



SERMON ON THE MOUNT

THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM

AN INTRODUCTION TO “THE WAY OF THE KINGDOM”

This section serves two purposes. It is the close of Matthew 6:1-21 and introduces our final section (6:25-7:29). Jesus here sums up not only the previous section on spiritual disciplines but really the whole sermon. He teaches us two things: First, there are earthly and heavenly rewards and the heavenly rewards are much better and second, that what really matters (and what dictates which rewards you get) are a matter of the heart.

The eyes are the lamp of the body, so what are you looking at? What catches your gaze? What makes you dream? Jesus makes this important observation and then apparently changes the subject to money, or does he? Is this a non-sequitur or is Jesus pulling a Jesus and revealing what is probably true about us? Jesus spends more time than the average preacher talking about money because (as he says) it is at the root of all kinds of evil.

WEEK SIX: “False Prophets”

Matthew 7:15-23

When you wake up in the morning, think about any morning rituals you walk through. Hopefully brushing your teeth & grabbing something to eat are somewhere on the agenda. But maybe you check social media on your phone or watch the news before work? It's not uncommon in today's fast-paced, media-

based society to want to stay up to date with what's happening or catch up on what we've missed. In this week's scripture, Jesus challenges us to pay attention to and question the content we consume from others.

It's part of our task as listeners and contributors to breakdown the things we hear. Jesus says that there are many "prophets" in the world that will proclaim a message of hope, life, and success while appearing to have the answers we're seeking. The distinction between these prophets and Jesus are vastly different. Yes, Jesus did experience success in terms of attracting large crowds & acclaim by performing miracles, etc. But never does Jesus claim that one's success or attractive platform are the basis for what we assume produces good fruit.

With so much noise coming from a variety of sources and outlets, it can be very difficult to discern the reliability of one's word and what we should devote ourselves to. Jesus' concern for our understanding of what we know as truth presses for us to consider the long-term product rather than any short-term success. Jesus wants us to question what we hear. Without reviewing what we consume, we aren't given a true understanding of what we contribute ourselves to. The proof of Jesus' superiority over false prophets and the vision He has for human flourishing lies only within His atonement for humanity's sin. By partaking in the results bore of Jesus' sacrifice, we consume from the only healthy tree that bears life.

- 1. Read Matthew 7:15-23.*
- 2. What can you learn about God's character in these verses?*
- 3. What/who do you find yourself receiving from regularly?*
- 4. What kind of success or acclaim do they have? Short-term? Long-term? Christian? Non-Christian?*
- 5. How has Jesus positioned Himself as the only prophet worthy of your devotion?*
- 6. In what ways do you believe God is leading you to turn from the things you might find yourself listening to? What do you believe He is leading you to commit yourself to?*
- 7. How can God's Spirit refine your mind, heart, and your hands to live as a contributor to Jesus' call in your context? Take a moment and ask Him to help you.*