

# (Matthew) ch.7:6-29

by Zac Poonen

---

*Jesus teaches us to balance discernment with non-judgmental love, and to be careful of false prophets who make the narrow gate wider than God made it.*

**Duration:** 54:34

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 7:1-5, Matthew 7:13-15, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 7:24-27

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Christian Living"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on Luke chapter eleven verse thirteen, where Jesus talks about the importance of asking for the Holy Spirit. The preacher emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is the good gift that God wants to give us, as it allows us to partake in God's nature. He encourages the congregation to ask, seek, and knock for the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the importance of persistence in prayer. The preacher also highlights the importance of treating others with love and kindness, summarizing it as 'do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for a right attitude towards God and others, and the importance of obedience to God's word.

---

## Transcript

Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel chapter 7 and verse 6. It's very wonderful to see the balance that there is in the teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord and in the teaching of God's Word. It says in the first five verses of Matthew 7, do not judge, and the whole theme of those five verses is do not judge. How can you say to your brother that there's a speck in his eye when there's a log in your own eye? The Lord's not saying don't see the speck, but he says why do you look at the speck and you don't notice the log? Later on he says in verse 5 that you need to see the speck to be able to take it out.

But the point here is that we must not look at the speck in another person's eye with a judgmental unloving attitude. Jesus could look at the specks in people's eyes clearly and help them to remove it. In fact he told Peter once, get behind me Satan, you are not interested in the things concerning God, but your mind is set on man's interests.

Wasn't that a speck in Peter? And Jesus helped to pull it out because he had no log in his own eye. So this doesn't mean that we're not to help other people overcome their weakness or not see them or not have any opinions about others, but rather that we shouldn't have a judgmental attitude towards people and not judge in areas where we cannot see, which is the thought life and the attitudes and motives which are hidden in a man's heart. But having said that, in the very next verse Jesus says don't give what is holy

to dogs and don't throw your pearls before swine.

Obviously he doesn't mean literal dogs and literal swine, but it's amazing that Jesus who was gentle mind, mild and loving, not only called people vipers, a generation of vipers, serpents, he also called them swine and dogs. Imagine that the loving Jesus called human beings dogs and swine because it was truth. He didn't say it in a derisive way.

He called people fools who laid up riches for themselves. And when a man is interested only in the things of earth, he's behaving like an animal. He's like a pig or a dog.

That's clear. What are the pigs and dogs interested in? We can say they're interested in food and earthly things, food, sex, rest, sleep. These are the things that pigs and dogs are interested in, in their own, in fighting for their rights, in their own comfort and ease.

And when a human being who's being created in the image of God is only interested in these things, that his mind is set always on these things, food, rest, sex, comfort, ease, he's really no better than a dog or a pig. A dog and a pig's not interested in spiritual things. They're not interested in prayer, studying the word, obeying God's commandments.

And when a human being is not interested in these things, he's really no better than a dog or a pig. He has no interest. And where the Lord says, the Lord says where you find that a person's got no interest in spiritual things, don't throw these precious pearls before them.

Don't give that which is holy to them. What then? Shall we not preach to them at all? Of course we must preach to them. But don't give them the pearls.

First, give them that which will create an interest in spiritual things in their heart. Then give them that which is holy and the pearls. In other words, our first aim must be to get a person to be aware of his spiritual need.

Then we can give him that which will minister to his spiritual need. It's no use telling people about Jesus dying for their sins and of being a savior from their sin if they don't even realize that they need salvation from sin. Perhaps they don't even feel they're sinners.

What's the use giving them that which is so precious? We need to first get them to be aware of their need. What's the use telling people about how to get victory over sin if they don't even have any interest in it, if they don't even see that God's word commands it, or that God challenges them to it? There are believers who don't have the slightest interest in victory over sin, who don't even seem to know that God's word teaches that. So here the Lord says, as long as a person's behaving like a pig or a dog, not interested in any of these things, it's no use giving him that which is holy and the pearls.

We've got to try and create an interest in them, first of all. And some people just don't have an interest even though you share the word that seeks to stir up an interest. Well, you've just got to leave them alone.

Don't give that which is holy to dogs. Don't throw your pearls before swine lest they trample them under their feet and in turn and tear you to pieces. We need to be wise.

In other words, in contrast to what he said earlier about do not judge, it's pretty clear here that we need to discern as to whether a man's a dog and a pig or whether he's got little spiritual interest in him. So we see

the balance of scripture. Do not judge, but do discern whether a person's a dog or not.

