

# (Through the Bible) Matthew 7

by Chuck Smith

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*In Matthew 7, Jesus teaches about the principles of judgment, the importance of self-reflection, and the power of prayer in discerning how to live righteously.*

**Duration:** 1:25:12

**Scripture:** Matthew 7:1-2, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 7:24-27

**Topics:** "Obedience To God", "Holy Spirit"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the importance of obedience to God's word. He uses the story of Peter's vision of unclean animals to illustrate how we often argue and challenge God instead of simply obeying Him. The preacher emphasizes the need to build our lives on obedience to God's truth rather than just hearing and agreeing with it. He also highlights the importance of seeking the power of God's love through the Holy Spirit in order to live up to the requirements of following Jesus. The sermon concludes with Jesus' teaching on not judging others, emphasizing that the judgment we use will be used against us.

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## Transcript

I believe that it goes without saying that Jesus Christ was certainly the greatest teacher who ever lived. And it is interesting to study his teaching habits. And he used the method of declaring a principle, amplifying it, and then illustrating it.

You declare the truth. It is important that we have certain principles established within our lives by which we live. We need to know why we live by these principles.

And that's best understood by having them illustrated for us. And so, he follows this method consistently in the Sermon on the Mount, declaring the principle and then amplify the principle by illustration. So, as we begin chapter 7, we begin a new principle as Jesus declares now a new principle to us.

And he declares, judge not that you be not judged. For with what, that's the principle, just judge not that you be not judged. And then he goes on to amplify it.

For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. And with what measure you meet, it shall be measured to you again. And then he illustrates it.

Why do you behold the sliver that is in your brother's eye, but you don't consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how will you say to your brother, let me take the sliver out of your eye and behold, the beam

is in your own eye. The hypocrite. First, take the beam out of your own eye and then you'll be able to see clearly to cast or to take the sliver out of your brother's eye.

Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast you your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you. Now, this passage has created difficulty in the minds of a lot of people because it seems like Jesus just tells you not to do one thing and then right around it, he turns right around and tells you, don't cast your pearls before swine or give that which is holy to dogs. And immediately that does entail a certain judgment of people.

Who can I share the holy things with? Who can I share the pearls of God's wisdom with? And I have to make some kind of a judgment because I'm not to share them with the dogs or with the swine. Jesus is saying basically that we are not to condemn, but we are to discriminate. Condemnation is something that God has reserved for himself.

God is the final judge. It's not up to me to say that a brother is condemned or a brother is damned. That's something that is in God's hands.

God reserves final judgment for himself, but it is something that I'm not to enter into. Paul the Apostle in writing to the Romans, talks about the horrible things that people in the world do. He talks how terrible the world had become.

People were fierce. They were incontinent. They were blasphemers.

They were adulterers. They did all of these horrible things. And having declared these terrible things that people were doing in the world, he then said, and thou art inexcusable, old man, whoever you are who judges another.

For in the same time that you're judging another, you're doing the same things yourself. Inexcusable if you judge another. Now, if I look at something that someone is doing, and I say, oh, that's terrible.

Oh, that's wrong. That's evil. I am acknowledging the fact that I know that that is wrong and that is evil.

But if I'm going ahead and if I'm doing the same thing, only in a little different shade of color, I am really condemning myself in that I am acknowledging that I know what is right, but I am doing what is wrong. And I could really be in worse shape than the guy that's doing it. You see, my judging another shows that I know better.

And yet, if I'm doing the same thing, change the situation slightly, change the names, change the scene. And so often those things which we are so readily willing and judging someone else for, by turning it slightly, I'm really guilty of doing that very same thing myself. You remember when Nathan came to David and told him about a man in his kingdom.

Oh, this man was wealthy. He had everything he desired. He had servants and maids and everything he could hope for, everything he could desire, great flocks and herds.

And next door to him, there lived a very poor man who had only one little ewe lamb, all he had. And this man loved that one little ewe lamb. He took it to bed with him, ate with him, it lived in the house with him, it was the only thing he had.

And this wealthy man had visitors come, and so he ordered his servants to go next door and by force take the one little ewe lamb from his neighbor and slaughter it and barbecue it for his guests. David got angry. He judged the man.

He said to Nathan, that man shall surely be put to death. Nathan said, David, you are the man. Change the situation just a bit now.

Here's David with all of his wines, ruling as the king over Israel. And next door to him was Uriah. And David took Uriah's wife and had Uriah put to death.

And and by turning the situation slightly, by the prophet coming to David and putting it in a little different light, David immediately judges the man, condemns him to death. But then as the scene is turned slightly, David then sees himself. Hey, David, you are the man.

Circumstances were slightly different, but David, you're it. And this is so true with us. We are so often ready to condemn someone for doing those things that basically we're guilty of doing ourselves.

