

The Greatest Sermon

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Scripture is in the New King James Version

The words of Jesus Christ are in red

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“I do not believe there is a problem in this country or the world today which could not be settled if approached through the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.”

Harry S. Truman

33rd President of the United States

Introduction

There have been multi-millions of sermons but there is only one that is the greatest sermon ever preached. That sermon is the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5-7. I would like to share it with you and provide commentary on this great sermon. As I attempt this I believe it will also give me a greater understanding of this wonderful teaching from the Lord Jesus Christ to all His followers

Matthew 5

On the Mountain

And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. ² Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: (Matt. 5:1-2)

When Jesus taught, great numbers of people would come to hear Him. His reputation was being spread as a man of great wisdom who worked miracles. He would feed thousands of people with a few fish and loaves of bread. He would work all types of miracles from healing the blind and those paralyzed to even raising people from the dead. He was a prophet from God. His popularity with the people was great.

²³ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. ²⁴ Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. ²⁵ Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. (Matt. 4:23-25)

Jesus came to this Earth for many reasons. The most important was to die for the sins of His people and then be resurrected from death. Jesus came to work many signs, wonders, and miracles. These miracles would confirm that He truly was the Son of God. However, His teaching ministry was more important to Him than doing miracles. Jesus told those who He healed not to tell others about it. There were so many people coming to Him for healing that His preaching and teaching

ministry was being somewhat hindered. It was more important to spread the word of God than to work miracles.

³² At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

³⁸ But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth." (Mark 1:32-38)

On this occasion when He delivered the greatest sermon, Jesus saw the great multitudes of people and went up on a mountain so that He could be seen and heard by more people. Notice that Jesus was seated and His disciples came to Him. Then He taught His followers wonderful truths in this sermon.

The Beatitudes

In this segment, our Lord gives us nine characteristics that Christians should strive to have and the blessings that go along with them. They are referred to as the Beatitudes. What wonderful blessings await the children of God when they exhibit these traits in their walk with the Lord Jesus! What does the word beatitude mean? It means being in a state of utmost happiness. As we live our Christian lives in these ways

we will be truly blessed and happy. Where do all blessings come from? They come from God in His mercy and grace to us.

³ *“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

What does it mean when people are poor in spirit? Does it mean they lack spirituality? No. These people are humble in spirit. They understand their sins and will make amends to God and those they have sinned against. They don't exhibit pride in their lives. Pride is one of the great sins against God. The prideful person doesn't need God. Satan and his angelic followers were cast out of heaven and will suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire because of their pride and rebellion against God.

Satan used pride to deceive Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. When we sin, it is because of our pride. We want to do things our way rather than being obedient to God's commands.

When the Apostle Paul was writing Timothy about the qualifications of pastors, he said the following about who should not be a pastor:

⁶ *not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. (1 Tim. 3:6)*

There are three categories of sin.

¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 2:16)*

Let us all have a humble spirit toward God and mankind, for we will be able to share in the blessings of His great kingdom.

*⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.*

All of us go through times of mourning for various reasons. It may be because of the loss of a job. Perhaps it is because a family member passes away. We will all have to face serious illness and our own death. We may also mourn about our sinfulness. There is much to be sad about. When trials hit us, we need to turn to our Savior in prayer to ask for help and comfort in our time of need. Christ has told us in Scripture for us to ask Him for help. He may not give us what we ask for but He will answer our prayers according to His will and comfort us in our time of need. He will shoulder our burdens. *³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matt. 11:30)*

*⁵ Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.*

What does it mean to be meek? Does being meek mean that we are weak? No, meekness is a wonderful characteristic to have. Meekness causes us to have a quiet spirit in times of stress. It doesn't selfishly and loudly assert our rights; it enables us to calmly work out our problems without being combative. Jesus was meek yet He wasn't weak. In meekness, He taught us to give to others what they asked of us. However, He also drove out the money changers in the temple with a whip turning over their tables in righteous indignation because they demeaned God's house. One can be both meek and strong. Those who

are meek shall receive the blessings of Earth both now and in the future.

¹³ *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom. (James 3:13)*

⁶ *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

What is our agenda in life? Do we have our priorities right? Do we have a passion to live a godly and righteous life? Is it important to us to have a walk and testimony that causes us to be close to God? We should be filled with a desire to live a holy life. We should also want to see others live in a godly way. Jesus tells us that those whose motive is to seek righteous living in themselves and others will have their spiritual hunger and thirst satisfied. That hunger and thirst can only be satisfied through faith in Jesus Christ who is the “bread of life” and who gives water leading to everlasting life.

And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

¹³ *Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:13)*

*⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy.*

God, in His great mercy, has forgiven us of our sins If we believe in His Son Jesus Christ.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

We too are to be merciful and forgiving to others. Jesus tells us in Scripture that if we are not willing to forgive others of their sins against us, He is not willing to forgive us of our sins. This should greatly motivate us to always show mercy and forgiveness to others. This is true even if a person has sinned against us and has not apologized or asked for forgiveness. Jesus forgave those who were crucifying Him on a cross and they never asked for forgiveness. When we have a spirit of mercy toward others, God will bless us with His mercy.

*⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.*

Are our hearts pure before God? What is a pure heart? We must do our best not to sin against our Father in heaven and others we

encounter. We need to be on guard, not only for our sinful actions but also sinful thoughts. How can we do this? We need to remove all temptation away from ourselves. We need to keep our thoughts upon heavenly things and how we can advance the kingdom of God. We must not dwell on the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.

Those who have a pure heart shall see God. What a wonderful blessing to know that one day we will see our Maker! However, it is impossible for us to have pure hearts unless our hearts have been changed by the grace of God. Only those who have faith in Jesus Christ can have a pure heart. Once a person comes to faith in Christ, that person receives the righteousness of Christ as Jesus paid for that person's sins when He died on the cross. Our hearts become pure only in Christ. We then qualify to be able to see God one day! How sad it will be for those who reject Christ and will never see His loving face. They will spend a Christ-less eternity in suffering, pain, darkness, and complete loneliness without the Savior Jesus.

*⁹Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.*

Our goal as Christians are to be peacemakers. We should love others as we love ourselves. People who love each other would always want to work out their problems peacefully and not argue or fight over them. Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, is called the "Prince of Peace."

*For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.*

*And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isa. 9:6)*

We will only have true peace within and without if we are peaceful followers of this Prince.

There is another prince who is the enemy of Christ. He is Satan, the prince of the power of the air. He is also known as Lucifer, the devil, and the evil one. Rather than peace, He seeks to bring discord between men and God as he and his demonic followers try to tempt men to sin and reject Jesus Christ.

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph. 2:1-3)

Satan and his followers live to satisfy their own sinful appetites. Christ's followers choose everlasting life as they strive to follow His commandments and seek a heavenly reward. Our eternal destiny will be determined by which prince we follow. Those who follow Christ will be blessed by seeing Him one day face to face in heaven. That will be the greatest moment of their existence! They will be called the sons of God. What a wonderful honor and privilege to be called the sons of God.

*¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

When we live our lives with integrity, honesty, and character some people will dislike us. We must always do the right thing even if doing it causes others to persecute us. God is glorified in us when we live for righteousness. Always trying to do the correct and right thing with a motive to serve Christ means that we are one of His disciples. Only those who have faith in Jesus Christ will enter the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹² Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

There is no greater Christian honor in this life than to be persecuted by others for serving Jesus Christ. Many Christians have been mocked, criticized, ostracized, brought before the authorities, imprisoned, and executed in some of the most inhumane and painful ways for their faith in Christ. The prophets in the Old Testament and apostles of the New Testament were persecuted for serving God. If we follow Christ and not the ways of this sinful world we can expect persecution by others. Jesus tells us that those who receive persecution for following Him will be greatly rewarded in heaven.

It is important to note as we end this segment of the Beatitudes that we understand that we are not saved by doing these things. We do these things because we are saved. These are attributes of those who have been saved by faith in Christ. We must be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, you need to come to Him by faith. For it is impossible to please God without faith in His Son. If we confess the Lord Jesus to others and

believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we will be saved. (Rom. 10:9) What are we saved from? We are saved from the wrath of God for our sins and eternal damnation in the lake of fire.

Salt

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Christians are the salt of the earth. What does that mean? Salt has several purposes. We add it to our food for better taste. It takes away the blandness. It can be put on roads to help remove ice or snow. It also acts as a preservative that can be put on food to help it last longer before spoilage. As Christians, we are the difference in this world. Our allegiance to Christ and His commandments give the world a taste of what is pleasing to God. We are the kingdom of God on Earth and His earthly representatives. However, if we backslide into sin and stop being a faithful witness for the Lord our effectiveness is greatly diminished. We no longer are a powerful influence for good. We become like salt that loses its saltiness. It is good for nothing but to be thrown away like trash. This should be a strong motivation for Christians to grow in the Lord and seek to enlarge Christ’s kingdom on Earth.

Light

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Christians are also the light of the world. We should be like a flashlight in this dark world of sin to help others find the way to everlasting life through faith in Christ. Our every spoken word and deed should shine forth the light and glory of our Father who is in heaven. Our thought life must be pure for our words and deeds to be pure. We must understand that others will be watching how we live our lives. We have been bought by the price of Christ’s death for us. We must strive not to disappoint our family, friends, acquaintances, ourselves, and most of all our Lord. We must live godly lives so that others will see how we live for the Lord and will give glory and honor to our Father in heaven. It is a great honor and responsibility to be a Christian.

The Law

¹⁷ “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

There were those who were false accusers of Jesus who said He was trying to do away with the Old Testament law given to Moses. What these people didn't realize was that the entire Old Testament pointed toward Jesus as the Messiah. Only Jesus has met every single prophecy of the Old Testament. If there was any doubt about Jesus being the Christ, that last statement proves He was. Jesus fulfilled the law. Now, as we follow Christ and His commandments, we have a better way than the law which prophesied of our Lord. Jesus had the utmost respect for the law however, the law could not save but only condemn mankind. Even the so-called righteous scribes and Pharisees were not good enough to enter heaven. The Bible says all of us are undeserving sinners.