Do discern whether a person's a pig or not. That's the balance of scripture. And if through spiritual discernment we discover that someone is a dog or a pig, that's not judging.

That's just obeying what God's word says in the very next verse. That is the balance of scripture. Do not judge, but do discern whether a person's a dog or a pig.

And if he is, don't give your pearls and that which is holy to such people. Then he tells us in verse seven onwards something further about the attitude we are to have when we come to God seeking him for anything. We are now really coming to the concluding section of the Sermon on the Mount.

He has spoken about the nine right attitudes described in chapter five, verses one to twelve. The nine wrong attitudes beginning in chapter five, verse thirteen onwards on up to chapter seven, verse six. Now, having heard these, the question is, are you a dog or a pig, having no interest in these right attitudes? Do you have a longing in your heart for these right attitudes, these nine right attitudes? Do you have a longing in your heart to be free from these nine wrong attitudes? If there is no such longing, the chances are that you qualify for that title that Jesus said used here of a dog and a swine.

Then you need to let God work in you and stir you up so that you have an interest in these nine right attitudes and a great desire to be free completely from these nine wrong attitudes mentioned in these chapters. How shall we receive them then? Is it by determination, good resolutions? Is it by taking a hold of ourselves? No, it is by asking. Your father alone can give you this.

Ask and it will be given to you. Seek. Seek means keep on seeking.

That's the real meaning there. Ask and keep on asking. That's how God tests us to see whether we're dead in earnest.

Seek and keep on seeking. Knock and keep on knocking. And everyone who asks like this continuously, who seeks like this continuously, and who knocks like this, they will receive and find and have the door opened.

And then he uses an illustration. He says, if a son comes to a father and asks for bread, will the father give him a stone? Certainly not. If he asks him for a fish, will he give him a snake? No.

If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly father who's in heaven give what is good to those who ask him? That which is good is these nine right attitudes that we first considered in chapter 5, verses 1 to 12. That which is good is freedom from these nine wrong attitudes that we've been considering from chapter 5, verse 13 onwards to chapter 7, verse 6. Ask for this. You're asking for bread.

Your heavenly father will not give you a stone. He won't say, I'm sorry, I can't give it to you. How much more will your heavenly father give what is good to those who ask him? James says in James 4.1, you do not have because you do not ask.

You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives. You're just asking for earthly things to consume upon your own lusts. Why not ask God to give you the power of the Holy Spirit? In Luke chapter 11, verse 13, in a parallel passage, he said, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children,

how much more shall your heavenly father give the Holy Spirit? Here he says, that which is good.

That which is good is the Holy Spirit who gives us God's nature and it's God's will that we partake of his nature. These right attitudes are God's nature. Freedom from these wrong attitudes is by partaking of God's nature.

We have to ask for it. Ask God. Seek for it.

Knock for it. Keep on hammering away at God's door until we get it. Then he sums up in one sentence in verse 12 what our attitude to others should be.

Whatever you want others to do for you, do so for them. This is the law in the prophets. Our whole attitude to others can be summed up in one sentence.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you. Love your neighbor as yourself. Do you want this life? Ask.

Seek. Knock. Keep on asking, seeking and knocking and your heavenly father will give you that which you ask for.

Let's turn today to Matthew's gospel chapter 7 and verse 13. We have now come to the conclusion of what is known as the Sermon on the Mount and we saw that Jesus spoke here about nine right attitudes and then about nine wrong attitudes and then he says these words. Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it and so we see here in the context in which we find these words that it is speaking about the type of life that Jesus spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount.

In the Sermon on the Mount he speaks about a particular type of life and the way to this life is through a narrow gate and through a narrow way. This life of Jesus for after all these nine right attitudes that we've considered in chapter 5 onwards we can say are the attitudes that Jesus had in his own life and the wrong attitudes that he warned us against are the wrong attitudes which represent the life of the flesh, the life of Adam infected by the poison of Satan, everything contrary to the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of Christ is described in chapter 5 verses 1 to 12 in the nine right attitudes in the remaining verses on up to chapter 7 verse 6 and he says if you want to get out of this pathway to destruction into which we're all walking the broad way that leads to destruction what is that? That is the way of these nine wrong attitudes.

What is the narrow gate and narrow way that leads to life? That is freedom from those wrong attitudes and partaking of these nine right attitudes. That is the plain meaning of that verse in the context in which it comes. Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it.

