

SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 2020

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

FOUR CRITICAL WARNINGS | MATTHEW 7:13-27

The Sermon on the Mount is a beautiful summary of Jesus' teaching. Jesus has described the character of the kingdom, the impact of the kingdom, and the deep heart righteousness required by the kingdom. He introduces us to a Father who knows our deepest needs and is more willing to meet those needs than we ever dared to imagine. He challenges us to pursue a single treasure, cultivate a single vision, and serve a single master—to seek God's kingdom and his righteousness above everything else.

Everyone who heard Jesus teach was deeply impressed with the elegance, simplicity, and beauty of his teaching. Jesus is not looking for fans; however, he is inviting us to rearrange our lives and follow him. He brings the Sermon to a close with four critical warnings.

## DON'T THINK FOLLOWING CHRIST IS EASY. IT'S NOT

*VERSES 13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup> But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."*

1. According to Jesus, we can take the easy path or the hard path. How would you describe the difference between the two?
2. Why is it difficult to come to Christ?
3. Why is it challenging to follow Christ?
4. Why would anyone choose the narrow path?

## **DON'T THINK EVERYONE WHO SPEAKS FOR CHRIST BELONGS TO CHRIST. THEY DON'T**

*VERSES 15-20: "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. <sup>16</sup> By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? <sup>17</sup> Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. <sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

1. In the Old Testament, there were three tests for a true prophet. Did their predictions prove to be true? Did their words accurately reflect the one true God? Did their personal conduct reflect the heart and character of God? Why do you think Jesus focusses on the integrity of the messenger rather than the content of the message?
2. What happens when we embrace teaching that does not accurately reflect the heart and character of God and what he requires of us?
3. Why do you think Scripture uses the analogy of bearing fruit as a reliable window into our heart and character?
4. What are some of the fruits you might expect from someone who genuinely belongs to Christ?

## **DON'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THE SENSATIONAL. PURSUE THE ORDINARY**

*VERSES 21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

1. If powerful teaching is not a clear indication that someone belongs to Christ, neither are powerful works. According to this passage, what is the best indication that someone really belongs to Christ?
2. What happens when we get caught up in the sensational and ignore the ordinary call to do God's will?

## **DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH THEOLOGY FOR THEOLOGY'S SAKE. BUILD YOUR LIFE ON IT**

*VERSES 24-27: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. <sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

1. Why is a solid foundation critical to any home or building?
2. According to Jesus, what is the foundation of the Christian life?
3. What do you think Jesus has in mind when he describes the rain, streams, and winds that will inevitably beat against the house?
4. What happens when the house has a weak foundation?
5. What are some steps we can take to build a solid foundation in Christ?