

The Gospel According to Matthew pt 20

(Enter Thou into the Joy of Thy Lord)

Consider with me if you will, the Lord's message to the two disciples on that road to Emmaus, was it not a message of Him? Did He not "expound the things in the scriptures concerning Himself"? I ask you this then, is there any difference here and now in this passage before us?

The Holy Scriptures, are a love letter, a letter of God's love for a people, a people who were not called a people, a people who sought not the Lord of Truth, a people who if it were not for the Love of God, would go as all mankind are going, to their own destruction! **"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened (made alive) us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus"** (Eph 2:4-7).

This message our Lord and Savior is bringing is a message of right and wrong, "the law" the problem is natural man thinks he can achieve these actions of right and has no understanding of the truth that he cannot of his own accord, even to the slightest degree. Only those whom the Son of God is revealed in Grace, are brought to see this truth about themselves. I have recently been called "antinomian", why? Why would one call me, or any of God's people "Lawless"? The word actually means "to no longer be ruled by, bound by the law", God's people are ruled by Grace, God's grace. Only one who is still ruled by the law, would use that term as a degrading offensive term against someone else. What does it mean to live by Grace? To live by Grace is have an understanding, we cannot fulfill the law, in anyway that is satisfying to the Almighty God! we live only because He is Gracious to us! We look upon Him with reverence, because He is God, we look upon Him with Love because He has been gracious to a sinner deserving nothing but His wrath! **"Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple"** (Psa 65:4).

The Sovereign Lord God of all creation inspired the Prophet to Say this; **“The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee”** (Jer 31:3).

Or **“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”** (Isa.61:10)

Robert Hawker wrote this about our text in Matt. 7; *“The Lord JESUS in this Chapter concludes His Sermon on the Mount, and what a blessed way He does in comparing the wise hearers of it to those who build on the Rock, and the foolish to those who build on the Sand”*.

In this chapter, our Lord Jesus concludes His Sermon on the Mount. Throughout this sermon (Matthew 5-7), our Savior draws a clear, unmistakable distinction between true and false religion, between outward ceremonialism and inward godliness, between religious hypocrisy and true spirituality. In chapter 5 He showed us the character of His people and the necessity of holiness. In chapter 6 He showed us the character of true worship and the necessity of faith. Here in chapter 7 He brings it all home to all who heard Him (and to all who read His words today) by making general, but pointed, exhortations and warnings, that we all need to be reminded of continually. May God the Holy Spirit, who has preserved these exhortations and warnings for us upon the pages of Holy Scripture, graciously apply them to our hearts.

Read Matt. 7:1-5

Our Lord is not teaching that we ought never to exercise judgment about anything. In fact, we are taught of God to **“prove all things”** (1Th 5:21).

He’s not telling us that we must never condemn as evil the opinions, the behavior, and the doctrines of men.

If the Sermon on the Mount teaches anything, it teaches us the necessity of spiritual discernment, that's the Lord's instructions in (Mat 7:15-16).

We are to **"try the spirits"** as the Apostle John state it in (1Jn 4:1). We are to mark those who cause division. We are to be a people of decided values and dogmatic doctrine.

In these verses our Lord is condemning a censorious, fault-finding spirit. As J. C. Ryle wrote, *"A readiness to blame others for trifling offences or matters of indifference, a habit of passing rash, hasty judgments, a disposition to magnify the errors and infirmities of our neighbors, and make the worst of them, this is what our Lord forbids."*

"faith which worketh by love" teaches us not to be rash, critical, nit-pickers, but to be patient, longsuffering, forbearing, and forgiving of one another; **"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"** (1Co 13:4-7).

We must never put ourselves in the place of God, sitting in judgment over our brethren, acting as though we have the ability, or the right to condemn, (Mat 7:1).

Judgement is God's prerogative, and His alone. This principle applies to our attitude regarding all people; but it is particularly applicable to our attitude toward other believers; **"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand"** (Rom 14:4).

Any time we set ourselves up as judges over others, we set ourselves up to be judged (Mat 7:2).

We have work enough to do in taking care of our own souls (Mat 7:3-5).

Because we cannot look into another person's heart, we do not have the ability to judge the motives of others.

