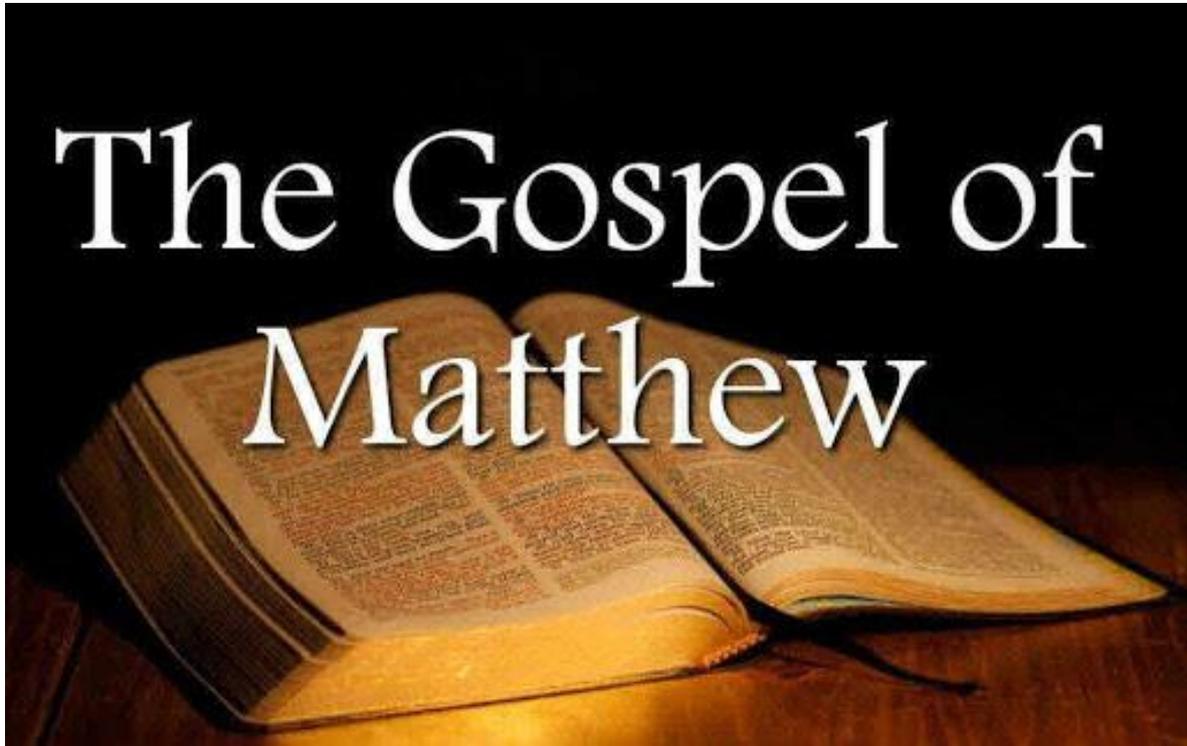


The Book of Matthew



Part 3

5 more studies in Matthew's Gospel

Brief Outline of Matthew's Gospel

1:1 - 4:16	Introducing Jesus
4:17 - 16:20	Public ministry in and around Galilee
16:21 - 18:35	Private ministry in Galilee; preparing the disciples
19:1 - 25:46	Ministry in Judea
26:1 - 28:20	The death and resurrection of Jesus

Please Note the following:

1. It is helpful, but not mandatory, to prepare your answers before meeting with your group.
2. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
3. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP.**

Study 1 - Our Attitude to God and Others- Matthew 7:7-12

(Sermon on 16-May-21)

Read Jeremiah 29:1-14

1. Where are the people of Israel and why?

They are in exile in Babylon having been captured by Nebuchadnezzar. They had been exiled because of their continual sin and rebellion against God. God tells them, through Jeremiah to make themselves at home and be good citizens of Babylon.

