

Matthew 7 part 2

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Date: 10 December 2023

[0 : 00] All right. Hello, everyone. We are in the 12th session in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7.

And I realized just now, as I looked at it, I kind of have to finish it today, otherwise there will be 13 sessions in the Sermon on the Mount. So, no, in seriousness, I do intend to finish today.

And so we're in Chapter 7, if you want to be turning there. And just by way of a brief recap, because I'm aware that there are some in the room who have missed 11 of our 12 sessions.

And there's no excuse for that. Some of them are available to listen back to, actually. Most of them, I think, actually. So, by way of recap, then.

So, this has been Jesus Christ challenging his disciples. And what a challenge it has been. We've seen him correct and instruct on true blessedness.

[1 : 08] Which is to say, those who don't appear to be blessed in the initial analysis, in fact, are those for whom God has this incredible blessing. And then we've talked about true righteousness.

Based not on the outward adherence of law and doing and doing, but it's based on the purposes and the desires of the heart. So, true blessedness, true righteousness. And then we saw true religion.

Which is to say, how do you give? How do you pray? How do you fast? And the answer is, to be seen by none other than God.

Or, I should say, for no one's benefit other than for God. I'm giving, I'm praying, I'm fasting for him. Then we've talked about true treasure. That which is valuable in eternity is far more valuable than that which is valued on earth.

And actually, the desire for them is mutually exclusive. And then we've talked about true peace. Where Jesus said how, I think, a correct understanding of what is truly valuable, a correct understanding of wealth, and understanding God's heart tends to reduce worry and anxiety.

[2 : 17] So, true blessedness, righteousness, religion, treasure, and peace. And then as we've got into chapter 7, I've suggested that the whole chapter has an overtone of true discernment.

And last week we covered, from verse 1 down through 11, we've talked about how do we judge? How do we judge? In the sense that, of when we see a sin in a brother or sister, and the answer is, well, we don't.

At least not until we are first sought to discern our own faults, which we would do through prayer and through the scriptures, and through trust-based healthy relationships with fellow brothers and sisters.

So, that was last week. Oh, and then we talked a little bit about this pearls before pigs, which is to say we should discern when there comes a time that we stop putting ourselves and spending our time and energy to reach the stubbornly lost.

There comes a time when we say, okay, I'm going to use my time and energy somewhere else to serve the Lord. And then we talked about rightly discerning the heart of God, who desires to give, and he's a better giver than the best of earthly fathers, and we've talked about that.

[3 : 30] But within the context that we should seek his kingdom first, and trusting him when the answer isn't immediate. Yes. That's as far as we got last week. Thank you. So, today we've got a whole bunch of things.

We have the golden rule in verse 12. We've got discerning the gates. We've got discerning the prophets. And then we've got discerning how we are building our lives.

We can manage all that in 50 minutes, I reckon, can't we? Surely. Well, let's see how we get on. So, we're in chapter 7 of Matthew. And if you'll permit me, I think I'm just going to jump straight in to verse 12 then.

The golden rule. Matthew 7, verse 12. In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you. For this is the law and the prophets.

Now, many read this so-called golden rule. And they'll say, we don't need God to come up with that philosophy.

[4 : 42] And it is true. There's a whole Wikipedia page on this. But nearly every man-made religion and philosophy has something resembling this.

However, what I found very interesting is that most, if not virtually all of those other man-based attempts to say something like this, always will put it in the negative.

Which is to say, if you don't want someone to do it to you, don't do it to someone else. Whereas Jesus is not saying that. He's saying, the good that you want people to do to you, you should do.

So, you can fulfill the world's interpretation of this by just ignoring your enemies. In fact, you could ignore everybody and still be adhering to that particular rule. But Jesus calls to a higher standard.

Do the good that you would like done to you. Notice, though, that there is a callback here.

[5 : 45] Because Jesus begins the verse saying, in everything therefore. Which is to say, it's a summation. Or it is building upon the previous teaching. And if you flick back a couple of chapters to Matthew 5, from 39.