If you just turn it slightly, look at it from a little different angle, that's me. It to me is always surprising and interesting how horrible our sins look when someone else is committing them. They don't look so bad when I do it.

I always have a way of looking at myself through the rose colored glasses and I look pretty good. And I can just I can tell you exactly why I did it. But, oh, he's terrible.

And it's often our own failings that we despise most in others. We come down hardest on others. And so the Lord just says, judge not, lest you be judged.

I'm not to condemn. That isn't my place. That's God's place for.

With what judgment you judge, you shall be judged with the standard. That I am judging others. That is the standard by which I will be judged, I am I am setting the standard for judgment when I'm judging others, I'm setting the standard for my own judgment.

When I measure out, that's the same ruler that's going to be used for me. With whatever measure you are meeting it out, that is the same measurement that will be used for you. The standards that you set are the standards that will be required.

So it's best to just leave that area alone. Leave that in God's hands. And then the Lord sort of points out how ludicrous it is for me to be seeking to correct the flaws in my brother.

I said, did you see the sliver in his eye? Oh, look at that. Well, it says you seem to be able to see the sliver in your brother's eye, but you don't notice that you've got a 12 by 16 in your own, you know, you got a beam in your own eye. Now he said, look, first of all, take the beam out of your own eye and then you'll be able to see clearly to take the sliver out of your brother's eye.

In other words, who am I to really judge someone else for what they are doing wrong? When there are so many flaws in my own life, there's so much wrong with me. Now, if I am guilty of judging others, then people are going to start looking for the faults in me. And it's just human nature.

If you are that kind of person that is constantly going around condemning and judging other people, then they are going to be watching you very, very closely for the flaws that are in you, because they're going to have to try and put themselves back up by pulling you down. So, the principle, judge not that you be not judged. Yet, the Lord has given us reason and wisdom, and he doesn't expect us to just set it on the shelf.

And so he tells us, don't give that which is holy to the dogs. Neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and they turn again and rend you. There are some people with which you just cannot share the things of God.

You just shouldn't even try to share the things of God with them. They will not respect them. They'll just make fun of them.

They will just trample them under their feet, and then they will turn to tear you. Now, how am I to know, then, who I can share and who I should not be sharing the truths of God with, unless I make some kind of a judgment? Now, Peter was there listening to the Lord, and it is interesting that he picks this up in his epistle, in his second epistle of Peter. He talks about, as it has happened, according, he's talking about the false teachers and the wicked people and the false prophets and all.

And he said, and it has happened to them, according to the true proverb, the dog has returned to his vomit and the pig to his wallowing. And the mire, they've turned back to their old natures. And he uses the same dog and pig kind of a concept.

There are some people that just mock and ridicule the things of the Spirit. And for me to take the precious things of God, those beautiful things that God has done in my life, and start relating them to Him, it's just, you're just taking pearls and casting them before swine. You're not to do that.

Oh, but how in the world can I know? How can I walk that narrow, without judging, and yet not being a fool in taking the pearls and giving them to the swine? How in the world can I walk that? Well, the Lord tells us in the next verse, ask, and it shall be given you. Now, this word, ask, is a word that Jesus uses for prayer when He's talking about our prayer. He never uses this word when He talks about His own prayer life.

The word means to beg, to implore, to beseech. When He talked about His own prayer life, He said, I will inquire of the Father. When He talks about our prayer, He talks about our beseeching, begging God.

He could inquire of the Father because when He came, He came on an equal level. But when we come, we come as really beggars, in a sense, because we have nothing really to offer God. But ask, and it shall be given you.

James said you ask, and you receive not, because you ask amiss that you might consume it upon your own desires. Seek a little bit stronger, and you shall find. Knock, and it shall be open unto you.

Now, someone has pointed out that these Greek words, ask, seek, and knock, are in the present perfect tense, which to be properly translated in English would be, keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking. Not just a once complete action, but a continuing action. So, the continual prayer life, asking, seeking, knocking.

Now, if we ask, it will be given. If we seek, we shall find. If we knock, it shall be open.

For every one that asks, receives. And he that seeks, finds. And to him that knocks, it shall be open.

And now he's going to illustrate that a bit. For what man is there of you, whom if his son ask for bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 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? Notice again, that as in our last study, as Jesus was talking about prayer, he was dealing with relationship and always in prayer. We need to consider relationship, that's vital for prayer.

It is your Father. As a child, you have every right to come to your Father whenever you are in need. And again, as he is speaking of prayer, he speaks of this relationship.

How much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him? Now, he is again pointing out that as earthly fathers, when our children come to us, we recognize that they have certain basic needs. If my son comes to me and says, Dad, I'm hungry, can I have a peanut butter sandwich? I don't hand him a rock and say, chew on that, kid, you know. I know that he has certain basic needs.

And so, when he comes and he ask for bread and peanut butter, we say, sure, go help yourself. If he says, can we have fish for dinner? Can I have a tuna sandwich? Can I have, if he ask for fish, will you give him a snake? No, the thought is just reprehensible. Of course not.

I love my children. I respect their needs. If they ask for bread, we'll give them bread.

If they ask for tuna, we'll give them tuna. Now, if I, being evil, that is on this lower level of humankind, if I, with all of my failings and with all of my flaws, would not be so cruel and inhumane to my children as to give them a stone when they're asking for bread or to give them a serpent when they're asking for fish. If I would not do that, then how about my Heavenly Father? If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more, the argument there is from the lesser to the greater, you wouldn't do that, how much more will your Heavenly Father, which is in Heaven, give good things to those that ask? Now, in Luke's Gospel, as he records this, he declares, how much more will your Father, which is in Heaven, give to, give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him? It is interesting that there are some people who seek to spread the boogeyman concept of God.

In regards to coming to God and seeking God for the work of His Spirit within that person's life. And I've heard people say, now, you've got to be careful as you just, you know, open up yourself, because there were people who were seeking to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and they became possessed by demons. That is about the most blasphemous concept of God I have ever heard uttered and totally foreign to what Jesus said.

Now, there are a lot of people that have, as a result of these boogeyman stories, become fearful of God. Well, I want to be careful, you know, how I open up to God, because, you know, you sure don't want, you know, some kind of a horrible experience like that. You don't have to worry.

You can come to God with every confidence. And I open, my worry is not what God might do to me if I open up to Him completely. My worry is what I will miss if I don't open up to Him completely.

I have no, absolutely no fear or no qualms in just opening my life totally to God. That doesn't bother me in the least. I'm not at all worried about what God is going to do or what God is going to allow or where God is going to send me or what God might require of me.

But these old boogeyman stories, you know, oh, no, you be careful what you say you're not going to do. That's just what God will make you do, you know. So that we begin to be apprehensive of the will of God.

We're almost fearful of the will of God. I hate snakes and bugs and rats. And if I say, God, thy will be done, oh, look out, you're going to end up a missionary in deep, dark Africa, you know, trembling all night under your net as the rats are running through the thatched roof, you know.

No, no, no. Totally false concept of God. Your Heavenly Father loves you.

And His plan for your life is so far superior to your own plan. The best thing that could ever happen to anybody would be to chuck his own plan for his life and just yield to God's plan completely. Nothing better could ever happen to you than to be right in the center of what God wants for your life.

That's the kind of Father I have. He has my best interest at His heart. And He only gets upset with me when I interfere with His accomplishing His best interest in my life.

He does get upset with me because sometimes I get in the way. I think I know better. I think I know what's best for me.

And I sometimes get a little pushy as I'm trying to get what I have envisioned and dreamed. And I think this is the very best for me. And I sometimes get pushy and then He wraps me on the knuckles.

But not because He doesn't love me, it's just that I am getting in the way of His better plan. For me, what God has planned for you is the greatest thing that could ever happen to you. And the wisest thing any man could ever do is just to fully submit his life into the hands of God.

Because God loves you. And your Heavenly Father is concerned with your best welfare. Therefore, now notice that therefore is never the beginning of a thought.

But it is a word of summary or conclusion. Because of, like Dr. McGee declares, whenever you find a therefore, you must ask wherefore. So here's a therefore, so you must ask wherefore.

So this, which is often called the golden rule, does not really stand by itself. And this is the mistake that so many people make in quoting the golden rule, is that they leave out the therefore and they just quote the rule, whatever you would that men should do to you, do ye also unto them. That's not the golden rule.

And to quote it that way is wrong and it leaves you totally helpless. If you don't have the therefore in it, there is no way that you're ever going to fulfill it. 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.

Now, this is the final verse of this section, judge not that you be not judged. Remember he told you with whatever measure you meet, it's going to be measured to you again. The measure by which you measure others is the measurement by which you're going to be measured.

The judgment by which you judge others, that's the judgment wherewith you will be judged. And so, in the conclusion of that judge not, because you're setting the standard in the measurement, he concludes it by declaring, therefore, all things whatsoever that you would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. Now, there are many people who will tell you that Christ did not declare anything new.

That this was a very common saying among the great teachers and philosophers of the past. That Confucius said, don't do to men what you don't want done to you. Confucius say, some of you older folks pick up on that one.

When we were kids, there were all kinds of Confucius say, you know, many men smoke fuminchu. Remember that one? Confucius say, he who throws mud loses ground. Aristotle said much the same.