2. List the promises God makes to them in verses 10 to 14?

- *God promises that the captivity (exile) will not go beyond 70 years (v10)*
- *God promises to bring them back from exile (v10)*
- *God has plans for them (v11)*
- *God's plan (even though they are being punished by being sent into exile) is to prosper them, not to harm them; and to give them hope and a future (v11)*
- *God promises to listen to them when they call on Him and pray to Him (v12)*
- *God promises them will find Him when they seek Him with all their heart (v13)*
- *God promises to bring them back out of captivity and gather them from all nations and places where they have been banished to (v14) - and bring them back to the place from which He carried them from exile (v14)*

3. How might these promises relate to us as sinful people?

Even though we are sinful people, just like the Israelites in exile, God punishes people for their own good and also gives a way forward, especially when we seek Him with all our heart.

4. What do you learn from God's dealings with Israel here?

As we learnt last week, judging people's behaviour, is never about destroying them but helping them. Even though God had sent Israel into captivity, He still wants what's best for them; and promises a bright future and a return from exile, one day.

Read 1 Kings 3:1-15

5. What did a young Solomon ask for? Why?

Solomon (v9) asks for a discerning heart to govern the people and to distinguish between right and wrong; so that he can govern God's people correctly. Solomon

says he is a little child (v7) and doesn't know how to carry out his duties and he is governing a lot of people (v8). Essentially Solomon is asking for wisdom.

6. In Matthew 7 so far in our studies, we have been looking at judging others.

Why is wisdom important when judging others?

As Solomon prayed for in v9 above; when assessing someone else's behaviour, we need wisdom and discernment; to judge correctly from right and wrong. As we said last week; God's Word should be a moral compass.

Read Matthew 7:7-12

7. **Ponder:** Jesus' teaching on prayer might seem out of place here; but why do you think Jesus wants us to pray in connection with the context of judging?

This may seem out of place; but we are human and fallible; we make mistakes. Only God can judge perfectly. Therefore, we must pray and seek God's wisdom, direction and discernment.

We should be clear on the context here; verses 7 to 12, come straight after Jesus' teaching on judgment in which He said we need to judge ourselves correctly before we even look at judging others' behaviour.

The context is we need "spiritual" discernment to judge correctly.

So, Jesus says we need to pray and ask God for this spiritual discernment.

8. What does Jesus teach in verse 7 & 8?

Our Christian duty to help others is too difficult without God's help. In fact, the whole teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is too difficult; without God's help. Jesus is teaching if we ask, seek and knock on God's door for his help in spiritual matters, He will answer.

9. What commands (imperatives) does Jesus give in verse 7?

The commands in verse 7 are: Ask, Seek and Knock. The tense in Greek is to keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking.

10. What promises corresponding to these imperatives does Jesus give in verse 8?

If we ask, God promises we will receive.

If we seek, God promises we will find.

If we knock, God promises to open the door.

11. What do we learn about prayer in verses 7 and 8?

It is a continual process. We must "keep on" coming to the Lord and asking for spiritual wisdom and discernment.

12. **Ponder:** Does verse 7 & 8 mean we can ask for "anything" and God will give it to us? If not, what does Jesus mean?

No, these verses are often misunderstood. These verses apply to asking God for spiritual discernment and spiritual wisdom and spiritual gifts; not asking God for a new sports car or a big mansion; not name it and claim it, as some might preach on these verses.

John Stott makes the following distinction; he says: we need to distinguish between the gifts of God as Creator and the gifts as Father, or between creation-gifts and redemption gifts. It is perfectly true that God gives certain gifts (harvest, babies, food, life) whether people pray or not, and whether they believe or not. He sends rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons to all. He makes the sun rise on the evil and the good alike (Matt 5:45). God's redemption-gifts are different. God does not bestow salvation on all alike but only on those who call upon His name will be saved (Rom 10:11, 12).

It is not material blessings but spiritual blessings, like: daily forgiveness; deliverance from evil; peace; wisdom, discernment, the increase in faith, hope and love.

13. What illustration does Jesus use in verses 9 to 11?

Jesus illustrates the nature of God's giving. If an earthly parent, even though they are sinful (evil), know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will our heavenly Father, who is not evil but wholly good, give "good" gifts to those who ask Him. Note: God is not going to give us gifts which are bad for us, even if we think they are okay or good!

14. What is the point of the comparison Jesus makes in verse 11?

The point of the comparison is to show that if sinful humans can give good gifts, how much more will a sinless heavenly Father give good gifts.

15. What's the **golden rule** in verse 12?

If we have our attitude with God correct; then we can deal with others correctly too. The golden rule is: do to others what you would have them do to you.

We are sensitively putting ourselves into the other persons shoes and wish for them what we would wish for ourselves; then we would never be mean, always generous; never harsh, always understanding; never cruel, always kind.

16. What does Jesus mean by "**for this sums up the Law and the Prophets**"?
(cf. Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14)

Jesus summed up the Law and Prophets as loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves (Matt 22:37-40); showing love!

So, by practicing the Golden Rule, we are showing the love of God to others and that sums up what Jesus taught about the Law and the Prophets.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 7:7-12**?

Maintaining the right attitude towards God and towards others



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

V11 - God gives us good gifts

➔ How does this passage **apply to your life**?

We must be developing our relationship with God through prayer and by asking for wisdom and discernment.

We must be developing our relationship with others by showing love.

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Matthew 7:12

Finish in prayer: Ask God to give us wisdom in our relationships.

Study 2 - Our Relationship to False Prophets - Matthew 7:13-14

(Sermon on 23-May-21)

Before we begin: Throughout life we all have to make many choices (good and bad). Personally, reflect on some good and bad choices you have made. Share them with the group, if you feel comfortable in doing that.

Bad choices

In my teens at school - I chose to be part of the popular group - rather than concentrating on my studies.

Turn my back on RC church/school upbringing in my teens

Made myself king of my life instead of Jesus

Good choices

Emigrate to Australia (although tough on my Mum and Dad)

To come back to Jesus at age 33 (although I believe He chose me - not I choosing Him - Ephesians 2:8)

To study and candidate for the ministry (again I believe He chose me - not the other way around)

Marrying Heather (did she choose me?)

Read Psalm 1

1. Write down the two types of people mentioned in this psalm.
 - a. *The Blessed one (i.e., the righteous one; not wicked)*
 - b. *The wicked one*

2. Write down the choices the two types of people make in this psalm.
 - a. *The Blessed one is the one who: i) delights in the law; ii) meditates on the law, day and night;*
 - b. *The wicked chooses not to delight in or follow the law*

Read Genesis 3:6-7

3. What choice did the woman and her husband make?

The woman saw that the fruit on the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom; she ate the fruit from that tree, even though God had forbidden it.

Her husband chose to follow the woman's lead and eat the fruit, even though he knew God had forbidden it. He listened to his wife instead of God.

Read Joshua 24:15

4. What choice does Joshua set before the Israelites?

Whether to serve the gods of their ancestors and the gods of the Amorites or serve the Lord, God. Joshua, himself, and his household, chose to follow the Lord, God.

Read Proverbs 3:31-33

5. What choice is presented in these verses?

- a. Not to choose the ways of the violent (v31)*
- b. A choice to be perverse or upright (v32)*
- c. A choice between being wicked or righteous*

Read Matthew 27:3-5

6. What choice did Judas make? Why? What could he have done instead?

- a. He admitted [in full remorse] his betrayal of Jesus (I have sinned) to the chief priest and elders and returned the 30 pieces of silver he had been paid for his betrayal of Jesus.*
- b. He then hanged himself. He could have gone to Jesus and begged forgiveness.*

Read Matthew 7:13-14

7. What are the two gates?

Narrow gate to life and the wide gate to destruction

8. Who is "The Gate"? (cf. John 10:7, 9). How does that relate to Matthew 7:13-14?

Jesus is the gate for His sheep (i.e., the ones who believe in Him) and those who enter His gate are saved!

