

Sermon on the Mount - Part 21

by David Servant

David Servant emphasizes the importance of obedience to Christ's teachings and the dangers of false teachings in his conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Matthew 5:3-12, Matthew 5:17, Matthew 5:20, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 7:13-15, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 7:24-27

Topics: "Christian Obedience", "Eternal Salvation"

Description

This sermon focuses on the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter seven, emphasizing the importance of obedience to Christ's teachings for salvation. Jesus warns about false teachers and the narrow path to eternal life, highlighting the necessity of holiness and obedience. The sermon stresses the authority of Christ's teachings compared to the scribes and Pharisees, urging listeners to be disciples who obey all of Christ's commandments for entrance into heaven.

Transcript

Welcome back once again to Israel, and so glad you've joined me in Galilee, and I'm so glad that this is our final day of filming in Galilee, here on Mount Arbel, because war has broken out with Lebanon just so many miles to the north of us, right behind me here. All day yesterday, we could hear the rockets landing, some as close as actually 10 miles away from where we're sitting, and so glad we're finishing up the Sermon on the Mount, and going to be heading south away from the rockets tomorrow morning. If you have your Bible, can you open it to Matthew chapter seven? We've come a long way in our journey through the Sermon on the Mount, but we're in the conclusion now in Matthew chapter seven, where Jesus, after sharing how our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees if we hope to enter the kingdom of heaven, according to Matthew chapter five and verse 20, a verse that I've made reference to over and over again in these programs, because it's such an important and pivotal verse in this sermon.

After he elaborates on how we can do better, and then he summarizes it and says, whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them, for this is the law and the prophets, that ends the body of his sermon, then he begins his conclusion. He tells his disciples, as we read in our former broadcast, you've got to enter by the narrow way. The broad way leads to destruction.

Many are those who take this easy path, and so he tells us that if we're going to make it into heaven, if we're going to inherit eternal life, that we're going to be with the minority. It's the narrow way that leads to

life. Few are those who find it, but the broad way that leads to destruction, that's where most of the people are going.

Okay? So we're going to be in the minority. I'd be very suspicious if you think you're going to heaven with hordes and hordes of other people who are going to heaven with you. Then Jesus warns his disciples, he warns us about something that could stop us from continuing on the narrow way, and that of course would be false teachers and false prophets who might mislead us into thinking that we can make it some other way than by the narrow way.

You see, and that is basically, in general, what the false teachers and false prophets are saying. They're saying, look, it's easy, come along with us, we'll show you the way, and look, how can we all be wrong? Those fanatics over there, look, there's just a few of them, look how many of us there are, look how many are following me. And so people often think, well, the majority can't be wrong.

Well, Jesus just told us the majority is going to be wrong on this, and so you don't want to be with the majority, you want to be with the minority. The minority believe it's a narrow way, it's a holy way, it's a way of obedience, and although salvation is by grace, it's not a grace that gives us a license to sin, it's a grace that gives us an opportunity to repent and follow Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit. I've said that over and over again, okay? So he tells us how we can identify these false teachers, and they are identified, he said quite simply, by their fruits.

You'll know them, how they live their lives. And as we finished our last broadcast, I hope I made it very plain, the fruits that Jesus is speaking of, that we ought to be inspecting in every spiritual leader, are not the fruits of miracles and signs and wonders, because, Christ warned now, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. So he's not really there just talking about spiritual leaders any longer, and false teachers and false prophets.

That's something that applies to everybody, and that is a summary of everything that he said so far. Then he goes on, many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, in your name, cast out demons in your name, perform many miracles? Well, of course, that could be anybody, but I think more typically, that would be more likely to be those who are spiritual leaders, false teachers, false prophets. They're the ones doing the miracles, prophesying all the time, and casting out of demons and so forth.

And you say, well, how could these people do this if it wasn't legitimate, if it wasn't the Holy Spirit helping them? Well, I'll submit to you that there's all kinds of people within the church world today who are in the ministry of casting out of demons who are false, because they're preaching the broad way. They're not preaching holiness and obedience. As a matter of fact, they're blaming all of our unholiness on demons that are in us.

And they have the solution, and it's not you need to repent, it's not you need to be born again and have the Holy Spirit come to live inside of you. It's, hey, come to my deliverance ministry, give me a decent offering, I'll cast out the demon from you, and we can continue this glorious ministry in helping others. And these people are hoping that's the solution to their problem, but they're psychologically manipulated.

They might gag and everything else, and scream, but the end result is that they don't change in the end, because in order to be holy, you've got to be born again. You have to be set free by the power of the Holy Spirit. And working in miracles, there's all kinds of people who are claiming to be working miracles.