What you don't want done to you, don't do to others. Socrates said, whatever is displeasing to you, then don't do that to others. So, they say the basic thought has already been expressed wrong.

You read Socrates, Aristotle and Confucius and all, and you see that they, all of them put this in a negative thing. In other words, I don't want you to kill me. So, I won't kill you.

I don't want you to rob from me. Therefore, I shouldn't rob you. All negative.

Jesus put it in the positive. Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. In a positive sense.

In other words, following Confucius, I would not hate you, but following Jesus, I would love you. It's not just the absence, just not a negative, it's a positive. Following Confucius, I would not steal from you, but following Jesus, I would give to you.

Can you see the difference? One is stated in a negative sense, so that you are passive in your relationship with the others. But the other is stated, Jesus states it in a positive way, that causes me to initiate positive actions towards you for good, for kindness, for love, for giving. For, as I would that men should do to me, I should be doing to them.

Now, the therefore. You see, again, it would be impossible for me to fulfill this command of Jesus Christ, apart from the power of God in my life. And the therefore takes you back to ask, and you shall receive.

Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For whoever asks, receives.

Whoever seeks, find. And to him that knocks, it shall be opened. It takes you back to that.

I cannot do this in myself. I don't have the capacity or power to do this in myself. Therefore, I must ask God to work in my life by His Holy Spirit.

I must seek that power of God's love working in me. Because apart from that, I cannot live up to the requirements that are made of me here in the Sermon on the Mount. Now, Jesus begins to make application to the message.

He has stated the principles, amplified the principles, illustrated the principles. And now, finally, there comes, as must always be within any embodiment of any sermon, that place of exhortation to action upon what you have learned. And thus, Jesus now gets into that exhortation, first of all with warnings, and then with positive statements.

Now, enter in at the straight gate. For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction. And many there be which go in thereat.

Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads unto life. And few there be that find it. So, Jesus, first of all, tells us, look, it's a straight gate.

It's a narrow path. It's going to take commitment. It's going to take consecration.

And this is true of any endeavor that one might seek to succeed in in life. You don't succeed in anything without entering into a straight gate and a narrow way. You've got to be committed.

You've got to be consecrated to your cause. And so, this is not just exclusive for the Christian way. This is just for success in life, in any endeavor.

But especially in the Christian endeavor. It's a straight gate. It's a narrow way.

It takes real commitment. It takes real consecration to win. Now, as we read this, enter in at the straight gate, we are reminded of John 14, where Jesus said, Thomas had just said, Lord, we don't know where you're going.

How can we know the way? And Jesus answered and said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. Notice he first of all talks about the straight gate, the way. Then he says, be careful of false prophets.

I am the truth. And he's talking about entering in to life, the gate that leads to life. I am the life.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. So, enter in at the straight gate. There are people who are constantly accusing me of being too narrow.

Have you noticed the tremendous emphasis today upon broadness? There are people who would like to make the way so broad that ultimately everybody is walking in that way. Ultimately, every path will lead to God. Ultimately, everybody will be all right.

And they like to make the way so broad that it includes all of mankind, just so he expresses some kind of a religious fervor in his life. Because surely if you're religious, the Lord will accept you. Now, Jesus said not so.

It's a straight gate. It's a narrow path that leads to life. There aren't many who walk it.

It's a broad gate. It's a broad path that leads to destruction. And it's full of people.

If people are accusing you of being too narrow, praise the Lord. You're on the right path. It's a broad path, a popular way that goes to destruction.

Straight is the gate. Narrow is the way that leads to life. There are few who find it.

Now, the next is a warning of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Now, there are many warnings in the scriptures concerning false prophets. And again, this entails a judgment on my part.

If I'm to be aware of false prophets, I have to, when I see someone or hear someone who is not right on, I have to be able to judge. Hey, that man's a false prophet. I've got to be aware of him.

Now, there is tremendous difficulty in this warning to be aware of false prophets because they don't look like wolves. They don't have little signs hanging on them. I am a false prophet.

But they are in sheep's clothing. They're disguised to look like sheep. And I've got to be aware of the false prophets.

Now, how can I know a false prophet? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man comes to the Father but by me. And if any man tells you there is another way, then that straight way, or straight gate and narrow way, and someone tells you there is another way to life, he is a false prophet. You see the context in which the warning comes.

And today, there are so many people who are trying to tell you that just think good thoughts, just live a positive life, and you're responding to all that God requires. No way. So, we are told to be aware of the false prophets because they will come in sheep's clothing.

Now, let me also say, one of the dangers of the false prophets is that they do tell the truth the majority of the time. You know, if a false prophet told nothing but ridiculous, absurd things, there would be no danger at all. The first time he spoke, the first sentence he uttered would be so ridiculous as, you know, that guy's off the wall, he's a false prophet.

