

FOR PEOPLE WHO ENTER

Matthew 7:7-25

Rejection of their traditions 5:21-48

They miss the heart of the matter!

“✓ing the □” isn’t enough!

God wants a changed heart.

Rejection of their practice 6-7:6

6 areas related to practice of religious leaders:

1st 3 contain 1 message:

Their practice is a fake show!

Almsgiving 6:1-4

Prayer 5-15

Fasting 16-18

Next 2 are about **MONEY** =>

Concerning wealth 6:19-24

Jesus warns listeners about danger of imitating leaders’ attitudes about money.

Their goal: accumulate material wealth

=> store up treasure on earth.

Jesus’ corrective:

Material goods are taken by thieves, moths or rust

Material treasure is temporary.

Better to focus on permanent treasure!

What we love will enslave us!

Are we enslaved by *heavenly* treasure, or *earthly* treasure?

Their focus: physical things–esp. money

Jesus’ corrective:

Rather than focus on *material* things, focus on God.

Trust Him to provide what we need tomorrow

=> Concerning faith 6:25-34

Don’t Be Anxious

God’s people should pursue His kingdom;

He can provide everything else we need for today & tomorrow.

If we focus on following Him,

He provides everything we need.

CONCERNING JUDGING OTHERS 7:1-6

7:1-2 Judge not, that you be not judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, & with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

Religious leaders are experts at judging others.

[“Do not judge!” = “Stop judging!”]

Refers to Pharisees’ practice of setting selves up as judges & measuring others by themselves.

They aren’t nearly as good a standard as they think they are!

They'd better pay attention to *their* shortcomings!

He just pointed out areas where they come short of God's desire, because their heart isn't right.

Yet, they criticize "common" people for not measuring up to *their* standards.

He *doesn't* say what people use it to say:

Not that we should never make judgments.

Not that we shouldn't distinguish between good & evil

Not that we shouldn't discern between truth & error.

He warns about **danger of condemning others for not measuring up to *our* standards.**

Judgment of others, without mercy, will be turned back on us.

People who want to be treated with mercy must treat others with mercy.

INSTRUCTION FOR PEOPLE WHO ENTER

-for accepted people 7:7-25

After evaluating weakness of leaders, which shows why scribes & Pharisees aren't good enough, Jesus turns to conduct of those who *will* enter the kingdom.

These instructions are not *prerequisites* by which we *earn* entrance into the kingdom.

Like Beatitudes, they focus on kind of people who enter kingdom.

***Basis of entrance is God's gift,
received by faith.***

Faith produces these qualities in people who truly believe.

They are valid to identify who belongs to God's kingdom.

Without transformation produced by God's Spirit, no one ever lives such a life.

Entrance to people who *seek* 7-11

"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 the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ⁹Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone?*

¹⁰*Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

Pres. tense inv. indicates we should *keep* asking.

Characteristic of those who enter: they persistently **seek** good things

[=> Holy Spirit] from Him.

No one ever seeks Him unless God seeks and draws *them*!

Entrance to people who serve others 12 *"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."*

People who enter the kingdom have learned what it means to *"love your neighbor as yourself."*

If we want God to give us what we desire,
we should treat others similarly.

We'll seek to give *others* what *they* desire.

We'll never do that in our own strength;
 God has to produce that desire in us!
 WE should seek that kind of love!

Entrance to people passing by *narrow gate* 13-14

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Narrow gate: living God's way (righteous living); way of faith

Way of absolute righteous living is impossible! (Rom 10)

No one makes it that way.

Even fewer people choose way of faith.

Narrow gate & road which leads to life is by trusting Jesus, which produces transformed life.

That's the truly NARROW gate;
 few try that way!

Entrance to people who bear fruit 15-20 *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn-bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.*

Religious leaders dress like lambs;
 on inside they're ravenous wolves,
 seeking to destroy.

Observe their fruit;

[=> they seek to *KILL* Messiah!]
 you'll see what they really are.

Jesus already described their character;
 it will *never* get them into God's kingdom!

People who have authentic life *inside* tree produce good fruit.

Healthy trees => good fruit;
 sick trees => bad fruit

Pharisaism doesn't produce good fruit;
 it'll be cut down & destroyed.

Entrance to people who DO the Father's will 21-23

*"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who **does the will of my Father** who is in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

What IS the Father's will?

John 6:29 – *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom he has sent."*

6:38 *"I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

Those who enter kingdom seek to do Father's will.

Lots of people will do great things in Jesus' name, but real test is whether we *know* Him.

Are we trusting Him?

Implications for us?

Entrance to people who practice Jesus' words 24-27

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine & does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain fell, & the floods came, & the winds blew & beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷The rain fell, & the floods came, & the winds blew & beat against that house, & it fell, & great was the fall of it."

What are "these words of mine?"

Wise man builds on **Jesus' words: way of faith.**

Jesus is the Rock on which we should build.

The **foolish man builds on unstable ground.**

Way of the flesh will collapse underneath us.

It will wash away when the storms come.

What is the "way of the flesh?"

It's trying to do it myself—by MY effort!!

Pharisaic righteousness is unstable, shifting sand.

Implications for us?

We should build on the Rock!

Reaction from the crowd 7:28-29

When Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

They're amazed by His teaching NO ONE ever taught them with that kind of authority before.

He spoke as someone who knows what He's talking about!

This isn't just the opinion of a teacher.

He sounds like He knows the Author—like the Person Who wrote the book!

DISCUSSION: How should Lord's words affect OUR lives?

How should WE apply words this week?

What will change?

How can we live counter-culturally—against flow of culture?