And some of them are about as convincing as studio wrestling is, as people fall over, quote-unquote, under the power, and the only power is the power of suggestion. And it's not based upon the fact that the Holy Spirit comes in when these guys are present, it's based on the spiritual principle that there's a sucker born every minute. And you have an evangelist who, you know, pushes you, gives you pressure on your head, and he has a guy behind you to catch you, and so forth, and if you try to keep yourself up, he'll keep on pushing you harder.

I've been pushed by some of the best. You know, and prophesying, oh my goodness, prophecy, there's so many people prophesying things that are outlandish. Their prophecies always, I notice, agree 100% with their particular brand of doctrine.

You know, they give a message, one of their sermons on how you can prosper, and then out comes a prophecy on how God wants you to prosper, and so on, and so forth. And so again, it's all manipulation. And so Jesus is going to say to many of those people on that day, I will declare to them, he says in verse 23, I never knew you, depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

So the fruit, which we should be inspecting in every spiritual leader, is the fruit of holiness and obedience to Christ's commandments. And of course, there's a huge problem in judging people who are on TV, because all you're seeing is a talking head. You have no idea how that person is living his or her life, and so it's very difficult.

So beware, beware, beware, beware, you don't know. But again, I just want to emphasize, in verse 21, Jesus says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But who gets into heaven? It's the same people he's been telling us all along get into heaven.

It's the blessed people of the Beatitudes who display that their lives have been changed by the Holy Spirit and they're living a life of holiness. It's not the fornicators and adulterers, according to Christ in Matthew 5. It's not those who are murderous in their heart. It's not those who are hypocrites, religious hypocrites who fast and pray and tithe, but just have a thin veneer of Christianity.

And every other category that we've looked at, it's not those who at one time were salty and became unsalty, who therefore were good for nothing. Okay? It's not those who are following the broad way. It's not those who are the pigs and the swine who don't appreciate or value the word of God.

You know, you think about it, how many people within the church world would even be interested in what I've been talking about in this series? You know, how many? I would guess, you know, a minority of people in the church today, in the evangelical church would have the least bit of interest in participating in this series, where we've just gone verse by verse through the entire Sermon on the Mount. All they want is Sunday Christianity, a nice little sermon that reaffirms them, pats them on the back, or tells them how much God wants to bless them, you know, and they can be on their merry way, on the broad way that leads to destruction. They are, according to Christ, pigs and swine, spiritually speaking, they don't value what's really valuable.

Here are the words of Christ himself. Here's the words of the Son of God who came to the earth, you know, and yet basically it's being ignored. Okay, now, Jesus now closes this sermon in verse 24.

Here's the final part of the conclusion, and he says, therefore, now remember what I've said over and over again. Anytime you see the word therefore, ask what it's there for, and it's always there for this reason.

What he's about to say is based upon what he just said.

In this case, he's going to summarize his entire sermon. Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them, or as my margin says, does them, or obeys them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and burst against that house, and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock.

There's the wise man. Then, everyone who hears these words of mine and does not obey them or act upon them or do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and burst against the house, and it fell, and great was its fall.

What's the message? The message is, once again, the same identical message. You've got to be obedient to Christ if you want to be a survivor. The rains falling and the floods falling, of course, that's a picture of the wrath of God.

It ought to remind us of the days of Noah when the wrath of God fell in the form of a flood. Jesus is not talking here about the rain, the little bit of rain that comes into everybody's life when you have a dark day or a bad day, and if you just apply his word, you'll have success in life and live victoriously above your little problems. That's often how this scripture is used.

Rip from its context of the entire Sermon on the Mount and say, well, you need to be doing what I say, the preacher says, what Jesus says, because that's how you can rise above the little problems of your life and live victoriously in this life and be rich and all these other things that God's word supposedly promises us. No, this is at the end of the Sermon on the Mount where the message has repeatedly been you've got to be holy to get into heaven. You've got to obey Christ, and so the floodwaters represent the rising wrath of God that ultimately sweeps away all those who don't do what he says, whose homes are built, as it were, upon sand.

All right, so which one are you? And again, the art of teaching, they've said sometimes, is the art of repetition. Jesus has repeated the same thing over and over again, specifically, generally, it's impossible to miss this message unless you're a theologian. That'd be the only way you could miss this message.

You're so smart that you can't get it. But Jesus said it's the fool who builds his house upon the sand, and when the rains descend, the floods come, they burst against the house, it falls, and great, he said, was its fall. He's warning about ultimate, complete destruction and waste.

That doesn't sound like heaven to me. Okay, so I hope this has sobered us all up as we've gone through the Sermon on the Mount. We have a few more things to say in summary as we finish today, so stick right with us and we'll be right back with those closing words.

See you in one minute. Hey, I'm in a very unusual place. This is Hierapolis, not far from Laodicea, the lukewarm church.

This entire cliff face is covered with calcium deposits that have been deposited here over a millennia. The water still runs over and leaves all the calcium behind. It's as hard as rock, but it looks like it's snow.

