

**Matthew – The King And His Kingdom**  
**The Great Adventure**  
**Notes For Session 8 – Chapter 7: Choices in the Kingdom**

Third of three chapters on the Sermon on the Mount.

- Remember, Jesus is the new Moses; the Sermon on the Mount is the new Covenant of the Lord.

**T1. Judging Others Verses 1-6:**

"Stop judging, that you may not be judged. For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother's eye. "Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces."

**A.** Text deals with judgments that occur in everyday life as people set themselves up as a moral guardian and critics of others. Not our job to judge other peoples faults – it is God's job.

- 1) Jesus' target is the Pharisees who created a moral climate in which everyone watches everyone else to see if they are keeping up to the standards.
- 2) Difference between judgment and prudence.
- 3) The temptation is to look down on each other for moral failures, but all of us have moral failures – a temptation to play God.

"Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you." Luke 6:37-38

- 4) Judgment will bounce back on you.
  - If you try to judge another without taking care of your own moral failure (sin), you can't see straight – you can't see the situation for what it is through your own sin.
  - Examine your own heart first. Tend to our own failures first.
- 5) Fraternal correction is not judging. You can express your concern for a person by coming to a person in humility.

**B.** St. Augustine says

- 1) Some sins rush to judgment in the conscious while others remain hidden until the last day. We do well not to pass judgment on hidden things until the Lord comes to pass judgment on the hidden things of darkness.
- 2) One had best not pretend to counsel another when one has the same fault unexamined.

**C.** Exercise Critical Discernment - 1 Thes 5:21. "Test everything; retain what is good."

- 1) Examination is critical in order to not profane what is holy.
- 2) St. Augustine – try to acquire those virtues which you think your brothers lack and you will no longer see their defects because you will not have them yourselves.
- 3) Anybody can tear down – only a master can build up.

**D. Pearls before Swine Verse 6:** "Do not give what is holy to dogs, or throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn and tear you to pieces."

- 1) Requires some kind of judgment or discernment
- 2) You need to know the people you are around
- 3) Dogs is an abusive term for Gentiles or unbelievers.
- 4) Jesus is saying do not throw your pearls before unbelieving people to be trampled upon.
  - Pearls = Truths of our Faith (e.g. Eucharist, Blessed Mother, etc)
  - Don't try to explain the meaning and life of the Kingdom to people who won't even understand the Jewish world within in which it makes sense.
  - People must be taught the elementary things before we can throw pearls.
- 5) Jesus redirects this teaching to anyone who is inhospitable to the Gospel – Jew or Gentile.

## **T2. Prayer Verses 7 – 12:**

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, or a snake when he asks for a fish? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him."

**A.** The problem is not that we are too eager to ask for the wrong things; the problem is that we are not nearly eager enough to ask for the right things.

- 1) James 4:2-3 – speaks to why we do not get our prayers answered.

"You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war. You do not possess because you do not ask. You ask but do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. "
- 2) Because you ask wrongly to spend it on our own passions.

**B.** James 1:5-8: – a practical guide to prayer.

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and he will be given it. But he should ask in faith, not doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed about by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord, since he is a man of two minds, unstable in all his ways."

**C.** Article 2609 of the Catechism

Once committed to conversion, the heart learns to pray in faith. Faith is a filial adherence to God beyond what we feel and understand. It is possible because the beloved Son gives us access to the Father. He can ask us to "seek" and to "knock," since he himself is the door and the way.

**D.** Article 2610 of the Catechism.

Just as Jesus prays to the Father and gives thanks before receiving his gifts, so he teaches us filial boldness: "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you receive it, and you will."66 Such is the power of prayer and of faith that does not doubt: "all things are possible to him who believes ...

- 1) Once again points to the filial relationship to God which Satan tried to destroy when tempting Jesus in the desert in Chapter 4..
- 2) God want us to pray for all things both small and great. Nothing too small to bring to God.

- 3) John Paul II on his comments on Blessed Mother at Wedding Feast at Cana: Mary brings the most common, the smallest details into the presence of Jesus.
- 4) If God is a Father, then we should relate to Him as a Father, not as a dictator.

**E. Christianity, Judaism and Islam all believe in Abraham, but relate to God differently:**

- 1) They relate to God differently based on Isaac and Ishmael.
- 2) Ishmael was a son of a slave and related to Abraham as his Master. Islam sees God as Master.
- 3) Judaism and even more so Christianity- Isaac related to Abraham as Father so we relate to God as Father.
- 4) In Islam to relate to God as Father is blasphemous.

**F. Archbishop William Temple- When I pray, coincidences happen. When I stop praying, the coincidences stop happening.**

- 1) God will not let you down. This is the meaning of the Sermon on the Mount.
- 2) God will strengthen you to live this life in the New Covenant.

**G. The Golden Rule Verse 12:**

"Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets."

- 1) Can you imagine a Family, Parish, Nation, or World that lived the Golden Rule?
- 2) The whole law reduced to one sentence.
- 3) It is where we fall short. Take the time to pray so that we can allow God to speak to us and show us where we are erring.
- 4) Other religions have said this. What makes Jesus' teaching difference is that underneath the moral lesson is the love of the heavenly Father.

**T3. The Two Ways Verses 13- 23**

**A.** Jesus is telling us that there are two ways to walk. All along in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been telling us to live this way – a full menu of things to do. Now is telling us that there are two ways to live.