9. How are the two **roads** described?

The broad road - that leads to destruction and many enter through it

The narrow road - that leads to life and only a few find it.

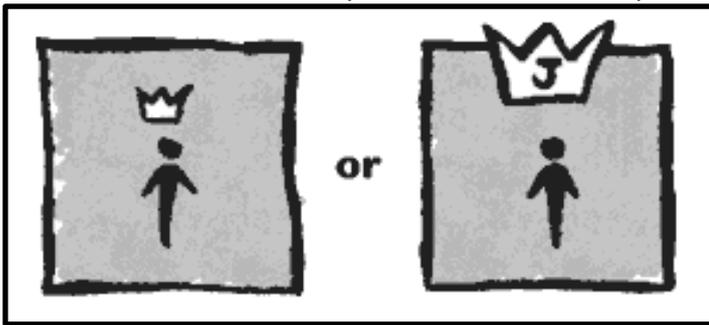
10. What two **destinations** are there?

Heaven or Hell

11. **Ponder:** Why do you think the wide gate/road is more attractive to most people in Australia today?

- *There is the common notion that nearly everyone goes to Heaven*
- *Or there is the common notion that Hell doesn't exist or a wrong idea of what Hell is*
- *Or people have Jesus' teaching backwards - that many go to Heaven and few go to Hell*
- *Some people don't want to be held accountable for their behaviour and they don't want to follow rules, especially God's rules; and they don't want to be told what to do*
- *Some people think they know better than God*
- *A lot of people have this attitude "everybody does it" but that is not proof that it is right.*

12. How does the picture below express the choice we all have to make?



Either we are King of our own lives or Jesus is King of our lives.

13. **Challenge:** Write down the name of someone you know, who does not follow Jesus, and commit to sharing the choice of "two ways to live", that Jesus presents here (*Two Ways to Live* tracts are available from Rev Paul, if you would like to use one)

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 7:13-14**?

Choose the narrow gate that leads to the narrow road, that leads to life in Heaven



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

- ➔ How does this passage **apply to your life?**
- a. We cannot sit on the fence - Jesus only presents two choices - and only one of those choices is the right one
 - b. Jesus is saying there is no such thing as universalism - i.e., the doctrine that all human beings will eventually be saved
 - c. Jesus is saying there is no such thing as religious pluralism - i.e., the belief that there are many ways and gods that lead to being saved. This implies there are many roads - whereas Jesus says there is only one road!
 - d. The way of life is narrow, lonely and costly
 - e. It means letting go our 'baggage' of sin and worldliness. People find it hard to let go of their "old" life.
 - f. We cannot walk on two roads, in two different directions
 - g. Share this choice of 2 ways to live with others

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V14

Finish in prayer: Ask God to give us His words to say as we share the choice that Jesus presents in Matthew 7:13-14.

Study 3 – The Peril of False Prophets – Matthew 7:15-20

(Sermon on 30-May-21)

Before we begin: What is a prophet?

Dictionary definition: a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God.

Bible definition: one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence His spokesman, solemnly declares to people what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation.

In this study, our New Testament passage, from Matthew 7:15-20, Jesus will talk about false prophets.

Read Jeremiah 14:14 and Jeremiah 23:16

1. How are the false prophets described in Jeremiah 14:14?

Jeremiah 14:14: they lied. They prophesied false visions, divinations, idolatries and delusions of their own mind.

2. How are the false prophets described in Jeremiah 23:16?

Jeremiah 23:16: God says they are not to be listened to because they fill people with false hope; they only speak visions from their own mind - and are not speaking on behalf of God.