²³ *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Rom. 3:23)*

It also says no one does good in the sight of God. We can't be saved by doing good works for no one does good by God's standards.

They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." (Rom. 3:12)

We can only be saved by our faith in Jesus Christ. We then receive His righteousness which qualifies us for heaven.

Murder

²¹ *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'* ²² *But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!'*

shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

The sixth of the Ten Commandments states one should not commit murder. However, Jesus explained that if we are even angry at another person without just cause we are in danger of being judged by Him. We need to be very careful when we criticize another person. If we call a person silly or worthless (Raca) we are in danger of being judged by God for it. If we call someone a fool, we are in danger of being cast into the fires of hell. We must be ever so careful for what we say. The Bible says we will be judged for every single word we speak.

³⁶ But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. ³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.” (Matt. 12:36-37)

If we hate or want to kill someone than we are a murderer in the sight of God. It is not just doing the actual evil that is sin. If we desire it in our hearts, we still have committed the sin.

Reconciliation

²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

This passage teaches us that before we worship God with our offerings, we need to first resolve conflicts we have with others we have offended or harmed. Then He will accept our worship. In other words, we can't

be right with God until we fix the problems we have with others we have wronged.

Settling Disputes

²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

When we have conflicts with others we need to quickly resolve them. If we don't we may get drawn into a legal battle with a large financial settlement or even face jail time. God wants us to resolve these matters speedily. If we don't we may face these dire consequences which could have been avoided if we had not let our pride prevent an early settlement.

Adultery

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

The seventh of the Ten Commandments states we are not to commit adultery. Jesus again explains this commandment more fully. If a person lustfully looks upon another who is not their spouse, they have committed adultery in their hearts. God judges not only our actions but also our thoughts. That is why it is so important to work at controlling our thought lives so that we don't succumb to evil, lustful thoughts

toward others. Marriage, between a man and a woman, is the only God ordained way to have sexual relations with another person. This is certainly a high bar Jesus is setting for us. It shows what a holy God expects and how we are accountable to Him for even our thoughts. Praise God that He will forgive us of our sins through faith in Christ. He will also help lead us out of temptation.

The Cause of Sin

²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Jesus is telling us that we must do everything possible to remove those things that lead us into sin. If it is alcohol addiction, we must remove all alcohol from our lives. The same goes for using illegal drugs, watching pornography, and many other evil things we can do. The only way we can get victory over these sins that have a hold over us is to remove those things that cause us to sin. It may be extremely hard to do that (like cutting off a limb) but removing the cause of the temptation is better than being cast into hell for these sins.

Marriage

³¹ “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ ³² But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

God designed marriage for a man and woman to express their love for each other through a sexual relationship. It is a gift from God. The Bible says that God hates divorce.

*“For the LORD God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one’s garment with violence,” (Mal. 2:16)*

In the Old Testament a man could divorce his spouse for just about any reason by giving her a certificate of divorce. Jesus is expanding our understanding regarding divorce in this passage. Once we marry someone it is a lifetime commitment. A person who is divorced and marries another person causes both people in this new marriage to be committing adultery. The only exception to this rule is if the grounds for the divorce is because of marital infidelity. However, if the unfaithful spouse is repentant and the other spouse is willing to continue the marriage, that would be preferred. The faithful spouse would be showing godly grace in that case.

The question is often asked if the faithful spouse can remarry. I see no biblical reason why the faithful spouse could not remarry if the person they marry is a Christian. The Bible says Christians are not to unite with an unbeliever. Divorce on the grounds of adultery ends the marriage much the same as the death of a spouse ends the marriage. The widow

or widower is free to remarry in the Lord. So too is the faithful spouse free to remarry in the Lord without this new union being considered adulterous.

Oaths

³³ “Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ ³⁴ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great

King. ³⁶ Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Jesus is telling us that in former days it was said that a person should not swear to do something and then break that promise. However, Jesus tells us that we should never swear to do or not do something. Normally when one swears they invoke a higher authority by saying the words, “I swear to God.” God’s name is never to be used in personal oaths as that is using His name in vain or in an inappropriate way. His name is holy. Jesus also tells us that we shouldn’t swear by heaven for it is God’s holy throne; by Earth for it is His footstool; by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great King; nor by your head (your own authority) because you can’t make one hair white or black. In other words, swearing by one of these entities will not help you accomplish the promise or oath. It demeans them.

It is much better to just say yes or no in our discussions. The Bible says the tongue is an unruly evil. We speak so much sin. We often grumble,

complain, judge others unfairly, gossip, back bite, etc. in speech. The best way not to sin in our conversation is to simply limit it to yes or no for just about everything else comes from a wicked heart. Those who hold their tongues are very wise. When it comes to our talking, less is better than more. If you are not sure you should say something than don't say it because it is your conscience convicting you.

