

Jesus Taught the Word of God With Authority

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand what Jesus meant when He said that you will know false teachers by their fruit. We saw that the focus of such teachers is on the things of this world, instead of the things that are eternal. In this topic, we are going to see that Jesus taught with authority.

As Jesus came to the end of this sermon, He taught His disciples and the crowd that was listening about the two builders and the two foundations. Matthew 7:24-25 says, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” We see that Jesus concluded His sermon by pointing out that people would make one of two responses to His sermon. Everyone there that day heard what Jesus taught. Some would take action and put what Jesus taught into practice in their daily lives. Others would hear what Jesus taught and would make no changes in their lives.

These verses speak about those who would hear and put into action the things that Jesus taught. Jesus compared this response to a wise man who built his house on a rock. The word translated “wise” speaks of one who hears and takes action to make changes. This word is used several times in the first nine verses of Matthew 25. Matthew 25:1-4 says, “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.” In these verses, we see that both groups took lamps. However, the foolish group took no oil for their lamps.

The fact that Jesus said the wise man built his house on a rock shows that those who hear and obey what Jesus teaches are building on a solid foundation. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18, “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” The word “Peter” means *a stone or a small rock*. The word translated “rock” means *a very large rock*. This is the word that is used both in Matthew 7 and also in 1 Corinthians 10:4 where we read, “And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.” Together, these verses show us that the wise person is the person who builds his or her life on the foundation of Christ, the Rock.

Those who hear and do what Jesus taught are those who are building on Christ as their foundation. In life, there will be rain and storms that come. That means that we will face various trials in our lives. When Christ is the One that is our foundation, we do not need to worry that these trials will destroy our foundation because Christ is a solid foundation. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, we are told, “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.” Then, Romans 14:4 adds, “Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.” The Lord will never leave or forsake us.

In contrast, Jesus warned in Matthew 7:26-27, “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came,

and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” Jesus was talking to His disciples plus a large group of other people who had come searching for Him. Everyone there that day heard what Jesus had taught. However, some would make one decision and many others would make a very different decision. Many of those there that day heard exactly what Jesus had told His disciples. Instead of doing the things Jesus taught, they would hear them and do nothing. Jesus said that those who made that choice would be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

The word translated “sand” can refer to either sand or sandy ground and sometimes the word was used to speak of a group of people so large that it could not be counted. That is illustrated in Hebrews 11:12, where we read, “Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born *as many* as the stars of the sky in multitude— innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.” In this verse, we see that sand is used to show that the number of descendants of Abraham could not be counted. However, in Matthew, this word is used to talk about building a house on either sandy ground or just sand. It is very easy to build such a house because no time has to be spent preparing a large rock for the foundation of the house.

In the same way, those who build on the sand are making no preparation for their eternal future. They are just living to enjoy the temporary pleasures of this world. In the time of Isaiah, God had called on the nation of Judah to repent and turn back to Him. Instead, most of the people of that day chose to live for the temporary pleasures of sin. Isaiah 22:13 said that they did not weep in repentance for their sin. That verse says, “But instead, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating meat and drinking wine: ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!’” Here, we see that the people chose to live for the moment in the time of Isaiah. Jesus knew that most of the people were doing the same in His day. That is why Jesus warned that those who heard His Word and did nothing were foolish and were building on the sand. The same is true today.

Jesus warned what would happen to all who choose to live for the moment at any time. Jesus said that the rain will come, the floods will come, the winds will blow, and the fall of that house will be great. Jesus had been teaching the true meaning of the law. Most of the people were depending on their own works to keep that law. Jesus had just explained the true meaning of the law. That teaching showed that good works could never save any person from judgment. Ephesians 2:9 says, “Not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Then, Titus 3:5 adds, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.” The people had to choose to come to Jesus in repentance and faith because He is the narrow gate, or they would continue on their way to eternal destruction which is illustrated by the total destruction of the house built on the sand.

When Jesus finished speaking, Matthew 7:28-29 says, “And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” The word translated “authority” is a key word in these last two verses and means one having power, strength or authority. Later, in Matthew 9:6-7, Jesus said, “‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins’—then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’ And he arose and departed to his house.” In this verse, the word is translated “power”. In Matthew 21:23-24, the chief priests and elders questioned Jesus. Those verses say, “Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?’ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things.’” Because of their unbelief, the chief priests refused to answer the question of Jesus and so He did not answer their question.

However, Jesus later made it clear to the disciples the source of His authority. Matthew 28:18-20 concludes the book of Matthew by the following statement of Jesus to His disciples, “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.” This commission to all Christians to make disciples is given by Jesus who is the One who has all authority. Jesus said in the previous verses here in Matthew 7 that if we build our foundation on Him, we will hear and do what He says.

In contrast to the teaching of Jesus, the scribes would quote other scribes as the source of their authority. Satan tried to offer Jesus authority over the world when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Luke 4:6 says, “And the devil said to Him, ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.’” Jesus showed the source of His authority to both the people and Satan later in that chapter. Luke 4:32 says, “And they were astonished at His teaching, for His word was with authority.” Then, Luke 4:36 adds, “Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, ‘What a word this *is!* For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.’” Jesus showed both by His words and by His authority over demons that He had a source of authority much greater than Satan.

The people were filled with amazement as they heard and saw that He taught with authority. The word translated “were astonished” means *to be struck with astonishment or to be amazed*. The people had never heard teaching like this because they were used to hearing the scribes quote the opinions of other scribes. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to accurately teach and explain the Word of God by quoting from the Word of God, in context, instead of quoting from the opinions of others. The Word of God is living and powerful because of the source of its authority. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children to use the Word of God to explain the Word of God.