

Sermon on the Mount Part XLIII - Conclusion

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 June 2014

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 0 0] To the Sermon on the Mount, today we intend to conclude it. These chapters consisting of Matthew 5, 6, and 7 are full of all kinds of wonderful principles that need to be adopted by anyone and everyone across all dispensations, and it is imperative that we be able to distinguish the principle from the actual teaching.

Please understand at the outset today, if you will, this important kind of, I guess we would call it a caveat, the Sermon on the Mount.

The emphasis of this passage is not a go and do likewise regarding all of the statements herein. And yet, that is almost always the way it is interpreted.

And I want to make that distinction very forcefully and very clear at the outset, because it is exactly what I said and what I warned against that is precisely the way most Christians approach the passage, and it ought not to be.

This is not a directive, the Sermon on the Mount, where Christ is saying to you, as a believer today, everything that I have said in this Sermon on the Mount is what you are supposed to go out and do.

[1 : 3 1] You are supposed to imitate this. That is not true. But that is, unfortunately, the way most understand it. And the reason it is not true is because the Sermon on the Mount was given by Christ as it pertained exclusively to the Jewish nation of Israel who functioned under the law of Moses.

It is amazing how just understanding that concept can open up so much to you. Unfortunately, there is an effort that has been probably around for hundreds and hundreds of years, and that is to Christianize this teaching and make it current Christian methodology.

This is what we are supposed to be doing. And for some people, just the fact that most Bibles contain these chapters in red ink means all the more to them, because that means this is what Jesus said and you better really do it.

That's a very, very unfortunate misunderstanding and it leads to a lot of confusion. The reason being, we are not Jews and we are not under the law of Moses.

Then a legitimate question can be asked, well, if this is true, then why are you even considering it? Why have you spent 42 sessions dealing with these passages if it is not intended for our obedience and our doing?

[3 : 0 8] And the answer is this, all of God's word from Genesis to Revelation is given for us, but it is not all given to us directly.

And we would appeal once again to the Miles Coverdale. I think you probably have that in your bulletin. It's on the flip side of this. Look at your scripture passage, the insert if you will, and turn it over.

Miles Coverdale has provided us with something that I have utilized dozens and dozens of times over 50 years here, or 40 years here at Grace, and it has to do with how we are to approach the scriptures.

I have often said, and so say I now again, if there were just some way that we could get all the pastors and all the churches to simply respect and follow the rules that Miles Coverdale gave us, so much of the bickering and wrangling and divisiveness that exists in the Christian church could simply be eliminated.

Because this is, in my estimation, the finest thing outside the Bible that has ever been given for the interpretation and understanding of the Bible.

[4 : 26] I'd like you to take your copy and read it with me. Let's read it in unison, if we may please. This is in 1535. This was given upon the provision of the first completed English Bible ever made.

And it was called the Coverdale Bible. He was behind it. And along with the translation of the complete Bible in English, he gave these principles for interpreting it.

I just wish there were some way that we could get them more respected and more utilized. Let's read it together, if we may please. It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goeth before and what followeth after.

This is golden. It is so simple, and yet it is so absolutely critical and important. So, if this be the case, and Matthew is not actually written to us, we are studying it because it is written for us and contained in the Sermon on the Mount, as well as in all of the Old Testament and all of the Gospels.

there are numerous abiding, timeless, spiritual principles that are to be enacted in the life of a believer.

[6 : 11] And there are all kinds of principles that are set forth here in the Sermon on the Mount. And we've dealt with a number of them, and I'm seeking to conclude this series today after 42 messages, but I would simply refer you to any of the 41 CDs that precede this if you want an exposition of those as they come up in the text.

So, keep that in mind, if you will. the Sermon on the Mount is a lengthy expression of contrasts that Christ made between the teaching and the directives of the Jewish religious establishment of His day and His own teaching.

And, by the way, we could parallel that today by simply saying that there are lots of individuals, and there are lots of churches, and there are lots of denominations that have all kinds of precepts and teachings and demands and commands and all the rest of it that are strictly man-made.

They are not biblical at all. They do not have any biblical origin to them. They are just add-ons that people think would somehow improve the Christian faith by adding these things to them.

This is as old as the hills. This is exactly what the Jews had been doing for hundreds of years when Christ came on the scene. They took the law of Moses as God gave it, and they began refining it, defining it, adding to it.

[7 : 48] Their explanations often made the text say things that it did not say or that Moses did not intend to communicate. And what they became, in essence, was the teachings of men.

And that Christ roundly criticized. and he said, you have made the word of God of none effect by your traditions and your add-ons and your hoops to jump through and your minutiae and the pettiness and all of the things that you encumber people with.

God had nothing to do with that. This is all man-made stuff. You've added that. And it has effectively neutralized what God said. You have actually overridden what God said with what you said.

And it's confusing to the people. And that is what Christ really took to task. And you know, we have the same kind of situation existing today.

It's in Catholicism and it's in Protestantism and it's in Judaism and it is man-made. It is where men think they are adding something of value to what God has said by providing these additional regulations and rules and add-ons and all of the rest of it.

[9 : 06] And it's tragic because it prevents people from knowing and understanding the true and the pure word of God. So, at the outset, and we saw this in chapter 5 and I think of it verse 22 where Christ said, unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

and that too is a clue that he's talking about the kingdom of heaven and that was in keeping with the Jewish concept that was prevailing at that time. And all of that has to be kept in the same venue.

And when you reach in and try to take it out or apply it to the church, which is the body of Christ today, you're just struggling and drowning in confusion. And that is precisely what is taking place.

Many times, Christ said, you have heard, but I say unto you. You have heard, but I say unto you. And we already read in the scripture portion that you read with Gary that the people were amazed at what Christ taught in those three chapters.

That's Sermon on the Mount. They were amazed because this wasn't just an ordinary run-of-the-mill rabbi who was giving them ho-hum stuff that they'd already heard. This man, Jesus of Nazareth, a carpenter from Galilee, was giving them content that was wow stuff.

[10 : 37] They just couldn't get over it. They never heard anyone speak. And you know, the really unusual thing about Jesus is he talked as if he himself was the authority rather than consistently referring to the authorities, the rabbis, who had gone on before.

who is this guy anyway? Who is he really? What gives him the right to say you have heard and this is what you have believed for hundreds and hundreds of years, but I say unto you, who are you?

Well really? Who are you? What gives you the right to countermand all of these learned prophets and teachers and rabbis who have gone on before?

What makes you so special? What makes you think that you can come in here and just spew out your teachings and override all of this stuff? Who do you think you are anyway? and yet they could not get over the simplicity the directness the earnestness he just had them captivated they hung on every word and they were amazed they said we had never heard anything like this who really is this man?

and you know that still is the question who is this man? what gives him the right to make those kind of claims?

[12 : 18] and we all need to deal with the reality either he is who he says he is or he isn't he is who the Bible says he is or he isn't there is no half way and you can't have it both ways you've got to make a choice and the people did here they had to make a choice too what gives this Galilean carpenter the right?

do you realize he went contrary to all of the conventional wisdom how could Christ be right and all of the recognized authorities be wrong?

now we've dealt with this issue before and I want you to ever keep it before you conventional wisdom is very often right sometimes it's wrong what the majority thinks is very often pretty much on track but sometimes it is woefully apart from the truth perhaps the most sterling and stunning example that could be given of that was going all the way back to Genesis 6 and Noah how in the world could eight people be right and the whole world's population as it existed at that time be wrong well they were and today there are all kinds of venues in which this principle can be applied and we see it all the time you know it would be a great thing well maybe it wouldn't be because

God hadn't designed it that way but in some ways it would be a lot simpler thing if we could just take a vote poll people you know like the pollsters do poll people and when you get 78% 83% whatever even if it's just 51% you can take it to the bank the majority is always right no they're not no they're not it would be kind of comforting if you could just line up the votes if you've got a decision to make you line up the votes and you get the majority and then the majority is always right and everything will turn out wonderful because the majority is always right no they're not do you realize that God has always worked with a minority God has never had a majority of anything on his side never has had today we are embroiled in an issue that has been on the back burner for a long time it first came to light in a really dramatic way in 1925 in Dayton

Tennessee with the Scopes Monkey Trial and the issue of evolution and creation and the silver tongued orator William Jennings Bryan who had been a candidate for president two or three times was the prosecuting attorney and Clarence Darrow who was a brilliant but admittedly very ungodly if not atheist at least agnostic attorney from Chicago Illinois and the two locked horns in a public courtroom in Dayton Tennessee over John Scopes who was a science teacher at the time and he had been called on the carpet and charged for teaching evolution in the schools and of course you can't teach anything else today can you isn't that interesting do you see the flip flop and how this thing works well as it turned out Scopes was convicted and William

[16 : 19] Jennings Bryan won the case and Scopes was found guilty and he paid some ridiculous fine like a hundred dollars or whatever and officially officially creationism won but unofficially it lost big time big time and there are numerous things that come into play and I don't want to go into them because this isn't the message for that but I say all of that to just say this the majority today in academia I mean the people with all of the standards the PhDs all the rest of it they are in the fold of evolution and they see it as an absolute fact it is not a theory at all nothing else is worthy of being taught and so on and so on and if you want to take a poll

I would imagine you probably get 90% of those science teachers in leading universities and colleges throughout the country would line up behind evolution and as far as the average person is concerned that makes it true because these are the brainy people they've studied this I mean they're into geology and they're into paleontology and they're into all of these things and they've studied them and they know I mean they absolutely know that the earth is billions and billions of years old and if you don't believe that you're just a dunce you must have fell off the turnip truck last Friday night or something like that you know and this is this is the standard that's the conventional wisdom the majority wins the day but very often they're wrong very often they're wrong now bear in mind they're not always wrong a thing is what it is and it has to be evaluated on the basis of its truthfulness and its facts etc so all of these things need to come into play and when you come to a subject like this where

Christ stands alone against all of the religious authorities of that day the religious establishment and those who had gone behind before he was he was a voice crying out in the wilderness but he was right he was right and that's the thing to keep in mind so in connection with all of that Christ said therefore in conclusion to everything that he said he's going to wrap it up now and so am I he's going to wrap up everything that he has taught in these chapters with a parable imagine that concluding a message with a parable and the parable is very definitive if you look at it it begins with verse 24 and he is saying as he brings his message to a close therefore therefore and what that word therefore means as you probably already know is he is talking about in light of everything I have told you in this message up till now here is the conclusion this is what it all boils down to and it is this everyone who hears these words of mine that I've just delivered to you and acts upon them may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock now let me stop right here and inject something that

I think might be helpful do you see when he says everyone who hears these words of mine is that you well you've you've just heard them but is he is he talking to you I mean he says everyone who hears these words remember remember miles coverdale if thou mark not only what is spoken or written but of whom and to whom is he talking to you here no he isn't talking to you he's talking to those people who comprise the audience that was there before him 2000 years ago as he delivered this message when he says you he doesn't mean you he means the you back here now by way of principle we have already considered the importance of being able to extract the spiritual principle from that and make application of it nobody is saying nothing in the sermon on the mount applies to you no no no no no there are lots of things in the sermon on the mount that apply to you but that's application it's not interpretation and there's a huge difference this is the sum of it and he's going to explain what it all boils down to in a parable a parable is a story that includes common everyday things that people are really familiar with and already understand and know about but it has a spiritual meaning or application and we're going to see the application and how it applies to you and to me everyone who hears these words of mine and acts upon them may be compared to a wise man who built his house upon the rock that's a solid foundation bedrock and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and burst against that house and yet it did not fall for it had been founded upon the rock you see what he's saying here foundation is everything what is he likening his words to

Christ is likening his words to the foundation and what you build or what anyone in that audience or in this audience builds upon that foundation the authority of Christ the words of Christ that's your superstructure that's your life it was their life and by way of application it's your life you are right now at whatever stage of life you are you are building a structure you are building your life day by day you are adding things to your life just think of it in terms of an edifice spiritually speaking an edifice may have different stories has different rooms spiritually speaking you're building a house you are erecting something it is your life what you are pouring into it what you learn what you experience what you do what you engage what you love what you hate all of these things you are pouring into your life you are a builder you're in the process of making something you've heard people talk about making something of your life that's exactly what we're talking about we're all on the road to doing that everybody is some of us have got most of the building done these are twilight years you're thinking in terms of the top story others are on a lower level you're building something because of the tenderness and youthfulness of your years you've just started building on the foundation you you haven't even really gotten you haven't even gotten the first floor constructed yet because you're so young you're still working on that first floor and what

