

- 1) Ok, moving on ...
- 2) We covered these next verses earlier but I want to read them again just to have perhaps a more complete perspective of what is being said by Jesus.

Matthew 7:15–20 (ESV)

A Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

- 3) “Fruit” is a Jewish metaphor for both character and conduct.
 - a) Jesus’ followers would be able to discern false prophets by looking at their lives and conduct.
- 4) This is why we must first and foremost look at their fruits before we even consider their teachings.
- 5) Here again, Jesus is simply saying that despite their profession of being prophets (teachers of the word), if we observe their fruits, (both character and conduct) it will be plain to see that they are false.
- 6) In context of these concluding passages, we must be sure we apply this axiom to our own lives.
 - a) We must have fruit (both character and conduct) in our lives that shows our true life in the Spirit.
 - b) We cannot allow our lives to become a religious sham practicing our pious acts before men for their adoration and approval.
 - c) If we do, we will become exactly like the people Jesus talks about in the next passage ...
- 7) John R. W. Stott gives us another warning regarding how we come to trust someone’s teaching:
We must not be dazzled by a person’s outward clothing – his charm, learning, doctorates and ecclesiastical honours. We must not be so naive as to suppose that because he is a Ph.D. or a D.D. or a professor or a bishop he must be a true and orthodox ambassador of Christ. We must look beneath the appearance to the reality. What lives under the fleece: a sheep or a wolf?

Thoughts / Comments / Questions?

- 8) Once again, moving on ...

Matthew 7:21–23 (ESV)

I Never Knew You

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons

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in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

- 9) As I said a moment ago, we cannot allow our lives to become a religious sham practicing our pious acts before men for their adoration and approval.
 - a) That is in essence what these folks are.
- 10) Here perhaps we get to the rubber meeting the road part of Jesus’ teaching on the life of a disciple.
- 11) Perhaps some of the people he is speaking to in this passage are part of the group of false prophets he was referring to back in verses 15 through 20.
- 12) The real idea behind all this is that these folks were all about the show.
 - a) They were not being obedient to Jesus’ teachings – they were simply doing works, even works in Jesus’ name but without a true devotion to Him as their savior.
 - b) This is why He can say to them simply “I never knew you.”
- 13) Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary says of these folks ...

Verse 22 shows that the “will of my Father in heaven” refers to acts of simple obedience to Jesus’s teaching rather than spectacular supernatural feats. Some false disciples claimed to have prophesied, and this indicates that at least some of them belong to the category of false prophets described in 7:15–20. Some false disciples claimed to cast out demons and perform miracles. They did so “in your name” meaning that they invoked the power and authority of Jesus to perform these impressive acts. **But the miracle that identifies the true disciple is a transformed life that results in godly living**¹⁹

We obviously cannot cast out demons, prophesy, or perform miracles but, how can we fall into this trap?

- a) Doing good deeds, giving lots of money, etc. but not really having God driven motive in our hearts for what we are doing.
 - i) It could be either praise of others or just making us feel good about ourselves as the prime driving force behind our deeds.
 - ii) Perhaps, we are even doing things to be sure we go to heaven – that famous “checklist” mentality!
 - iii) It is only when we are conscious of what we are doing as it relates to a heart for God’s desires for us that we are pleasing to Him.

So, how do we prevent ourselves from becoming someone to whom Jesus says, *I never knew you?*

- 14) Jesus actually tells us how in these next verses...

¹⁹ Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, Thomas R. Schreiner, and Andreas J. Köstenberger, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), 210.

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1) Continuing on ...

Matthew 7:24–27 (ESV)

Build Your House on the Rock

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

1) Here’s one of those “Oh yea” questions ...

What are the rock and the sand?