Matthew 5, verse 39 on. Then, I think this is what Jesus is having us think back to and summarizing for us. Because there we read this. But I say to you, do not show opposition against an evil person.

But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other toward him. Also, if anyone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him too.

Give to him who asks of you. Do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. And we could read on. And Jesus says, if you only love those who love you, how is that any better from the rest of the world?

And I'm not going to re-preach the text, because Ray's taken us through that just recently. But this is what Jesus is calling us back to here with the golden rule. So I think our challenge then is to think, whom do you disagree with?

[6 : 57] Whom do you struggle to see eye to eye? Who's the one who always seems to talk down to you? Or treat you with a short temper? Maybe in the workplace, or the school, or wherever you find yourself.

Who is the one who's like, oh, that person. Man. Well, Jesus says to love and to bless such a one is utterly Christ-like. Whereas to only love the lovely, and to only do good to those who do good to you is utterly worldly.

And you will have no reward for it. That is the golden rule, and it goes far beyond what the world would say. But then Jesus says this, this is the law and the prophets. This is the law and the prophets.

Which I take to mean, you may know that the Old Testament today consists of the law, prophets, and the writings. But I think that phrase may actually be, or that way of thinking may actually be later than Christ.

So I believe this is Jesus' way of saying the whole of the Tanakh, the whole of the Old Testament. 929 chapters. 23,000 verses.

[8 : 05] Man, I've lost so much time counting them. Give it away, Ray. It's a lot, right?

How do you distill all of that? 929 chapters into just one thing. Treat people as you want to be treated. I will build on that slightly.

Because Jesus is directly asked later in his ministry. If you want to flick there, or if you want the reference to jot down, it's Mark 12 from verse 28. Because Jesus is here.

He's been arguing with the Sadducees. And after he's silenced them, we read this. One of the scribes came up and heard them arguing, Jesus and the Sadducees.

And recognizing that he had answered them well, asked him, what commandment is foremost of all? And Jesus answered, the foremost is, hear Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

[9 : 05] And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is like this. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

And I think it's important to share that. Because there are, I think that there's clearly two parts to what Jesus is saying. And in our Sermon on the Mount passage here, we're only seeing part two.

But I think it's important for us to see the whole thing. The two parts of these, there is who you are. Which is to say, someone who is loved by God and someone who loves God.

With heart, mind, soul and strength. That's who you are. And then the second part is, what do you do? How does that work out? And that, the answer is, well, it is loving one another. And loving in this constance is a verb.

It's a doing word. It isn't just, I love those guys so much. It is blessing them. You are doing things, you are giving. So, a foundation of who you are, loving God.

[10 : 07] A foundation. And then building on that, what you do. Which is what we're talking about here in Matthew 7. So, I hope that makes sense. That's the golden rule. The summary of the whole of the Bible that was in, I was going to say in print, but that would be an anachronism.

The summary of the whole Bible that was inscribed at the time of Christ is to love your neighbour. All right. Well, let's go on to the next part.

Verse 13 of Matthew 7. And I apologise if I'm going a bit quick. You'll be able to listen back and fill in anything. Matthew 7 verse 13.

We read this. Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. And there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life.

And there are few who find it. The narrow and the wide gates. Well, what is the command? The command is enter.

[11 : 08] That is the imperative. And the only imperative in our little two verse section here. Enter. Enter what? What is left for us to infer.

And I think the context makes that inference pretty straightforward. It is the kingdom of heaven. If you do want to double check on that, then... In fact, actually, I will refer us to this passage.

This is Luke 13. Because here in Luke 13, Jesus does cover some similar content, but in a different context. And I think it's quite helpful for illuminating what he means here.

So do take the time, if you would, to flick over to Luke 13. And I'm going to read from verse 22 down to verse 30.

Because what he's going to do here is show that this is talking about salvation, in case you didn't take my word for it. But it's also going to amplify what he's talking about. So Luke 13, verse 22.