Notice what God's word says that most people are going along the wrong way. Very few, Jesus said in verse 14, find the way to life. Few find the way to life.

This should be something that we should take very seriously because if most people are going around on the way to destruction and we look around we can be pretty sure that most of the people around and most people who call themselves Christians too who have a very casual attitude towards these sins that Jesus spoke of. Let me list them again. What we considered from Matthew 5 21 on up to chapter 7 verse 5.

Anger.

How many Christians take anger seriously? Or dirty thoughts, sexual lust in the thought life, lying, vengeance, selectiveness in love, seeking the honor of men, love of money, anxiety, judging others. These are not things that many Christians take too seriously. Broad is the way that goes to destruction.

Many are going along that way. In another passage Jesus said strive to enter in through the narrow gate for many will try to enter and will not be able. Why won't they be able? Because they are not willing to pay the price.

Why was the rich young ruler not able to enter through the narrow gate? Because he was not willing to pay the price. The gate was open but he was not willing to pay the price to go through. Jesus said the gate was the size of a needle's eye and you can't go through the needle's eye without giving up your love for money etc.

That man wouldn't give up his love of money so he couldn't go through the needle's eye. And so we see that it is an unwillingness to pay the price that prevents people from going through the narrow gate and therefore they choose the path of least resistance. The wide gate.

They don't realize it leads to destruction. Do you expect there to be a great percentage of disciples in the population of any country? Then you haven't understood Matthew 7 14. Few there be that find it.

If you were to gather a congregation of two lakhs of people in a public meeting and ask them how many of you want to go to heaven when you die? Every sensible person among those two lakhs of people will raise their hands. Only a madman would want to go to hell. Which sensible man wants to go to hell? And yet many people can ask that question and think that that expresses a spiritual desire.

How many of you want to go to heaven? Believe in Jesus. Is that what he said? He said the way is narrow and few there be that find it. It's more than just wanting to go to heaven when we die.

It's a question of whether we want to partake of God's life, that life of purity and humility. That life that loves one's enemies. That life that forgives people who have harmed us.

That life that does not seek its own but the glory of God. That life that keeps itself pure so that God's glorified. That life that refuses to judge others.

How many people are interested in that life? You ask that question to the people to the two lakhs and you'll find very few are interested. Very few are even interested and therefore they don't find it. If you seek, Jesus said very clearly earlier on, seek and you will find.

Matthew 7 and verse 8. Everyone who seeks finds. Why is it then he said few are those who find it? Verse 14. Because there are very few who are seeking it earnestly, sincerely with a willingness to pay the price.

It is in this context that he said also about the false prophets. Verse 15. Who are the false prophets? In the context is the false prophets are the ones who make the narrow gate wider than Jesus made it.

Beware of false prophets. The context is the narrow gate and the wide gate. The false prophets in the old testament were those who preached peace, peace when there was no peace.

You read particularly in the prophecy of Jeremiah. How Jeremiah was in constant conflict with the false prophets because they preached peace when Jeremiah was preaching judgment. And so Jesus warns us to beware of the false prophets.

Jesus said that the narrow gate was the size of a needle's eye. He said in Matthew chapter 18. Matthew chapter 19.

It's easier. Verse 24. For a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

There he defined the size of this narrow gate. It's the eye of a needle. We can ask ourselves what is this narrow gate? The narrow gate is the gate of discipleship.

Jesus laid down the conditions of discipleship in Luke chapter 14 verses 26 to 33. And they primarily can be summed up in three things. First of all, that we put Jesus first above all our loved ones.

Second, that we put Jesus first above ourselves. And third, that we put Jesus first above all our possessions. Basically it's our attitude to our loved ones, our own self-life, and to our possessions.

Luke 14, 26. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, he cannot be my disciple. Second, if he doesn't hate his own life and take up his cross daily and follow after me, verse 27, he cannot be my disciple.

And Luke 14, 33, if a man doesn't forsake all his possessions, he cannot be my disciple. That is the narrow gate. A man must come to the place where he says, Lord, you are more to me than all my loved ones.

You are more to me than my own self-life, my reputation, my ego, my honor. You are more to me than every single thing I possess on earth, my job, my wealth, my possessions, my house, my everything. Then only does he get through the narrow gate.

It is impossible to get through that needle's eye if a man doesn't fulfill that condition. Then we see that the false prophets are not necessarily the heretics who are preaching wrong doctrine. The false prophets are those who do not proclaim these conditions of discipleship, who get people to believe in Jesus, saying, God will bless you and heal you, but don't tell them about the necessity of becoming disciples.