Far too many are quick to condemn another believer's conduct and to tell a brother or sister what they should or should not do, not with the authority of God's Word, but merely by the measure of their own opinions. We would be wise to recognize that none of us have the ability to discern what God the Holy Spirit would have another to do, unless we can point to a specific passage of Scripture that gives specific instructions regarding the matter at hand. We have no right to even form an opinion relating to the conduct of a brother or sister in Christ, apart from the Word of God. Rather, let us pray that God the Holy Spirit will supply both ourselves and our brothers and sisters in Christ with wisdom and grace to do His will in all things; and leave it to Him to do so. In all our judgments of others let us be kind, gentle, and lenient; **"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets"** (Mat 7:12).

If we must err in our judgment concerning others, let us err on the side of lenience, not on the side of severity.

Read (Mat 7:6).

Here is a word of wisdom concerning the way we are to deal with those who oppose our God and Savior and the gospel of His grace.

Dogs and swine are terms used in the Scriptures to refer to unclean things and to refer to wicked, reprobate men. Just after telling us not to be rash in judgment, our Lord tells us that in preaching and witnessing to men, we must make a judgment, deciding when to work with men in patience and when to dust off our feet as a witness against them; **"And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet"** (Mat 10:14);

In (Act 18:6) **"And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles"**;

In (Tit 3:10-11) we read **"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself"**.

But we also read **"Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee"** (Pro 9:8).

Folks, We must never be reluctant to confess Christ before men; but there are some, like Nabal, to whom none can speak concerning the things of God (1Sa 25:17). If you speak to someone about the things of God, and they obviously do not want to hear what God has revealed, leave them alone.

Next our Savior gives us a blessed promise of grace, read (Mat 7:7-11).

our Lord encourages us to pray. There is nothing so plain and simple as prayer. Here our Lord assures us of God's readiness to hear and answer the prayers of His children (Heb 4:16) **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**

Using the illustration of an earthly father, our blessed Redeemer assures us that our heavenly Father because of His love for us, is inclined to bless His children. Does not a fallen, sinful man naturally give good things to his children, simply because they are his children? If so, how much more the great Father of mercies must be to give His Holy Spirit to His children.

Our heavenly Father, who, though unasked, has already given the greatest of all blessings in giving us His darling Son, will He withhold any good thing from us? Isn't that what we read in (Rom 8:32) **"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things"**? Or how about (Joh 14:16-20) **"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you;**

Read (Mat 7:12)

These words summarize all that our Lord has said in this Sermon on the Mount. By this golden rule, let us mold our behavior towards all things.

Let this be the measure of our judgment and reproof, our charity and severity, and of our thoughts and conduct with regard to all men. This is the essence of all that is taught in the Word of God concerning our treatment of others, both of believers and unbelievers. May God give us grace to live by this blessed rule. There is nothing that would make us more useful to others.

Read (Mat 7:13-14)

The strait gate is Christ himself. He is the Door of life and salvation (Joh 10:7-9) **“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture”**.

By him alone we have access to and acceptance with the Father. The strait gate is exactly as wide as Christ, and exactly as narrow. The wide gate is as broad as anything and everything added to Christ (Gal 5:2; Gal 5:4) **“Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.... Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”**.

Most people are on that broad way to destruction. Therefore, our Lord graciously urges us to strive to enter in at the strait gate. — **“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”** Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Having just urged us to trust Him alone for righteousness and redemption, the Lord Jesus Christ warns us in (Mat 7:15-20)

False prophets come in sheep’s clothing, professing to be sheep. But they are ravening wolves, whose only object is the destruction of the sheep. They creep into the church, as Jude puts it, **“unawares,”** undetected.

But they can always be detected and known by their fruits. Their fruits do not refer to their outward conduct and behavior; but to the doctrines they teach in opposition to the gospel. All false prophets and all false religions teach a mixture of works with grace. They deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, by denying the efficacy of His redemption, His righteousness, and His grace. They turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, asserting that the teaching of the gospel (salvation by grace alone, without works) opens the floodgates to immorality (Jud 1:4).

Augustus Toplady wrote; *“Every religion except one puts upon you doing something in order to recommend yourself to God. It is only the religion of Christ (which runs counter to all the rest by affirming that we are saved and called with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to the Father’s own purpose and grace) which was not sold out to us on certain conditions to be fulfilled by ourselves, but was given us in Christ before the world began. It was long ago remarked by a good man that, ‘It is the business of all false religion to patch up a righteousness in which the sinner is to stand before God. But it is the business of the glorious gospel to bring near to us, by the hand of the Holy Spirit, a righteousness ready wrought, a robe of perfection ready made, wherein God’s people, to all the purposes of justification and happiness, stand perfect and without fault before the throne.’”*

Next the Lord gives us a warning against presumption, read (Mat 7:21-22).

