

Invitation to the Sermon on the Mount Lifestyle - Pt. 3

Jim Hall - August 2010

Foundations that Cannot Be Shaken

A) In part 1 & 2 we looked at the question of 'Is the future friendly?'

i) Jesus spoke about his 2nd coming and calls us to be 'faithful and wise servants' (Matt. 24:44-47) as we eagerly anticipate the return of our Lord

ii) In order to be considered to be those 'wise and faithful' ones we must live out the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7)

iii) We have looked at Matthew 5-6 through the biblical analogy of the 'garden of the heart' (Song of Songs 4:1). In Matt. 5 Jesus addresses the 6 'weeds' or toxins that choke out our spiritual vitality and in Matt. 6 he speaks of the 5 practices (or spiritual disciplines) that serve to 'water' the garden of our heart.

a) The 6 'weeds' included: anger, lust, disloyalty, deception, revenge and retaliation.

b) The 5 practices included: giving, praying, fasting, longing (after treasure in heaven), and believing (that God will be your source of supply).

B) In Matthew 5-6 Jesus describes the key areas of a radically different lifestyle, a 'sermon on the mount' lifestyle. In Matthew 7 Jesus speaks about some of the significant implications and temptations that will come our way as we seek to re-orient our lives around the Kingdom values.

The Decisions of a Lifetime

A) In **Matt. 6:19-24** Jesus calls us to pursue 'treasure in heaven' rather than 'treasure on earth'. This is a major paradigm shift away from what our western society is focused on. Living this way requires that we have revelation that there is significant connectedness between this age (our present lives) and the age to come (beginning at the return of Christ)

B) The Scriptures (both old and new testament) continually teach that we will be rewarded in the age to come based on the choices we make (as believers) in this age. (see Ps. 62:12, Isa. 62:11, Matt 6:4, 6,18, 20, 1 Cor. 3:8 & Rev. 22:12)

C) In **Matt. 6:25-34** Jesus teaches us that living a lifestyle that is focused primarily on the treasures in heaven will lead to certain temptations to worry about our present needs and wants. He calls us to live in faith, confident in the love of our heavenly Father who knows our needs and will provide for us. Living with this confidence liberates us to respond with a countercultural pursuit of the Kingdom of God!

D) Jesus continues to reveal the response of our heart to this lifestyle in **Matt. 7:1-6**. Living a 'sermon on the mount' lifestyle will also lead to inevitable temptations in our heart to compare ourselves with those around us. Such comparisons often result in forming judgements in our hearts toward other people. These judgements damage our hearts and distract us from the essential setting (focus) of our eyes and hearts on Jesus who is our ultimate example (Col. 3:1-4)

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E) **Matt. 7:7-12.** Rather than comparisons and judgements which keep our focus on one another, Jesus points us to respond with a continual focus on God through a lifestyle of prayer. This is made possible as we grow in our revelation of *what God is like* in his character and emotions, as well as *who we are* before him (1 Jn. 3:1). We increase in our ability to pray with confidence and boldness before God (1 Jn. 5:14-15; Heb. 5:16)

F) Jesus' next point in **Matt. 7:13-14** is that living this 'sermon on the mount' lifestyle is not going to be popular. Even among the Body of Christ, when you add up all the believers through Church history, it will be the minority that choose to live this lifestyle. We must stay focused on Jesus.

i) Obviously v. 13-14 have been understood in reference to the road of salvation. This understanding is perfectly correct. Part of the brilliance of the Sermon on the Mount is that each section can stand on its own but it should also be read as a linear flow of thought. In this linear progression, the reference to 'destruction' should be understood in temporal terms, in relation to 7:27.

G) In **Matt. 7:15-23**, Jesus is primarily speaking about the time in human history known as 'the end of the age'. What Jesus is looking for in us is the fruit that comes from doing the will of the Father.

H) In **Matt. 7:24-29** Jesus gives the summary conclusion of the sermon.

i) In living a 'sermon on the mount' lifestyle we do the will of our Father in heaven and we produce spiritual fruit that will last for eternity.

ii) The question we must ask: What are we building our lives around?

• Building our 'house' (meaning our lives) on the 'rock' (meaning Christ) is far more than believing that Christ is our Savior. Accepting Christ into our lives is the essential starting place, but from there we begin to live our lives through a radically different paradigm.

iii) The sermon on the mount is *the foundational lifestyle of every Christian*.

iv) In using the analogy of a 'house' to represent our lives, a house has many rooms. Different rooms can be used to illustrate different areas of our lives. Jesus calls us to build the *entirety of our lives* on him, centered around Christ. Far too often we have 'compartmentalized' lives.

v) Notice that the rains, streams and wind come against all people. Living this lifestyle does not stop the rains from coming. Many believers are trying to figure out how to get the 'rains' and 'winds' to stop happening in their lives. This is simply not a biblical expectation.

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The Coming Day of Evaluation

A) Scripture makes it clear that as Christians we will all one day stand before Jesus and he will evaluate our lives.

i) "If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames." 1 Cor. 3:11-15 (see also Rom. 14:10 & 2 Cor. 5:10)

ii) "Half our troubles are due to the fact that we live on the assumption that this is the only life and the only world. Of course we know that is not true; but there is a great difference between knowing a thing and really being governed and guided by that knowledge in our ordinary life and outlook." - Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Putting it into Practice

A) As the Holy Spirit touches our spirit, we respond by asking 'Brothers, what shall we do?' (Acts 2:37)

i) Jesus makes it perfectly clear that the required response is to begin to change the way that we live and to 'put into practice' what we have heard.

B) Steps of response

i) Worship. We must begin to have times of intentional worship on a daily basis. First and foremost we worship God because He is worthy of it, however it also has a profound impact on our spirit that softens and opens up our heart to receive more of what the Holy Spirit is trying to say and do in us.

ii) Read slowly...pray slowly. Begin to approach the Sermon on the Mount through the lens of 7:7-11. Come with confidence before God and begin to read over the sermon, praying as you go and listening to what the Holy Spirit will say.

iii) Intensify through giving and fasting

iv) Live in confidence. Choose daily to connect with your Father in heaven who is eager to 'give good gifts to those who ask him' (Matt. 7:11)