Jesus said in Matthew 28, verse 19, go and make disciples of all nations. And if you're not obeying that command, we're just making people believe in Jesus without telling them the price of discipleship, we can earn the title of false prophet. We've got to be careful.

False prophets may hold a Bible and preach that Jesus died for your sins and yet hide the cost of discipleship. And so we see, Jesus said, enter by the narrow gate, beware of false prophets. If we listen to the teaching of Jesus, we cannot go astray.

If we take the word of God exactly as it's written, we're safe and we will not miss the gate or the way. Let's turn today to Matthew's gospel, chapter 7 and verse 15. Here Jesus warned us about false prophets as we were considering in our last study.

And we saw that false prophets are not necessarily those who are preaching dangerous heresies. There are various types of false prophets. Second Peter chapter 2 warns us about them.

The epistle of Jude warns us about them, but they're not necessarily those who are saying that Jesus Christ is not God or that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh. Those are also false prophets or that those who don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ or his virgin birth. These are also false prophets, but here he is particularly speaking about those more deceptive false prophets who probably sometimes don't even feel that they are false prophets, who probably don't even realize that they are being deceived by Satan and being used by Satan to deceive others.

People who have a partial understanding of truth and stand up claiming to be God's representatives. These are the ones we are to be very careful about. Remember, a glass of milk with a few drops of poison in it is always more dangerous than a whole glass of poison.

Why? Because the whole glass of poison we shall identify and stay away from straight away, but that glass of milk which looks so good with a few drops of poison may catch us unawares. And when truth is mingled with error, it is more dangerous than pure error, because pure error can more easily be detected. But when a person is proclaiming truth or half truth, half the truth, mingled with error, then we need to be more careful.

And we need not be so afraid of those false prophets who are proclaiming error 100 percent, but we need to be more careful of those false prophets who proclaim 90 percent of the truth and leave out that important 10 percent, without which we don't have the whole truth. So we see that there are different degrees of false prophets. Beware of false prophets in the context, verse 13 and 14, those who make the narrow gate, the needle's eye, wider than God made it, and therefore they get more people in.

Jesus said, few will find it this way to life because the gate is so small and the way is so narrow. But when a person is interested in numbers, when a preacher is interested in large numbers, when he's boasting about the numbers of people that come to hear him speak, you can be fairly sure that he's in danger of becoming a false prophet if he's not one already. Jesus and the apostles were never interested in numbers.

They were always interested in the quality of disciples that they made. Jesus never boasted about the number of people who attended his meetings or the number of people healed of their sicknesses. When we concentrate on numbers, we usually sacrifice quality and end up in danger of becoming false prophets.

If we are interested in quality, we shall hold up the needle's eye. That standard of life proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount is the standard of life for disciples. And if we seek to build a church, we will seek to build a church of people who have that standard of life.

Now we cannot guarantee that everyone who comes to our church will necessarily live by that standard, but we should not be guilty of the crime of not proclaiming that standard constantly in our church. Then we are guilty. We are to proclaim clearly this is the narrow gate.

This is the narrow gate. Even Jesus had a Judas Iscariot in his flock. So we will have Judas Iscariots in our flock.

Eight percent of Jesus' flock were Judas Iscariots. Eight percent of our flock may be Judas Iscariots too. But Jesus was never guilty of hiding the size of that narrow gate as a needle's eye.

We shouldn't be guilty of that either. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing. In other words, they have the right doctrine.

The clothing is the doctrine, that which we wear on the outside. Appearance before men of being right and like a lamb. But inwardly are ravenous wolves.

They are eager to get something from the flock for themselves. Beware of those preachers and pastors who are interested in getting what you have, either your money or gifts from you, etc. Usually they are false prophets.

Jesus was not interested in getting things from people. He was not interested in people's money. He was interested in their souls.

The apostles were not interested in people's money. They were interested in people's sanctification. That's the mark of a true prophet.

He's not interested in what we can give him, but he's interested in our sanctification. And Jesus said, you will know false prophets by their fruits. It's very easy to identify a false prophet.

Look at his life. Look at his spirit, not his doctrine. That's very important.

Unfortunately, many believers seek to identify false prophets only by their doctrine. It's true that there are false prophets who come with false doctrine, but that is the easiest thing to identify. But what is most subtle is when a person comes with the right doctrine, but with the wrong life.