Read Ezekiel 13:1-7

3. What does God have to say about false prophets here?

- *They follow their own spirit and have seen no visions (v3)*
- *They are like jackals (wolves) scavenging through ruins trying to find someone to eat up with their lies (v4)*
- *They haven't lifted a finger to repair the defenses of the city and have risked nothing to help Israel stand on God's Day of Judgment (v5)*
- *Their visions are false and their divinations are a lie (v6)*
- *They say "The Lord declares..." when the Lord has not told them anything (v6)*
- *Their visions and divinations are sheer fantasy (v7)*

Read 1 Kings 22:13-14

4. What do we learn about false prophets from these verses?

Micaiah is asked that his words would agree with the other prophets. He quite rightly says in v14 - "surely as the Lord lives, I can tell only what the Lord tells me". From this we see, that prophecy has to come from the Lord and not from the prophet themselves.

5. How would you summarize the difference between false and true prophets?
Prophecy has to come from the Lord and not from the prophet themselves.

Read Deuteronomy 18:14-22

6. How can we know if a prophet is speaking from the Lord and telling the truth?
V22 - If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

Read Matthew 7:15-20

7. What analogy for false prophets is given in verse 15?

They are ferocious wolves in sheep's clothing.

Being ferocious; they are dangerous!

We shouldn't be impressed with charisma but true godly character.

Need to ask ourselves, what is under the fleece; a wolf or a sheep?

8. How will true and false prophets be recognized in verse 16? How does this line up with our Old Testament passages?

He uses the idea of a fruit tree.

A tree cannot hide its identity for too long; once the fruit appears, it's obvious what sort of tree it is. Thornbushes don't produce grapes and thistles don't produce figs. Time will tell what sort of tree it is; in the same way time will tell whether a prophet is a true one or a false one, by what they say and whether it happens and whether it lines up with God.

The OT passages were saying two things: a) wait and see; and b) does it line up with God's Word.

9. What two trees are compared in verses 17 and 18?

Good trees and bad trees.

10. What sort of fruit do the two trees produce?

Good fruit or bad fruit.

11. What outcome is given in verse 19?

If a tree does not produce good fruit, then it is cut down and thrown in the fire.

12. What test can we apply in verse 20?

We can wait and see if the prophet (the tree) produces good fruit (truth) or bad fruit (falsehoods and lies that don't agree with God)

13. In **Matthew 7:13-14**, Jesus taught about the wide and narrow gate. Why do you think he follows this teaching with verses 15-20?

There may be false prophets/teachers/preaches that teach false things and lead people to the wide gate, instead of the narrow gate.

14. **Ponder:** Matthew 7 has been about judging; how do verses 15-20 relate to the idea of judging others?

Before making a snap judgment about someone's teaching/prophecy - we do well to check it out in the Bible that in lines up with God's Word. If God's Word is silent on that they are saying; then we wait and see, before making a final assessment.

15. **Ponder:** Does this passage speak to us as well as to prophets; if so, in what way?

As disciples of Jesus, we are also called to make disciples (Matthew 28:16-20). In doing so, it's important that we know God's Word and a very careful with God's Word, so that we don't accidentally lead them astray.

Read Acts 20:17-31

16. Who is the Apostle Paul speaking to and why?

The Elders of Ephesus.

Why? He is about to leave and go to Jerusalem and he doesn't expect to return.

17. What has Paul done in Ephesus (verses 19-21)?

Served the Lord with great humility and with tears; he was severely tested by plots from his Jewish opponents (v19)

He has only taught helpful things to equip them to teach (v20)

He has preached repentance to Jews and Greeks and that they must turn to faith in the Lord Jesus (v21)

18. Where is Paul going next and what is his future outlook?

He is compelled by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem (v22)

He doesn't know what will happen to him (v22)

He expects to face prison and hardships (v23)

All he knows is that He must finish the race marked out for him - which is to testify the Good News (Gospel) of God's grace, in Jesus Christ.