- a) We have a tendency to answer “the Word” but, in both cases just outlined, the Word is heard the Rock and Sand are what we do with the Word we hear – NOT the Word itself !!
- 2) This is another choice like the narrow gate vs. wide gate.
 - a) We can choose to hear and make a wrong decision about following – building our house on sand.
 - b) Or we can hear and obey – building our house on a solid rock and foundation.
- 3) When we are true followers of Christ, we must not only hear his words, but we must act on them.
 - a) We have to allow His message to make a difference in our lives.
 - b) The key to this parable (as with all parables) is the central message, not the peripheral details.
- 4) The one who builds "on rock" is a hearing, responding disciple – not a phony, superficial one like the ones he just said he never knew.
- 5) James tells us basically the same thing:

James 1:22–25 (ESV)

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

- a) We have to get our heads and our hearts wrapped around this truth!
- b) We cannot be like want-a-be athletes that "talk" a great game, but have no skills or abilities.
- c) Not everyone who talks about heaven belongs to God's kingdom.
- 6) Jesus is more concerned about our "walk" than our "talk."
 - a) He wants us to do right things for right reasons, not just say the right words.
 - i) If we do this, our house (which represents our life) will withstand the storms.
 - ii) If we do not, then our house will not.

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- (1) And, oh by the way, the storms will come!
- b) But, as we were told in the verses just prior to this, the final storm will come at the judgement – will our house stand then?
- 7) Matthew concludes the 3 chapters of the Sermon on the Mount with this statement:

Matthew 7:28–29 (ESV) The Authority of Jesus

²⁸ And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- 8) We have seen this authority throughout the study.
 - a) In truth, Jesus has left little doubt of who he really was – the Son of God.
 - b) That is the basis of the authority that astonished these folks.
- 9) The question that comes to my mind when I read this is, as these folks walk away from this hillside encounter how many are truly persuaded to change their lives?
- 10) How many are “almost persuaded”?
- 11) The answer can be “truly persuaded to change their lives” – if and only if they have become the **radical disciples** that Jesus is asking His hearers to be in this entire sermon.
- 12) Jesus concluded his sermon with a challenge about foundations.
- 13) Those who heard him were impressed by his authority.
 - a) But amazement doesn't equal acceptance or submission.
- 14) People who agree in theory that a house should be built on a solid foundation may still go out and construct their lives on a sandbar.
- 15) To conclude, let's do a quick review and perspective check.
- 16) This sermon or teaching has been called Jesus' manifesto, and a picture of his fulfillment of the law, among other things.
- 17) But, above all it is one of Jesus' most important teachings, laying out what life in God's kingdom looks like – both inwardly and outwardly.
- 18) The sermon breaks down into basically 3 sections:
 - a) Beginning in Matthew 5 we covered:
- 19) **The Heart of Kingdom Living**
 - a) **The Beatitudes:** Blessings on the humble, merciful, pure, and faithful—even in suffering.
 - b) **Salt and Light:** Followers are meant to influence the world for good.
 - c) **Fulfillment of the Law:** Jesus deepens the law, focusing on **inner righteousness**, not just outward actions.
- 20) Beginning in chapter 6 we covered **True Righteousness vs. Hypocrisy**

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- a) **Giving, Prayer, Fasting:** Should be done sincerely, not for show.
- b) **The Lord’s Prayer:** A model for humble, God-centered prayer.
- c) **Treasures in Heaven:** Prioritize eternal values over earthly wealth.
- d) **Trust God:** Do not worry about basic needs—God cares for you.

21) Finally in this last chapter we covered *Living with Wisdom and Obedience*

- a) **Judging Others:** Examine yourself before criticizing others.
- b) **Ask, Seek, Knock:** God responds to those who pursue Him.
- c) **The Golden Rule:** Treat others as you want to be treated.
- d) **Two Paths:** A narrow way leads to life; a broad way leads to destruction.
- e) **Wise and Foolish Builders:** True disciples don’t just hear Jesus’ words—they **act on them**.

22) Bottom Line

23) The Sermon on the Mount teaches that following Jesus is not just about external behavior, but a **transformed heart** that produces humility, obedience, trust in God, and love for others.

24) My hope is that this is what came across in this study.