Grace that does not make a person obedient to God is not the grace of the gospel. Faith that does not make a man faithful is not the faith of God’s elect. Salvation that does not transform sinners into the image of the Savior is not Bible salvation. Salvation is more than a religious profession, an emotional experience, and the performance of religious duties. Salvation is doing the will of God, does the Lord say “be humble and thou shalt be saved”? No! He say’s **“Whosoever believeth”** (John 3:16).

Salvation is doing the will of God, believing on, trusting the Lord Jesus Christ (Joh 6:29) **“This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent”**.

Folks, Salvation is the voluntary surrender of our lives to Christ the Lord; this is the work of God **“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”** (Luk 14:26-33).

Salvation is leaning on the everlasting arms of our Substitute who died in our stead, and shed His own righteous blood, **“perfecting forever them that are sanctified”** and this is the work of God!

Salvation is being born again of the Spirit of God who like a wind listeth wither He shall, another words He say's **“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy”**

Folks salvation is by the sacrificial Blood of the righteous Son of God, Salvation is of the Lord!

Preaching or prophesying in the name of Christ, and even performing miracles in His name, is not evidence of grace and salvation.

If there is no union with Christ here, there can be no communion with Christ in eternity. The Lord Jesus does not say that few, but many will be found in the day of judgment who lived and died in religion without Christ. What a solemn fact this is to consider! “**Lord is it I?**” Let us ever “**strive to enter in at the strait gate,**” that we may be found among the blessed few who have Christ, “**the hope of glory,**” formed in them.

Read (Mat 7:24-27)

Here our Lord draws a clear distinction between true and false faith. Christ is the Rock upon which we must be built. He is the precious Corner Stone the Lord has laid in Zion. Those who believe on him shall never perish, but have everlasting life. Those who build on the sand of their own works shall be buried in the everlasting ruins of their own confusion in hell.

Faith in Christ is compared to the building of a house of refuge (Mat 7:24). Sooner or later, our house will be tested by earthly trials, spiritual trials, rains of trouble, floods of sorrow, and winds of adversity (Mat 7:25).

If your house is built on Christ the Rock, it will endure the trial and stand the tests of time. If your house is built on the sand, anything other than Christ, sooner or later the rains and floods and winds will bring it crumbling down around you.

Lastly read (Mat 7:28-29).

Throughout this Sermon on the Mount, our Savior exemplified the way gospel preachers are to preach. He taught “**as one having authority.**”

Brother Don Fortner wrote; “*He did not propose questions for debate. He declared truth. He did not offer an opinion to consider. He taught doctrine to be believed. He did not defend a religious system. He taught a righteous salvation. He did not mutter with uncertainty about speculative theories. He taught matters of absolute certainty*” “**as one having authority**”.

As we read Matthew 5-7 and hear the Lord Jesus Christ teaching the gospel, showing us the way of holiness and perfection before God, let us rejoice to know that He has fulfilled all for us as our blessed Surety and Substitute.

He is all our Salvation. He is “all in all” to His redeemed.

Let us, by faith, build upon Him who alone is the Foundation laid by God and the whole Superstructure, both of the law and the prophets. In that great day, when the Lord God shakes the whole earth in judgment, let us be found in Him and built upon Him as upon a rock, as that Rock against which the gates of hell shall never prevail!

Robert Hawker concluded his comments on the Sermon on the Mount with this prayer;

“Precious, blessed Lord Jesus! A stone of stumbling and rock of offence; yet to me be thou more precious than the mountains of spices. In thy person, work and offices; in thy character and relations, in thy complete righteousness and salvation; be thou my Lord, my hope, and everlasting portion. Lord grant that I may never build on the sandy performance of any thing of my own, or mix up with thy complete work the hay and the stubble of any legal righteousness, which can stand no wind of the day of God’s wrath; but be thou the all in all, of all grace here, and of glory for ever.”

Amen.

Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple”

Come thou faithful servant, Enter Thou into the Joy of Thy Lord!