19. What does Paul warn them about in verses 25-31?

They will not see him again (v25)

That he is innocent of the blood of any of them (v26)

He has only ever proclaimed the will of God (v27)

*He warns them to **keep watch over themselves and over all the flock they have** (v28)*

*They are to **be shepherds** (v28) of the church (which cost Jesus His life)*

*He knows **there will be savage wolves** among them and they will not spare the flock (v29)*

*Even from **within the church** they will be **some who distort the truth** in order to draw away disciples after them (v30)*

*Therefore, they must **be on their guard** (v31) - Paul has been warning them day and night, with tears, for three years!*

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 7:15-20**?

Be on our guard for false teaching and false teachers.

False prophets known by their fruit (character and conduct; teaching; whose glory they seek and the effect of their teaching)



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

To gain spiritual discernment by referencing God's Word

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V20 - Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

Finish in prayer: Pray that God would give us spiritual discernment as we continue to live in this fallen and broken world.

Study 4 - The Danger of Merely a Verbal Profession - Matthew 7:21-23
(Sermon on 6-June-21)

Read Isaiah 29:13

1. What's the problem for Israel?

Israel has a heart problem. They honour God with their lips but not their heart. They worship God their way and not the way God wants. They are not worshipping from the heart.

Read Ezekiel 33:30-33

2. What's the problem for Ezekiel here?

The people come and hear Ezekiel's words from God, but they do not put God's message into practice. They did not listen properly.

The people are acting hypocritically; they speak of love but their hearts are greedy and unjust. They see Ezekiel's words from God as just love songs accompanied by lovely music; rather than putting God's words into practice.

One day they will know they missed out on words from a great prophet!

Read Hosea 8:1-14

3. What is the problem for Israel here?

They have broken their covenant with God (v1)

They cry out to God with words "Our God we acknowledge" (v2)

They have rejected God and His goodness and so they will be pursued by an enemy [the Assyrians] (v3); hence the sounding of the trumpets in v1.

What have they done wrong?

- a. *Set up kings and princes without God's permission (v4)*
- b. *They have made idols out of silver and gold (v4)*
- c. *They made a calf-idol in Samaria (vv5-6)*
- d. *The tribe of Ephraim built altars for sin offerings but they became altars for sinning (v11)*
- e. *They regarded the law of God as something foreign (v12)*
- f. *God is not pleased with their sacrifices anymore because they are meaningless (v13)*
- g. *Israel has forgotten their maker (v14)*

As a result of this rebellion and disobedience against God - they will be punished:

- a. *And so, they have sowed a wind - and they will reap a whirlwind (v7)*
- b. *They will be swallowed up by Assyria (vv-8-9)*

- c. They will be oppressed by a mighty king (v10)
- d. He will punish their sins (v13)
- e. It will be like they are back in Egypt - oppressed (v13)

Read Matthew 7:21-23

4. What contrast is made in verse 21? (c.f. Matthew 12:50; Romans 2:13; James 1:22 and 1 John 3:18)

A contrast between those who "say" and those who "do" [obey]

*Matt 12:50 - For whoever **does the will of my Father** in heaven is my brother and sister and mother*

*Romans 2:13 - For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who **obey** the law who will be declared righteous*

*James 1:22 - Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do** what it says.*

*1 John 3:18 - Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but **with actions** and in truth*

5. What is the problem in verse 22? (c.f. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3)

We must all stand before Jesus on that day [Day of Judgment]

Some people will stand before Jesus with impressive spiritual accomplishments, like: prophesying and casting out demons in Jesus' name and even perform miracles but that will not be enough. Because what Jesus wants is a true heartfelt relationship; true fellowship with Him; true connection with Him - not merely words!

As 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 says:

*If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, **but do not have love**, I gain nothing.*

In our faith, we need to truly love Jesus and love others - as a response to His death and resurrection.

6. What is the outcome for those who give God only lip-service, in verse 23?

A terrible outcome. What awful words to have to hear from Jesus: "I never knew you? Away from Me, you evildoers". Separated from Jesus forever; how terrible.

