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The Sermons of Jesus Christ: The Sermon on the Mount

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THE SERMONS OF JESUS

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (Matt. 5-7)

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AN ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 5-7

Introduction:

- Probably no other sermon in all of history has been more misunderstood and misinterpreted than the Sermon on the Mount.
 - A. Liberal theologians, although blatantly denying the deity of Christ and the inerrancy of scripture, have for centuries used and misused Christ's words here, twisting them to fit their own humanistic and unbiblical social gospel. One false claim along this line is that a person can be saved by keeping the concepts of the Sermon on the Mount (as if this were possible for a non-Christian).
 - B. Others, however, who do accept the Bible as God's Word, have also erred, concluding that Jesus' lofty message here does not in the least apply to us today, but refers to a totally different dispensation. Thus, while the first group misuses it, this group ignores it.
- Both views are soundly refuted by the Apostle Paul: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).
- The following outline is based on the interpretation that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus was instructing and encouraging born-again believers in their day (in spite of opposition) to live by those kingdom principles which will become universal during the Millennium.
- A number of people believe that the sermon may have been delivered on one of the twin peaks on the Horns of Hattin, located about four miles west of the Sea of Galilee and some eight miles southwest of Capernaum. It was in this exact area on July 15, A.D. 1187, that a very famous battle was fought. At that time the brilliant Moslem military leader Saladin met and utterly crushed an army of European Crusaders. Saladin would later that same year, on October 12, capture the city of Jerusalem.
- We will survey this sermon in a six-fold manner, all dealing with the subject of the Kingdom:
 - the Believer and the Kingdom
 - Law and the Kingdom
 - Old Testament and the Kingdom
 - Worship and the Kingdom
 - Entrance to the Kingdom
 - Stability of the Kingdom
- **The believer and the Kingdom** (Matt. 5:1-16; Luke 6:24-26)
 - A. Positive characteristics: Things to achieve—
 1. Those who are poor in spirit:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3).

Why are the “poor in spirit” happy? Because they recognize their own spiritual poverty and are qualified to be filled by the riches of His grace. There are two local churches described in the book of Revelation which vividly illustrate this concept. One recognized its true condition; the other did not.

Smyrna, the happy church—*“I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and Are not, but are the synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9).*

Laodicea, the wretched church—*“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:15-17).*

2. Those who mourn:

“Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4).

Dwight Pentecost wrote:

Our Lord did not promise, ‘Blessed are they that moan, for they shall be comforted,’ but, ‘*Blessed are they that mourn.*’ When we carry some burden that brings tears, our natural response is to complain, to moan, to question God’s wisdom and benevolence, God’s right to do this to us. He did not say, ‘Those who moan will be comforted,’ but ‘*those who mourn.*’ (*The Sermon on the Mount*, Multnomah Press, Portland, Ore., 1980, pp. 31-32)

There are four classic examples in the Old Testament where men of God mourned over their own sins and the sins of Israel:

Daniel (9:3-19)

Isaiah (6:5)

Ezra (9:5-15)

Nehemiah (1:4-11)

3. Those who are meek:

“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth” (Matt. 5:5).

It should be immediately understood that meekness is not weakness. To the contrary, one of the most fearless and courageous individuals in the entire Word of God was Moses. Consider his amazing life: At age eighty he confronted the mightiest monarch of his day, the Egyptian pharaoh. Ignoring the king’s threats, Moses thundered down ten terrible plagues upon the land.

He then led his people across the surging waters of the Red Sea, through a burning desert up to the very borders of the promised land. He was hardly a coward. And how did God describe this champion of courage? *“Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth”* (Num. 12:3).

In light of all this, biblical meekness may be defined as subdued strength. Moses never used this divine strength for his own selfish interests. Although he was constantly slandered by his own people, he refused to retaliate. Like the Savior, who could have instantly marshaled twelve legions of angels to protect Him in Gethsemane, Moses chose instead to pray for, rather than destroy, his enemies.

4. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness:

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matt. 5:6).

Jesus is saying here that the secret of spiritual growth is a spiritual appetite. In other words, those who eat little will grow a little; those who eat much will grow much.

One of the greatest books ever written on the person of God is entitled, *The Pursuit of God*, by the late A. W. Tozer. In this book, Dr. Tozer wrote:

In this hour of all but universal darkness, one cheering gleam appears. Within the fold of conservative Christianity, there are to be found increasing numbers of persons whose religious lives are marked by a growing hunger after God himself. They are eager for spiritual realities, and will not be put off with words, nor will they be content with correct ‘interpretations’ of truth. They are athirst for God, and they will not be satisfied until they have drunk deep at the fountain of living water. (Christian Publications, Inc., Harrisburg, PA, p. 7)

5. Those who are merciful:

“Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7).

The Romans spoke of four cardinal virtues—wisdom, justice, temperance, and courage. But mercy was not among them. Both divine mercy and grace can be thought of as opposite sides of the same coin.

God’s mercy is not receiving what we deserve; that is, hell.

God’s grace is receiving what we do not deserve; that is, heaven.

Thus the merciful person is one who both sees and serves another human being in Jesus’ stead.

6. Those that are pure in heart:

“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8).

The word “pure” here is the Greek word *katharos*, which can also be translated by the English words, “clean and clear.” *Katharos* is an important word in the book of Revelation, referring to:

The garb worn by angels (Rev. 15:6)

The heavenly city (Rev. 21:18)

The river of life—*“And he shewed me a pure river of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1).*

7. Those that are peacemakers:

“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt. 5:9).

The role of the peacemakers is later described by Paul:

Their leader is the God of peace (1 Cor. 14:33).

They aspire after peace with all people (Rom. 12:18).

They proclaim the gospel of peace (Eph. 6:15).

8. Those that are persecuted for righteousness’ sake:

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:10-12).

What is to be the reaction of those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake? In a word, they are to rejoice. Two reasons are given for this:

Because of the relationship down here—To suffer in this manner is a great privilege, for it associates one with the godly prophets of the past who were also persecuted.

Because of the rewards up there—*“For great is your reward in heaven” (Matt. 5:12).*

Note—the promises given to believers:

- a. To possess the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3)
- b. To be comforted (Matt. 5:4)
- c. To inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5)
- d. To be filled (Matt. 5:6)
- e. To obtain mercy (Matt. 5:7)
- f. To see God (Matt. 5:8)
- g. To be called the sons of God (Matt. 5:9)

h. To possess the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:10)

Note—the duties assigned to believers:

a. They are to function as the salt of the earth:

“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matt. 5:13).

(1) In the ancient world, on occasion, salt was considered to be more valuable than gold. It was certainly more practical. Roman soldiers were paid in salt. If one were derelict in his duty, he was said to be “not worth his salt.” Salt prevents, provides, and promotes.

It prevents corruption and dehydration.

It provides flavor.

It promotes thirst.

(2) In a spiritual sense, the salt of the believer’s testimony can accomplish all three functions.

b. They are to function as the light of the world:

“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:14).

The believer receives this divine light from Christ (John 1:9) so that he might reflect it for Christ. *“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world”* (Phil. 2:14-15).

B. Negative characteristics—Things that should be avoided:

1. Money seeking—*“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”* (Matt. 6:24-25).

The word “*mammon*” is an Aramaic word, pointing to wealth or riches. The word “*despise*” here refers to the act of placing a low value on something or someone. Jesus is not saying here that one must hate money in order to serve God. He is saying that possessions must be placed on the lowest rung of our priority ladder.

An Islamic proverb says: “He that seeks after this world is like one that drinks sea water. The more he drinks the thirstier he becomes, until it slays him.”

2. Men pleasing — *“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”* (Matt. 6:26).

- **The Law and the Kingdom** (Matt. 5:17-20; 7:12)

A. The divine fulfiller of the Law — *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law; or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”* (Matt. 5:17-18).