[12 : 03] Interesting question.

And he said to them, Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin standing outside and knocking on the door, saying, Lord, open up to us. And he then will answer and say to you, I don't know where you're from.

Then you will begin saying, We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. And yet he will say, I do not know where you are from.

Leave me, all you evildoers. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.

[13 : 08] Wow. And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last.

Wow. It is, right? Who is being saved, Jesus? Who is entering eternal life? Who is entering into the kingdom of God, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are?

And I had to sort of ponder on that for a few moments as I was thinking on this, because those guys lived on this earth three and a half thousand years ago. And they're there now.

And we'll see them. And we'll eat and drink with them. And I just thought, man, that is blowing my mind. Anyway. But Jesus doesn't answer the question, does he? Are there only a few being saved?

And Jesus doesn't give you a yes or a no. What does he say? He says, you strive to enter the right gate, man. Don't even worry about those guys. You look to yourself, bro.

[14 : 16] Oh, and by the way, you might be surprised at who doesn't get in. You might be surprised, because some of those who you think are first, they're going to be last. They're going to be knocking on that door, because they have the wrong gate.

So the imperative is, you strive, all of us, I need to, we need to make sure that we are going through the right gate. Well, back to Matthew 7 then, with that background.

We've got a narrow gate, and we've got a wide gate. I suggest to you that there are two dimensions for us to consider in the language here.

And the first dimension is ease and difficulty. The narrow gate is hard. It's hard. It's a hard way to go.

It's a difficult way. That way is characterized by lack and want. And on the other hand, the wide gate is easy. It's comfortable. You might even say, it feels like the blessed way.

[15 : 15] It feels good. This is all right. I'm liking this. And then the second aspect, or dimension, is visibility. The narrow gate is not obvious. When you're approaching that city, and you see this big old gate, you don't go, gee, I wonder if there's a smaller one.

It's about visibility and invisibility. There's the obvious gate, and then there's the hidden gate. And you've got this inviting, visible, I pictured it with these neon signs, and there's a Starbucks outside, and you can buy coffee as you're going in.

And it's like, oh, sir, let me saddle your donkey. Oh, whatever they do. I just imagine this really awesome place. You can see it as you're approaching, and then you might see the odd person just wander off around the side.

I wonder where that guy's going. And there's a thin, hidden, obscured gate. So, difficulty, ease, visibility, invisibility. I think that those are two aspects to this.

Or, if you like, the obvious gate and the less obvious gate. How do we understand that, then, now that I've given you this weird picture in your minds? Because the thing is, is in the absence of any other information, duh, you go the easy way, right?

[16:30] I mean, no one chooses, I'm going to go the way that really hurts. There's got to be more to it than this, right? And there is. Of course there is. Let's understand it. Are we saying that the ease or difficulty in one's life is a factor in whether or not one is saved?

And if you were to read, for example, Luke 16, 25, this is the passage where you've got the rich man and Lazarus. You may know it. But in there, verse 25 of Luke 16, we have Abraham speaking to the rich man in Hades.

And he says, Abraham said, Child, remember that during your life you received your good things. And likewise, Lazarus, bad things. But now, he is being comforted here and you are in agony.

Ooh. Hmm. And then in our very passage, at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, we had the Beatitudes, right? And we read how Jesus said that the state of being poor in spirit, being in the state of mourning or persecuted or insulted, these are all indicative of a future blessing.

So if we had a fairly limited view of Scripture, we might land in a place where we thought, well, what I need to do is ensure that I'm reducing my personal comfort as much as possible because that's how I get into the kingdom of God.

[18:01] No. No. No. No. But, I mean, the fact is there are, right? It's called asceticism. And there are people who think that is the way to go.

And there are people today who will do things like self-flagellation and all kinds of nonsense. No, no, no. Let's remind ourselves, Acts 16 and 31, this is the Philippian jailer.

