

Fruits of Faith

August 9, 2020 ~ The Greatest Sermon (4 of 4) ~ Mat 7.1-29

Summary of Where We Are

- ❖ Today is the last part of 4-part series on the “**Sermon on the Mount**”
- ❖ Earlier messages were “**Purpose of Man**”, “**Purpose of Law**”, & “**Roots of Faith**”
 - ❖ **1st message** ~ Objective standards by which God evaluates man
 - Describes the character & conduct of man that God values & rewards
 - The 8th beatitude is a consequence of walking 100% in the spirit
 - If we’re honest, we’ll admit we’re not there / But most of us “**want to be**”
 - Jesus issued a radical call to His followers to be different from the world
 - **Mt 8** ~ “**Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead**”
 - Christians are called to lives of sacrifice – We are “**the walking dead**”
 - Not morbidly so, but we’ve already died in Christ – meaning we live too
 - ❖ **2nd message** ~ Affirmation of Law and correction of misunderstandings
 - God’s Law is His perfect standard – never changed, never relaxed
 - God’s moral Law was present at creation, it’s present today, and forever
 - Pharisees and Scribes “**tamed the Law**” / They’d “**pulled its teeth**”
 - !!!: Teachers forced to apply “**curve**” to allow A’s though students imperfect
 - ❖ **3rd message** ~ Disciplines of faith (deeds, prayer, fasting) “**not to do / to do**”
 - Last week’s message, “**Roots of Faith**”, was focused inward, downward
 - Human interaction in **Chapter 6** was sinful focused on pride & vanity
 - Good deeds, prayers, fastings ~ All were simply to be seen and praised
 - But Jesus advised discretion (*secrecy*) – focus on God in heaven alone
- ❖ Today’s message, “**Fruits of Faith**”, is focused outward, upward

Xition: Let’s look at a key contrast between chapters 6 and 7 . . .

Inward and Outward of Chapter 6 & 7

- ❖ Two key words in **Ch6** were secret (x6), worry (x6)
 - ✧ Two topics addressed (good deeds, praying, fasting) & (eating, drinking, wearing)
 - All are individual actions – many are isolated actions (*private*)
 - !!!: Spectrum spiritual to material – Pharisees (all material) Jesus (all spiritual)
- ❖ Key words in **Ch7**: judge, ask, seek, knock, enter, gather, build
 - ✧ **v21** ~ “Not everyone who says to Me .. but he who does the will”
 - ✧ These are not isolated to individuals – they’re interpersonal, action oriented
- ❖ **Ch6** is about being / **Ch7** is about doing

Matthew 7 ~ Best Known Phrases in all of Scripture

1. **v1** ~ “Judge not, that you be not judged”
 2. **v6** ~ “Do not .. cast your pearls before swine”
 3. **v7** ~ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you”
 4. **v12** ~ “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”
 5. **v13** ~ “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction”
 6. **v17** ~ “Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit”
 7. **v21** ~ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
 8. **v24,26** ~ “A wise man built his house on the rock .. but .. a foolish man built his house on the sand”
- ❖ These 8 sentences would likely be recognized by most Americans
 - ✧ Even Americans who can’t point out Florida on a map would recognize these
 - ✧ It’s the privilege of every child of God to embrace the truth of these words

Xition: We start with every unbeliever’s favorite memory verse . . .

(1 of 8) vss 1-5 ~ “Judge not .. your brother’s eye”

- ❖ This is perhaps the unbeliever’s favorite memory verse
 - ✧ People are often familiar enough with the Bible to quote it out of context
 - ✧ But, let’s be careful that we clearly understand this command
- ❖ We often say Jesus is showing us how to judge, not condemning judgment
 - ✧ This is true – in part / But in a way, the unbelieving masses are correct
 - ✧ Paul says in **Rom 14.4**, “Who are you to judge another man’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls.”
 - ✧ Paul also writes in **1 Cor 5.9-13**, “I wrote to you .. the evil person”
- ❖ To “judge” is to act – to pronounce someone guilty or innocent & levy punishment
 - ✧ Only people in positions of civil or ecclesiastical authority have such power
 - ✧ Christians have “*limited*” power to do this with one another
 - ✧ Yet unbelievers are outside of our sphere of judgment

(2 of 8) vss 6 ~ “Do not give what .. tear you in pieces”

- ❖ “what is holy .. pearls” ~ devoted to God / truth of God and His Word
- ❖ “dogs .. swine” ~ unclean and impure – reject the truth and attack you
- ❖ Jesus instructed the 70 disciples to leave towns that rejected them
 - ✧ Paul would go to the Jews first in a city – but to the Gentiles when rejected
 - ✧ Unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica pursued Paul to Berea to persecute him
- ❖ III: Free food ~ Churches require people to attend worship in exchange for a meal
 - ✧ III: TANSTAAFL ~ Poor people that attend think of it as the cost of the meal
 - ✧ No such “quid pro quo” in the ministry of Jesus
 - Jesus didn’t heal people only if they promised to stay for a spiritual lesson
 - He did, however, rebuke those that were coming only for the free food

Xition: Our 3rd is also very famous . . .