So, they usually come on with truth. They have all of the markings and all of the earmarks of a true prophet, and much of what they say is true. Now, much of what Herbert Armstrong says is true.

Much of what the Jehovah Witnesses say is true. Much of what Joseph Smith said was true. So, you cannot immediately always discern a man who is a false prophet, for he oftentimes is leading people with the truth and is drawing people by the truth.

But when it comes down to the bottom line, when it comes to that basic truth that deals with your eternal salvation, is he bringing you to the straight gate with a narrow path? Is he bringing you to a reliance and a trust in Jesus Christ and Him only? Or is he bringing you to trust in a religious system? Is he bringing you to trust in a religious ritual? Is he bringing you to trust in a church? And if a man will seek to cause you to trust in anything other than Jesus Christ and a complete reliance upon Jesus Christ for your eternal life, that man is a false prophet. But a lot of times you've got to hear quite a bit before they get to their bottom line. And they lead you through a maze of deception as they are saying a lot of things that are true.

But the real issue is when they point to the path. What path are they pointing you to and leading you to for your eternal life? A false prophet also seeks to fleece the sheep ultimately rather than feed the sheep. And so as you get into the program, you'll find that they will begin to emphasize more and more your giving to support their program.

And though Herbert W. Armstrong does not ask for any offering, send for the free booklet, send for the free magazines. Once he has you hooked, then he begins to demand double ties and triple ties. And there comes a real push to get you into financial bondage to them.

Now, Peter, as he warns of false prophets, and this is an earmark of those false prophets, their emphasis upon money. Ultimately, they'll get around to it and they'll really begin to emphasize the money aspect. So, 2 Peter 2, as he is warning about the false prophets.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privately shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord. You see, there you get to the ultimate thing is the denial of Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. They deny the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

And many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And notice here comes the bite, it's always there. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.

They'll have you selling magazines on the street corner or from door to door, or they'll have you selling flowers or peanuts in the parking lot. Ultimately, they will seek to make merchandise of you. They will seek to profit off of you.

Because down underneath, that's the bottom line, that they are covetous. They are after the money and they'll get you with the money gimmicks. And they'll make you feel guilty in a cheapskate if you, you know, don't give everything.

And they'll put out pots and ask you to drop your jewelry in. And they'll, they seek to make merchandise of people. So, watch the emphasis that a person puts upon money.

Because number one, God is not broke, nor is he even bent. God is not depending upon man's support for his programming. God is perfectly capable of providing for his program.

And God doesn't put the pressure upon people to give. Because God doesn't want people to give under pressure. And if someone is pressuring you to give to God, he is actually seeking to motivate you by wrong motivations.

Because Paul said, you should never give under pressure. Not by constraint, not by pressure. And so, watch the emphasis that they put on money.

The big money drives, the big money programs. Beware, Jesus said, of false prophets. Which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly, they're wanting to devour you.

They are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

Now, not by the fruit of what they say, because much of what they say is truth, and if people follow the truth, good fruit can come from the truth. But the ultimate fruit that you're to look is the fruit in their own lives. Judge the fruit of their own lives.

You will know them by their fruits. Now, having warned us of false teachers, he also warns us of false professions. For he said, not everyone 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. Now, first of all, no one will enter heaven who doesn't say, Lord, Lord. Paul said that the confession of Jesus as Lord was essential to salvation.

If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. It's a part of the essential for salvation, the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord. But, Jesus is saying, not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, is going to enter.

Though it is a requirement to entering, there will be those who are saying, Lord, Lord, who will not enter. Jesus on another occasion said, Why do you call me Lord, and yet you don't do the things that I command you? You see, our problem is that we've come to think of the term Lord as a name. And so we say, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we think of Lord as his first name. Jesus is middle name, and Christ is last name. He's the Lord Jesus Christ.

But in reality, when I say the Lord, you should put a comma there. For Lord is not his name, it's his title. The title that signifies my relationship to him.

He is my Lord, I am his slave. I am his servant. He is my Lord.

Now, as my Lord, he has the right of total control of my life. When he asks me to do something, it isn't mine to ask him why. It's only mine to obey.

I am his servant. He is the Lord. And that's what the whole title is indicating.

And that is why Jesus pointed out inconsistency. He said, people are calling me Lord, Lord, and yet they're not doing the things I command them. That's inconsistent.

And if you are calling him Lord, and yet you're disobeying, you're rebelling at his commands. You're a part of that inconsistency. So not everyone who says Lord, Lord is going to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

He is pointing out that saying the right thing is not enough. Many people are saying the right things. John points out things that people are saying.

They're right things to say. I have fellowship with God. What a glorious thing to say.

But John said, if you say I have fellowship with God and you're walking in darkness, you lie. You're not keeping the truth. I may say, oh, I love God.

But John said, if you say you love God and you hate your brother, you're a liar. How can you love God whom you have not seen and hate your brother who was made in God's image? I may say, oh, it's so glorious to abide in Christ. I just love this life abiding in him.

John said, if you say you abide in him, then you ought to be walking as he walked. Why do you call me Lord, Lord? Jesus said, and you don't do the things I command you. A classic example of this is Peter there in the city of Joppa about noontime.

He's on the house of Simon the Tanner there on the seashore. And he was hungry. And while in a trance, he saw a vision.

This sheet came down from heaven, tied in the four corners. And on the sheet were all manner of creeping animals and unclean type of animals. And the Lord said to Peter, rise, Peter, kill and eat.

And Peter answered, not so, Lord. No, no, no, Peter, you can't do that. You see, that's an inconsistency of speech.

And yet, how often we are guilty of that. We're guilty of arguing with him. We're guilty of challenging him.

But as the servant, my place is just to obey him if he is indeed my Lord. And I need to think of Lord, not as a name, but as a title. And our difficulty lies in the fact that we have come to think of as his name rather than his title.

Now, there will come a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. People may not want to confess that they may not want to yield to his Lordship. Now, they may rebel against the Lordship of Christ.

But there's coming a day when every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. But though they confess it, it doesn't mean they're going to enter the kingdom of heaven because not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's more than what I say.

It's more than having correct spiritual language. It's more than using spiritual terminology. Jesus said not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the kingdom of heaven.

But he who does, he who is doing the will of my Father which is in heaven. Now, it is to God's glory that we do say Lord, Lord. And it is the will of God that we say Lord, Lord.

But it is also the will of God that we be doing those other things that God has commanded us to do. And in obedience to Jesus Christ, we are actually then proving His Lordship. But if I'm not obeying Him, if I'm not following His commandments, then I can say Lord, Lord all day long.

And it's just taking the name of the Lord in vain in a sense because I'm not really submitted to His Lordship. So, He said many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not preached or prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils and in Thy name done many wonderful works. Now, notice that Jesus said not all who say Lord, Lord, but he who does or doeth the will of the Father.

But what these people who come to Him saying Lord, Lord are telling Him, actually they are telling Him the things they've been doing. Lord, Lord, haven't we been preaching in Your name? Did He tell us to preach in His name? Yes. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. These signs shall follow them that believe. And so these people are testifying, Lord, didn't we preach in Your name? Lord, didn't we cast out devils in Your name? Lord, didn't we do many wonderful works? And so Jesus said he who does the will of the Father and these people are telling the Lord what they were doing.

But even to them, Jesus said, I never knew you. Depart from me, you that work iniquity. Now, what Jesus is saying is that we never had real true relationship as Lord and servant.

You're saying Lord, Lord, but you weren't obedient to me. You weren't following my commandments. You were in a sense doing your own thing.

Yes, you were using my name to preach to others, but you were preaching for your own glory to fulfill your own needs. Yes, you were doing wonderful works, but in such a way as to draw glory and attention to yourself. Remember the principle that He declared in chapter 6 verse 1, take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men.

For I say unto you, ye have your reward. Lord, Lord, didn't we do these wonderful works? Yes, but your motive was wrong. Now, we are told that one day we are all going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged for the things which we have done while we were in these bodies.

And that our works at that time are going to be judged by fire. And much of the work that we have done supposedly for the Lord, we're going to watch just go up in smoke like wood, hay and stubble. The works will be judged.

It says what sort or what manner of works, what sort of works they were. They'll be judged by the motives behind them. Why did I do it? Did I do it for my glory? Was I seeking attention for me? Was I seeking glory for my name or was I seeking glory for God's name? Now, those works that remain and abide after the test of fire, we will be rewarded for.

But here are people saying, Lord, Lord, we've done all these wonderful works in your name. And he says, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

So, it is important that we examine ourselves in the light of these things Jesus has been telling us. There is a straight gate and it's a narrow way and few there are that find it. God, help me.

I don't want to run in vain. It would be terrible to run all your life and to find out you were on the wrong path. You spent your whole life in the wrong path.

I was talking to a Mormon one day and I asked him concerning eternal life. And he said, oh, I won't know whether or not I have that until I die. And I said, isn't that a little late to find out? John said, these things I write unto you that believe that ye may know that you have eternal life.

You don't have to wait till you die to find out. That's too late then. You better take a look at the path now.

You better examine the gate you're going through. You better examine yourself. Paul said, therefore, let every man examine himself.

For if we will judge ourselves, then we will not be judged of God. So, there is a judgment that we are allowed. I'm not to judge you or condemn you, but I am to judge me.