So I've looked up and down this mountain for something that's hot or something that's cold, can't find it. It's all just lukewarm. So perhaps that's what Jesus had in mind when he spoke to the Laodicean Christians 2,000 years ago who live not far from here.

You're not hot, you're not cold, you're lukewarm. Unless you repent, I'm going to spit you out of my mouth. Alright, welcome back.

We're going to close this study of the Sermon on the Mount and then perhaps go on to something else that Jesus spoke in the Gospel of Matthew. But I want you to look at the final commentary by Matthew in Matthew 7 and verses 28 and 29. The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at his teaching.

Well, I hope that you and I have also been amazed at what we've read here. And we'll be amazed for the same reason those people were amazed who first heard the sermon. Here's what Matthew said, why they were amazed.

For he was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes. Now that is not one commentary describing, you know, one phenomenon. That is that there was one difference between Jesus and the normal people.

That is he was teaching as one having authority because the scribes did not teach as having authority. No, no, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for that very thing. They sat themselves in the seat of Moses and spoke with authority.

They did not get up. No scribe or Pharisee got up and said, you know, I'm not really sure I'm right about this and your opinion is as good as mine and goodness me, you know, we're all just human here. And so, you know, maybe I'm wrong on this.

No, the scribes and Pharisees spoke with authority as if they were right. Okay. And so this is actually two differences between how Jesus, two things that the crowds observed about Jesus.

Number one, he was teaching as having authority. Well, that means he was speaking like he was the authority. I mean, he often spoke of himself.

He referred to himself many times in this. And he said, you know, your eternal salvation is based upon whether or not you do what I say. Well, that's speaking with authority.

You know, any human teacher, purely human teacher who said such a thing would be obviously guilty of heretical speaking because he would be speaking with so much authority. Christ spoke as if he was God. Well, which shouldn't surprise us.

He was God. And so of course he would speak with authority. Christ never said, you know, I'm not really sure of this.

This is kind of my opinion. You can consider it and, you know, wait with all the other opinions out there and, you know, arrive at what is truth for you. No, no.

He said, what I speak is the truth. He was the final authority on the subject. And secondly, the second thing that they were amazed at was that he was not teaching as their scribes.

What that means clearly from the context of the Sermon on the Mount and the entire New Testament is that Christ's teaching contradicted that of the scribes and Pharisees. Well, we've pointed that out over and over again as we've worked our way through the Sermon on the Mount. You know, everyone knew that what Jesus was saying was in direct contradiction to the scribes and the Pharisees and the rulers of the

synagogues.

He was, in much of the sermon, correcting their perverted teaching. Now, as followers of Christ, we are obligated to keep the commandments of Christ. Jesus said, go into all the world and make disciples.

Teach them to obey all that I have commanded you. And Paul, writing to the Corinthians in chapter 9 of his first letter, he said, I am, you know, not under the law of Moses. I'm under the law of Christ.

And so there are two different laws that exist, one for the Old Covenant, one for the New Covenant. Now, let us not assume, however, that these are two entirely different laws. No, no, no.

I want you to imagine one big circle here that would be the law of Moses. And the law of Moses included hundreds of laws. I think someone counted them one time.

They're like 630 or 613 or something. And so imagine a big circle right here with lots of dots in it, each dot representing, you know, one of those laws of Moses. Now, imagine another circle over here with dots in it.

That represents the law of Christ. Of course, Christ never gave 600 commandments, but he did give hundreds of instructions and commandments. You know, I guess it would be hundreds.

I never actually counted. But there's quite a few. Okay.

Now, let us not think that these two laws are mutually exclusive. Oh, no. To have a right picture of these two big circles with lots of dots in them, we need to now move them together so that they overlap considerably.

Okay. And so a lot of what's in the law of Moses is also in the law of Christ. You know, adultery is a sin under the Old Covenant.

It's a sin under the New Covenant. Lust is a sin under the Old Covenant and also a sin under the New Covenant. Lots of overlap.

And Christ, most of what he spoke of was in that overlap portion. Now, there are parts that don't overlap. In this sliver of a circle over here that is not overlapped from the Old Covenant law, the law of Moses, you find dietary laws.

You find all the laws about the Levitical priesthood and the temple and so forth. Because that's all a change. That's all been fulfilled under the New Covenant.

You know, we don't sacrifice animals now because Christ is our final Passover. He is the Lamb of God. And we realize now, looking at the Old Covenant through the lens of the New Covenant, all those old animal sacrifices just serve to prefigure the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

In this sliver on this side, stuff that is not included in the Old Covenant, but which is unique for the New Covenant, we find commandments like a new commandment. I give unto you that you would love one another even as I have loved you. That's a new commandment.

Okay. We find commandments like go into all the world, preach the gospel, make disciples and so forth. And so, we want to make sure we're following what Christ said in his commandments.

He's the one who has the authority. He's the one we obey. The people that he was speaking to that day, of course, were still under the Old Covenant.

They were obligated to keep everything that he had said as well as everything under the Old Covenant. Now, essentially, in summary, what Christ did throughout this entire sermon, after he told them, your righteousness has got to exceed the scribes and Pharisees, after he told them, I didn't come to abolish the law. I came to fulfill the law.

I want you to imagine those two overlapping circles. I want you to imagine that the scribes and Pharisees had taken certain laws within the Old Covenant circle and perverted them, twisted them, changed them to such a degree that they were, in essence, taken out of the realm of Orthodox understanding and teaching. So, imagine a scribe or a Pharisee grabbing one of those laws, twisting it, and then taking it outside the circle.

And so, there's all these little laws, little dots outside those two circles that have been just turned upside down by the scribes and Pharisees. Christ said, I didn't come to abolish the law and the prophets. I came to fill it to the full.

And so, we can describe it this way. Here's what he's just done. He's taken all these little laws that the scribes and Pharisees have taken out of the realm of Orthodoxy and brought them back in to where they should be.

Back into the law of Moses, rightly explaining them so that his disciples can rightly interpret them, understand them, and apply them. Bringing them back in. And they're not only then part of the law of Moses, as they had been for hundreds of years prior to that, you know, over a thousand years prior to that, but they also then become part of the law of Christ, which we are obligated to obey.

You know, you think about it. Jesus said, go make disciples. Teaching them to obey all that I've commanded.

That's what a disciple is. It's somebody who's listening to and obeying Christ's commandments. And those are the only people who get into heaven.

Now, I want you to think about all the teaching that you hear in the church world and realm. How much of it qualifies under that category of, it's disciple-making teaching. That is, it's teaching us the commandments of Christ so that we can obey them.

Well, it's so sad, as I've said over and over again in these programs, how much teaching is not based upon that. It's based upon something else. Usually on how you can get blessed, how you can have victory, how you can have success, and so forth.

Very little about holiness. And very rarely, very rarely is it ever mentioned that holiness is absolutely essential for heaven. But in this sermon, again, in summary, we've seen it over and over and over again.

In the Beatitudes, Christ told us who are the blessed people who are going to heaven. They are identified by holiness. Jesus warned his disciples, don't become unsalty or you're good for nothing.

You'll be thrown out. That's a warning that holiness is a part of salvation. He tells them to let their light shine so people will see their good works and they'll glorify their Father who is in heaven.

Then he says their righteousness, our righteousness, must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. We won't enter into the kingdom of heaven. He warns that those who hate their brother will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

He warns those who are, you know, lustful, those who are sexually immoral will not enter the kingdom of heaven. In a subtle way, he warns that those who don't tell the truth will not enter the kingdom of heaven. He says you have to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

What? Verse 45 of chapter 5. In order, that is, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. See, there's again another characteristic of those who are going to go to heaven. Those who are true children of God.

They love their enemies. He warned, don't be like the religious hypocrites. Even though they fast, pray, and tithe, they all go to hell because they do it to be seen by men.

If you're like them, you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. He warned his disciples, you gotta forgive others or God won't forgive you. So, you know, there's just so many warnings here.

The same thing. Jesus warns, if you're laying up treasures on this earth, that proves you're full of darkness. God is not your God.

Money is your God. And, of course, you don't go to heaven unless God is your God. He warns now in the summary of this sermon.

It's a narrow gate that leads to eternal life. And few are those who find it. It's the narrow way of holiness and obedience.

He tells us, beware of the false prophets. Because even if they're working miracles, they might even be calling Jesus Lord. If they don't have the fruit of obedience and holiness, they, like all their blind followers, wind up in hell.

And so don't be following those guys. Then, the final conclusion of the sermon. The one who hears these words of mine and does them, he's the person who, when the wrath of God falls, will survive.

He's the man who builds his house upon the rock. So you see, I wasn't counting it, but it must have been 10 to 15 times where Christ clearly stated it's only the holy that get to heaven. Why? Because the only people who have saving faith, you know, that saves them, are people who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and who, therefore, listen to his commandments and obey his commandments.

I hope that message has come through loud and clear throughout this entire series as we've studied. Okay? Well, I just want to say thanks so much for joining me. It's been a great journey.

I've enjoyed it with you. We've got other series that we're working on, probably next, the Olivet Discourse. Hope you can be with us for that one as well.

All right? Until I see you or am with you the next time, may the Lord bless you richly. Keep on following Jesus with all your heart. I'll see you in heaven.

God bless you. Hey, there's a whole lot more happening through the ministry of Heaven's Family than just this teaching broadcast. Heaven's Family consists of three divisions, the first of which is Shepherd Serve.

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Thanks so much. God bless you.

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