B. The divine fulfilling of the Law — *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets”* (Matt. 7:12).

1. This famous command, known by millions as the Golden Rule, is in reality the Gracious Rule, for one must experience the saving grace of God to fully practice its teaching.
2. Some have accused Christ of plagiarism here, claiming that He simply repeated what the Chinese philosopher Confucius and others had already said centuries before. Note, though, the words attributed to them: *“Do not do unto others that which you would not have them do unto you.”* A quick comparison shows that there is a tremendous difference between these two statements. One is negative, the other positive. An example of the usage of both concepts can be seen in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The negative usage, as demonstrated by the priest and Levite. They did not in the slightest either harm or harass the poor bleeding and half-dead victim. In essence, they simply did not do to him that which they would not desire for him to do to them in the same situation. But they left him to die.

3. The positive usage was demonstrated by the Good Samaritan. He *“bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him”* (Luke 10:34). Why did he do this? Because the Good Samaritan would have desired the same treatment if the situation had been reversed. The difference between Confucius’ words and those of Jesus is the difference between death and life.

- **The Old Testament and the Kingdom** (Matt. 5:21-48)

A. In relation to murder (Matt. 5:21-26)

1. The basic concept — *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment”* (Matt. 5:21).

Jesus here refers to the Sixth Commandment, *“Thou shalt not kill”* (Exod. 20:13). The word “kill” literally means “murder,” that is, the unlawful taking of a human life.

The judgment mentioned here has in view the common local courts, arranged

according to Deut. 16:18, consisting of seven judges and two assistant Levites.

2. The broadened concept—*“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire”* (Matt. 5:22).

Jesus equates anger and hatred with murder. He is saying that a devilish attitude is as serious as a devilish act. Finally, he warns that to hate and harass one’s brother may result (unless, of course, repented of) in both human and divine retribution. John the apostle later amplified upon this: *“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him”* (1 John 3:15).

B. In relationship to adultery (5:27-30)

1. The basic concept—*“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery”* (Matt. 5:27).
2. The broadened concept—*“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (Matt. 5:28).

Our Lord treats the Seventh Commandment, *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”* (Exod. 20:14), as He did the Sixth Commandment. Evil acts are the result of evil attitudes. As Solomon once observed: *“For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”* (Prov. 23:7). The Apostle Paul was attempting to drive home this concept when he addressed his peers, the Jewish leaders, in the following manner: *“Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?”* (Rom. 2:22).

C. In relationship to divorce (Matt. 5:31-32)

1. The basic concept—*“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement”* (Matt. 5:31).
2. The broadened concept—*“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery”* (Matt. 5:32).

D. In relationship to oath taking (Matt. 5:33-37)

1. The basic concept—*“Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths”* (Matt. 5:33).
2. The broadened concept

Negative—*“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of*

the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black” (Matt. 5:34-36).

Positive—*“But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matt. 5:37).*

The Pharisees knew that they would be held accountable if they swore by God’s name and broke their oath (see Lev. 19:12; Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21). In light of this, they had invented four lesser oaths. Thus, one might swear by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, or his own head. But Jesus here points out that these oaths were just as binding. He then concluded:

Don’t swear by heaven, for it is God’s throne.

Don’t swear by the earth, for it is God’s footstool.

Don’t swear by your own head, for it is God’s creation.

E. In relationship to retaliation (Matt. 5:38-42)

1. The basic concept—*“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth” (Matt. 5:38).*

The broadened concept—*“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away” (Matt. 5:39-42).*

F. In relationship to love (Matt. 5:43-48)

1. The basic concept—*“Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy” (Matt. 5:43).*

This statement cannot be found in the Old Testament. It was no doubt one of the common (but incorrect) teachings of the rabbis. In fact, to the contrary, the Old Testament teaches just the opposite.

