

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 2 – The True Way; The False Way

February 1, 2022

MOSES' WORDS/JESUS' WORDS

Observe (or not) a parallel between Moses' words, inspired by God the Holy Spirit, in the Torah and Jesus' words in Matthew.

Deut. 30:15-20 - *I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I announce to you today that you shall surely perish (be destroyed!); you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey (to agree w/; to yield to) His voice, and that you may cling (stick to!!!) to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*” Choosing life or death is based on loving God. Loving God means obeying Him (agreeing with Him and yielding/submitting to Him) and clinging to Him...gluing yourself to Him!

CONSIDER: To believe God is to believe ALL of what He says...including what God teaches about the Messiah!

Deut. 18:18-19 – God told Moses, *I will raise up for them* (the children of Israel) *a Prophet* (Jesus fulfills the roles of Prophet, Priest, and King) *like you from among their brethren* (this Prophet, Who is the Messiah, will be Jewish), *and will put My words in His* (Jesus') *mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. ¹⁹ And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He (Jesus) speaks in My name, I will require it of him.* The individual who does not “hear” God's words spoken through Jesus will be held accountable.

We see a true way and a false way in the OT. Jesus spoke of a true way and a false way in the NT. There is one way of salvation in Scripture!

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW/NON-BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

George Barna is the Sr. Research Fellow for the Center for Biblical Worldview at the Family Research Council and the head of the Cultural Research Center at AZ Christian University.

Barna recently reported that the US is in the midst of a “worldview crisis.” A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. Someone with a biblical worldview believes his/her primary reason for existence

is to love and serve God. A biblical worldview is based on the infallible Word of God. When you believe the Bible is entirely true, then you allow it to be the foundation of everything you say and do. There is a biblical worldview and there is a non-biblical worldview.

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What Barna has found over the years is that while most people in America own a Bible and know some of its content, most Americans have little idea how to integrate core biblical principles to form a unified and meaningful response to the challenges and opportunities of life.

In December 2021, Barna reported that ONLY 21% of all who attend evangelical churches have a biblical worldview!? Pastor Jamie during his first sermon on the book of Hebrews reported another pole which reports that 30% of self-identified evangelicals believe that Jesus was merely a great teacher!

Jesus' final words in His Sermon on the Mount contrast the true way and the false way. The true way speaks to following the will of God; the false way speaks to NOT following the will of God. Jesus proclaimed absolutes. Scripture notes two types of people: the righteous and the wicked. Scripture never speaks about the middle-of-the-road person! Have you noticed?

Rom. 12:1-2 - *I beseech (I urge) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable (rational) service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

TRUE/FALSE

Jesus' final words in His Sermon on the Mount contrast the true way and the false way. The true way speaks to following the will of God; the false way speaks to NOT following the will of God.

If someone doesn't follow the will of God, where does that leave them? "I WILL REQUIRE IT OF THEM" (Deut. 18:18-19).

John 8:24 – Jesus in speaking with the Jewish religious leadership told them, *you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*

Isa. 34:14-24 – this passage speaks of heaven and who will dwell on high with God, who will see the King *will be forgiven their iniquity.*

Jesus PROCLAIMED absolutes.

Scripture notes two types of people: the righteous and the wicked. Scripture never speaks about the middle-of-the-road person! Have you noticed?

If someone doesn't care about the consequences, have they pondered the alternative? Can they spell out the alternative – based on what authority?

JUDGE NOT

Matthew 7, which introduces the true way and the false way, begins by forbidding hypocritical judgment of others. Those desiring to judge their fellow man are warned that AS they judge so they will also be judged!

Matt. 7:1-5 - "*Judge not (condemn not), that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be*

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measured back to you. ³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Too often the one judging, who is able to see a small speck/a splinter in his brother's eye, overlooks the fact that he has a plank/a beam in his own eye. Such judgment is hypocrisy. What is hypocrisy? Hypocrisy is not conforming to our own standards but expecting others to live up to those standards!

When the Holy Spirit convicts me of sin...if I'm keeping short accounts with God, the Holy Spirit convicts me and I confess immediately! BUT if I haven't been walking closely with God and I don't confess my sin immediately, the Holy Spirit reminds me! Maybe I turn a deaf ear to the Holy Spirit's reminding me. How, then, is Scripture impacting me, changing me, transforming me? AND, at the same time that I'm not sensitive to the Holy Spirit, I'm sharing with others how they need to be living for God!? That's hypocrisy!!

Jesus told the multitude and tells us to FIRST cast out the beam from our own eye so that we can see clearly. Then we can help our brother or sister in their removal of the speck that is in their eye.

DISCERNMENT

Matt. 7:6 - *Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces...*

Would Jesus say this to discourage us from sharing the gospel? In this "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus had told the multitude and the disciples to let their lights shine before the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Jesus may have said this to call the people to discernment, and to encourage them to look for prepared hearts that are ready to receive. When we find such open hearts, we can trust that God has already been working upon them.

FOCUS ON WHAT IS HOLY

What is "holy"? It's that which is set apart. We've been talking about God's word in this entire context of Jesus' sermon. "Pearls" speak to what is treasured. The word of

God – the kingdom of God – eternal life with God are TREASURED! And, Jesus told the people to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them!

Our focus in this passage should NOT be our contempt for the dogs, for the swine. I believe that Jesus is focused on what is holy. He is speaking of having respect for the holy – God’s word! Matt. 7:6 - *Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet....* Dogs and swine, I’m suggesting, would be those who would not only be unreceptive to the gospel but would treat the word of God with insult and contempt. Because we are to share Jesus, we truly need to ask God for discernment!

I don’t think that the focus in this teaching/this passage should be contempt for the dogs, for the swine. I believe that Jesus is focused on the holy – and respect for the holy – God’s word!

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The command not to cast your pearls before swine does not mean we refrain from preaching the gospel. Jesus told the multitude and the disciples to let their lights shine before the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Might Jesus be calling us to look for prepared hearts that are ready to receive?

ASK...SEEK

Matt. 7:7-8 - *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.* It seems that continual prayer is in view. Jesus is not teaching that believers always get what they ask for. It seems that Jesus is telling the multitude listening and the disciples that the more time a believer spends in communion with God, the more he or she will know what to ask for in accordance with God’s will.

Jesus went on to say, “Seek, and you will find” (Matthew 7:7b). What is it believers ought to be seeking? It is God Himself! “Seek the Lord and His strength; seek His presence continually!” (Psalm 105:4).

KNOCK....

Jesus then said, “Knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7c). Here is ACTION that a desire produces. Be persistent in prayer._

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

It is good to pray and seek God. It appears that Jesus is speaking of having/of exercising intensity, passion, and persistence in prayer. And, we will receive, find, and have opened unto us – what God desires for us.

“THE GOLDEN RULE”

Matt. 7:12 - *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.* “Everything” means – in all things! “Do” means – produce, cause to happen! Jesus knew the human heart and its selfishness (v. 11).

In Matt. 7:12, Jesus is harkening back to Lev. 19:18 - *You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.* We are prone to take revenge!

Jesus gave the people/and us a standard by which we, as naturally selfish people, can ACTIVELY treat others the way we would like to be treated. We love ourselves. We need to love others with that same intensity of love!

DESTRUCTION/ETERNAL LIFE

In the remaining verses of this section we read of two gates, two ways, two destinations, two groups of people, two types of trees, and two types of fruit, two groups at the judgment, two kinds of buildings building on two kinds of foundations. Jesus is distinguishing between the way that leads to destruction and the way which leads to eternal life with God!

Matt. 7:13-14 - *Enter by the narrow gate* (access; entrance) *for wide* (broad; root – to shape; to form – used of a potter [creating...could that mean making your own way??]) *is the gate and broad is the way* (the traveled road) *that leads to destruction* (utter destruction; root – to abolish), *and there are many* (many, large #) *who go in by it.* ¹⁴ *Because narrow is the gate and difficult* (confined, restricting) *is the way which leads to life, and there are few* (little, small, few) *who find it.*

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We're told that there will be few/comparatively a small number, who enter the gate that leads to life. Context: the kingdom of heaven. Many have tried to soften Jesus' words. These are Jesus' words...His truth! The way is narrow and only One Savior is offered to the world and His is the only way!

FALSE PROPHETS

In Matt. 7:15 – *Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.* Jesus has been laying out the distinction between what the Jewish religious leadership has been teaching and what He Who is offering Himself as the King of the kingdom of heaven/God has been teaching. I am suggesting that Jesus is speaking of the Pharisees and the scribes as the false prophets! Might listening to the false teachers prompt many to enter the broad gate? We need to be careful to whom we are listening! We need to be Bereans! Bible speakers and teachers need to be tested against the truths of the word of God.

KNOW THEM BY THEIR FRUITS

¹⁶ *You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?* ¹⁷ *Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.* ¹⁸ *A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.* ¹⁹ *Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.* ²⁰ *Therefore by their fruits you will know them.* Jesus spoke of the way to identify false teachers. Jesus gave the illustration of grape vines and fig trees. When we see grape vines, we expect them to produce grapes; and, we expect fig trees to produce figs. A farmer who notices one of his fruit trees not bearing any fruit will cut it down. It is useless.

DEPART FROM ME

Matt. 7:21-23 - "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?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' About whom has Jesus been speaking? The religious leadership of the day who were living out a mere external compliance...clinging to their self-righteousness. They were doing good works that were hollow and that would lead to eternal separation from God!!!

Matt. 23:15 - Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Lip profession without the right heart attitude will hear from Jesus, *I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!*

FOUNDED ON THE ROCK V. SAND FOUNDATION

Matt. 7:24-27 - 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

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great was its fall. The truth that Jesus presented necessitates a decision based on the truth of His word and His Person.

AUTHORITY!

Matt. 7:28-29 - 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.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS V. THE PHARISEES' RIGHTEOUSNESS

In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, I believe He invited this great multitude that gathered to hear Him and to forsake the teachings of the Pharisees. Jesus answered the question of how good one has to be to enter the kingdom. One must be as good as God!

Lev. 19:1-2 - And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² 'Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.'

The only righteousness by which sinners may be justified/declared righteous is the perfect righteousness of God that is imputed to those who place their trust in Him and receive His forgiveness of sin through Jesus (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:5).

Jesus' teaching was so different from anything the multitudes had ever heard that they were "amazed at His teaching" (Matt. 7:28). They were amazed at the content of His words and also at His authority. Jesus identified with mankind. He rejoiced with His people in their joys, and He wept with them in their sorrows.

QUESTIONS

What was new to you in this chapter?

What are your observations? What are your questions?

How do you see Jesus? Has understanding Who Jesus is in Matthew 7 & 8 changed your thinking? Changed you? How?

What are some Biblical worldviews?

How do you understand hypocrisy?

Do you believe there is a true way and a false way? How would you explain this to someone?

How are you understanding Matt. 7:21-23?

Are Jesus' words giving you an urgency? How?

Write down those friends, family members, acquaintances with whom you desire to share the message of the narrow gate and the wide gate.

Could you share Deut. 18:18-19 and Jn. 8:24 with someone who needs to hear these verses?

Would you appreciate shorter table time? Is 30 minutes sufficient?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 2's handout with the Bible references.

Jot down your observations and ask questions about what you're reading.

Share what God is teaching you with at least one person.

Read Week 3's handout when you receive it.