 19 illustrates the unfruitful life of the unregenerate who is "cast into the fire," a picture of eternal punishment in hell.

Matthew 7:16 "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

"Ye shall know them by their fruits": False doctrine cannot restrain the flesh, so false prophets manifest wickedness (2 Peter 2:12-22).

Matthew 7:17-18 "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

Everyone has heard the Scripture "Bring up a child in the way he should go: when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6). If you teach a very small child not to steal, chances are that he will never steal. This goes for all sins. The earlier we learn not to sin, the better off we are.

We usually are what we have trained ourselves, and our parents have taught us to be. Environment has a great deal to do with what we become. A child, who is in church several times a week, will generally have better morals than someone who has never been exposed to Christianity.

Cursing, swearing, telling dirty jokes, etc. are many times a habit that has been picked up at work or at school. The Bible says not to fellowship with those of unbelief, because we will all become like them.

Peach trees bear peaches; pear trees produce pears, etc. Apples do not come off a peach tree. We are all part of a family tree. We must be careful to pattern our lives after Jesus.

I have used the expression so often, if you plant an English pea; that is what you will get in return, not butter beans.

If we are rooted and grounded in the Word of God, and if we study the Bible and hide its Words in our hearts, then we will be able to use what knowledge we have to help others get saved. Some of us will be able to lead a few to God, and some will lead hundreds.

We will be fruit bearers when we work to get people saved. We always influence them for the good or evil. We spoke of it before, we must not judge, but we can be a fruit inspector.

Matthew 7:19-20 "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."

God tells us what will happen if we do not produce fruit for him. It is very much like having an orchard. We will wait a few years, prune the trees, fertilize them, work around them, and water them; but then if they do not produce, we will cut them down.

We can say all day long that we are Christians, but unless we do something about it, it is hard to convince God we are serious.

Verses 21-23: Not everyone professing Christ is genuinely saved. Even the outward verbal acknowledgment of His lordship is in itself not enough to save the unbeliever apart from true repentance and faith. A genuinely saved person is one "that doeth the will of my Father," the Greek present tense suggesting that he is continually living in obedience of the will of God as the normal course of his life.

Matthew 7:21 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

"Not every one that saith ... but he that doeth": The barrenness of this sort of faith demonstrates its real character (verse 20), the faith that says but does not do is really unbelief. Jesus was not suggesting that works are meritorious for salvation, but the true faith will not fail to produce the fruit of good works. This is precisely the point of (James 1:22-25; 2:26).

You see, this is what we have been talking about in church. Many people pretend to be Christians, who have not sold out to God. Some come to church for the fellowship, some come to better their position in the community, and some come so that they can belong to something. None of these things will get us to heaven.

God wants us totally, or not at all. Playing church will not get it. Jesus explains here what it takes. Our will must be turned over to God so completely that we, like Jesus, can say, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done", (in my life).

A TOTAL COMMITMENT TO GOD.

Matthew 7:22 "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

“Have we not prophesied ... cast out devils ... done many wonderful works”: Note that far from being totally devoid of works of any kind, these people were claiming to have done some remarkable signs and wonders. In fact, their whole confidence was in these works, further proof that these works, spectacular as they might have appeared, could not have been authentic.

No one so bereft of genuine faith could possibly produce true good works. A bad tree cannot bear good fruit (verse 18).

Matthew 7:23 "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

“That work iniquity” which is lawlessness. All sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4), i.e. rebellion against the law of God (13:41).

The fact that they did these things was good, but why did they do them? Was it for great fame and a lot of money? You see, God looks more at the reason we did something, than the fact that we did it.

If you have a million dollars and you give a thousand to God, you haven't done much; but if you have a thousand and give it all, then that is great. God knows you love Him enough to sacrifice self for Him.

Verses 24-27: In drawing His concluding illustration of the two foundations, Jesus begins with the word “therefore.” On the basis of all that He has taught and illustrated, He concluded that all who both hear and do His sayings shall be saved. As a great Master Counselor, Jesus reminded His listener that hearing this message alone will not change his life. He must both hear and do what Jesus has said.

The elements of the closing illustration are drawn from the simplicity of nature itself, the “rock,” the “rain,” and the “winds.” The man whose house collapsed was at fault, not because he failed to labor, but because he did not lay the proper foundation. The shifting sand represents human opinion and the doctrines of men as opposed to “these sayings (verse 28).

The house represents a religious life; the rain represents divine judgment. Only the house built on the foundation of obedience to God’s Word stands, which calls for repentance, rejection of salvation by works and trust in God’s grace to save through His merciful provision.

Matthew 7:24-25 "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:" "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock."

You see, we must not only hear the Word, we must do it, as well. We can go to church and listen, until we are old and gray, but it does us no good at all, until we start applying the things we learn to our own lives. A wise man knows the answers to life's problems, because he searches them out in the Bible and applies them to his own life.

The "Rock" that we must build upon is Jesus Christ (the Cornerstone). It rains on the just and unjust. Problems will come. The only difference is a Christian faces problems differently. We pray and ask God to help us through our problems. They do not overwhelm us, because our strength is not in ourselves. We depend on Jesus. We just roll them over on Him, and He takes care of them for us.

Matthew 7:26-27 "And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:" "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

It was the same "rain" (problem). You see, without a good foundation, we fall. We must have our feet planted firmly in the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be able to withstand in the terrible day that is already around us. Take your eyes off the problem, and get them on Jesus. Stand firm, claiming the Word of God as your personal strength. God is the answer. There is no other way.

These teachings of Jesus astonished the ones listening on that day, and are still astonishing today. He breaks with tradition. He emphatically teaches that our hearts must be right with God, not just go through a bunch of rituals.

He seems to be interpreting the meaning of the laws of God, rather than changing them. People were blindly, systematically keeping the law without having the vaguest idea why they were keeping them. They were not truly feeling anything. God wants our hearts, not our formality.

Matthew 7:28 "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:"

The entire Sermon on the Mount is addressed to believers and presupposes faith in Jesus as Messiah. The works done by the believer are not based on himself but on the "rock" (verse 24), who ultimately is Christ Himself (1 Cor. 10:4). He is the personal embodiment of all His teachings. Thus, when He finished the discourse, "the people were astonished." Amazement engulfed the audience.

Matthew 7:29 "For he taught them as [one] having authority, and not as the scribes."

"Not as the scribes": The scribes quoted others to establish the authority of their teachings; Jesus was His own authority (28:18). This matter of authority was a major issue between Jesus and the Jews, who felt their authority challenged.

The outstanding feature of His teaching was His "authority," meaning the divine approval and authoritative constraint with which He delivered His message.

Such straightforward preaching, based on the depth of one's own life, was in direct contrast to that of "the scribes," who were the copyists of the Law and the theologians of their day. They had to rely on tradition for their authority, whereas Christ was His own authority.

Jesus really did not tell them that the law was bad. He told them His interpretation of the law. He did have all authority. He wrote the law in the first place. His understanding was not earthly, but heavenly.

When Jesus took on the form of flesh and dwelt here on the earth, He related to the difficulty in our lives truly being able to comprehend the law. I believe the Sermon on the Mount is a truly in depth explanation to us of what it takes for us to please God.

Matthew Chapter 7 Continued Questions

1. How will we know for sure that it is Jesus returning?
2. How do we know these false prophets will be in the church?
3. Inwardly, what are they?
4. Who are these false prophets pretending to be?
5. In Second John, who are the ones who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?
6. In verse 9, it says, "Some people have not God". Who are they?
7. What two things tell whether a person is of God or not?
8. In Matthew 7:16, how will we know them?
9. Finish this quote, "Train up a child in the way he should go _____".
10. What one thing has a great deal to do with what we become?
11. Cursing, swearing, and dirty jokes are usually picked up where?
12. Why should we not fellowship with unbelievers?
13. What two things help us win people to Jesus Christ?
14. What happens to a tree that does not produce good fruit?
15. In verse 21, it says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven". Then who will enter?
16. What does it take?

17. In verse 22, we read of people who have ministered to other people but are not saved themselves. Why?
18. Who gave the most, the millionaire who gave a thousand dollars or the poor man who gave a thousand dollars?
19. Jesus said, if you hear His words and do them, you will be like whom?
20. When the problems of the world came, what did this man do?
21. We can listen to God's Word until we are old and gray, but when does it become useful to us?
22. Who is the rock? The Cornerstone?
23. Why do problems not overwhelm a Christian?
24. Where should a Christian's eyes be fixed?
25. Where must our feet be?
26. What can we claim as our strength?
27. Did Jesus change the law?
28. Jesus taught them as whom?
29. What does the author believe the Sermon on the Mount is?