

Who Do You Say That I Am?
Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**
21- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 1
Introduction to the “*Sermon on the Mount*”

Church July 17, 2022

Matthew 5:1&2a&7:28&29

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

2 He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

7:28 When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching;

29 for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Here, in the beginning of Chapter 5 and going all the way down to the End of Chapter 7- is the first Section of Teaching in the Gospel of **Matthew**. You may remember that I told you that the former tax collector designed this Book to resemble the first five Books of Moses- in order to capture the Attention of the Jewish people, to whom Matthew originally wrote this Gospel.

So, Matthew wants his Jewish audience to look at Jesus as being several things:

- The long-awaited Messiah
- Immanuel (God with us)
- The 2nd and final Adam

... as well as the 2nd and final Moses.

And we have just completed the Section of this Book that could be titled, the “*Beginning*”- and we are now entering into the first Teaching Section of this Gospel Record.

So, in this Section that covers Chapters 5-7- we will see that Jesus announces the arrival of a *new* Kingdom- that He calls, the “*Kingdom of*

Heaven". And Matthew also talks about a *new* kind of people, who will inhabit this new Kingdom- a *new* people of God- that *become* the people of God- NOT through Birthright; nor through Nationality or Ethnicity; and NOT through being Circumcised. People become the new Citizens of this new Kingdom- by Believing! By Faith alone! And that means that the Kingdom of Heaven will contain Gentiles as well as Jews.

So, Matthew wants the Jews, who read this Record, to understand that Jesus came to earth in order that He might:

1. Confront Evil
2. Restore God's Reign in the Earth
3. Establish a new Kingdom
4. Create a "new" people of God- the "saved"

Now, over the Centuries, as people have read the Teaching that Jesus gave here in Chapters 5-7- it has become known as the "*Sermon on the Mount*". And that title comes from verse 1 that says:

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

Matthew wrote, "**When Jesus saw the crowds...**" And that phrase comes from **Matthew 4:25** that says,

Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

... and we discovered last time that because Jesus was performing amazing and breathtaking Miracles of physical Healing on all sorts of people, who came to Him- who were sick with all sorts of ailments- Matthew wrote that there were "**Large crowds**" of thousands; perhaps *tens* of thousands; or even *hundreds* of thousands of people- all crying His Name; all begging Him to heal their child; or their parent; or their friends; or even themselves.

So, the scene here is one of great Desperation; along with great Chaos; accompanied by great Noise. Hundreds, maybe thousands of weeping mothers- holding their dying children- praying that God would touch the heart of this "Prophet"; or this "Man" (they really didn't understand who or what He is.) All they know is that God uses Jesus to heal people. And so, as these large crowds gather around Him- they pray that Jesus might perform just one more Miracle; just one more Healing for them. In addition, there were hundreds or maybe even

thousands of frantic fathers- pushing their way through the sea of people to get closer to Jesus. And you also had neighbors and friends- hoping beyond Hope that this “Miracle Worker” would be able to cast the devil out of their friends or family members.

But there is no particular Order to any of this- no calm and orderly lines of people; no distinction between the bad cases and the really, really, really bad cases. Everybody is all mixed together in the “Large crowds” that Matthew wrote about. And Jesus isn’t keeping “Office hours” here either. No 9-5 and then everybody goes home. Once the news got out that over in Galilee there was a Man, Who had the Power to heal every Sickness; and every Disease; and to cast out demons from those oppressed by the devil- the people came. And as the News spread- *more* people came. And as more people were healed and delivered- even *more* people came. And they came day and night and they never left.

But nobody brought any food with them; no sleeping blankets or cots. Nobody planned anything here- because this had never happened to any of them before and so, nobody knew what to do or what to expect. Also, for most of them- this was the first Move of God’s Spirit in over 400 years- so, there was no way to know what to plan for in advance- no way to organize this; and no way to catalogue the people. There was just this endless steady stream of people- walking; some riding donkeys; some bringing people on stretchers or beds or cots.

So, there is literally no end of the people. And there is no way to determine which ones need Jesus the most- because they ALL need Him. And the Noise- there is no End to the crying; and the pleading; and the asking; and the praying. And they don’t stop when the sun goes down- but all during the night- there is the unending Sound of desperate people- weeping and pleading with God to help them. And so, Matthew wrote,

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them

... which is why they call it the “*Sermon on the Mount*”. Jesus literally sat down on the side of a mountain so He could be elevated- so this sea of people could see Him... and Jesus began to teach them.