Honor the Requests of Others

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. ⁴⁰ If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. ⁴¹ And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴² Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

It has been said that you are to treat others just like they treat you. If someone hits you then you can hit them back. If they steal from you then you can steal from them. Doing this is taking revenge on someone. Jesus turned the world upside down with His statements in this passage as they go contrary to how most people think and respond. He tells us not to resist an evil person when they take advantage of us. If someone slaps us on one cheek, we should turn the other to be slapped. If someone wants something you have, give it to them and even more. We are to give to others what they ask for; we should not refuse those who want to borrow from us. Jesus is teaching us not to be selfish but to look after the needs of others. Our worldly possessions are not important. Living our life serving others is

important. Jesus lived by His own words. At the end of His life He was mocked, scourged, forced to wear a crown of thorns, and then crucified. Through it all He never spoke one bad word about his tormentors. He did not resist the evil people who treated Him so terribly. He even asked His Father to forgive them for what they did to Him.

Love Your Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? ⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

It is natural for most people to love their friends and hate their enemies. However, Jesus said that we should also love those who do all manner of evil against us because that kind of love makes us the sons of God. It is totally unheard of to make the statement that we should love our enemies. This kind of love exceeds human understanding. We need to respect all people who have been created by God even those who are evil. God gives sunlight and rain to all men equally to meet their needs so we too should consider the needs of the just and unjust. What reward do we have for only loving people who

love us? Even those who are evil do that. The real challenge is to consider the needs of evil people who may abuse us. If we can love those who hate us we are showing the love of our Father in heaven who is perfect. Jesus commands us to be perfect. God wants nothing less from us but how can we be perfect? We can't in and of ourselves. With man, it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Therefore, Jesus came and died for us. As we receive Him as our God and Savior, we receive His righteousness and perfection. He received the penalty of our sin on the cross. What a wonderful substitutionary atonement for believers in Jesus Christ!

³⁷ Jesus said to him, *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”* ³⁸ *This is the first and great commandment.* ³⁹ *And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’* ⁴⁰ *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”* (Matt. 22:37-40)

Matthew 6

Do Good Secretly

“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that you may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. “But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, “that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Jesus is telling us to do all our good works toward others in secret. Why? It is because most like to do charitable works to impress others.

It becomes their motive rather than doing the good itself for other people. We should be doing good things for others to benefit these people. In Jesus' day, as in our day, some people love to make a show of their piety. They would do something to bring attention to themselves, like blowing a trumpet, to let others know how good they were.

Jesus is saying that people like this are hypocrites. Their hearts are not right. He said they have their reward. Since they are interested in pleasing men rather than pleasing God their only reward for doing their alms is the praise of men. They forfeit the glory and honor from the one who counts, their Father in heaven. To prove our sincerity and proper motives, Christ tells us to do all our good deeds in secret. This would prove that our motives are right and our desire is to please our Father who sees and knows all things. He will reward us openly for these secret deeds of goodness.

How Should We Pray?

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. “But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Prayer, along with the study of the Scriptures, demonstrates our faith in God. We must have conversation with our Lord to grow in our knowledge of Him. Conversation demands both listening and talking. Reading the Bible is how we listen to God. In the Bible, He gives us all the information we need to live a life that brings glory and honor to

Him. He gives us only the information that is beneficial to us. Praying to God is our talking to Him. It should consist of our showing Him adoration for His holiness, glory, and greatness. We should also use prayer to confess our sins to Him and ask for forgiveness. Next, we should thank Him for all that He has done for us in taking care of all our needs. Finally, we should ask Him for the things we need.

Jesus tells us that when we pray we should not be like hypocrites. Praying to God is an honor and privilege. It is beyond our finite understanding how God can hear, understand, and answer multi-millions of prayers each hour, yet He does. We should not pray to impress others with our eloquence as some did by praying in the synagogues or on the street corners to be seen of men. As was the case in doing good works, our praying should be done in secrecy, where the door is shut and no one knows what we are doing. Our Father who is there with us in that secret place, hears our prayers and will reward us openly. We will lose that reward if our motive is to bring honor to ourselves rather than honoring God.

Vain Repetitions

⁷And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Our Lord tells us not to pray using vain repetitions as the heathen do. What are vain repetitions? God does not want us to keep repeating the same words or phrases as the uncivilized do. These words become meaningless because they don't come from the heart. They are empty words. We are wasting God's time and our own time by praying like

that. How long would you listen to someone if they just kept repeating the same words or phrases?

Be very careful about praying lying in bed with the lights out right before you go to sleep. You will often get so sleepy you will not be able to keep your mind on your praying, will often repeat yourself, and then fall asleep in the middle of your prayer. This is the height of rudeness to our Lord. How would you feel if someone was talking to you and then fell asleep in the middle of their conversation? It would convey to you that you were not very important. A good time to pray is early in the morning. You are rested from a night's sleep and you can start your day worshipping the Lord.