Read Romans 10:9-10

7. How is this passage different to the people Jesus describes in Matthew 7:21 who say "Lord, Lord"?

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," **and believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For **it is with your heart that you believe and are justified**, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

It has to be mouth and heart - not just mouth.

Read 1 Corinthians 12:3

8. What does a true profession of Jesus as Lord require according to this verse?

³ Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," **except by the Holy Spirit.**

A true profession requires the Holy Spirit living inside us!

Read Luke 6:46-49

9. How do these verses relate to what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7:21-23?

A wise person is one who not only professes Jesus as their Lord but also hears Jesus' words and puts them into practice; they are like a wise builder who built his house on a rock foundation.

The foolish person is one who hears Jesus' words and does not put them into practice; they are like a foolish builder who built his house without any foundation.

We must build our lives on the foundation of Jesus!

Read James 2:14-26

10. In what ways does this passage relate to what Jesus is teaching in Matthew 7:21-23?

Faith that is not accompanied by action (good deeds)

James mentions how Abraham was declared righteous because he demonstrated his faith in God when he offered his son, Isaac, on the altar; his faith and actions were working together and his faith was made complete, by what he did (v22).

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 7:21-23**?

Words are not a substitute for obedience and neither are religious works.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

➔ How does this passage **apply to your life?**

- a. Examine our lives - are we just giving Jesus, lip-service? Would people see us as hypocrites - saying one thing but doing another?
- b. In response to what Jesus has done for us? do we live for Jesus or ourselves?
- c. In response to what Jesus has done for us; do we live to do the Father's will and to please Him? Or I way just living to please ourselves?
- d. As Psalm 139:23-4 says:

²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V21

Finish in prayer: Thanking God for our faith in Jesus and asking Him to help us to do His will. [**Groups might like to pray the Lord's Prayer together**]

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;*

Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us,

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

for Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Study 5 - The Danger of Merely Intellectual Knowledge - Matthew 7:24-29 (Sermon on 13-June-21)

1. Find places in the Bible where God is described as a **rock**, a **fortress**, a **refuge**, and a **strength**. Share them in your group.

*Deuteronomy 32:15 - They abandoned the God who made them and rejected the **Rock** their Savior.*

*Psalms 18:2 - The LORD is my **rock**, my **fortress** and my deliverer; my God is my **rock**, in whom I take **refuge**, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

*Psalms 28:8 - The LORD is the **strength** of his people, a **fortress** of salvation for his anointed one.*

*Psalms 46:1 - God is our **refuge** and **strength**, an ever-present help in trouble.*

*Numbers 14:17 - "Now may the Lord's **strength** be displayed, just as you have declared:*

2. Why do you think God is described with these adjectives?

***Rock** - has the idea of security - like we would say "rock-solid". God is our security because He never changes - He is the same yesterday, today and forever.*

***Fortress** - has the idea of protection. We've God in our life, it's like we have a fortress surrounding us and protecting us - from the enemy of Satan, sin and death.*

***Refuge** - has the idea of a place we run to when we're in trouble or we need help. As Psalms 46:1 - says God is our refuge and is an ever-present help in times of trouble.*

***Strength** - has the idea that when we are not doing everything under our own strength - we are to do things under God's strength; as Philippians 4:13 says: I can do all things, through Him who strengthens me.*

All these adjectives speak of God's sovereign power - He is the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent God.

Read Psalm 18

3. What problem does David have?

He is in danger from his enemies and King Saul (superscription of the Psalm)

He is in danger from his enemies (v3, v17)

He faces death (vv4-5)

He is in distress and needs God's help (v6)

4. What adjectives does David use to describe God?

My strength (v1)

Rock, fortress, deliverer (v2)

Rock, refuge, shield and horn (symbol of strength) of salvation, stronghold (v2)

Thundering voice (v13)

Most High (v13)

Support (v18)

Faithful and blameless (v25)

Pure and shrewd (v26)

Perfect (v30)

Rock (v31)

Rock and Saviour (v46)