Now most of these people had experienced somebody teaching them before. But when Jesus finished this particular Teaching at the End of Chapter 7- Matthew wrote:

When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

So, to them- this Teaching was different; it was amazing; and unique. Nobody taught like Jesus and Matthew gives us insight into *why* when he wrote,

... the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for [because] He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

... so, even though the Scribes visibly held the formal and official Position- the people knew that they had NO Divine Authority. They wore the right robes- but they were NOT endued with Power from on High. The Scribes and Pharisees all stood in the correct Place- but they had no Divine Credibility. And the people knew it.

But something was unique about Jesus. For example, when Jesus discussed what the Ten Commandments said- it was as though He had actually written them 1,450 years earlier. And when Jesus brought out what the Ten Commandments actually *meant* all along- the people understood that Jesus had fulfilled them.

Now the Sermon on the Mount can be read in about 10-15 Minutes. And it is simply not feasible for people to travel long distances to hear a ten- minute Sermon. So, that tells us that Matthew's Account of this Sermon in Chapters 5-7 is a probably "summary" of what Jesus taught. So, what we see in this Account are the important Elements or Attributes of what the Kingdom of Heaven looks like. And we also see what the Characteristics are of the people, who will inhabit this glorious Kingdom.

And since this Sermon contains the important elements of the Kingdom of Heaven and who qualifies to inhabit it- it is also very probable that Jesus preached the Elements of this Sermon many, many times during His 3-1/2 year Ministry. And sometimes He summarized them in a shorter version while at other times- Jesus preached much longer.

For example, on one Occasion illustrated in **Matthew 15:32**- Jesus' Teaching turned into a three-day Conference and that is probably what actually happened in the Event described here in **Matthew 5-7**. The Summary that we read here in these three Chapters may very well have been spread over several days.

Now the former tax collector gives us this Sermon as being an actual teaching Session on an actual Occasion- the same way that Dr. Luke did in his parallel version. But this is also, at the same time, a Sample of the kind of Teaching Jesus was presenting throughout Galilee at this stage of His Ministry. So, the Sermon on the Mount is the first of six similar Collections of Teaching in the Gospel that we will see in Chapters 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 23, and 24-25.

Now one of the great Discussions about this Sermon centers around whether it is for Christians today. The Theme or Subject of the entire Sermon on the Mount

is the Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven and the kind of Life required of those who desire to become a part of it. And that is obvious because of the way Jesus repeated the phrase, the “Kingdom of Heaven” and from the way that phrase is used.

Reference to the “*Kingdom of Heaven*” is found in **Matthew 5:3** in the first of what we now call, the “*Beatitudes*”, when Jesus said:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

... as well as the *ending* of them in **Matthew 5:10**

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

... and it is given in **Matthew 5:20** as the Reason Why the Old Testament Law is in the Kingdom:

For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

In **Matthew 6:10**- we are also *commanded* to regularly ask God to bring the Kingdom of Heaven into its fullness in our own hearts; and on the earth at the beginning of what we call, the “*Lord’s Prayer*”

Your Kingdom Come ...

... and in **Matthew 7:21** at the Sermon’s End- we find the same phrase:

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 will enter.

... and we need to remember that the Sermon on the Mount comes on the heels of Matthew’s statement about Jesus preaching the “**Gospel of the Kingdom**” throughout Galilee in **Matthew 4:23-25**, which clearly means that Jesus was teaching about the Kingdom all the time.

But here is where Honesty MUST become an Issue. There are many within the modern Church, who act very “matter- of- factly” about this Sermon- as though them fulfilling it is really just a piece of cake. Yet the Reality is that the American Church, as a whole, is much further AWAY from fulfilling this Sermon than at any Time since Jesus preached it. So, why the disconnect? Listen to how Jesus summarizes the entire Sermon in **Matthew 5:48**

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Really? Perfect? Now maybe what Jesus was talking here about was NOT sinless Perfection- but simply a Call for believers to obey **Matthew 5:38-47** that says,

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.'

39 "But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

40 "If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

41 "Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

42 "Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.'

44 "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

47 "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?

... but even if that is true- how is that working out for everyone?

I mean every time this Passage is read- most of what I hear is all the reasons why we really don't have to live like this.

The Reality is that the Standards Jesus upholds in this Sermon are as high as the stars. It is hard to find a *higher* Standard anywhere else in the entire Bible. And the Morality Jesus sets up in this Sermon is so difficult for people to actually obey- that numerous attempts have been made by many throughout the Centuries to explain why this Standard of Behavior is not to be taken seriously as a way of living demanded of God's people by Jesus. Here are three of the most important.