Note: *“If thou meet thine enemy’s ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him” (Exod. 23:4-5).*

“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink” (Prov. 25:21).

2. The broadened concept—*“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44).*

• **Worship and the kingdom** (Matt. 6:1-7:11)

A. Giving (Matt. 6:1-4; Luke 6:38)

1. The rules

- a. Fruitless giving—*“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward”* (Matt. 6:1-2).
- b. Fruitful giving—*“But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth”* (Matt. 6:3).

2. The rewards

“That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly” (Matt. 6:4).

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

B. Praying (Matt. 6:5-15; 6:7-11)

1. Essentials in prayer

- a. Those prayers God rejects—*“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward ... But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking”* (Matt. 6:5, 7).
- b. Those prayers God receives—*“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly”* (Matt. 6:6).
“For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him” (6:8b).

2. Elements in prayer

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matt. 6:9-13).

This prayer, the most well-known and oft quoted in the entire Bible, has been greatly misunderstood concerning both its name and nature.

Its name—It is not the Lord’s Prayer, but the Disciples’ Prayer. The Lord’s Prayer is found in John 17.

Its nature—Some have overused it, memorizing and reciting it, feeling there is a magical blessing attached to it.

Others have underused it, concluding that it belongs to another dispensational age.

These positions are, of course, in error. In essence, what is referred to as the Lord's Prayer is a model prayer, given by the Savior to His own, serving as a guideline to help them pray more fruitfully.

Luke provides the background which led to this prayer:

"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).

It is extremely significant to observe that on no occasion is it ever recorded that the disciples ask: "Lord, teach us to preach," or, "Lord, teach us to work miracles." But they did ask Him to instruct them in prayer. The implications are staggering, for this indicates that the prayer life of Christ had more influence on them than the sermons He preached or the miracles He performed.

Note the various elements listed in this prayer:

- a. FAITH! *"Our Father, who art in heaven"* (6:9a)
The first two words here serve as a reminder concerning my *horizontal* responsibility ("our") and my *vertical* responsibility ("Father").
- b. WORSHIP! *"Hallowed be thy name"* (6:9b)
David felt this part of prayer to be so important that he appointed a select group of men who did nothing else in the temple but praise and worship God. (See 1 Chron. 23:5; 25:1, 7.) In the book of Revelation John sees four special angels who exist solely to worship God and who *"rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come"* (Rev. 4:8). See also Christ's statement to the Samaritan woman (John 4:23-24).
- c. EXPECTATION! *"Thy kingdom come"* (6:10)
This kingdom is that blessed millennial kingdom spoken of so much in the Old Testament (see Isa. 2:2-4; 25:8; 35:1, 8, 10; 65:20, 25) and later previewed by John in the New Testament (Rev. 20:1-6).
- d. SUBMISSION! *"Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"* (6:10b)
Jesus would later give the finest example of this element in

Gethsemane (see Matt. 26:39).

- e. PETITION! *“Give us this day our daily bread”* (6:11)
This suggests our praying should be as regular and often as our eating—namely, daily!
- f. CONFESSION! *“And forgive us our debts”* (6:12)
The blood of Christ will forgive us of every sin, but not of one excuse. Only confessed sin can be forgiven (see 1 John 1:9).
- g. COMPASSION! *“As we forgive our debtors”* (6:12b)
- h. DEPENDENCE! *“And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil”* (6:13)
It should be understood that while God has never promised to keep us from temptation, He has promised to preserve us in and through temptation. (See 1 Cor. 10:13.)
- i. ACKNOWLEDGMENT! *“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen”* (6:13b)
Some ten centuries prior to this, one of Israel’s earliest kings had prayed in a similar fashion:

“Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O Lord is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all” (1 Chron. 29:10-11).