So remember, dear friends, there are two types of false prophets. Those who come with wolf's clothing and who are wolves. They are easy to identify.

Wrong doctrine and a wrong life. But what is more dangerous is those who come with sheep's clothing, the right doctrine, but the wolf's life inside. You will know them not by their words, not by their doctrines, not by their eloquence.

And listen to this, not even by their spiritual gifts, but by their fruits. Very often people identify a man of God by his spiritual gifts. Unfortunately, the vast majority of believers tend to think that if a man's got gifts, he's a man of God.

But Jesus said, no, by their fruits you shall know them, not by their gifts. If you will keep this simple test before you, you can be protected from being deceived by false prophets. Not by their gifts, but by their fruit.

Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes. If you find grapes hanging on thorn bushes, you can be pretty sure somebody's planted it there. Figs are not gathered from thistles.

If you find figs hanging from thistles, you can be sure it's an artificial one put up there by someone to deceive you. A good tree bears good fruit, but the rotten tree bears bad fruit. Matthew 7, 18, a good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree produce good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. It's not a question of gift, it's a question of fruit. So then, a repetition of what is mentioned in verse 16, you will know them not by their gifts, by their fruits.

Even though Jesus has said these, this made the statement twice in the space of a few verses, yet we find today most believers are not able to identify a person by fruits. They look for gifts, and therefore they go

astray. Jesus spoke about gifts later on, that we shall come to.

But consider here, what is the way by which we can have good fruit? Good fruit is not produced by hanging grapes on thorn bushes, or figs on thistles. In other words, it's not a question of producing one right attitude by human effort and hanging it on our life so that other people see it. Is that how a mango tree produces mangoes? Is that how a coconut palm produces coconuts? By tying coconuts on its branches? No.

It comes from the life within. And that's the point here. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit.

If the tree is good, it'll produce good fruit. It's not a question of tying good fruit onto it. It's a question of the life within.

And in another passage, Jesus says, make the tree good, and the fruit will also be good. In other words, don't concentrate on the fruit if you want good fruit. That's the point.

But concentrate on the tree, on the roots. Make sure that the tree itself is good, and the fruit will automatically be good. You don't have to worry about it.

But if the tree is bad, in other words, your inner heart attitude is bad, you haven't repented, you haven't really set things right, your conscience is not clear, no matter what you do, you can give people an impression, hang good mangoes here and there, and hang good coconuts, and give people an impression that you are good and clean. But it's all a deception. Have you seen these plastic fruit, plastic oranges, and plastic bananas? They look more real than the real ones.

No life in them. And there's a lot of synthetic Christianity like that, which is worth nothing. Make the tree good, which means let Jesus lay the axe, first of all, as we considered in Matthew 3, to the root of that other tree, the flesh.

Let him lay the axe to the root of that tree, put to death that which is of the flesh, so that through the Holy Spirit another life can come in, another nature, not manufactured, but partaken of, not imitated. It's not a question of imitating Christ, but a partaking of his life. There's a world of difference between the two.

To imitate is to hang good fruit on a bad tree. To partake of the life is to change the very nature of the tree, so that it is a good tree within, and he doesn't have to worry about imitating. Automatically the life comes forth.

A cat doesn't have to imitate other cats. It behaves like a cat spontaneously. This is what Jesus is emphasizing here.

Make the tree good, and then it'll produce good fruit. But if you don't listen to this exhortation, every tree that does not bear good fruit is not a question of doctrine. Good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 7, and verse 15. We were considering in our past studies Jesus' warning against false prophets. This is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, where he speaks about the narrow gate that leads to life, and the narrow way.

We saw that the narrow gate was the gate of discipleship. The narrow way is the way of taking up the cross every day, and denying ourselves, and putting the flesh to death, and following Jesus. It's a narrow way, because it involves death to that which our flesh longs to do.

Death to freedom for the flesh. But it's the way that leads to life, and there's tremendous freedom in that life. And then Jesus warned us that this doesn't come by imitation, or by determination, or by good resolutions, but rather by partaking of God's life, as we saw earlier, by asking, and seeking, and knocking, so that the tree itself becomes good, and thus produces good fruit.

And in this context, he spoke about false prophets, and he said a false prophet can be identified by the type of fruit that he bears. Bad fruit. Not by his gifts, not by his eloquence, not by his knowledge, not by his doctrine, for he will have sheep's clothing.

And there's a tremendous need in the day in which we live, because the Bible says that there will be many false prophets in the last days. Jesus warned us about that in Matthew 24. All the apostles warn us about it.