1. Dispensationalism. According to this popular approach, the Sermon on the Mount is seen as merely a Statement of the Principles on which the coming "*Messianic Kingdom*" will be established when Jesus returns. But this view goes

on to teach that if the Jews would have repented of their Sins and NOT said that Jesus was a tool of satan- then the Lord would have established this kind of Righteousness on the earth back then.

But Jesus was rejected by the very people, who should have embraced Him the most. And as a result of the Jew's categoric Condemnation of Jesus- this View says that the Kingdom of Heaven was "postponed." The Fundamentalist Pastor of the First Baptist Church of New York City wrote this in the late 1800's,

"This sermon . . . cannot be taken in its plain import and be applied to Christians universally. . . . It has been tried in spots . . . but it has always been like planting a beautiful flower in stony ground or in a dry and withering atmosphere."

But one of the biggest Problems I have with any View about any Subject by anybody is when they start talking about God "trying" to do something but couldn't because of some reason. We need to always understand, dear friends, that God NEVER "tries" to do anything. God simply does. And what He desires- ALWAYS comes to pass- *exactly* as He decreed it. So, God is NEVER defeated by anything! God is absolutely Sovereign over everything- all the time. And that means that in every Situation and in every Circumstance- God's Will *triumphs* over everything else. And that includes the sinful Decisions and Choices of evil people as well as all that satan desires. So, it is God, Who ALWAYS reigns supreme- NOT Man and NOT satan.

But, once again, the "*Scofield Reference Bible*" proved to be more of a Problem than a Help because in one of the *earliest* versions, the footnotes concerning the Sermon on the Mount said in part,

"The Sermon on the Mount in its primary application gives neither the privilege nor the duty of the church."

But it is precisely a World such as ours, with its manifold Evil and Injustice that the Sermon has in mind- rather than some "*Millennial Kingdom*" where only Righteousness will exist. And this is so blatantly obvious that some later Dispensationalists have *modified* their earlier Teaching by speaking of the Sermon's "*timeless Ethics*". But even at that- most Dispensationalists today, who will give praise to the Sermon's Value- will, nevertheless, continue to drive a wedge between it and authentic Christianity. But that only serves to illustrate Dispensationalism's flaws rather than any flaw concerning the Sermon on the Mount.

2. Lutheran Orthodoxy. Lutherans are very serious and sober about the *Sermon on the Mount*- like they are about the entirety of Scripture. But in keeping with their focus on “*Law and Gospel*”, most modern Lutherans view the Sermon as really nothing more than an exposition of the Old Testament Law designed to drive men and women to Grace. Many will even teach that the Sermon on the Mount is actually nothing more than a *re-stating* of the Ten Commandments.

Yet those, who believe that are hard-pressed to explain why there is no mention at all anywhere in the Sermon about the Sabbath- which is clearly the 4th Commandment.

Now it is true that the Old Testament Law was designed by God to drive us to His Grace, precisely because none of us can please God by achieving the Law’s Standards. But that is not all that the “*Sermon on the Mount*” is about. The Sermon absolutely does point us to God’s Grace- but it also tells how we are to live as God’s new people in Christ’s new Kingdom.

Lutherans consider the “Righteousness” that is referred to in the Sermon as being nothing but “Christ’s imputed Righteousness”. But that approach is faulty because what Jesus taught in several verses within the Sermon is clearly a literal, actual, personal, intrinsic Righteousness that must characterize the Lives of all who are truly a citizen of the new Kingdom. For example, when we read verses like

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

... and ...

Matthew 5:10

Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

... and ...

Matthew 6:1

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

... and ...

Matthew 6:33

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Jesus was clearly NOT referring to the *imputed* Righteousness of Jesus Christ that saves us in these parts of the Sermon on the Mount- but to the personal, intrinsic Righteousness of the individual that is developed AFTER a person is saved through the Process of Sanctification.

So, as we correctly emphasize the spotless Righteousness of Jesus that justifies us- that is imputed to us by the Agency of Faith alone- we must not forget that the Best; and the Highest; and the Decisive Goal of Salvation is NOT to simply miss Hell- but to have both the Power and Desire to live in Humble and Joyful Obedience to all the Jesus taught. And as we obey- we are *developing* our own, personal, intrinsic Righteousness. And that is why the Apostle Paul said this in **Romans 10:10a**:

for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness ...