We should not pray using meaningless repetitions because our Father knows the things we need even before we ask Him. It is a high and great privilege to pray to God. Let us not demean the act of prayer with meaningless words that show our lack of sincerity.

The Lord's Prayer

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray:

Jesus gives us a model prayer that we can pray from time to time. Our prayers should not be limited to just this one. When we pray, we must make sure we think about the meaning of each word.

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

In this prayer, we need to recognize we are addressing God who is our Father in heaven. This is the Being who deserves our greatest respect, honor, adoration, and worship. He rules from heaven; however, He is omnipresent or present everywhere at once. He can be in heaven, on Earth, and even in hell at the same time and knows what is going on in

all creation at once. This is so difficult for us with finite minds to understand the infinite God. Our minds are limited to time and space however, with God there are no limits.

We are to hallow the name of God. He is so holy, righteous and pure, even to speak His name requires great responsibility and restraint. What does hallow mean? It means that His name is to be set apart for holy uses only. We must use it with the greatest respect and honor. So many people flippantly use the name of God and Jesus. They just blurt it out in common usage. "O my God" is used by so many people just for emphasis. Some even blaspheme the name of God and Jesus in angry curse words. This is a terrible sin. We should limit the use of God's name and only use it when appropriate such as in our prayers or when we attend worship services or bible studies.

How important is it to keep sacred the name of God? It is the third of the ten commandments given to Moses by God.

⁷ *"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain. (Ex. 20:7)*

¹⁰ *Your kingdom come.*

When we think of this phrase we often think it is referring to a coming kingdom. However, I believe it is referring to the kingdom that has now come. When Jesus was on Earth He cast out demons. This showed that the kingdom had already come.

Jesus said, ²⁸ *"But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matt. 12:28.)*

Some think that the coming kingdom of God will come with signs and wonders from heaven. What did Jesus say?

*“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, **“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”** (Luke 17:20-21)*

The coming kingdom was a spiritual kingdom within all Christians who struggle against sin and the demonic hosts. God the Holy Spirit resides within us to be our helper to be victorious over sin and Satan.

Jesus left this world to be seated on the right hand of God. It is from heaven that He rules over His kingdom.

¹⁹ *So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. (Mark 16:19)*

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Sometimes people pray to God for His will to be done. That is a meaningless thing to ask for. Is our prayer to God asking that His will be done somehow going to make God stronger so that He can do what He wills or wants? No. God is omnipotent which means He is all-powerful. He does whatever He pleases in heaven and on Earth. No one can restrain Him from doing what He wants to do.

*For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom is from generation to generation.*

³⁵ *All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;
He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And among the inhabitants of the earth.
No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, “What have You done?” (Daniel 4:34-35)*

What is being said here is that God's will or what He wants to happen will happen not might happen. It isn't up to luck because there is no such thing as luck or chance. It is all determined by God who is the sovereign King and Ruler over all creation. Is our God a weak God or an all-powerful God who controls world events and the destiny of men? To ask the question is to answer it.

God has made the following promise to us:

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:28)

What is being said here is that everything that happens in the life of the Christian will be worked out for our good. Even the bad things that happen to us will be for our good. We may not know how until we see Jesus but we know that God never breaks a promise to us. This can only be accomplished by a God who sovereignly planned all the details of our life in eternity past.

Yes, His will is going to be accomplished on Earth, in heaven, and in all His creation! We don't have to worry about the world spinning out of control. Even though it seems like things are going bad in this world, God is always in control and will always bring about His will. Have no fear. Satan, his league of demons, sin, death, hell, and the unsaved will never triumph over God. The Lord will defeat them all and cast them into the lake of fire.

¹⁰ The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Rev. 20:10)

¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:14-15)

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread.

Jesus is telling us to ask our Father to give us our daily bread. We need food for our daily nourishment and existence. We are not to worry about food for if our Father in heaven will feed the birds of the air, He will certainly feed us as He cares more for us. We also see in this phrase that our real daily bread is being spiritually nourished by reading the Word of God each day. Jesus is the “bread of life.” He is also the “Word.” Jesus told Satan the following in the wilderness temptation:

⁴ But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” (Matt. 4:4)

Let us pray for the daily nourishment of Christ who sacrificed His flesh and blood for our pardon on the cross.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We must ask God to forgive us of our debts, also translated transgressions or sins. Jesus has the power and authority to forgive our sins. We need to repent of our sins and ask the Father for forgiveness. We are to also forgive others who sin against us.

When we sin against others we are also sinning against God. For forgiveness to take place we must first seek forgiveness from those we have sinned against. Then we must ask the Lord to forgive us. No

other human being has the power to forgive sins. When Jesus saw the faith of the paralyzed man brought to him for healing He told him his sins were forgiven. When the religious leaders there heard His comment, they thought He committed blasphemy or verbal sin against God.

And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:21)

These religious leaders were wrong on part of their thinking and right on the other. They were wrong because Jesus was not committing blasphemy. Jesus can forgive the sins of people. They were right that only God can forgive sins. Jesus is God.

¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Here Jesus wants us to ask the Father to not lead us into temptation. God will not tempt us

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. (James 1:13)

We are weak and easy prey to Satan and our own fleshly appetites. We need God to protect us and give us strength to fight against the evil one. The main goal of the devil before he is cast into the lake of fire is to disrupt the plan of God and bring as many people to the lake of fire as he possibly can. Our fight is not so much against other people but against the unseen demonic forces all around us.

¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this

age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Eph. 6:12)

If our eyes were opened to be able to see all the demons and their activities in this world, we would be terrified. God graciously prevents us from seeing these evil beings.

For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

As we come to the end of the Lord's Prayer, we are to give God all the glory He deserves. Jesus is the King of kings and rules His eternal kingdom. We need to praise Jesus for He has all the power of God's might in His hands. Jesus is the Creator of all things. He also has all the glory of the universe in Him. We should praise Him as the almighty King who is truly glorious beyond our comprehension and reigns forever. The Bible says the following about Jesus Christ:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. ¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (Col. 1:15-18)

¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (Rev. 11:15)*

¹⁴ “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Jesus returns to the subject of forgiveness. If we want God to forgive us of our sins, we must be willing to forgive others of their sins against us. This is true even if they don't ask for our forgiveness. As stated earlier, Jesus asked His Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him even though they had not asked for forgiveness. They didn't realize they were crucifying God the Son.

³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

Fasting

¹⁶ “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

Why do people fast? Why is that a form of worship? Fasting demonstrates our faith. It shows God that we are so serious about loving, trusting, and obeying Him, we would even deny our own bodily needs to show our faith in Him. One time when the disciples could not cast out a demon, Jesus told them in that case fasting was necessary along with faith and prayer. Fasting adds strength and power to our requests to God. Fasting pleases God if we do it with the right motive. Fasting, like giving our financial gifts, is a sweet-smelling sacrifice to Him.

Jesus wants us to fast secretly. He wants us to wash our face and make it look like we are not fasting. The hypocrites make their faces look like they are ill to show off their fasting. He tells us to do this in secret so we will be rewarded openly by our Father who sees in secret. Let us not lose our reward by showing off our good works before men. The only reward we will have is the praise of men, not of God.

What Do You Treasure?

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What are the most important things in your life? Is it having a high paying job, a big house, expensive cars and large boats? Is it having a bunch of property or wearing expensive clothes? These things are temporary. Property will wear out. These tangible things may be valuable in this life but they have no eternal value at all. They are subject to theft and wearing out. When we are on our death bed we will know that these things were of little importance. What is really important is how we served our Lord and others in this life.

Jesus tells us to lay up treasures in heaven where no one can steal them and where they never wear out. How do we do this? Jesus wants us to have faith in Him, study His Word, be active in prayer, attend church regularly, give our financial offerings to His ministries and the poor, and many other things we can do to advance His kingdom and lay up heavenly rewards. We should do these things privately and not to be seen of men. Where are our priorities in life? They need to be spiritual and not worldly, for the world will pass away but what we do for Christ

will never pass away. Wherever our treasure is, so will be our heart. If our desire is for worldly things, then everything else will take a back seat including God.

The Lamp of the Body

²² “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Jesus tells us that the lamp or light of the body are the eyes. If our eyes are good, then our whole body will be full of light. If we focus in life about good and wholesome things than our lives will reflect that in righteous living. However, if we focus or put before our eyes evil things our whole body will be full of darkness and that darkness will be great. Let us not commit the sins of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Let us follow and obey Jesus who is the “light of the world!”

¹² Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Which Master Do Your Serve?

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

What is mammon? It refers to material wealth or possessions. Jesus is saying that we cannot serve both God and earthly wealth. We will either love the wealth and hate God or love God and hate the wealth.

Which is it for you? Who is your God or master? Is it God or wealth? This is not to say that being wealthy is a sin or somehow wrong. As Christians, we can use our wealth for the benefit of others and to advance the kingdom of Christ. We must make a choice because we cannot serve them both. If we choose material things, then those things become our idols. We end up worshiping them instead of God.

¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (1 Tim. 6:10)

This verse tells us that the love of money and material possessions is the root cause of all kinds of evil. It causes us to be greedy. This becomes an appetite that is never satisfied. We may lie, steal, and cheat to get more money and possessions.

This verse does not say having money is the root of all kinds of evil. It is the love of money that is the problem. Let us be content with the blessings God has given us.

¹¹ Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: (Phil. 4:11)

Now godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Tim. 6:6)

Worry

²⁵ "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"

²⁸ “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹ “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Jesus tells us not to worry about things. This is very hard for us not to do. It is our natural inclination to be anxious about all sorts of things. Jesus tells us not to worry about what we are going to eat or drink or what clothing we have. He tells us not to worry about life in general. God takes care of feeding the birds, and He makes the lilies of the field more beautiful than King Solomon was in all his earthly splendor. If He makes beautiful the grass of the field which will soon wither away, how much more will He take care of us? Worrying never helps anything. It damages our bodies and accomplishes nothing. It cannot add an inch to our height. The key problem with worrying is that it shows that we don't have faith in God to help us with our problems. He already knows what our needs are. Rather than worry He wants us to go to Him in prayer and ask for His help. This shows our faith in Him and without faith it is impossible to please God.

As Christians, we should not seek after worldly pleasures or things. Instead, we should seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and He will then take care of all our earthly needs. This means believing in Jesus Christ, following Him, and keeping His commandments. We

should not worry about things in the future because we can't control the future, only God can. Instead we should focus on the present and living for Christ. We should love God and believe that He will work out all things for our good according to His divine promise.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (Rom. 8:29)

Matthew 7

Judging Others

“Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye,

but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

One of our common faults is that we are often critical of others. We sometimes gossip and are willing to judge others for what they do or don't do. The Lord warns us about doing that. He says that He will judge us by the same standard we use to judge others. We are entering dangerous territory when we judge others, especially when we do it unfairly. God wants us to look inward before we judge others. We first need to remove those same faults from our own lives so we won't be hypocritical.

We have all thought negative thoughts about someone else. Sometimes we realize that we have also been guilty of either the same thing or something like it. We then feel hypocritical and are glad we never judged that person openly about it. We must be so careful not to judge people unfairly.

However, if we see a brother or sister in sin, we should go to them privately and try to persuade them to leave that sin and follow the Lord and His commandments. That is not judging a person if they are involved in open sin against God.

Don't Cast Your Pearls Before Swine

⁶ "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

This verse seems to be a hard one to understand. Who are the dogs and swine referring to? What are our pearls or that which is holy? It would seem that the holy things or pearls are referring to the Word of God. The Bible is referred to as the Holy Bible. The main resource we have about holiness in Christ is the Holy Bible. Later in the gospel of Matthew Jesus gives us the parable of the pearl of great price.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a pearl of great price. How do you enter the kingdom of heaven? It is only by believing and following Jesus who is the Way (John 14:6) and the Word (John 1:1,14). Jesus in the Great Commission commands us to make disciples of all nations. We are to spread the news of the gospel and salvation through Christ. We are to witness to others on behalf of Him. How do we reconcile the Lord’s Great Commission with this verse?

I believe the dogs and swine that are referred to are those who have committed blasphemy against God and His Christ. They curse God and all things holy. They commit blasphemy against the Holy Spirit by attributing the works of God to demons. These people who have a hatred for God and His Word are not worthy of the pearls of the gospel. They would just stomp all over the precious Word. Their eternal end is the lake of fire. Jesus warns us not to give these dogs or swine the gospel because they will turn on us and try to destroy us.

Ask, Seek, and Knock

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who

seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! ¹² Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus commands us to ask Him for the things we need. He commands us to seek them. He wants us to knock on His door and actively pursue the things we need. Why? When we do this, it shows our faith in Him. We often don't have something we want because we didn't ask. If we go to God in prayer asking and seeking these things, then God will give them to us. Jesus gives us an example of the goodness of God. If we, who are sinful, always give good things to our children, how much more will the perfect God give good things to those who ask Him? We must learn to ask for things we need not just for things we want. We also must accept the fact that if what we are asking for is not for our good He won't give it to us. We must be willing to accept a no from Him recognizing He knows what is best for us.

Jesus then shares the golden rule. We are to treat others just like we want them to treat us. This is one of the main themes written in the Old Testament by Moses and the prophets. Another way to say it is to love our neighbor as our self. The Christian life is all about looking out for the interests of others just like we look out for our own best interests. However, this is no easy task. Sin is ever present and causes us to have pride and self-satisfaction. We are selfish and love ourselves more than others. This is something we must work on constantly and pray for God's help. Jesus' whole life was based on how He could help others.

Two Gates

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Jesus said that there are two gates before us and we must choose one or the other. One gate is very narrow which means that it is hard to pass through. This is the gate that Jesus tells us to enter because if we do we will obtain eternal life and happiness. Sadly, few people will go through this gate. He warns us about the broad gate which is the easy one to enter. That is why most people go through this gate. The broad gate leads to destruction and damnation in the lake of fire. What does this all mean?

The broad gate represents the world and all its enticements to sin. The gate keeper is Satan who will try to lure as many people as he can to come to their destruction. He is very successful as he deceives most people to trust in riches, fame, power, sex, and pride. These people fall victim to all kinds of sins. These sins are their idols and they have no desire to worship God or His Christ. Their destruction is certain.

The narrow gate represents holiness and a love for God and others. This gate keeper is Jesus Christ. The people who enter through this gate are those who have trusted in Jesus Christ, believing that He died and was resurrected by God for them. Few people will believe and enter through this narrow gate.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:14)

Those who do believe in Christ will seek after Him and try to live a holy life. Due to their faith in the Savior who died for them, they will inherit everlasting life.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

Although few will be saved, the word “few” is relative. The few are a great number of people from the beginning of creation and heaven will be full of all those who believed in the Lord.

