

Day One – Recap of Matthew 7:13-29

And thus we end Matthew's version of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, perhaps the most important teaching we have on what it means to be a Christian. I would love for you to have figured it all out over the past few months, but since that is a patent absurdity, perhaps we could shoot for something a little more reasonable. What I do hope for you is at least an "affectionate familiarity" with the text. We all should think about these chapters more as a good friend than some distant celebrity with which we are only vaguely familiar.

They should be Beatitudes, not religious platitudes. Gone, I pray, is the vision of Jesus delivering these "blesseds" as some obscure collection of heavenly well-wishes. These are the nuts-and-bolts of your life as a Christian! Pursue these without rest and without reservation!

Take your advice on Old Testament interpretation from Christ himself and remember every bit of it. Remember, also, the shameless way that Christ realigned the focus of the Old Testament toward Himself. The Law is not an easy thing to understand, but we do know that it finds its definition and meaning in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He gave us lofty standards to inspire us to greatness, not beat us into morbid introspection. Your failures enlarge the glory of Christ's successes!

Our piety becomes pomp when done to impress others. Give as though everyone were watching while ensuring that no one knows. Pray fervently in secret and your public prayers will come easily. Use the Lord's Prayer as a beautiful model, not as some magical formula for godliness in personal prayer.

Live with both feet in this world, firmly committed to the task before us, without succumbing to the fleeting pleasures that accompany this present regime. Use your wealth as a good steward, knowing that only the good things will endure the test of time. Manage your time the same way. Work hard while you have the time, for we are not guaranteed tomorrow. Tomorrow is the Lord's domain.

Reserve your critical spirit for your own life, carefully analyzing your motives and actions. Exercise charity with others, remembering how much has been shown to you.

Jesus makes it abundantly clear that every person has been given a choice with what to do with his or her life. Most follow the world and reject Him, whether in open rebellion or through pursuing another means to the Father. Cling to Christ and His words! Build your life on the rock of His righteousness and follow His precepts, rejecting the way which seems right to men.

As we continue through Matthew, remember all that we have learned here. Jesus serves not only as a Teacher on high, but also as a tangible example of love and compassion. Remember the clarity of this Sermon in the midst of His healing, His parables, and His beleaguered road to Calvary.

Day Two

Matthew 8 begins where chapter 4 leaves off, with the Sermon on the Mount as a sort of parenthesis in between. At the end of chapter 4, Jesus was “going about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. And great multitudes followed Him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan” (vv.23-25). Jesus then “went up on the mountain” (5:1), where He preached His great sermon, and then came down from the mountain, still followed by “great multitudes” (8:1).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus turned the religious beliefs and practices of popular Judaism, especially those of the scribes and Pharisees, topsy-turvy. He had told them, in effect, that their teaching was wrong, their living was wrong, and their attitude was wrong. Virtually everything they believed in, stood for, and hoped in was unbiblical and ungodly. The Lord overturned their entire religious system and exposed them as religious hypocrites and spiritual phonies.

Unlike other Jewish teachers of that day, Jesus did not quote the Talmud, the Midrash, the Mishnah, or other rabbis. He recognized no written authority but the Old Testament Scripture and even put His own words on a par with Scripture. “The result was,” Matthew explains, “that when Jesus had finished these words [the Sermon on the Mount], the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one with authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt. 7:28-29).

In establishing Jesus’ messiahship Matthew demonstrated His legal qualification through His genealogy, His prophetic qualification through the fulfillment of prophecy by His birth and infancy, His divine qualification by the Father’s own attestation at His baptism, His spiritual qualification by His perfect resistance to Satan’s temptations, and His theological qualification through the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

In chapters 8 and 9 Matthew dramatically sets forth still another qualification: Jesus’ divine power. Through the miracles of these two chapters, Matthew shows beyond doubt that Jesus is, in fact, the very Son of God, because only God could perform such supernatural feats. In an astounding display of power, Jesus cleansed a leper, healed two paralytics, cooled a fever, calmed a storm at sea, cast out demons, raised a girl from the dead, gave sight to two blind men, restored speech to a man made dumb by demons, and healed every other kind of disease and sickness.

- From the MacArthur commentary over Matthew

Day Three - Read 8:1-22

List the three miracles Matthew tells us about in this passage.

Challenge: What are common characteristics of these three miracles?

Day Four – Read 8:1-22

Why do you think Jesus performed these miracles?

What did you learn from each of the three miracles?

How can you apply what you learned to your life?

Day Five – Read 8:1-22

As you read vv. 16-22 ask yourself, “What keeps men from Christ?”

We have two examples of people who said they would follow Jesus, but...

How do you understand Jesus response to the first man? Apply this to your life?

Explain the second man’s response. What is the result of his decision?

Day Six

If you are looking to go a little bit deeper in your understanding of the text for this week, try one of these resources:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getBookSections&cid=1&source=1>

<http://www.evangelibrary.org.uk/members/com/nt/jcr/mt/mat-Index.html>

Sermons Transcripts:

Ligon Duncan - http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/matthew_vol_1-2/matthew_vol_1-2/index_Matthew_vol_1-2.html

Audio:

John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/14/>

S. Lewis Johnson - http://sljinstitute.net/sermons/new%20testament/gospels/matthew/matthew_master.html