**B.** 1970 of the Catechism:

The Law of the Gospel requires us to make the decisive choice between "the two ways" and to put into practice the words of the Lord. It is summed up in the Golden Rule, "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; this is the law and the prophets. The entire Law of the Gospel is contained in the "new commandment" of Jesus, to love one another as he has loved us."

**T4. The Narrow Gate Verses 13-14:**

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few.

The wide gate vs. the narrow gate.

**A. The Wide Gate**

- 1) Lot of people go through it
- 2) It is easy
- 3) It's the Road to destruction

**B. The Narrow Gate**

- 1) This is the tougher gate
- 2) Fewer go through this gate

## **T5. False Prophets Verses 15-20:**

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a rotten tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. So by their fruits you will know them."

**A.** In relation to the Narrow Gate versus the Wide Gate, Jesus is telling us to **Beware**.

- 1) Keep your eyes open there are ravenous wolves out there; there are sheep in wolves clothing
- 2) You will know them by their fruit. Be fruit inspectors.

**B.** Part of going through the Narrow Gate to life is being aware and looking for fruit. Knowing who you are dealing with. Living a wise and prudent life.

## **T6. The True Disciple 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 in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?' Then I will declare to them solemnly, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.'"

**A.** These Two Ways: the way to destruction which is wide, the broad way. The way to life the Narrow Gate.

- 1) The Narrow Gate leads to salvation.
  - Is harder to go through
  - More sacrifice, more self-examination, more suffering
  - Has a great reward
  - Deep joy
- 2) The Wide Gate leads to destruction.
  - Is easier to live
  - Selfish and self-centered
  - Consequence to choosing way

**B.** Jesus gives us guidelines to get through the Narrow Gate.

- 1) Make sure you get through the Gate – its not very wide!
- 2) Beware dangerous thinking – my actions are not really going to be that bad – it will all work out in the end. God is good and all people will end up in heaven.
  - Deuteronomy Chapter 30:15-20: brings out in no uncertain terms the two ways.

"Here, then, I have today set before you life and prosperity, death and doom. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I enjoin on you today, loving him, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and decrees, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to occupy. If, however, you turn away your hearts and will not listen, but are led astray and adore and serve other gods, I tell you now that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and occupy. I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the LORD swore he would give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

- 1696 of the Catechism:

The way of Christ "leads to life"; a contrary way "leads to destruction." The Gospel parable of the two ways remains ever present in the catechesis of the Church; it shows the importance of moral decisions for our salvation: "There are two ways, the one of life, the other of death; but between the two, there is a great difference."

- 3) Watch out for people who will lead you off tract. Look at the life of the person – can you see fruit? Can you see others being nourished by them?
  - Doing great works is not a sign.
  - Anyone who separates you from the Teaching of Magisterium of the Church is a false teacher and a false prophet.
  - I am either faithful or unfaithful in a covenant relationship.

### **T7. The Two Foundations Verses 24-29:**

"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined." When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

- A. Jesus did not teach in the name of any other person. Most teachers would teach in the name of a Rabbi; Jesus did not. He taught on his own authority.
- B. Doing what Jesus says makes the difference between a house that stands or a house that falls in a storms of lives.
- C. A house that stands is one that listens to the word of the Lord and does what he says.
  - 1) Deut 6:4:- "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone!"
  - 2) Hearing goes beyond the physical hearing.
  - 3) To hear is "to do" in the Jewish culture.
  - 4) Those who do the word of Jesus, their houses are the ones that stand.
- D. Jesus says that everyone who hears these words and does them is like a wise man who builds his house upon the rock.
  - 1) Solomon was a wise man who built a house upon a rock (on the temple mount in Jerusalem.) 1 Kings 3:10-12, 1 Kings 8:27.
  - 2) The enduring house is your soul grounded on Christ. 1 Cor 3:11-15
- E. Calls for a serious evaluation of our lives – where is my treasure?
  - 1) Lay up for yourselves a good foundation. (St. Paul)
  - 2) Making wise decisions based on Christ. Doing the Word of the Lord.
- F. On a broader scale, Jesus is speaking about the temple.
  - 1) In Jerusalem, they are continuing to build Herod's temple, but it is not build The Rock – Christ and will come crashing down in 70 A.D.
  - 2) In 70 A.D. 1.2 million Jews were slaughtered by the Romans; no Christians died because they did what Jesus told them and fled to the hills.
- G. In Matthew 16, Jesus will teach that his house will be built on Peter and Peter will be the Rock.

**H. Different Meanings – Our house is.**

- 1) built on the words of Jesus;
- 2) built on Jesus being the new temple; and
- 3) built on Peter, the Church.

**T8. Conclusion**

- A.** If you want to build a strong house (family), listen to Peter and obey all that Jesus has passed on. Build it on the obedience to Jesus and allegiance and faithfulness to His Church, and your house (family) will last forever.
- B.** James 2:14-26 -- By my works I will show you my faith. Faith without works is dead.
- C.** Become fruit inspectors. You can tell people by their fruit.
- D.** Do not follow false prophets. Be careful who you learn from – look at the fruit in their lives, not the miracles, not all the great big show – look at the fruit in their life..
- E.** What sort of house are you building?
- F.** Are you hearing but not doing?
- G.** Sermon on the Mount assures us that one day we will be judged based on the content of this message!
- 1) Did we hear, but not Do?
  - 2) Did we hear, and Do? If so we are Blest people.