False Prophets

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Jesus warns us about false prophets. Who are these false prophets? They are people who lie to us. They try to deceive us by getting us to sin against God. Their father is Satan who is the great deceiver. These people are demonically inspired. Jesus wants us to know about these liars and to not succumb to their temptations. Speaking of them He said:

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he

*speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”
(John 8:44)*

Jesus tells us how we can spot these evil persons. We will be able to look at their lives and see what kind of fruit they produce. If their lives are full of sin and evil, we know they are false prophets. If their lives are full of goodness and love for others, we know they are true prophets of God. We need to be careful though. Jesus tells us on the outside they look very good but on the inside, they are like wolves that are hungry to devour us.

“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!’

Here Christ tells us more about these false prophets. Standing before the Lord Jesus on judgment day, they proclaim the words “Lord, Lord.” Now they appeal to Him as Lord even though they didn’t truly believe in Him in life. Jesus tells us that these false prophets will say to Him that they had prophesied and cast out demons in His name, and did many wonders in His name.

Many people on judgment day will try to convince Christ that they should be able to enter heaven because of their good works. The Pharisees, the Jewish religious leaders of His day, had good works but their heart was far from God. The Bible says that all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is no one who does good in

the sight of God. The following is what the Bible says about man's good works:

But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. (Isa. 64:6)

...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, (Titus 3:5)

The Scripture is very clear. We cannot earn our way into heaven by good works for no one is good enough. Our so-called good works in the eyes of God are like filthy rags. Salvation comes to us as a gift from God and it is based only on our faith in Jesus Christ. That is why we can't boast or take credit for our salvation.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Eph. 2:8-9)

³¹*So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31)*

However, once we have been saved by our faith then good works will certainly follow that faith and we will produce good fruit for the kingdom of Christ.

These false prophets will plead their case before the Lord Jesus Christ, the Judge. He will tell them to depart from Him as He never knew them. He knew in eternity past they would never trust in Him, only in their good works. They were never one of His people so He said He never knew them. The Lord will cast them into the lake of fire on that last day.

Are You a Wise or Foolish Builder?

²⁴ “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 states that the person who hears Him and does what He says is a wise individual. He is like a person who builds his house on a rock or firm foundation. That house will withstand great rains and wind. Notice that we must hear what Jesus says to do. We hear by reading His holy word, the Bible, and by listening to biblical teaching and preaching. However, hearing is only the first part. We then must act on what we have heard from Him. Jesus is the rock of our salvation. It is essential for our house or lives to be firmly grounded on the teachings of Christ. When times of great trouble come our way, we are ready to handle them. We are protected by the grace of God because we are anchored to Him. This make us very wise because we will be saved by Christ and will inherit both earthly and heavenly blessings.

However, those who fail to listen and follow the words of Jesus will see their house or lives destroyed. Whenever trials come their way in life they are not prepared or protected by the Lord. They have no firm

foundation supporting them. Their lives will crumble because they were secured by sinking sand rather than the rock of our Savior. These people are truly foolish. Their end is eternal suffering in the lake of fire.

The People's Response

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

When Jesus had concluded His sermon, the Bible records that the people were astonished. They were amazed at His teaching. Jesus teaching was mighty. He spoke with great authority as a prophet from God. The people were mesmerized by His words. This kind of teaching was very different than what they were used to by the religious leaders of that day. Their words seemed empty compared to the words of Jesus.

Epilogue

I hope this experience of examining the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest sermon, has been a beneficial experience for you. Jesus taught with authority because He is the greatest authority. He is the very Word of God which became flesh and dwelled among men. He is God the Son.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

If you would like to learn more about the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ please see my e-book, [Did Jesus Christ Claim To Be God?](#) It is also on www.free-ebooks.net.

As I end this book let me remind the reader that there is coming a day of judgment when all mankind must stand before Jesus Christ and give an account of their lives.

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it,

and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:12-15)

Those whose names were not found written in the Book of Life are all those who did not believe in Jesus Christ in their lifetimes. Those whose names are written in the Book of Life are Christians who believe in and trusted Jesus Christ in life as their Lord and Savior.

The final result of unbelievers will be to suffer eternal torment in the lake of fire. The final result of Christians is everlasting life in the new heaven and new Earth.

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (Matt. 3:36)

My urgent prayer for you, the reader, is for you to repent of your sins (turn away from them) and receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ who alone can save you from the judgment and wrath to come.

³ *I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)*

³¹ *So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” (Acts 16:31)*

I therefore invite you to receive Jesus Christ in faith as your Lord and Savior. I also invite you to read and daily study the Word of God and pray to Christ our only High Priest and mediator between God and man. Don't put this off. Do it today because “... now is the day of salvation.”

*“In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have helped you. “Behold, now is the
accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (Isa. 49:8)*

Amen