He said to the apostles, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus. And you will be saved, you and your household. It is that simple. Let's remind ourselves, entrance into the kingdom of heaven is conditional upon receiving forgiveness of sins offered by Jesus Christ, believing and trusting in his sacrifice, alone for it.

And actually, the minute that we started trusting in our hardships, Oh, I'm going without today. I'm fasting today so that I might have a, I might be better saved.

No. We're in trouble now. We are in trouble now if we're taking Jesus and my suffering to get saved. No, no. No, no, no. So then how do we understand it, right?

[19:11] This is, now I've confused us all, possibly including myself. If you want to turn to Acts 14, verse 19, please feel free to do so.

This is in Paul's second missionary journey and I'll read you a few verses from this where Paul is talking about suffering in the context of his walk with God. Acts 14, verse 19.

And Paul is, Derby. I didn't write down where he was. I think it's Derby. Anyway, Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out to the city thinking he was dead.

But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day, he left with Barnabas for Derby and after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made a good number of disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith and saying, it is through many tribulations that we must enter the kingdom of God.

Through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God. So Paul has experienced this extreme suffering. Almost enough to kill him.

[20 : 33] This being stoned. Afterwards, he goes out to Derby and then he comes back to Lystra. That's where it was. And he explains this. He explains what's happened and the answer is, tribulations are part of entering the kingdom.

Going through hardships. That is actually a part of it. Guys, this is normal, says Paul. Don't be surprised. Jesus speaking in John 15, verse 18 says, If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before I hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this, the world hates you. So if we choose the gate that leads to life, then it is to choose a world, it is to choose a gate that the world hates.

And it makes us at enmity with the world. That's a hard gate. It's a hard gate. Furthermore, in John 17, Jesus is praying in that great high priestly prayer and he says of his disciples, he says, Father, I have given them your word and the world has hated them because they're not of the world just as I'm not of the world.

I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They're not of the world just as I'm not of the world. Sanctify them in truth.

[21 : 58] Your word is truth. Just as you sent me into the world, I also send them into the world. See, I hope you can see what I'm saying here and what the gates are a picture of.

We who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, we who are entering the kingdom of God are not of this world. And that puts us, it puts a target on our back, right?

You know, and I feel like I should remind us of 1 Thessalonians 4 where we speak of the rapture and that day when we will be caught up and all of this is gone and we're with the Lord forever and that is when, that's when it's awesome.

That's when we are removed, this removal that Jesus is speaking of. It's not yet, it's not yet, but it's coming. So that's one aspect to suffering. I mean, and of course there is another aspect to it which is the hardships and the sufferings of life that are not directly linked to persecution but which is your illnesses, it is your difficulties, it is your setbacks, it is your struggles, it is the failures, it is all of that stuff.

All of that stuff that just comes by being a resident on this broken planet. and contrary to much prosperity teaching, it isn't necessarily God's purpose to reduce that for us in this life.

[23 : 21] You know, Paul spends several verses in 2 Corinthians 11 talking about these various hardships. Some of them are persecution, being beaten up, but then there's also shipwrecks and being adrift at sea and there is going hungry and being exposed in the wilderness and then he's bitten by a snake in Patmos and there's a whole raft of things that happen to Paul not because of the fact that he's a Christian but just because he's in a broken world.

Hard things. And as I thought on this, the Lord took me back to Hebrews 11 which is all about how faith, the whole thing about faith is it's oriented to the future.

We have faith because we don't got the thing that God has promised yet. In Hebrews 11 verse 13 through 16 the writer says this, speaking of all of these saints there in the Hall of Faith, Hebrews 11, he says, all these died in faith without receiving the promises but having seen and welcomed them from a distance and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own and indeed if they had been thinking of that country which they left they would have had the opportunity to return but as it is they desire a better country that is a heavenly one.

Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God for he has prepared a city for them and us. I just want to add that in. He prepared a city he is preparing a place for us.

[25 : 07] God's blessing the fulfillment our longing to be freed from all of these things that are hard it is coming and faith points us to the hereafter that's where the comfort is.

And so you know last week we talked about the fact that we should bring our hardships to God we should say God this is hard and we talked about the thorn in the flesh and so it's you know it's not like we go you know we disregard these things God cares but ultimately the remedy the solution the thing we are praying for is in the hereafter.

Right so what do we do? Well the exhortation in the text again is simply this enter through the narrow gate is make your calling election sure I suppose is our application. what I think it means is we should expect by choosing to follow Christ we shouldn't expect an easy life on the contrary we should expect it to be more difficult and we probably could potentially get an easier life.

It could mean that we're giving sacrificially it could mean that we're giving up our time for another's good it could mean a whole bunch of things going the extra mile all these things we've read in the Beatitudes but it means we should bring them to God and entrust them to him and I wanted to just tag this on the end because what if you're reading this and you're saying that's cool but I don't think my life's that hard compared to some have I got the right gate?

and I thought I just thought I'd take a minute to speak to that because actually living faithfully with God's teaching living in accordance to what he says living with moderation and temperance it gives us peace and joy in our hearts and it has a tendency towards good health and with Israel there were explicit promises of provision for obedience for those for whom God is well pleased all throughout the Old Testament this is one of the themes we see do good do well obey the law hey your animals are giving birth your fields are fruitful it's all good so I say that to say this it doesn't mean you've necessarily got the right gate you've got the right gate if you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and I think what I would say is God intends for us to have our priorities shifted so that we aren't focused on ourselves and our comfort or lack of the same the worldly person prioritises his or her comforts he prioritises how much can I get and our priority is how much can I give how much can I give how much can I bless others for and so my encouragement to those who who feel that

[28 : 11] I don't think my way is as hard as some then give glory and thanks to God for his provision and love and then pray Lord how can I serve how can I bless I have my health how can I serve I have wealth how can I give I have peace in my heart whom can I comfort who can I lift up 1st Timothy 6 verse 17 through 19 speaks to this but in the interest of time we'll move on you can write that down if you want 1st Timothy 6 17 to 19 alright let's move on to verse 15 a tree in its fruit or my heading for this would be discerning the prophets discerning the prophets beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves you will know them by their fruits grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles are they so every good tree bears good fruit but the bad tree bears bad fruit a good tree cannot bear bad fruit nor can a bad tree bear good fruit every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire so then you will know them by their fruits beware beware the pseudo prophets pseudo being a greek prefix we know this we use that one ourselves what it means is deceptively false that's what pseudo means it means deceptively false looks real on the surface looks legit it's not legit and prophet prophetess the greek word it just means one who speaks forth a divine message so anybody who claims to declare the will or word of god falls into that category pseudo prophets then someone who claims to speak for god actually doesn't and we are to beware them again we only have one imperative in the text is beware beware wolves dressed as sheep in that a very obvious and important cross reference for this is in

Acts 20 where Paul is giving his emotional final address to the leadership in Ephesus and there's a whole bunch we could read there but I'll just read a few verses from verse 28 of Acts 20 Paul has already reminded them that he's declared to them the whole counsel of God everything that God has to say Paul has declared it to them so they know the truth so then he says this be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood I know says Paul that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock and from among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them therefore be on the alert it's the same imperative be on the alert be aware remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears and now

I entrust you to God and to the word of his grace which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified wow well it's the same warning right wolves in sheep's clothing among the flock among you guys they're going to be the leaders in the church pseudo deceptively false not obvious in our text again the admonition is beware and you will know them by their fruits what's that Jesus doesn't explain does he Jesus doesn't say and by fruit I mean this thing so we need to understand it and I think we can immediately see one thing from the context if you look at verse 22 these guys are saying Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles they did they did do all those things and Jesus says you'll know them by their fruit so those things are not fruit the doing of these works the prophesying the casting out demons this is not fruit guys because otherwise

