

“Kingdom Come”

Sermon on the Mount Series: Fifteenth Lesson, Matthew 7.21-29

Introduction

- A sobering passage, but one thread through with hope - we can be secure in the storm.

1. What it means to build on the sand

- In this point we are defining what it means to think we are known by Jesus, or to claim such a relationship, but in fact to not know Jesus, or to be known by him.
- The context of ‘sand..rock’ is that both sets of people hear God’s word and, most likely, claim to be putting it into practice (like the miracle workers of vv21-23). One set are doing so authentically, while the others are merely picking and choosing the ones to practice.
- The Sermon on the Mount emphasises the heart consistently. A truly heartfelt devotion to Jesus results in wholehearted obedience to his commands, but that obedience is not the *substance* of the relationship.

A. Charismatic activity

- Prophesying - perhaps this could, today, include preaching/teaching God’s Word.
- Driving out demons / Miracles - Jesus is welcoming of anyone on his ‘side’ (Mark 9.39-41), but anyone claiming a relationship with him must do so with respect. For a serious and humorous example of what happens when we try to use the power of Jesus disrespectfully (without true faith in him) see what happened to the seven sons of Sceva in Acts 19.11-20!

B. Claims to be a disciple

- Calling him “Lord’ (kyrios - sometimes just ‘sir’ etc, but in Matthew more a term denoting authority). These are people claiming authentic discipleship.
- It could be that they know other commands they should be following but are not doing so - a little like the rich ruler after he had met Jesus (Matt 19.16-30).
- It could also be that they are wanting discipleship on their terms - like the men in Matt 8.18-22
- Another possibility is that they assume if they are practising these command, which they presumably consider to be most important since those are the ones they brandish at Jesus as evidence of their relationship with him, they are ‘safe’ with Jesus.
- Key issue - “only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7,21 NIV11)

2. What it means to build on the rock

- In this point we are defining what it means to be known by Jesus and to know him.
- “But we often miss what his first hearers would probably have heard behind the dramatic picture-language. Not far away from where he sat on that hillside, just a hundred miles or so away in Jerusalem, Herod’s men were continuing to rebuild the Temple. They spoke of it as God’s House, and declared that it was built upon the rock, proof against wind and weather. In the last great sermon in Matthew’s gospel, Jesus warns that the Temple itself will come crashing down, because Israel as a whole had failed to respond to his message. Halfway through the gospel, in another dramatic moment, he promises that

Peter's confession of faith will form the rock on which something very different will be built — the community that believes in him, Jesus, as Messiah."¹

A. Defining what it means to hear

- Hearing is not merely listening (James 1.22-25; 2.14-20, 1 John 2.4)
- We often have the radio, music, a podcast etc. on, but are not listening to it
- We've all experienced having conversations with people where they ask us a question and we're flummoxed because we realised at that moment we've not been listening!
- Hearing is active - *wanting* to learn.
- Goes back to the Beatitudes - wanting to be different people, hungry and thirsty for righteousness.
- Listening to Jesus with hungry ears.
- What does it look like to 'hear' in that way.....?

B. Defining what it means to practice the words of Jesus

- Active building, not passive
- Visiting B&Q will not a patio build (whether online or in person!)
- Know what we're building - a more Christlike life for his glory, our joy and the advancement of the kingdom
- Know what we're building on - Christ as the rock
- What does it look like to 'build' in this way.....?
- Pray for practise, not just understanding. Is there anything you are finding hard to understand at the moment? Practice a beatitude today.
- "The point is that the wise man (a repeated term in Matthew; cf. Matt 10:16; 24:45; 25:2, 4, 8-9) builds to withstand anything."²

3. How these truths affect the way we live

- Storms come
- Some are random
- Some are caused by our own folly
- Heavy rain can send flash floods surging down the normally dry wadis with devastating effect.
- Question is - are we ready?

A. The foolish building to avoid

- This means practically....

B. The wise building to practice

- This means practically....

Conclusion

- Imagine a home, church, society living the beatitudes and the teachings of the sermon on the mount! Let's spread the word...

¹ Wright, N. T. Matthew for Everyone Part 1 Chapters 1–15. 1. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.2. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.

² Carson, D. A. Matthew. EBC 8. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas.