

Matthew 7:21-29 - “Building On The Right Foundation”

Today we come to the end of this amazing Sermon on the Mount that Jesus shared to speak on the Kingdom of God and the character of Kingdom citizens. We’ve covered lots, learned lots (I pray), and as we wrap things up today we continue to look at these contrasts that Jesus is highlighting here at the end of His sermon. We saw last week the Two Routes and the Two Fruits. Today we’ll look at the Two Claims, and the Two Builders.

1. The Two Claims – 7:21-23

7:21-23 - “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

This is a sobering passage for many people. It’s a passage that some would like to avoid, forget about, and pretend it’s not there. It has brought panic and needless doubt to many who are truly saved but it’s really meant to bring worry and concern for those that are not saved.

You see Jesus brings up a truth bomb for us that not everyone claiming to be believers in Him are going to enter into heaven. There are going to be those who seem like true believers, they have the Christian lingo down, but they’re missing it.

What are they missing?

They’re missing a true, genuine faith in Jesus. They’re lacking a relationship with Him. Remember, Jesus has been addressing the false prophets in 7:15, and now He deals with false professors. These are people that have been led astray by false prophets and false teachers. They’ve bought into a message that was not the true gospel. The false prophets deceive others whereas these false professors are self-deceived. They thought doing great exploits for the Lord meant an automatic in to the kingdom.

- The word **Lord** is the Greek word *kurios*, and it’s a term that can mean master. It’s defined as “he to whom a person or thing belongs”.

Here's the problem, these people never truly belonged to Jesus. They weren't rooted in Him as we saw in 7:18-20, and as a result they weren't bearing any fruit that indicated them to truly be saved and in Christ.

So Jesus makes a distinction, it's not just those who say that Jesus is their Lord, it's those who demonstrate it by a changed life; those who actually live out the will of the Father.

- Now for some that may seem pretty daunting. And it may begin to sound like a bit of a works-based gospel. But let me explain this to you. Salvation is not a matter of our work or effort. We don't have to fear in life wondering if we scored well enough on the practical exam of carrying out God's will.
- We are saved by faith and faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone!

God's not looking to see if you've 'done enough' to be saved. Jesus has done it all for us to be saved. But when we surrender our life to Him, He makes us new. This is conversion or regeneration. We have a new heart, new focus, new priorities, a new devotion. This should be evident in a person who has truly been converted.

It's not as though we have to be wondering each day, *Did I do the will of God, did I veer off? Was His will for me to drive on the Freeway to church today, or to take the back roads?* We don't have to fret these little things in life. Listen to what Jesus said when asked by a group what they must do to do the works of God:

- **John 6:29**, *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'"*
- And then later in **John 6:40**, *"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."*

So, the key is that you believe in Jesus as the Son of God. And it's by believing in Him and placing your trust in Him that you are converted, born again, and brought into a relationship with Him.

- **Romans 10:9–10**, *"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

So, Jesus is dealing with a group of people who have not done this. But they've done a lot of incredible things by which they thought they must be accepted into heaven. Look at what we read in 7:22:

'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

Now here's the crazy thing, these people looked like the real deal. They seemed to be right on track with the things of God. But just like the false prophets who were not truly rooted in Christ, these false professors were not either. And they were doing things, but they weren't doing them for the Lord.

How then were they doing all these seeming Christian things?

These were even supernatural things.

They did this through the power of a different source – the devil.

- It's shocking that miracles are sometimes done through pretenders and false teachers.
- The magicians in Egypt certainly were able to do some impressive supernatural wonders. It just goes to show that miracles do not prove a person. And if it's miracles you're seeking for proof, it may be a counterfeit. I'm not even implying that these people were acting in cahoots with the devil. They were just deceived and thought that doing great acts must mean they're accepted by Jesus.
- Don't get caught up in the hype. I have nothing against miracles, and I believe God is still a miracle working God, but it's not the basis or reason for our salvation.
- When asked why a person is living for Jesus, their answer should not be because they saw someone get healed, or because they had some miraculous encounter. Their answer should be always centered on the gospel and the fact that they are sinners in need of a Saviour. They recognize that Jesus died for their sins as the perfect Son of God and rose again to secure eternal life for them. It's simple yet so sad how often people miss it or make it something other than the simple gospel truth.

So, these people we're seeing in our text are acting like they're serving the Lord and living for Him. They use the name of the Lord as some magic formula to gain acceptance and approval.

Now what's maybe confusing to some is that if these works are being done through Satan, why are demons being cast out? Would Satan take out his own?

Yes he would, temporarily, to create the façade that this is of the Lord. This allows him to bring a greater deception and bring about an even stronger work down the road.

Understand that Satan is at work today to lead people astray. He has supernatural abilities and will use them to counterfeit the work of the Lord.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:7–10**, *“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.”⁸ And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.⁹ The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”*

So we see some very sobering words reserved for those who are putting on the show that they are tracking with Jesus but yet are living very independent of Him. They’re just paying lip service.

This speaks of that great day when all unbelievers will stand before Christ at the great white throne judgment (Revelation 20:11-15).