Now, 1,000 years later, Israel’s ultimate King, the son of David, appears upon the scene, *“exalted as head above all.”*

Someone has pointed out the extraordinary collection of relationships which emerge in this prayer:

That of father and child (*Our Father*)

That of God and worshiper (*Hallowed be thy name*)

That of king and subject (*Thy kingdom come*)

That of master and servant (*Thy will be done*)

That of benefactor and suppliant (*Give us this day our daily bread*)

That of creditor and debtor (*Forgive us our debts*)

That of guide and pilgrim (*Lead us not into temptation*)

That of Redeemer and redeemed (*Deliver us from the evil one*)

3. Encouragements in prayer (Matt. 7:7-11)

The rewards involved—*“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?”* (Matt. 7:7-10).

The rationale involved—*“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”* (Matt. 7:11).

C. Fasting (Matt. 6:16-18)

1. As practiced by the hypocrites—*“Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward”* (Matt. 6:16).
2. As practiced by the humble—*“But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly”* (Matt 6:17-18).

D. Earning (Matt. 6:19-23)

1. Earthly treasure is insecure and corruptible—*“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal”* (Matt. 6:19).
2. Eternal treasure is secure and incorruptible—*“But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Matt. 6:20-21).

E. Serving (Matt. 6:24)—*“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Matt. 6:24).

F. Trusting (Matt. 6:25-34)

1. The illustrations
 - a. The fowls of the air—*“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”* (Matt. 6:26).
2. The lilies of the field—*“And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”* (Matt. 6:28-30).
3. The invitation—*“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? Or, What*

shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. 6:31-34).

G. Judging (Matt. 7:1-5)—*“Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (Matt. 7:1-5).*

1. Jesus here lists three reasons against passing judgment upon another:

The one judging will himself be judged.

The one judging will be judged by the same measuring stick he uses to measure others.

The one judging is often more corrupted by the same sin he condemns others for. Consider the utter hypocrisy as described by Jesus:

Here is a man blinded by a huge “wooden” sin the size of a building beam.

Here is another man bothered by a small “wooden” sin the size of a mote. And the result? The first tries to condemn the second!

2. Honest and critical evaluation on the part of one believer toward another is sometimes necessary. This should only be done, however, if the person evaluating is not guilty of the same sin and if three rules are carefully observed:

- a. Is my criticism unkind? (Prov. 18:8)
- b. Is my criticism untrue? (Exod. 23:1)
- c. Is my criticism unnecessary? (Prov. 11:13)

H. Witnessing (Matt. 7:6)—*“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matt. 7:6).*

1. The hogs and dogs probably refer to apostate religious teachers (see 2 Peter 2:22).

- **The entrance to the kingdom** (Matt. 7:13-27)

A. The way (Matt. 7:13-14)

1. The gate to hell—*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat” (Matt. 7:13).*

2. The gate to heaven—*“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it”* (Matt. 7:14).
- B. The warning (Matt. 7:15-23)
1. Concerning false prophets
 - a. Their deceit—*“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves”* (Matt. 7:15).
 - (1) Various Old Testament prophets had warned Israel concerning the danger of false shepherds.

“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed; but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost: but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them” (Ezek. 34:2-4).

“For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idle shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened” (Zech. 11:16-17).
 - b. Their description—*“Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 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”* (Matt. 7:16-18).
 - c. Their destruction—*“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire”* (Matt. 7:19).
 2. Concerning false profession
 - a. The caution—*“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”* (Matt. 7:21).
 - b. The claim—*“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?”* (Matt. 7:22).

- c. The condemnation— *“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity”* (Matt. 7:23).

Note the terrible two-fold deception described here:

Religious deceivers deceive others.

Religious deceivers deceive themselves.

It is tragically possible to mouth the words of God, to imitate the works of God, but never personally to know the true witness from God, that is, Jesus Christ.

C. The wisdom (7:24-27)

1. Its abundance as seen by the first builder— *“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”* (Matt. 7:24-25).
2. Its absence as seen by the second builder— *“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”* (Matt. 7:26-27).