Jesus wouldn't say you'll know them by their fruit it can't be works it can't be miracles Colossians 1 10 Paul has a prayer for the church and he says that his prayer is that they would bear fruit in good works so they're doing good works and in the doing of good his prayer is that they would bear fruit so the good works themselves ain't the fruit okay how do we understand it then so fruit is a common image in scripture plenty of psalms and proverbs talk about fruit and what you will find if you do a survey is that the common sense is it's the consequence it's the outcome it's the result of a thing that you've done so for example psalm 104 13 says that the earth is satisfied with the fruit of his god's work so god does work and the fruit of that work is satisfying to the earth paul philippians 1 22 speaks of his fruitful labour so he's doing a whole bunch of labour but there's a fruit there's a consequence there's a blessing and it's the consequence that we inspect so how do we understand it the work of good prophets the work of the legit prophets is valuable it is tending to bless and have eternal value and as a side note and I think this is quite apt most fruit have seeds in them which is to say there's a reproductive nature to them good fruit tends to reproduce itself it reproduces christians it brings new life it leads to salvation it leads to others producing fruit good fruit has seeds in it so and then in contrast the works of the false prophets they are evil and they are worthless they tend to harm and hurt rather than being nutritious so the thing that we're measuring is not the apparent works but it is the enduring result so we shouldn't say that guy is doing great works for God he must be a godly man she must be a godly woman

I'm going to follow after them maybe maybe not the question is what is the result if you look to an incredibly gifted worship leader I just love the songs that he writes I just love her voice beautiful beautiful therefore I'm going to listen and heed everything they say in social media or whatever else because clearly they're godly no no no no that's not right or the winsome and charismatic bible teacher great but what happens when the scandals come to light what happens when actually you find out that for those closest to them there is harm and there is hurt and there's been abuse wolves when there are people being hurt and devoured there's a wolf amongst the flock so what do we do what do we do what do we do well again what is the commandment that Jesus gave us here in Matthew 7 it is beware give heed take note what does it mean what does it mean greek dictionary but means be in a continuous state of readiness to learn of any future danger need or error be on guard against so continuously present active that's the command and then he says and to amplify that

[36 : 40] Jesus says and by the way here's your instructions for how you know how do you know what is the enduring result so let me read this for you 1st Thessalonians 5 16 to 22 this is Paul's closing remarks in Thessalonians it's like super concentrated teaching here from Paul love it he says rejoice always pray without ceasing in everything give thanks for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus do not quench the spirit do not utterly reject prophecies but examine everything holding firmly to that which is good abstain from every form of evil so when I say to you beware the false prophets I'm not saying you should be in a constant state of fear over this Jesus is not saying that oh no what if I accidentally listen to one of their sermons what if I thought it was helpful no no no no this isn't God's will God's will is that we rejoice and give thanks it is that we don't reject prophecies but it is that we examine everything

Acts 17 11 very famous passage is where there's that commendation of the Thessalonian church why because they received the word with great eagerness examining the scriptures daily to see whether these things were so so that winsome and charismatically delivered bible presentation you don't believe it because of the winsome charisma you believe it because you checked it out in the scriptures and it's legit and it's right so examine everything hold firmly to that which is good and you know I do want to add this actually I know not everyone is sort of is book smart not everyone is book smart and I get that some people find it harder to study the bible than others some people find it hard because actually you know single parent two jobs whatever it is sometimes there are challenges how am I going to examine the scriptures daily to see if these things are so and I do get that and I guess

I just wanted to share one well two things on that one is I want to give you a little anecdote from many many years ago I knew a lady who came to the Lord and she was talking about this book that she was super helpful and it turned out to be one of the worst theoretical books I've ever read and it was awful but somehow the Lord managed to blind her from all the error and those little tidbits and morsels of truth the Lord managed to amplify them and actually there was no harm done and I thought that I just thought that was wonderful because the Lord has a way of protecting his sheep and I share that because again we don't need to be in this spirit of fear even if we're thinking how am I ever going to keep up because all I've really got time to is listen to sermons or all I've really got time for is so there's that I thought I'd share that because I think that might help and the other thing is just to encourage you give it the priority that you can it does need to be a priority even if it's just 10 minutes 15 minutes a day whenever it is we do need to get to know the scripture this is where audio Bible is good this is where you know we've got just so much free Bible software online the Blue Letter