1 Timothy 4.1, the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter days, men will fall away from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits that come through false prophets. 2 Peter 2, he warns us about false prophets. Jude warns us about false prophets.

John warns us about false prophets. And Jesus, of course. And if we are living in those days, we are living in the last days, in the time before the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth, then these words have particular relevance for our time, and we need to be able to discern how to identify a true prophet, Jesus said, by the fruits, by his life.

Is he interested in money? He must be a false prophet. Is he interested in lording it over you and taking advantage over you? Whatever his doctrine is, he's a false prophet. Not the serious type of false prophet who proclaims such blatant heresies as Jesus Christ not being God or not coming in the flesh, but a more subtle type of false prophet.

They're more dangerous. Good fruit is the life of Christ. When you listen to a preacher, ask yourself, what is this man interested in? Is he interested in showing off himself, his gifts, his personality? Is he interested in your money? Then put a big question mark over him.

In contrast, have a checklist like this. Does this man have the spirit of Christ? Does he have humility? Is he seeking to lead others to godliness? Then you can safely follow the advice of such a person. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit.

Verse 18. Every tree is known by its fruits, and then he speaks about gifts, and he's bringing the contrast between fruit and gifts here. Verse 21.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father and who is in heaven. Notice here. A person can say, Lord, and we can say that that is a person who has got the right doctrine.

He knows that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus Christ is God, and Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. His doctrine is right.

He says, Lord, Lord. In other words, he's not just a person who is intellectually right. He's emotionally stirred by the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He's excited. He's intellectually right, emotionally stirred, and yet he may not enter the kingdom of heaven. Even though his doctrine is right, even though he calls Jesus Christ Lord, even though he's emotionally excited, and he says, Lord, Lord.

Why? Because he does not obey. He does not do the will of my father in heaven. So we see that the essence of true spirituality is not knowledge of doctrine, though that's important.

It's not emotional excitement, even though that's good, but it is obedience. True spirituality is in the way your will is set. Is your will set to do the will of the father? Then you are a spiritual person, not otherwise.

That is a mark of a true prophet. He will lead you not to intellectual knowledge alone, not to emotional excitement alone, but to obedience. We can say there are three types of preachers and three types of churches.

One which concentrate on doctrine, knowledge, Lord. The others that concentrate on perhaps knowledge plus emotional excitement, Lord, Lord. Plenty of hallelujahs and clapping hands.

It's Lord, Lord, not just Lord, you see. There's knowledge plus emotional excitement, and yet both of these preachers and both of these assemblies fall short of God's standard. The preacher who can lead you to God's highest is the one who tells you about Jesus Christ as Lord, who's excited about it and says Lord, Lord, but also goes on to lead you to obedience, to the will of the father, obedience to God's word, to every little detail.

Remember what Jesus said in the last verse of Matthew 28, the last verse of the gospel of Matthew, teach them to obey all that I have commanded. That's the last verse of Matthew's gospel. Those are the last words that Matthew records Jesus spoke before he went up.

Teach them to obey the commandments. That is what qualifies a person for the kingdom of heaven, according to Matthew 7 21. 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.

In that context also we can say that false prophets are those who leave you with intellectual knowledge and emotional excitement, don't lead you on to obedience. And then he said in verse 22 concerning gifts, many, notice the word many, not just a few, many will say to me on that day, and that day is the day when Jesus comes back to earth and sets up his kingdom. They'll say Lord, Lord, they got their doctrine right, Lord, they're emotionally excited about it, Lord, Lord, and something further, they served him.

How did they serve him? No doubt with much sacrifice and also with supernatural gifts. Did we not prophesy in your name? Now we know that every Christian doesn't prophesy, some people don't even believe in prophecy. Here are people who have the gifts of the Holy Spirit and they didn't prophesy in the name of some heathen god or idol, they prophesied in the name of Jesus Christ.

Further, in your name we cast out demons, there are demons being cast out with other names, but these are people who did it in the name of Jesus Christ. And in your name we performed many, not just one or two stray miracles, but many miracles. Here are people who are involved in a wide healing ministry.

Do you think that every person who is engaged in a healing ministry in the name of Jesus Christ is a man of God? If so, you are a believer without any discernment. If so, you're a believer who's never taken seriously the words of Jesus in Matthew 7.22. Here he's speaking about people who have a wide healing

ministry, having performed many miracles and not spurious miracles, which don't stand the test of close examination. These are genuine miracles, otherwise they couldn't bluff the Lord.

There are healers who bluff people saying they've done many miracles, but they can't say that to the Lord. These are genuine miracles done in the name of Jesus Christ, genuine prophecy done in the name of Jesus Christ, genuine casting out of demons done in the name of Jesus Christ. And their doctrine is right, and yet the Lord says, I will declare to them in that day, I never knew you.

Think of that. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. What does it mean to practice lawlessness? To practice lawlessness, according to 1 John 3, verse 4, is sin.

You who commit sin. In other words, it's possible for a man to live in sin in his private life, and yet to stand up on a platform and cast out demons in the name of Jesus Christ, and do miracles in the name of Jesus Christ. Because when God gives a gift to a man, he usually doesn't take it away, even after the man backslides.

There are a lot of people who started out in a healing ministry, and they were sincere in the beginning, God gave them a gift. And afterward, they backslid, they got interested in money and their own honor, and they began to be in sin in their private life. Not serious sins, but sins in God's eyes, in any case.

Seeking honor, seeking to get money for themselves, unrighteousness, all types of things, telling lies. And gradually they drift away, but they still continue to do miracles and cast out demons. And the Lord will say, depart from me, for I never knew you.

You shall know them not by their gifts, but by their fruit. Supposing you saw a man who preaches about the Lordship of Christ. He was a sick, casts out demons and prophesies.

Would you think he's a man of God? I would not, until I can see his character. Until I see whether he's leading people merely to intellectual knowledge and emotional excitement or to obedience. This is the test.

Dear friends, you will need this test more and more in the days to come, if you are to be protected from deceivers who heal the sick and cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Remember the words of Jesus, by their fruits, not by their gifts, you shall know them. Let's turn today to Matthew's gospel chapter 7 and verse 24.

Here we see the concluding paragraph in this last section of the Sermon on the Mount, which we've been considering in the last few weeks. Here he speaks about two men, a wise man and a foolish man. And it's very important for us to look at these two men carefully.

Matthew 7 24. Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and burst against that house and yet it did not fall for it had been founded upon that rock. In Sunday school the children sing a chorus, the wise man built his house upon the rock and goes on to say, build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's right, provided we understand it right. What does it mean to build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ? Does it mean just to believe that he died for your sins? Listen carefully. Verse 24.

Everyone who hears these words of mine and obeys them, it's not belief, it's obedience. For true faith always results in obedience. A faith which does not result in obedience is a counterfeit faith.

Salvation is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. But James says in James 2 26, faith without works, that is works of obedience, is dead.

That's like a body without the spirit, he says. A body without breath is dead and so faith without works of obedience is dead. A true doctrine can be like a body with ten fingers, ten toes and all the parts of the body but if it doesn't have breath it's a counterfeit faith.

So the real mark of faith is obedience and therefore Jesus says to build our house on the rock is not just believing in Jesus but obeying these words of mine with particular reference to the sermon on the mount and the rains and the floods will never be able to destroy that man's house but the one who hears these words of mine and does not do them, he takes it lightly. He believes, he agrees. Everyone who hears these words of mine means what? That means he's a man who reads the otherwise how did he hear these words? He's a man who goes to church, to the meetings of the church, otherwise how did he hear these words? The only problem is that he didn't obey.

It was not lack of knowledge, it was not lack of emotional excitement, it was not lack of information, it was lack of obedience. He called Jesus Lord, Lord but he didn't obey. He had the gifts of the spirit, cast out demons, performed many miracles but he was still founded on the sand because he didn't obey.

What is the sand? We can say the sand is our mind and our emotions. If the truth of God only comes into our mind, we're still on sand. If it's only penetrated as far as our emotions, we're still on sand.

When does the truth of God hit rock? When our will is blasted. When the dynamite of God's word blasts our will. Then we lay our foundation on the rock and we say Lord not my will but thine.

Lord I want to be angry with my brother but I'm not going to be angry. I want to do your will. I find my flesh lusting after women but I'm not going to yield to that.

I'm going to do your will and keep my thoughts pure, my eyes pure. My flesh desires vengeance but I will not take vengeance. My flesh loves money but I shall love you and hate money.

My flesh wants me to tell lies but I shall speak the truth. My flesh tells me to hate my enemy but I shall love my enemy. My flesh tells me to judge others but I will not.

My flesh tells me to be anxious but no I shall live by faith. I shall obey your word. That's the man who's built his house on the rock, who hears these words of mine and does them.