²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Many will in that day try to claim that they did all these things for the Lord, but Jesus will say, ***I never knew you***... That’s heavy. But this is of utmost importance. You see, many can claim that they know God, or at least know about God. Many claim that they believe. But yet they have never truly surrendered their life to Him. Jesus has never become their Lord and Saviour.

*You see, it’s not whether you know Jesus, it’s whether are you known by Him?

Now Jesus is omniscient, He knows everything and He knows you! But what He means by this is that He was never brought into their life. There was never a relationship between this person and Christ. It wasn’t that this person started out ok and then slowly drifted off. Jesus says, I ***never*** knew you. There’s never been a relationship there. This person has just been going through the motions, playing the part, but it’s been done independent of Christ.

In fact, flying this false Christian flag and masquerading as a follower of Jesus is likened to works of lawlessness. The person doing this is doing so in rebellion to

God and what He asks of them. Sadly they will miss out on all that God has for them. They call Him Lord but have never submitted to His lordship.

The question for you today is: have you surrendered to Jesus? Have you submitted to His lordship in your life? You see, this day that we stand before the Lord does not need to worry us or bring apprehension in our life. I've seen that far too often from Christians who wondered if they're going to hear those words: ***I never knew you; depart from Me...***

Jesus is not going to be at the judgment seat checking a list to see if your good works have outweighed your bad works. He's not spinning a wheel to see if you landed on the eternity in heaven slot. This does not need to be a cause of doubt or concern in your life. If you've accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, the one who paid the penalty for your sins, then you are His. You are known by Him because you've become a child of God!

The Bible says in **1 John 5:11–12**, *"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."*

Don't complicate it or let the enemy bring doubt into your mind of your salvation. If you are in Christ – you've put on Christ as your righteousness, you are saved!

- It's like having a life jacket. If your boat is about to sink in the middle of the ocean you don't need to panic if you have your life jacket on. You don't have to worry if that thing is going to keep you afloat or do its job. It's designed to keep you safe. And you know that as long as that thing is on, you're going to be fine.
- If you've put your trust in Jesus and put on Christ as the means of forgiveness of sins and the one that presents you righteous before the Father – stop worrying! You've done what is required of you.

Now Paul does say in **Philippians 2:12**, *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;"*

Again, that has brought some confusion and concern to people. But this is not work for your salvation, this is work out your salvation. You work out what you already have. Paul is addressing our need to continue to grow in Jesus; be rooted in Him and bear fruit. This is what we're called to do.

So rest in the glorious assurance we have when we have surrendered to Jesus!

Jesus now illustrates, again through a contrast, the life that is accepted verses the life that is rejected. It's a parable that highlights where the people we just talked about went wrong.

2. The Two Builders – 7:24-27

7:24-27 - “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Jesus brings this Sermon on the Mount to its final conclusion with the word therefore. Many people would have walked away from this Sermon being blown away (we see that in the last 2 verses). But it's not enough to just hear God's words. Both the people that Jesus addressed here – the wise builder and the foolish builder – heard His words, but Jesus isn't interested in us just hearing what He has to say. He wants us to apply what He says and to live it out obediently.

- The ones that are truly followers of Christ, are those that follow what He says. In other words, they put it into practice.
- They have come to Him (that's submission), they have heard Him (that's discipleship), and now they're doers of His word (that's obedience). Jesus says, this is the one who is **wise**!
- “If a person lives according to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, the world calls him a fool; Jesus calls him a **wise man**. The world considers a wise man to be someone who lives by sight, who lives for the present, and who lives for self; Jesus calls such a person a fool.” ¹

And the picture is that a person that lives out Gods Word is like the wise builder who prepared Himself with the right foundation. That foundation was a rock. We know Jesus is the Rock (1 Cor 3:11). He's strong and immovable. We're secure in Jesus! But the rock being mentioned here is obedience to God's Word.

¹ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (A. Farstad, Ed.; p. 1230). Thomas Nelson.

When you build a house, you need to go through the right preparations for it to last. You can take shortcuts (like the foolish builder), use inferior products, rush through it, but those all have a bearing on the strength and stability of that house. For many, they were just cutting corners in their following of Christ. They heard some nice things, maybe responded with an 'Amen', but they walked away and back into their own way of living. Jesus was teaching them a new way of life – one that if followed, would ensure strength and security.

Storms and trials may come, but you'll not be shaken when you follow His Word in obedience!

Many have felt the ruin by never putting the things of this chapter into practice.

- **Romans 2:13**, *"(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;"*

Jesus wants us safe and secure in Him. He wants you spared from the stormy judgment that is to come. But there's only one way. It's through Jesus! Build your life on Him. Don't just say you know Him and know His Word, live out His Word and live in Him!

3. The True Authority – 7:28-29

7:28-29 - *And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

The scribes in this day would teach people but would often quote other rabbis as their authority. Rabbi Hillel said this, Rabbi Joe once said that... And this would be their authority.

But Jesus comes and blows people away with this 30 minute sermon. Because it was powerful, authoritative, unlike anything anyone had previously heard. It was the living Word of God.

- And today when you come into contact with the Word know that it is the final authority, and it can change your life. But do not become a hearer only, but put it into practice, exercise it, and you will see yourself becoming more stable and stronger when difficulty comes.