Bible brilliant free to all all the commentaries you can read the Greek and the Hebrew and you know again not everyone has got time to spend hours on it but find a bit of time because this is this is how we protect ourselves we know the word and we trust God right let me continue because I just want to finish this bit on the tree and its fruit verse 21 of Matthew 7 Jesus continues not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven will enter many will say to me on that day Lord Lord did we not prophesy in your name and in your name cast out demons and in your name perform many miracles and then I will declare to them never knew you leave me you who practice lawlessness so in the end praise God for this in the end Jesus is going to ensure that justice is done hallelujah that that wolf who managed to keep his wickedness secret even to the grave he will not escape justice praise God it is the one who does the will of my father who will enter the kingdom of heaven who's that

John 6 29 this is the work of God that you believe in him whom he has sent just to keep that foundation the works of God is to believe in him whom he has sent and from there we build with the good deeds that we've been talking about all right I think we can move on to the next bit making such wonderful progress thanks Ray verse 24 of Matthew chapter 7 we're going to do this therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and slammed against that house and yet it did not fall for it had been founded on the rock and everyone hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain fell and the floods came and the wind blew and slammed against that house and it fell and its collapse was great well this is the end of

[42 : 43] Jesus if you've got a red letter bible suddenly things go black again and he begins this final thing with the word therefore and I think Jesus is calling us back to the whole of what he has said all three chapters everything he has said last week I reminded you of James 1 22 about looking in the mirror and then forgetting what you look like Jesus is saying guys if you just hear this stuff and don't do it if you don't heed my words then that's bad let me give you a bit of Greek because everyone loves a bit of Greek verse 24 therefore everyone who is hearing this is a present active verb everyone who is hearing these words of mine and is acting on them present active will be like the wise man who built

Aorist active done in the past so the one who is doing is like the one who has done I don't think that's helped is it continuous hearing and doing is like having laid a foundation that is right at the beginning of your building project for you and me to choose daily to hear and heed is to have laid a foundation that is right interesting Greek but that's what he says and continuous hearing and not doing is like selecting the wrong foundation okay cool what's that mean well look Jesus is clearly giving us a parable and it is a parable with a very clear and simple meaning you better listen up you better hear this and heed it it's simple it's right there in the text but we need to think it through because there are other texts to speak of foundations and I want to make sure that we've got a good well rounded view and picture of this our foundation is

Jesus Christ yeah just ignore that noise that doesn't mean anything it means I've got yeah it means I'm into my last 15 minutes oh dear 1st Corinthians chapter 3 verse 11 Paul says for no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid which is Jesus Christ on Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking stand see I planned that being known by him knowing him you know Jesus said what was it that he said to the serial prophets I never knew you knowing him and being known by him believing in his sacrificial death where he bore that just penalty for our sins it's that that is the foundation and attempting to do all of this stuff that Jesus has given us in this sermon you know hit on the one side and I'm going to give you the other one

I'm going to go with you two miles I'm going to do all this stuff but not on the foundation that's not going to profit because in the end the primary thing the first thing that we need to hear and heed is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved and you know and Ray's brought this out really well as we've gone through that the whole thrust if you hear and heed what Jesus is saying throughout this message if you come to the end of the Sermon on the Mount and go right I've got my list of stuff I need to do awesome you've missed the point because Jesus said you've got to be perfect how's that going and what Ray reminded us is Ezekiel 11 it turns us to God who removes the heart of stone puts in that heart of flesh that is how our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees that is how we get that foundation upon which we then do the good works which will tend to bear fruit the deeds are not the foundation we don't do stuff our way into heaven so a picture and note this as well