And the one who doesn't hear. The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and burst against that house and it fell and great was its fall. Now the thing is the wise man obviously spent a lot more in building his house because he did he was not satisfied with the superficial foundation.

In the parallel passage in Luke's gospel chapter 6 we read in verse 47 that the man who built on rock was the man, verse 48 of Luke 6, who dug deep. In other words he went through the sand and laid the foundation on the rock. In other words the wise man and foolish man did not select two other two parts of the town to build their house in.

They were building next door to each other. The only difference was that the wise man went through the sand till he hit rock. He went through the mind, intellectual knowledge, through the emotions, emotional excitement till he hit the will and yielded his will.

He built his house on the rock. The foolish man was satisfied with an intellectual knowledge of the bible, with emotional excitement and never obeyed in his private life. That's the difference between the two.

And another thing. The foundation of a house is that part of the house which cannot be seen. It's the underground part.

And here Jesus is speaking about obedience in the private life, in the hidden part. That's where we lay the foundation, in your thought life, in your attitude, in your motives. There, if you obey the words of Jesus, you lay your foundation on a rock.

There, if you disobey, you lay your foundation on sand, merely for the opinions of men. Those who live for the honor of men are living with a house built on sand. One day it will collapse.

Those who are living in secret before God's face, keeping themselves pure, not before men's eyes, but before God's face, in their thought life, in their attitudes and motives, are laying their foundation on the rock. So we see it's a matter of the hidden life. And we have to pay a price.

The wise man paid a hundred times greater price, perhaps, to build his house. And yet we can say, externally, both houses look the same. Perhaps the same size, same number of windows, doors, color, everything.

And yet the test came much later. Men looked at the two houses and said, this foolish man built his house so cheap. He's the wise man, men said.

And we may look fools in the eyes of the world at having to pay such a price to follow Jesus Christ, giving up everything. But one day you'll discover that those who have given up everything and gone through the narrow gate are the really wise people. And those who try to get the best of both worlds are the foolish people.

Those who tried to follow the Lord and love money were fools. One day their house will collapse. Sure.

Those who seek to follow Jesus and not be free from sin in their private life are fools. They are not building their house on rock. What then are the areas in which we need to be careful to build our house on rock? Let's review the nine right attitudes.

First of all, Matthew 5, 3, poverty of spirit, a sense of our own need. Second, mourning for our sin and for the needs of others for the glory of God. Third, gentleness, meekness.

Fourth, a hunger and thirst for righteousness. Fifth, mercy towards others. Sixth, purity of heart.

Seventh, a desire to make peace with all with whom we have difficulties. Eighth, being willing to be persecuted for the sake of righteousness, being willing to lose a job if necessary for the sake of righteousness. And ninth, being willing to be persecuted for the sake of Jesus Christ when we proclaim that he is the only way of salvation.

He is the only true God and the only mediator between God and men, being willing to be persecuted for that. And then freedom and salvation from the nine wrong attitudes. First of all, beginning at Matthew 5, 21, anger, freedom from anger, total freedom from anger.

And then total freedom from lustful looks and lustful thoughts, sexually lustful thoughts. And then freedom from lying, even in our spirit and in our words. Freedom from a spirit of vengeance, freedom from selectiveness in love, freedom from seeking man's honor, freedom from the love of money, freedom from anxiety, freedom from judging others.

It's the man who is desperately interested in having these nine right attitudes and freedom from these nine wrong attitudes, deep down in his thought life and in his attitudes and motives, in his hidden part, who is going to build his house on the rock before God's face. And then his house will stand, let the floods come in time or in eternity, and his house will stand. The result was, we read in Matthew 7, 28, that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes.

Their scribes proclaimed, gave sermons. Jesus spoke with authority, and we can ask ourselves, how did Jesus have this authority? Two reasons. One, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit, and second, he was preaching what he was already practicing in his life.

Do you know the secret of spiritual authority in our ministry? The anointing of the Holy Spirit, but that alone is not enough. Obedience to God's word, practicing what we proclaim to others, that is the secret of authority. Do not proclaim to others what you are not practicing yourself.

Do not seek to proclaim the word without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we also can follow in the footsteps of Jesus, for it is his will that we proclaim this message to others, that we obey it ourselves and proclaim it to others, so that we are disciples and make disciples of others, and that our churches are churches not just of converts, but of disciples, so that our and other nations can see the glory of God.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8306.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/matthew-ch76-29/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**