But that's so difficult. It's so hard to judge myself. Who really knows himself thoroughly? Who really knows the truth about himself? We're such complex individuals that we're not even always sure of the motivation behind what we are doing.

David said, thou hast searched me, thou hast known me. You know my down sittings and my uprisings. You understand my thoughts afar off.

That word afar off means in their origins. You understand my thoughts before I think them. You know what I'm going to think before I think it.

And then David said, you've encircled me in all of my ways. He said, such knowledge is too great for me. I can't attain it.

What knowledge? The knowledge of himself. I don't even really know myself. God, you know me better than I know me.

That's why he said, search me, oh God, and know my heart. You see, that's why it's important to recognize that the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. And it's very possible for a person to deceive himself.

In fact, the person who is a hearer of the word and not a doer is a person who is deceiving himself. Self-delusion. Again, Paul said, be not deceived.

But how often we are. And the Bible warns over and over of self-deception. And because there is this danger of self-deception, it is important that I submit myself to the Spirit of God to put the light of God upon my heart, to search me, oh God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there is a way of wickedness. And God, you lead me in the right path.

Again, that full commitment to God. I don't know enough to really be able to judge or analyze myself because of my deceitful heart. I've got to ask God to search my heart.

I've got to ask God to lead me in his path. Again, it comes right back to that complete commitment to Jesus Christ. Therefore, whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.

In Luke's gospel, it says the wise man dug deep and laid his foundation on the rock. There are certain foundational truths that we need to have undergirding our Christian experience. It's important that you have a solid, strong foundation.

And there are certain foundational truths of Jesus Christ, certain principles that you've got to have undergirding your Christian experience. Because Satan is going to attack you. In the 73rd Psalm, the psalmist begins by saying, truly God is good.

That's one of the basic foundational truths that you need to have under your feet. It's important that you have that as a foundation underneath. God is good.

Because Satan is going to attack that. There are going to be circumstances that are going to take place in your life that are going to seem so terrible and so adverse, you're going to be prone to say, I don't know how God can allow this to happen to me. And I can't understand why God would do this.

And I am not always going to understand God and Satan takes advantage of my ignorance and tries to cause me to challenge God and the goodness of God because I can't understand what God is doing because I can't see the full cycle. I can only see the present moment and what seems to be disaster to me right now. I can look back in my life and see so many of those experiences which I thought were totally disastrous at the moment.

I threw up my hands in despair and said, that's it. That's the way God treats me. I don't, you know, just, you know, you're just despaired.

You thought this is the end. This can't go any further. I've had it.

Sort of like Jeremiah and I said, I'm not going to speak anymore in his name. I'm just going to shut up and just, you know, close the book and quit. God's so patient in dealing with his impatient servants.

When the cycle was completed and I saw the end result, I said, oh, isn't God wise? Isn't God good, you know? Truly God is good. I need to know that. That is a basic foundation.

It's going to be a tact. It's going to be a sale, but I've got to have foundation if I'm going to stand in the storm. The psalmist said, surely God is good to all that call upon his name, but as for me, man, I almost slept.

I was just about wiped out. When I saw the prosperity of the wicked, whoo, they're never in trouble. They never have any problems.

Things always go so well for them. They have more than their hearts could desire. But here am I trying to live the right kind of a life.

And look at all the horrible things that have happened to me. Surely it doesn't pay to try and serve God. I've washed my hands and I've cleansed my hands in vain.

You know, it doesn't pay to try and serve God. And it just, he said, and I thought to understand these things and it was just too painful. Amen.

Can't handle it. Life, can't handle it. It's just the mysteries.

I just can't handle it. But I've got to have a solid foundation underneath. Notice that Jesus said the wind is going to blow.

The rain is going to descend. The floods are going to come. I don't care who you are, wise or foolish.

We will all be exposed to the elements. We will all be exposed to problems. We're all exposed to sorrows.

We're all exposed to difficulty. Being a child of God does not give me some kind of an immunity from problems or from difficulties, from trials. You remember, Peter said, now, beloved, don't consider it strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you as though some strange thing has happened to you.

You know, there are many, and as Peter said, there are many exceeding rich and precious promises. But there are many pretty ugly promises too. There are some promises in the Bible I just don't like at all.

There is that promise, and they that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. Man, how I hate that promise. I'm glad they didn't put that in the little promise book I have at home.

I'd hate to pick that one out in the morning. It's important that I have a solid foundation. The wise man dug deep, laid his foundation on the rock.

Paul said, no other foundation have we than this, even Jesus Christ. Is your life built upon Him? Have you dug deep and laid your foundation in Christ? In the words of Christ, in the sayings of Christ, now, he who has my sayings and does them is like the wise man who built his house upon a rock. And when the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, it stood because it was built on a solid foundation.