So, while it is true that *wrong* Belief ALWAYS leads to *wrong* Behavior- it is also true that *correct* Belief ALWAYS leads to *correct* Behavior. And correct Behavior ALWAYS brings about- biblical Righteousness!

3. The Social Gospel. At the other Extreme from these two inadequate Approaches to the “*Sermon on the Mount*” is the “*Social Gospel Movement*”, which began as a *perversion* of the biblical Gospel, and flourished at the beginning of the 20th Century. Leaders like Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch taught that the “*Sermon on the Mount*” was a type of “*Road Map to Social Progress.*” These men attacked the true, biblical Gospel by believing and teaching that the Kingdom of Heaven could be realized if only people would only take Christ’s ethical Teaching seriously.

And, of course, one of the major Casualties of this wayward View was the *genuine* Gospel that teaches that Salvation comes ONLY through individual Repentance and Belief- NOT through making our fallen and sinful Society into a more kind and generous one.

The “*Social Gospel*” flourished for several years; and can still be found in some quarters of Presbyterianism. But the popularity of the Social Gospel was destroyed by two World Wars; repeated economic Recessions; mass Genocides all over the world; and many types of social and economic Oppression that thrived under Fascism and Communism. And as those Evils rose up and temporarily flourished in the early parts of the 20th Century- people quickly dropped the “*Optimistic Eschatology*” of

the “*Social Gospel*” and it was labeled as “*Naïve*”.

But it wasn't Naïve- it was unbiblical. The “*Social Gospel*” attempted to impose Jesus' Ethics on people, who weren't saved and who had never experienced the Miracle of the New Birth. So, it was trying to put a square peg in a round hole. It was doomed to fail. And it *should* have failed. And we should pray that it never rises again.

So, the best way to View the “*Sermon on the Mount*” is by first looking at the Nature of the new Kingdom that Jesus has come to bring on to the earth. And as we see this new Kingdom- we will be driven to utter Despair because of the Sin we see in ourselves- that no amount of human effort can fix.

We can't enter into this new Kingdom unless we are the new people of God. But our Sin separates us from God and His new Kingdom. And that Separation brings us into total Despair- because we simply CANNOT cease from Sin. And that Despair will, in turn cause us to cry out to Jesus for Forgiveness; and a new heart; and a new mind; and new spiritual Life. And once we experience the Miracle of the New Birth- we will then pursue the kind of Life that Jesus said will allow us to occupy this new Kingdom.

So, the Sermon on the Mount teaches about a radical new people- who live in Christ's new Kingdom. And unworthy rebels become God's new people- NOT through natural Birth; nor through Nationality; nor through Ethnicity; nor through Circumcision. No, a people, who were NOT a people- become God's new people through Belief! And once they believe and are saved- this new people will then strive, through the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, to behave the way Jesus teaches here in this Sermon.

So, the “Way of Life” or the “Behavior” that is taught here in this Sermon is NOT the path for people to follow that allows them entrance into Christ's new Kingdom. No, this “Way of Life” is the “result” or the “fruit” of already being a part of this new Kingdom through the Miracle of the New Birth!

So, how should we approach the “*Sermon on the Mount*”? We should begin this mini-series by dividing the 3-Chapter Sermon into relevant parts- always striving to find out what these verses meant to Matthew as he was writing them down- some 2,000 years ago- but NOT by what these verses may mean to us today. And sometimes that effort is very easy. But at other times- it is very hard.

So, please pray for me as we go through these three Chapters. Because I'm not interested in fitting in with a particular theological Camp. I'm interested in fitting in with God and His new Kingdom and in what God the Holy Spirit moved on Matthew to write down. Because the words he used; and the terminology; and clauses; and phrases Matthew wrote down after hearing Jesus speak them- mean something very specific. And it is discovering what Matthew meant as he wrote

those words down- that will unlock the Beauty and the Power and the Value of this Sermon to us.

As we go through the Bible- we see very common and ordinary men- who were called to a very *uncommon* Ministry. And we see God using average, normal, every-day people to bring God's Truth in writing to us. And that means that God took very common and ordinary nouns; and pronouns; and verbs; and adjectives; and adverbs; and prepositional phrases and He placed on them and the people He used- an Anointing; an Unction; an Inspiration to convey the Word and the Will of Almighty God to all of Mankind. And through a series of Miracles and by Acts of Providence this Word has been preserved for us who now live in the 21st Century- so that we may first learn; and then believe; and then teach; and then obey; and then defend; and then love the very SAME DIVINE TRUTH that was given by the Apostles as they were used to establish Christianity on the earth. Here is how the half-brother of Jesus put it in **Jude 3**

Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints.