5. How did God rescue David?

He acted with creational wonders (vv7-13)

He shot his arrows to scatter David's enemies and sent lightning to rout them. (v14)

He reached down and took hold of David (v16) and rescued David from his enemies (v17)

He brought David to a spacious place and delighted in David (v19)

He gave David strength and security (v32)

He made David battle-ready (vv33-39)

He made David's enemies run away and destroyed them (v40)

He gave His King (David) great victories and shows His unfailing love to him (v50)

Read Matthew 7:24-27

These verses answer the problem Jesus warned about in verses 21-23; namely: paying lip-service to God.

6. What's the difference between verse 21 and verse 23?

Those who "do the will of my father who is in Heaven" (v21) and evildoers (v23)

7. What two types of builders are being described?

The wise builder

The foolish builder.

8. What does the **wise man** do?

The wise builder builds his house on rock and it withstands heavy rain and wind.

9. What does the **foolish man** do?

The foolish builder builds his house on sand but when the heavy rain and wind came, the house fell down.

10. What's the difference between the wise and foolish man? What is Jesus' point here?

*Both builders wanted to build a house. Their houses may have looked the same on the outside but the **foundation** was different.*

The wise builder used the proper foundation for building his house; i.e. rock.; and therefore, it stood.

The foolish builder used the wrong foundation for building his house; i.e. sand; and therefore, it fell.

It's the same for us in our Christian walk. People may look the same on the outside - but what is the **foundation** they are building their lives on?

Jesus' point here is we need to build our lives on the rock of Jesus' and obedience to His Word (which is of course God's Word).

If we build our lives on obedience to God's Word (rock) - our faith is built on a solid foundation. If we build our lives on disobedience to God's Word (sand) - our faith is built on a an unstable foundation.

In this parable the rain and wind, i.e. the storm, is judgment (both now but ultimately the final judgment). Following on from last week - if our faith is genuine faith, it will be accompanied by obedience to God's commands/Word; and we will be saved on that day. If our faith is not genuine, it will be accompanied by continual disobedience to God's commands/Word, and we will not be saved on that day!

11. Ponder: What is the key phrase in verse 24?

"and puts them [Jesus' words] into practice"

Read Matthew 7:28-29

12. Why are Jesus' listeners so amazed at His Sermon on the Mount (which stretches from Matthew 5 to Matthew 7)?

His words had authority.

As one commentator (FF Bruce) says, "the Scribes and Pharisees spoke BY authority and rested on their traditions of what had been said before; Jesus spoke WITH authority, out of His own Soul"

Spurgeon says Jesus' teaching surprised the listeners in two ways - substance (they'd never heard such doctrine before) and manner (authority, power and weight)

We need to understand that Jesus is speaking here:

- 1. With the authority of a teacher*
- 2. With the authority of the Christ*
- 3. With the authority of the Lord*
- 4. With the authority of the Saviour*
- 5. With the authority of the Judge*
- 6. With the authority of the Son of God*
- 7. With the authority as God*

13. What response do you think Jesus is expecting to His sermon?

Jesus wants them to be more than amazed or astonished at His teaching.

He wants them to "hunger and thirst for righteousness" - "ask, seek and knock" - "enter the narrow gate" - "do the will of my Father in Heaven" - "to build their lives on His foundation"- and "to put His words into practice".

What's the BIG IDEA of Matthew 7:24-29?

Build our lives on Jesus and obedience to His word - as our rock-solid foundation



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

➔ How does this passage **apply to your life?**

We need to listen to Jesus' words and put them into practice

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V24

Finish in prayer: Ask our Heavenly Father to help us obey Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
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Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible (G. Campbell Morgan)

The Message of Matthew (Michael Green)

Focus on the Bible: Matthew (Charles Price)

Matthew Volume 1 (Barclay)

Be Loyal Following the King of Kings NT Commentary on Matthew (Warren W. Wiersbe)

Notes/Prayer Points