But the foolish man is likened to a man who hears the sayings of mine and does them not. Now, as I read the Sermon on the Mount, I consent that it is right. My heart says, oh yes, that's true.

I agree with that. I consent to the truth, but unless I do the truth, my hearing and consenting is not enough. There are many people who believe the truth.

That is not enough. It is acting on the truth that is necessary. There are many people who believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

And they may even be saying, Lord, Lord. And they have consented to the truth. But as you look at their lives, they are really not doing the truth.

I read the Beatitudes and I say, oh yes, it would be good to have this kind of an attitude to be a peacemaker, to be merciful, to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Oh yes, that's good to be meek, to be poor in spirit and consenting to it. But if I go out and if I'm proud, if I'm haughty, if I'm not obeying, not living with those attitudes, then for me to consent to those attitudes, I'm only saying, yes, I know what's right, but I'm only condemning myself because I'm living what is wrong.

Now, it is an easy thing to, again, sort of rest in my believing the truth and feel a false sense of security because after all, look at my house. I've got nice wallpaper and pretty pictures on the walls. And I've got a roof over my head and it's not leaking.

Oh yes, but a storm is coming. The rain will descend and the flood will rise and the wind will beat upon the house. And if I am only building upon a consent to truth rather than an obedience to truth, my house will fall in the time of storm.

And so we must obey the truth, not just hear the sayings of Jesus, but be doing, be ye doers of the word and not hearers only deceiving yourself. Now, it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings. He came to the end of this Sermon on the Mount.

The people were astonished at his doctrine. I imagine they were. He said to them, except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you're not going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

I imagine that was the most astonishing thing they ever heard. Because as far as they were concerned, no one was more righteous than the scribes and the Pharisees. These guys practiced their whole life being righteous by the law.

And for him to say, unless you're more righteous than they, you're not going to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. That must have been an extremely astonishing thing for them to hear. They were astonished at his doctrine.

But mainly because he taught them as one who had authority, he did not teach like the scribes. The scribes when they taught would never speak with authority. But the scribes in their teaching would always quote the Talmud, the Mishnah, or one of the rabbis.

And even to the present day, in their teaching, you'll hear them say, now, Rabbi Gamil declares that this Scripture means this. And Rabbi, and they're always quoting someone else. They'll never speak with authority.

They're always just quoting, this is what someone else believes. This is what someone else has said about this text. But they never teach the text with real authority.

And so, they were astonished at Jesus. His teaching. He taught them as one that had authority.

He wasn't quoting any of the rabbis. He wasn't quoting any of the interpreters. In fact, he was in a sense saying, you have heard that it hath been said.

Rabbi Hillel said, and Rabbi Gamil said, but I say unto you. You know, they were wrong. I'm saying unto you.

And he was teaching them as one with authority. They had never heard this kind of teaching before from the scribes and from the rabbis. They didn't teach that way.

No one wanted to take responsibility for anything. It was a lot like the government employees today. You ever try and get a permit? Man, talk about a runaround.

No one wants to take responsibility for anything. Well, you got to see them over in that department. Oh, we don't have that in this department.

You'll have to go over and get permission over there first. No one wants to, you know, stick their neck out. Everyone's, you know, pushing you around.

Well, what does he say? But Jesus was willing to lay it on the line. He didn't teach them like they're scribes. He wasn't quoting from the earlier teachers, the rabbis.

And he was saying, I say unto you. Verily, verily, I say unto you. And he was laying it straight on the line with authority.

And well, might he teach them as one with authority? For he came with all authority. All power, he said, is given to me in heaven and in earth. And so he taught with that authority.

And it's interesting when one teaches with authority, people begin to gain confidence in that person. And that is why you have to, in a sense, be careful because some of the false prophets really are teaching with authority that causes people to be drawn to them. I don't know of any speaker who speaks with more authority than Herbert W. Armstrong.

Now, he speaks with real authority and people say, oh my, you know, he speaks with authority. So speaking with authority is not enough. We must judge their fruit and we must find out if they are leading me in the straight path of reliance in Jesus Christ only or do I have to trust in keeping the Sabbath and paying my double tithes and not eating meat? So he finished his sayings.

I think that it would be well for us to go back and to reread now the Sermon on the Mount, remembering that he who has his sayings and does them is a wise man. He's building his house on a rock. It will surely stand in the worst storms.

Next week, we'll try and get in gear and we'll take chapters and we will start moving, hopefully, more rapidly. I don't know. Who cares? I expect the Lord to come before we finish the New Testament anyhow.

So read five chapters and we'll go as far as we can. Uh, next week as the Lord leads. So, Father, we are so grateful for the opportunity of studying your word.

Now, Lord, we've heard your truth. We consent to your truth. Help us now, Lord, as we go to live, abide and walk in your truth.

In Jesus name, Amen.

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