

Matthew 7:24-29 (NKJV) The mind blowing effect of the Sermon on the Mount

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

You and I, and others like us, if we are **in Christ**, are in a band of people that are, at heart, **very different** from the rest of the world who are **not** in Christ. We are so different that our houses, which in this case represents our lives, will stand when the final rains and floods and winds strike. After we have lived our lives in constant **battle** from **the world, the flesh, and the devil**, we will **stand**. After we face the final judgment of God on all people, we will stand.

Now with that dramatic difference between a Christian and those who do not believe in Christ, what would you expect their day to day life to look like?

Doesn't this describe life?

Every day we wake up. Every day we are adding one more brick to the house. We will go through life with all kinds of experience designed to make us what 2nd Peter describes.

2 Peter 1:5-8 (NKJV)

5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,

6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8 For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That is what we are trying to build. We often fail, but those are the building materials we are trying to use. And all of our **life's situations** are an aid to this. All the winds and the rains and the floods, do not only not wash our lives

away, but when properly handled, make us stronger and able to bear more fruit as people.

When we wake up in the morning, how are we **viewing life**? Do we see life as a stream of those things God has ordained for us for our good? Or do we face life with the fear that life will do us harm and we will face things that we are not equipped to handle?

This morning I am standing here with a blood clot in my leg? Why? What is God's specific purpose? Well He has not revealed that yet. I don't know and I don't have to know. It is the kind of thing that happens to believers and unbelievers alike. But I know that it is in the stream of things that God has provided that He will use for my good.

The life built on the rock has its foundation in Christ. And as such it can incorporate all of the promises of God as it builds brick by brick. It reaches down to the foundation of the **Word of God** and builds **confidently**, knowing that through whatever happens, the building will stand because the author and perfecter of the faith is not us but Jesus.

Now, we are **ALL** tempted to think otherwise. The storms against us can be brutal. They seem senseless and arbitrary. Sometimes life's circumstances seem unbearable. We are tempted to fear or to give up. We are tempted to **pity ourselves** or **rage out in anger**. Sometimes the temptations of the world seem **unbearable**. It is so difficult to say yes to the good and no to the bad. And then we have the flesh, desperately wanting to put **our desires** above all the others **around us**. Feeling like there are things that we **must have or do** and we cannot imagine **being happy** if we choose another path. That too is life.

But everything that happens to us is God ordained.

I need to wake up and go to work tomorrow under circumstances that are often not desirable. That is God ordained. I often lose sight of that because my flesh does not like the stress. But, for now, it is the God ordained will of God. And I need this reminder. As long as it is there, it serves a good purpose. I need to forget this idea that **I should not have to do it** as long as I conclude that it is **what God would have me do**. Carla might be saying AMEN as I say this.

But this is what life building is like. This idea that our circumstances **should be different** is often a lie. If they **should be different** God would **make them different** or lead us to faithfully **make them different**. But to try to escape the world, the flesh and the devil in day to day life is a mistake. To keep resisting the fight is a mistake. To think we deserve better than our circumstances is a mistake that **serves no purpose**. To think that God should

treat us better is simply a failure to understand everything God has told us about life over and over again. He loves us. And He must prepare us for His presence. He must prepare us for our ultimate happiness. And sometimes there are no easy ways to do that.

So ultimately what does this life lead to? What should it look like?

Look what David tells us in Psalm 37.

**35 I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a native green tree.**

(Now that is one nice house isn't it. The wicked guy has a nice life.)

**36 Yet he passed away, and behold, he *was no more*;
Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.**

(But what happened to this nice life? It could not withstand the storms of God's judgment)

**37 Mark the blameless *man*, and observe the upright;
For the future of *that man is* peace.**

(Look at this. This is the man whose house is built on the rock. His foundation is in Christ. He is not living lawlessly. He is blameless. That means that he is not living and persisting in known sin but is living faithfully toward God. He is upright.

But this is important. Look at that next line.

For the future of that man is peace. The present might not look too peaceful. It may not look too good for a while. The wicked man's house might look a lot better. But what happens when death comes knocking? What happens when this life is coming to an end? This man can face it with peace. He can look forward to the rich reward and utter happiness that he will be welcomed into. And once ushered in, will never face anything after but peace. His house stands.)

**38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together;
The future of the wicked shall be cut off.**

Here is the end to the lawless. Here is the end to the sand builder.

**39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the Lord;
He is their strength in the time of trouble.**

**40 And the Lord shall help them and deliver them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them,
Because they trust in Him.¹**

¹ [*The New King James Version*](#) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Ps 37:35–40.

Here is why we can live without fear. It is **not** that we will **not have trouble**. It is that Christ is our **strength** in the **time of trouble**. Christ literally promises to help us through it. He will deliver us through it. He will keep the wicked from destroying us. He will often in this life, and always in the next life, save us from the wicked.

And why is that?

That their lives are ultimately built upon their trust in their God.

Because they trust in Him

There is a **because** to all this. There is a **difference** in these people. But ultimately it comes down to this. **Trust**. Trust is foundational to your life. Your **decisions** are based upon **that which you trust**. Trust is that which overcomes fear. We are told continually to Trust in the Lord as opposed to trusting in anything else. Because only the Lord has the power to save.

The Lord saves those who **trust Him to save them**.

That is why the answer to the question- why should I let you into heaven? Should be answered with **trusting** answers. Because I trust what **Jesus did to save me**. The focus is still on God and not on ourselves.

Psalms 112:7 says this:

7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings;

His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

Do you see how it works? When our ideas of **trust** work their way to the **core** of our thinking. When we are willing to **submit our feelings and thoughts** to the promises of God and the attributes of God. When we allow God's word to have **prominence** over our **compelling experience**. As we do this bit by bit and thought by thought, trust overcomes fear.

OK this brings us to the final verses in our text and of the whole sermon on the mount.

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Now as we read scripture it is always good to ask, Why would this be added? Why not just end with the end of Jesus's sermon? Why include how the crowds **responded** to be the conclusion of this narrative?

Can you remember a time like this? You **read a scripture**. Maybe you even heard it used in a sermon in a certain way. So you believed it said one thing. And then someone who was really good at opening up the scripture taught you **exactly** what it means **in context**. Do you remember how you felt? Well I think that is the feeling these folks felt except a hundred times over.

I remember thinking, like so many others have, wrong ideas about this passage.

Matthew 18:19-20 (NKJV)

19 Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

This was commonly used to teach about prayer. It is taught that if we can reach unity between ourselves about what God ought to do, and we all pray together, then God will do it.

I think it may have been Mike who I first heard preach the text **in context**. In context it is about **church discipline**, not prayer. And the two or three that are agreeing are witnesses called in to confirm that the person truly is in the state of sin.

I was shocked to find out that what I thought that scripture said all through the years was so blatantly wrong. We probably all have examples like that. Well these people Christ is preaching to have just experienced a **barrage of things** like this.

When Christ was done preaching they were **astonished**. The word for astonished in the Greek means **to expel by a blow**. To drive out or away. To strike with panic or shock. **To be struck with astonishment**.

These people have had their **minds blown** by what Christ said. It shook their world. It was like a gut punch that removes all your air. Have you ever had the wind knocked out of you? Well these people had the mental wind knocked out of them.

It is most often used in scripture of the reaction people had to Jesus's teachings. It blew their minds.

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Now notice what happens here. Do you see the change of **focus**. Up to now the focus had been on **Jesus's teaching**. And this **still** does talk about **the teaching**. But do you see the addition here? The **person** of Christ also becomes the focus.

He taught a **ONE HAVING AUTHORITY**. There is more than a difference in the **teachings** between the Scribes and Christ. There is a difference in the **teachers**. One has **authority**. The others **do not**. The **single voice** speaks truth. The **popular** voice, the **accepted** voice, the voice people have **approved of** and accepted as truth, do not.

Why should we obey the sermon on the mount? Well the right answer is not because it is superior teaching. The answer is not because it contains a lot of truth that would be helpful in day to day life. That is true, but that is not the real reason to do it. The best reason is because the **Son of God** who has been given all authority over this world **said it**. The one who bled and died for our sin and rose again on the third day- He is the author. He who owns us because He bought us with a great price. He said so.

King Jesus commands it. That is the real reason, the best reason.

Now why would Jesus have astonished these people with His teaching.

Let's examine a few things. Now maybe for us to understand the first reason a person would be astonished with Christ is to consider **who Jesus was**. I mean from a simply **human perspective**. Here is a guy that came from a Podunk town. The town was not really a bastion of over achievers. He lived among common folk. And he was a **simple carpenter**, as far as anyone knew. That probably would have been his reputation. A carpenter who may have acted a bit odd because He danced to His own drummer. Then suddenly he goes from being a full time, out of the limelight, carpenter to a **travelling preacher** and holy man. When you think of God making a **big splash** on the scene of planet earth, is **this** what you would have expected? We have the New Testament, so we **might guess** God would do something like that. But these Jewish listeners probably didn't. Their first reaction may have been astonishment because of the **unlikelihood** of Jesus acting and preaching like He did.

Then another reason they may have been astonished is **how** he taught compared to how the Pharisees taught.

I have read that when the Pharisees taught, they always **quoted** the teachers and decision makers of the past. They taught the law like you would **appeal a case in court**. You rely on precedent to make your point. So if you have three decisions that were approved of by prior Jewish religious courts, you quote them to make your case. Their authority would be based on man's precedent. They would **not quote others** in their preaching the way we might. If some author says something very clearly and very powerfully, we might quote them. I often quote people because they say what I want to say, but better. And I am not allowed to take credit for what they said. I must give it to them. But the Pharisees quoted the precedent to **establish the authority** of what they were saying. That is very different than quoting for effect and clarity. Jesus took a completely **different approach**. He simply referred to the Old Testament and told us what God **really wanted**, what it **really meant**. And He did not use the endorsement of a bunch of humans. He had no concern

what other humans thought or said. Because He knew the heart of His Father, which matched His own heart.

Jesus shared very simply and very clearly what **true spirituality** was **all about** and what it **looked like** and what **it did**. He put it in terms that anyone could understand. It may have been hard to **listen to** but it was not hard to **understand**.

So they may have been amazed by His method of teaching.

They may have been amazed by his unabashed denouncing of the teaching of the scribes and pharisees.

Keep in mind that the spiritual authorities were **just that** for these Jewish people. They controlled who could **access the temple**, essentially who could **fellowship with God**. That is probably how these people would have viewed the religious leaders. God had put them in charge to call the shots. We don't know how **skeptical** they were of their religious leadership. But the man in the street likely thought that this group of men **must be** representing God to some degree. And to **cross them** would be very costly.

They probably believed that much of what the Pharisees taught **was true**.

How would they know any better? Clearly when Jesus taught **the truth** about divorce the disciples previously believed something very different than what **Christ taught**. It probably aligned with what the **Pharisees** taught.

So all the ideas these people may have had about spirituality are being **exploded** in one sermon. Jesus took every sin, from something one might do **externally** to the **internal things** that preceded the external action. He claimed a much **higher** spirituality. He is compelling people to be different people from the **inside out**. Sin was no longer only something you might **get caught** doing. Now it is something that goes as deep as our thoughts and intentions. And we are just as guilty before God with internal sin that **leads** to an action as the **action itself**. This was not the kind of spirituality these people were used to. This, in itself, is enough to blow their minds. They had to come away from this thinking, **how in the world can we ever do this?** This is impossible. This is way more stringent, in some senses, than the pharisees teaching.

But I think the thing that would have pounded the spike in the mind blowing effects would have been how **Jesus regarded Himself**. Look at the **blatant confidence** with which He said what He said. Either He is a terrible swindler, or He is something very very special. We read these things and they do not strike us the way they would have struck **these people**. We **know** that Jesus is the Messiah and we **expect** that Jesus is speaking as the Messiah. All that

these people knew about Jesus was that this was a carpenter turned prophet preaching a sermon.

Let's look at some of the explosive statements He made.

Matthew 5:11 (NKJV)

11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

For My sake. Not for the sake of truth. Not for the sake of God. Jesus equates God's blessing to those who identify with Jesus. This is not for the message. This is for saying **I am with Jesus**. I follow Jesus. I think Jesus speaks truth. I am loyal to Jesus.

You and I could never, and should never, make a claim like **Jesus made** for ourselves. Your soul does not ride on being loyal to me. It might be a good trait to a point. But it is God we must all ultimately be loyal to. So Jesus is telling these people at this point- **I am different**. I am **more** than just a **teacher** of the law. There is something more important about me.

Matthew 5:17 (NKJV)

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

Notice again Jesus didn't say He came to **explain** about fulfillment. He said the **He Himself** will fulfill the law. That is different. None of the other teachers were teaching something so radical.

Matthew 5:21-22 (NKJV)

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Remember as we walked through these passage Jesus often referred to Old Testament concepts. But still. The way He words this is clear. Jesus is **painting himself** as for the **final authority** for how to understand the Words of God. He does not say, but scripture says. He says **I SAY**.

That in itself would have been astonishing. Here is the stand-in prophet from Galilee acting as if what He says has **absolute authority**.

Then look at one of our last texts.

Matthew 7:21-22 (NKJV)

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in

Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

Look how Jesus says, Not everyone who says to **ME** Lord Lord. Essentially it means not everyone who calls out to Christ as the Messiah on the day of judgment will be saved by Christ. No. It is ultimately **Jesus** who will have ultimate authority on that day to say **you can** or cannot enter heaven.

This would really have been **mind blowing**. Again, we miss this because we read this with the **assumption** that Jesus is the Messiah. I'll bet there were some **sharp inhales** when Christ actually made this statement. These people would have known instinctively that we are sitting in front of something **very different**. And He is either something very very **good** or very very **bad**. But He cannot be in the middle. Not with the claims He is making.

Those people who read the sermon on the mount as a **classic teaching** of a **great moral teaching** telling how the world could get along much better have missed the whole emphasis of this sermon. Jesus is telling people to live an **impossible** life. And he is telling them that only those who are the **beatitude people**, virtues that no flesh will aspire to, will **ever be able to do it**. Jesus tells us right from the start that the Christian life is impossible without a miracle. And the miracle does not start with us. It starts with God.

Now I hope we have a little astonishment **still** at the sermon on the mount. It will always hold before us a standard of holiness **whose reach exceeds its grasp**. But at the same time it is something **we must do**. Certainly not perfectly, but substantially.

Our proof of salvation relies upon it.

Let's reread Jesus's last words in the Sermon on the mount once more making it clear what His followers are like.

Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV)

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25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

And so we close this preaching series on the Sermon on the mount.