So, we are now on a "journey" together to "*contend earnestly*" for the "*once for all handed down to the saints*" Faith- the *Christian* Faith; the *Christian Religion*; biblical Christianity; Divine Truth- the Word of the living God- of which the "*Sermon on the Mount*" is a huge part.

So, next week, Lord willing, we will begin to read and exposit 107 Inspired; Inerrant; and Infallible verses that make up what we call, the "*Sermon on the Mount*"- which was preached by the Lord Christ- that has the distinction of being the greatest Sermon ever given by anyone in the History of the world.

So, right off jump street- I am doomed to fail in the sense that *whatever* I say- it will be lacking. And *however much* Truth we will all learn over the next several weeks- we *should* have learned MORE. And regardless of how glorious Jesus will look to us after we finish- He *should* have looked even MORE glorious.

But I make a Covenant with you this morning that I will do my level best to get this right. I will cry out to God; and read; and study; and diagram the sentences; and conjugate the verbs; and read and study and pray again. And so, I ask for your Prayers and your Patience as we go through this Sermon together.

And I think that because of that Effort and because God is Kind and Good and Merciful- we will get a lot of this Sermon right. And we will see a whole lot, that perhaps we have never seen before. And we will all grow closer to Jesus as a result of having gone through this Sermon together.

And even though after spending 5 decades of my life in Church; and even though I have read and studied and preached and listened to others preach the Sermon on the Mount many times before- I will try to come to each verse as fresh as I can.

But what I really don't want is for us to go through this Sermon and then act as though we have never even heard of it. Since this is the greatest Sermon ever preached- we should all be changed from hearing it and learning what it really means. So, I pray that we will begin to incorporate the meaning of this Sermon into our lives from his day forward. And here is one way we will know we have benefitted from going through this Sermon: Our Prayers will change.

Friends, I've been in the Church for 51 years and I have been present in literally thousands of Prayer Meetings. Yet it is hard to remember even a single Prayer Request from a single person about a single Aspect pertaining to the "Sermon on the Mount". And that screams out that one of two things is true:

1. We have all already reached full Obedience to this Sermon
2. We are NOT taking this Sermon seriously

There are a few things I have picked up during my "*Journey with Jesus.*" And one of them is: *We talk about what is important to us. We illustrate the Value of something by the amount of time we talk about it.* Lots of talk- lots of Value. Little talk- little Value. No talk- no Value.

But then as Believers- we also pray about what is important to us. So, lots of Prayer and Prayer Requests- lots of Value. Little Prayer and little Prayer Requests- little Value. No Prayer and no Prayer Requests- NO Value. And the lack of Prayer Requests and time spent Praying about actually obeying this Sermon in the modern church is astounding.

But when we read things like **Matthew 6:25-34** that says,

25 "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

26 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

27 "And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"

28 "And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

29 yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

30 "But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!

31 "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'

32 "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

34 "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

... what goes through our minds? Are we even convicted of not obeying this part of the greatest Sermon ever preached- or do we shrug our shoulders and hope we can get out of church in time for the kickoff? I pray that we all will take this Sermon more seriously from now on.

Or when we read Passages like this one from **Matthew 7:3-5:**

3 "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.

... do we then ask God to help us obey this- or do we simply say to ourselves, "*Well, I'm just not that Good yet*" and move on to the next Chapter?

What about what Jesus said in **Matthew 7:21-23:**

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 will enter.

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.'

Does this Passage cause us to tremble before the Lord- or do we push it from our mind thinking that it simply can't apply to us because we are saved? And what about what Jesus said in **Matthew 7:24-27:**

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

25 "And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.

26 "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

27 "The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell — and great was its fall."

Does this part of the greatest Sermon ever preached cause us to examine what our own Foundation is- or do we walk away from this- thinking that it couldn't possibly apply to us?

Dear friends, we are about to enter the "*Point of no Return*" in our Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**. Because once we begin to fully understand what Jesus was saying in these verses- we will never be able to claim Ignorance again. Frankly, I want to be held accountable to what Jesus preached here. And I believe it is time for the Members of the Covenant of Peace Church to rise up in our most holy Faith and lay claim to the Promises as well as the Responsibilities that we can read clearly from the pages of sacred Writ.

So, let us enter into this season together of hearing and then doing what Jesus preached in the "*Sermon on the Mount*".

Amen. Let's pray.

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