(3 of 8) vss 7-11 ~ “Ask, and it will be .. those who ask Him!”

- ❖ vss 7-8 ~ Persistence is the obvious lesson - action
- ❖ vss 9-11 ~ Trusting in the goodness of God is the lesson – point back to ch 6
- ❖ Again, note the initiative and action that is assumed of us
 - ❖ “Ask” – We want to know – take the initiative to find out
 - ❖ “Knock” – We want to get through closed doors
 - ❖ “Seek” – We devote time and energy to spiritual efforts – not easy
 - ❖ But note the progression – each step goes deeper requiring more effort
- ❖ Remaining verses focus on God as good & willing to help / don’t doubt Him

(4 of 8) vss 12 ~ “Therefore, whatever you want .. Law and the Prophets”

- ❖ NKJV puts with vss 7-11 / ESV puts with vss 13-14 c/narrow and wide gates
- ❖ I believe it relates to 7-11, but stands alone as its own thought
- ❖ vs 12 ~ Golden Rule ~ God’s principle of helping others applies to us as well
 - ❖ “for this is the Law and the Prophets” / This is the 2nd table of law

(5 of 8) vss 13-14 ~ “Enter by the narrow gate .. few who find it”

- ❖ This may have been the inspiration for John Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress”
 - ❖ Two possible destinations – “destruction” and “life”
- ❖ Narrow or wide gates are entry points to broad or difficult ways thru life
 - ❖ Q: JO quote – “He finds the current strong who swims against it, whereas he who goes along with it is insensible to it.”
 - ❖ Note the gate is not at the end of the road, but at the beginning
 - ❖ Concerning the “wide gate”, Jesus says “there are many who go in by it”
 - ❖ But concerning the “narrow gate” He says “there are few who find it”
 - ❖ Jesus implies you have to be looking for the gate to “find it”
 - You must have eyes to see that gate and courage to enter it

Xition: Moving on to the 6th rock . . .

(6 of 8) vss 15-20 ~ “Beware of false prophets .. you will know them”

- ❖ Jesus clearly refers to these fruit trees as being prophets
 - ✧ There are “**bad**” fruit trees and “**good**” fruit trees
 - “**Godly prophets speak truth and serve God**”
 - “**Ungodly prophets speak lies and serve themselves**”
- ❖ God’s Word contains all the remaining prophecy we need to know
 - ✧ Yet Jesus spoke these words to a generation facing tremendous change
 - But now – 2 millennia later – we know God’s Word is complete
 - ✧ Yet it took centuries of diligent study for the Church to recognize God’s Word
- ❖ Some still refuse to do so – III: Mormon family near Zion
 - ✧ Roman Catholics since Council of Trent are a “**works righteousness**” religion

(7 of 8) vss 21-23 ~ “Not everyone who says .. you who practice lawlessness!”

- ❖ I “**jumped the gun**” last week in sharing this verse
- ❖ Contrast two key words in this statement – “**says**” vs “**does**”
 - ✧ This is in keeping with the action verbs of **Ch 7** vs “**mere words**”
 - ✧ Words are cheap – We must “**walk the walk**”, and not just “**talk the talk**”
- ❖ Note Christ’s condemnation of them, “**you who practice lawlessness**”
 - ✧ People reject God’s Law and believe it acceptable to make up their own
 - ✧ Their law could be very exacting – enforcing austerity – but it’s of no value

(8 of 8) vss 24-27 ~ “Therefore whoever hears .. great was its fall”

- ❖ Therefore whoever “**hears these sayings**” and “**does them**”
 - ✧ “**What does not lead to action does not lead to transformative change**”
 - ✧ Only transformative change prepares us against “**rain**”, “**flood**”, and “**wind**”
 - ✧ Note it’s not what was built – a “**house**” – but where it was built
 - Effort is required either way – but “**will the effort be of lasting value**”?

Xition: We’re past the rocks of chapter 7 to see a magnificent shoreline . . .

vss 28-29 ~ “And so it was, when Jesus .. not as the scribes”

- ❖ It's not easy to astonish people
- ❖ **III: Magicians** – I love watching magic tricks
- ❖ These people that heard Jesus that day knew He was very different
 - ❖ “He taught them as one having authority”

☐ **Mt 28.18** ~ “All authority has been given Me in heaven and on earth”

- We serve the Lord Jesus Christ, “King of kings and Lord of lords”

☐ We've been called to live radical lives of faith

- We can't live radical lives of faith passively
- We must be “**people of action**” to be a part of God's “**transformative action**”
- We can't change the world – but God does change the world through us

☐ He simply asks us to have faith in Him – and follow where He leads

➤ Prayer and Song

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen ***pause*** Go in peace . . .

Fruits of Faith

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1. Review of previous messages: _____

2. Personal actions of **chapter 6**: _____, _____, _____,
_____, _____, and _____.
3. Actions words of **ch 7**: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, & _____
4. Eight "big rocks" of chapter 8:
 - a. Judge not _____
 - b. Do not cast _____
 - c. Ask _____; Seek _____;
Knock _____
 - d. Do unto _____
 - e. Wide is the _____
 - f. Every good tree _____
 - g. Not everyone who _____
 - h. A wise man _____
5. Comments: