

"The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

Part 12

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: Tonight in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have come to the closing section of the sermon.

Notice Matthew 7:24-27

This closing of the Sermon on the Mount is a passage that is filled with great spiritual riches. Before we get into these verses let me just walk you through the previous verses so that we can better get our mind wrapped around what it is that is being said by our Lord in this closing passage.

Jesus had preached the entire sermon for the purpose of arriving at Matthew 7:13-14. He has led all of His listeners to these two verses in which He was pressing them for a decision. He was not looking for applause for what He had preached He wanted a decision from the people. He had led them to a crossroads and they now had to make a choice as to which path they would walk in life. He presented them with 4 contrasts in this verse:

1. Two gates.
2. Two paths.
3. Two groups of people.
4. Two eternal destinies.

The main contrast within these 2 verses is between the "religious" person and the saved person or we could say between the religious leaders of Jesus day and those who were truly saved. The religious

leaders had led many through the wide gate and on the path of "religion" but that is the path which leads them to hell. Jesus said there will be very few that will find the strait gate and who will walk the narrow path which leads to eternal life.

Our Lord then went on and warned about false teachers who stand at the wide gate and welcome people to enter in to the broad path. He told us we would know the false teachers by their fruits.

Then He came to Matthew 7:21-23 and within these verses he spoke words which were intended to cause all to look deep within their hearts to be sure of their salvation.

Notice Matthew 7:21-23

Now we must get our minds wrapped around the main focus of these 3 verses and you will see why here in just a minute. The main focus of verses 21-23 is PROOF of true salvation. Now let us take that a little further and as we look a little deeper we see that PROOF of true salvation is "TO DO THE WILL OF THE FATHER".

Matthew 7:21

²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

The opposite of doing the will of the Father is to "WORK INIQUITY".

Matthew 7:22-23

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

So in these verses Jesus is focused upon "obedience" as a solid proof of salvation.

Notice Matthew 7:24-27

Here within these verses we see 3 contrasts:

1. Two builders; the wise and the foolish.
2. Two foundations; the rock and the sand.
3. Two end results; stability and collapse.

Notice Matthew 7:24

The very first word of this verse is so important. It is the word "therefore" and it tells us that what Jesus is saying here is connected with what He has just said. It also tells us that verses 24-27 are building upon the very same thought which is "obedience as proof of salvation". Again the contrast is between the "religious" person and the person who is truly saved.

Matthew 7:24

²⁴ *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:*

Matthew 7:26

²⁶ *And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:*

I. The Houses

For us to understand what Jesus is saying here we need to get our minds wrapped around the picture which He is painting with His Words.

a. The House on the Rock

Notice Matthew 7:24

Here in this verse we see that the man who hears the Words of our Lord and then put them into practice is like a man who builds his house upon a rock.

Let us start by considering what Jesus means when He refers to "*these sayings of mine*". This is a statement which looks back over the entire sermon He has just preached. Let me give to you a quick list of what it looks like to keep His sayings.

1. It is to live the "Be Attitudes".
2. It is to love one another and not hate, slander, or curse on another.
3. It is to do all we can to reconcile when we offend someone.
4. It is to be true to our spouse.
5. It is to keep our word when we make promises.
6. It is to refuse to seek revenge against someone who has brought harm to us.
7. It is to show love to not only those who love us but also to our enemies.
8. It is to give without drawing attention to ourselves.
9. It is to pray in the will of God.
10. It is to be so broken about spiritual situations that we desire to get to God in prayer more than we desire to nourish our own bodies (fasting).

11. It is to invest our finances into the lives of other people instead of into stuff.
12. It is to trust God with tomorrow and seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.
13. It is to not be critical of others because they are not like us.
14. It is to do for others what we would want them to do for us even when we know they would never even consider doing anything for us.

This is a condensed list of what it means to keep the sayings which Jesus referred to. All of this is only possible when we are surrendered over to the control of the Holy Spirit. These things are not possible to be carried out in the flesh.

Jesus said when we keep these sayings or when we walk in obedience to the Word of God we are then like a man who has built his house upon a rock. Now when we think of building upon a rock we right away think of Jesus as the Rock upon which the church is built.

Matthew 16:15-18

¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

*¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, **and upon this rock** I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

The "Rock" which Jesus referred to in these verses was Himself.

But I do not believe that is the meaning of the "rock" in Matthew 7:24. Jesus is referring to the rock here as a foundation and in the context of the verses we are looking at the theme is proof of salvation which is obedience. The foundation which Jesus is referring to here is a foundation which is built after we are saved and it is strengthened and added to by our obedience to God's Word. Let me show to you some verses that will help you to see this.

1 Timothy 6:17-19

¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

¹⁸ That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

¹⁹ Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Here we can see that obedience builds a foundation for which prepares us for the future.

Let me explain it a way that you can grasp onto what Jesus is saying in Matthew 7 and what Paul has written in 1 Timothy. When we walk in obedience to God's Word it builds up a strong foundation of assurance, it builds our faith in God and ultimately it builds our character which will help us to stand firm when the storms come. We will see this next week. Our obedience to the Word of God builds us up or we could say our obedience strengthens us in our Godly character. Let me show you some other verses which will reinforce this Truth.

Acts 20:33

³² *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶ *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*

⁷ *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*

Jude :20

²⁰ *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,*

The word "edify" also means "to build up"

Ephesians 4:11-12

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

With all of these verses we can clearly see that obedience to God's Word "builds us up" meaning that it strengthens our Godly character. So, the more we learn and the more we put into practice that which we learn; the stronger we become in our Christian walk.

There is more to this life of obedience which Jesus is speaking of here and we need to go to Luke's Gospel to see what Luke tells us about the foundation of obedience.

Luke 6:46-48

⁴⁶ And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

⁴⁷ Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

*⁴⁸ He is like a man which built an house, and **digged deep**, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.*

Luke adds 2 more words which will help us to understand something about the foundation of obedience. Let us understand as Jesus uses this metaphor of a man building a house He is point to real life illustrations which the people of His day would have been able to relate to. In those days a house foundation was dug by hand. There were no machines so to dig deep as this man does in these verses it tells us that he had to spend a great deal of energy. It was hard work.

Application:

There is a message in this about living a life of obedience which we need to understand. The more we walk in obedience as believers the stronger we become in our Christian character. There are believers who take the casual approach to the Christian life and they do not put forth much effort because they always chose the path of least resistance. These believers remain very shallow in there Christian character. Then there are those who are committed to walking in

obedience and they keep pressing on no matter how tough the road becomes. They do not look for the easy way out. Instead they accept the struggles which come into their lives as opportunities for God to manifest His power through them as they continue to stay true to the path that is before them. They refuse to compromise in their stand for the Truth of God's Word. They dig down deep and they plant their feet firmly as the attacks come from their friends and their family in an attempt to get them to compromise. The bottom line that I want you to grasp here is that it takes perseverance to lay a foundation that will remain solid. It takes perseverance to build upon that foundation. Building Christian character is not easy work. There will be times when you will be viewed as intolerant. There will be times your friends will all walk away from you. There will be times your obedience will cost you and you must be ready to pay the cost.

This is nothing short of discipleship.

Luke 16:26-33

²⁶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

²⁹ Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

³⁰ Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

³² Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

³³ So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Conclusion:

Walking in obedience is not the easy life. But the benefits far outweigh the sacrifices.

Notice Matthew 7:25

The reward of walking in obedience is stability in the midst of the storms. That stability is also proof of true salvation. Next week we will look at the storm and see there is far more than we see on the surface.