

I. The King is revealed (1-3)
II. The Kingdom is revealed (4-10)

A. In Principle (4-7)

1. The Messiah declares his faith. (4:1-11)
2. The Messiah demonstrates his faith. (4:12-25)
3. The Messiah defines the true nature of Kingdom life: The sermon on the Mount (5-7)
 - a. The character of Kingdom people (5:1-12)
 - b. The calling of Kingdom people (5:13-16)
 - c. The conduct of Kingdom people (5:17-7:27)
 1. With respect to true and false sanctification (5:17-6:18)
 2. With respect to true and false security (6:19-7:12)
 - a. “you can’t serve two masters” (6:19-24)
 - b. “your Father knows your needs” (6:25-32)
 - c. “seek first the Kingdom of God” (6:33-34)

Matthew 7

Chapter 7 continues to delineate the conduct that is expected of those who are a part of God’s Kingdom. The way we approach personal needs and problems is a vital part of our witness as is the way we identify the pitfalls that threaten to distract us from the way of God.

d. “judge self first” (7:1-6)

How am I to respond to the blind spots in others and to my own areas of weakness?

1. The critic must submit to his own laws (7:1-2)

¹ “Do not judge lest you be judged. ² For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.

- Jesus is not promoting radical tolerance here as some suggest because he and his disciples were often expected to pass judgment. I Cor.5:12, 6:1-5.
- He is addressing the Pharisee’s tendency to judge the motives of others in going beyond the letter of the Law. I Cor.4:5-6
- Note Jesus words in **Jn.7:24** “Do not judge according to appearances, but judge with righteous judgment.”

2. The critic must start with his own logs (7:3-5)

3 And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

- Hypocrisy is a repeated theme in chapters 6-7. The Pharisees tended to discern the smallest problem in others while ignoring the massive pride and foolishness in themselves.
- The challenge of "blind spots" in our lives is the focus. It is too easy to see the blind spots in another than to be realistic about our own moral "soft spots" and failures.
- The instruction is 1) deal with your own stuff before 2) dealing with another's problem.
- Note that Jesus is not attacking the idea of a normative moral standard of right and wrong. Nor is He attacking the ability or need for discerning good and evil. He is attacking judgment without discernment of 1) one's own soul, 2) the proper authority or responsibility to judge others (family, church, government), and 3) the proper motive for doing so (speaking truth in love at the right time).

3. The critic must be sensitive to his own limits (7:6)

6 Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

- The first test of proper judgment is knowing what, when, and who to judge.
- Proverbs 9:8 "Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you."

e. "ask, seek, knock" (7:7-12)

7 Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

- In contrast to the humility with which we view others, we are to be assertive and bold in bringing our needs to God.
- Assertiveness before God, as our source, is not presumptuous but commanded. Note: Jesus does not promise us "loaves" or "fish" but He does promise us "good things." We will get what we need as we ask, seek, and knock. There may be a link between this paragraph and what

has gone before (vs.1-6) in that both deal with the need for wisdom in discerning.

- Verse 12 is a summary of vs.1-11 where we are to judge as we would expect to be judged, and be given to as we would give to our children.

5. With respect to false scenarios (7:13-27)

a. Paths. (7:13-14)

13 Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. 14 For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

- The Jewish disciples would have expected the Messianic age to be a wide gate that all would see and pass through. It is shocking to hear Jesus talk about a remnant or narrow gate that would exclude many.
- We must not expect the message of the Kingdom to be popular with all people.

b. Prophets (7:15-23)

15 Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn {bushes,} nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit; but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits. 21 Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; *depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*'

- Getting the words right is one thing but don't be fooled by thinking that it is sufficient. Words can easily be used to abuse and exploit others.
- False claims by people with respect to their relationship to God are not uncommon. They are identified in part by their lack of integrity. They look good on the outside but are consumers (not caretakers) of the people. It's not what they say but what they do that gives them authority. The kind of environment that the religious leaders of Jesus day created did not look like the Kingdom that Jesus was proclaiming.
- Verse 21 says nothing about the validity of the claims made of Godly ministry by the religious leaders. It only notes that there are those who "claim" to have done great things in the name of Jesus.
- Jesus makes it very clear that our dramatic accomplishments do not assure a relationship with Him.

c. Platforms (7:24-27)

24 Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and {yet} it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand. 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and it fell, and great was its fall. 28 The result was that when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; 29 for He was teaching them as {one} having authority, and not as their scribes.”

- Wisdom should be our goal. The person who takes Jesus’ teaching to heart will be stable and weather the storms of reality well but the person who does not will suffer greatly.
- The disciples could see that Jesus’ life was consistent with his teaching and that his teaching struck at the heart of reality. It rang true and was welcomed.

Insights and Lessons from this chapter

- Are we faithful to conduct an honest audit of our own hearts? If we were another person who knew us well, what kind of critique would we make of our lives?
- In what ways have we been active in pursuing God today? What might we do to indicate that we are “asking, seeking, knocking”?
- Where do we need to be most sensitive to being led astray - false paths, prophets, or platforms? What are we doing to protect ourselves?