I think this is important there are two builders and for them both there's a storm coming and one of those houses is probably going to get built slightly quicker than the other and it's going to fall the one who has cultivated that habit of continuous hearing and obeying Christ investing the time maybe taking a little bit longer to build certain things taking a little bit longer to do whatever that's the one who's going to go into the storm and come out the other side whereas the one who doesn't cultivate that habit takes the shortcut happy to hear but I don't need that bit I don't need that bit I'm just going to the storm's coming down you go so I wouldn't press the parable any further than that I have read some interesting interpretations so it's about making an ongoing commitment to obey and that doesn't mean obey

[48 : 24] Ray and me it means obey God's words right how do we close this oh actually we've still got another couple of verses sorry verse 28 black text when Jesus had finished these words the crowds were amazed at his teaching for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes so the crowds were amazed and we began the sermon on the mount with Jesus looking at the crowds talking to his disciples and I think that the thrust of what Jesus is saying is to people who want to learn disciples that's what it means learners it doesn't necessarily and we shouldn't think of this I think in terms of saved and unsaved I don't think that's a useful characteristic when we're thinking about oh is it crowds is it disciples who is it I don't think that's useful because the word just means learners it just means learners who is it who's following and in the very next verse chapter 8 verse 1

Jesus comes down from the mountain and there are large crowds following him they want to learn they want to hear him and what will happen soon John 6 66 it says as a result of this many of his disciples left so lots said to a lot of people and at this stage the crowd are like what mind blown is the Greek you laugh but it kind of is you know it's literally been struck out struck out wow why because Jesus taught with authority he didn't do that sort of rabbinic standard which is to repackage what Rabbi so and so Ben so and so said it wasn't to appeal back to some authority in fact on the contrary what does

Jesus say you've heard it said I say to you and then we've got these figures these this thing about the trees this thing about the gates this thing about the foundations I can't find anything in rabbinic literature anything like this this is all novel unique to Jesus Christ and he gets to right he wrote the book so he gets to do this and the crowd are just not used to this kind of teaching with authority no human other than Jesus Christ no mortal let's say has should be teaching you novel things right we our role is to present this the bible right that's what we should be doing but Jesus is amazing and he's unique in that he can speak the word of God for he is the word of God well how do we conclude the sermon on the mount well I think the overtone is simply this

Jesus Christ is full authority to speak to you and me and the only wise thing for us to do is to heed what he says you don't need to fully understand it to obey you don't need to fully understand everything in these three chapters to realise he is calling us to an impossible standard and that impossible standard drives us to the cross and say Lord I need you but today we've read this treat people the way that you want to treat them them to treat you even your enemies do good to those who harm you because this is the way of Christ the word is don't be surprised if the way is hard today and it is characteristic of the way of life it doesn't mean God is overlooking you in fact to the contrary Jesus says the way into the kingdom of heaven is hard it's not obvious and it's hard don't follow after every spirit and prophet test spirits see whether they're from

God what is the fruit that is how we do it what do these people leave in their wake how are people doing what's happening to people are they growing are they filled with joy are they filled with peace or not test everything hold fast to what is good and then finally to sum it all hear and heed and so we would say Jesus what is it that you have for me today what do you want me to hear today how can I walk with you today Lord we thank you for these things Lord we praise you that even though the standard is perfection you have made a way you've laid that foundation in our hearts of Christ Jesus Lord these are hard things and I pray God that you help us all to sift them through because we want to hear and we want to heed like wise men building on the rock Lord we want to have that which we are building in this life stand the test

[53 : 34] Lord it's amazing when we read about how there's a reward for if that which we have built survives Lord we praise you that you're at work in our hearts Lord and I ask and pray that you would continue that work that we would support and bear one another's burdens that we would together be built up as a fellowship and this I pray in Jesus name Amen Amen