[25 : 01] Christ is saying whether to the audience that he was addressing there or whether to you today is you've got to determine what your authority is for your foundation what are you building upon what is it that you have under you that you are counting on holding you up and sustaining you and supporting you what is your philosophy of life what is it that really matters to you this is what he's talking about and notice he says when the winds blew the floods came and burst against that house you know what that say you're going to have floods you're going to have rain you are going to have adversity you're going to be facing some really tough times all of you because into virtually every life if you live long enough there are some real hard things coming are you going to hack it are you going to survive you going to cave in are you going to stand are you going to be able to come through it okay some of you well probably all of you are going to be facing the loss of a significant other you're going to say goodbye to your mom or dad how are you going to do that that's an adversity of life you're going to be facing a really tough situation oh now to be sure there are it isn't all like that there are the good times of course there are there are the wonderful joyful times the elation times on all of that that's that's great but you know life isn't just a bowl of cherries there are hard times that come because we live in a fallen world where people injure each other and where people are subjected to disease and death and all kinds of things like that are you going to be sustained when the hard times come well you will if you have the right foundation if you've got the supporting structure under you it won't give way one of my favorite preachers of another day

Vance Havner is with the Lord now he said I often quiver and shake upon the rock but the rock never quivers under me the authority that is behind the words of Christ for every dispensation including the present one and when we embrace Christ and his word as our authority he becomes our foundation and Paul said another foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Christ Jesus if Jesus Christ is your foundation that will not exempt you from the tough times Jesus never said put your faith and trust in me and everything will be wonderful it'll be just smooth sailing from there on out and you'll never have any troubles because

I'll look out for you and all no no no no no it doesn't work that way that's not biblical Christianity Jesus is saying you put your trust in me and when the hard times come I'll be there you and I'll sustain you and I'll enable you to get through it and I will gird you up and I will encourage you but if your foundation is anything else and these bad times come they'll wipe you out you won't have the staying power you won't have the spiritual stamina you'll just engage in one big long pity party oh why me what did I do to deserve this why that to happen why aren't I protected from this this is typical language of people who don't have the foundation they need this is like I say this is cross dispensational and everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act upon them will be like a foolish man you know what this is saying to me it's saying to me better to have never heard these words of

Christ better to have never heard them than to have heard them and ignored them because then we become more accountable and more responsible because we've been told you're not you live long enough you're going to know your share of heartaches you know what you call that life that's life nobody nobody escapes that nobody escapes the funerals and the hospitals and the operations and all the rest and the losses the losses of loved ones that's life life in this world but if you've got this foundation you'll be sustained you won't cave in you won't want to throw your faith overboard because you'll have an understanding and

Christ gives you that understanding that's part of the foundation the words of mine all under the rubric of Judaism the words of Christ then include all of scripture including what Christ continued to reveal after his ascension and what he revealed to the apostle to the Gentiles and that is a very very important concept to keep in mind so what we are saying in essence is this the words of Christ consist of all of the Bible all of the Bible not just the letters read in the gospels the words of Christ are contained in Genesis to Revelation but you have to take into consideration as Miles

[33 : 47] Coverdale said to whom he was speaking and who was involved who was the audience and when were they spoken and all the rest of it and when you do that you arrive at a settled understanding of what is your responsibility and what somebody else's responsibility when you take into consideration the totality of scripture and you see the progression of revelation how that God doesn't speak his whole mind in any one place but that the Bible is a compilation of doctrine that is on the move and developing and it starts with very little knowledge of God back in Genesis and as you move on through the Bible God is more and more revealed more and more clearly understood and we find a revelation that is updated and it is all from the same authority I think the major problem of Christendom with all of our divisions etc is linked to the concept or the inadequate concept of the inspiration of scripture and when people have an erroneous idea of that they're liable to reach any kind of conclusion and what do I mean by that I mean just what Paul said when he wrote to Timothy all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine reproof correction instruction and righteousness that the man of God may be complete that the man of God may be complete and I might inject there that the man of God may not only be complete but have a firm foundation so when we take the scriptures as they are unfolded with the progressive revelation of God and we see that what Jesus Christ revealed to the apostle Paul updates it updates what is revealed in the gospels and in the book of

Acts it is added on information that wasn't available until Paul came along and God arrested him on the Damascus road and gave him this abundance of revelations so that now now we are able to get the latest word from God and it isn't what was written to the Jew it's what was written to the Gentiles to the body of Christ made up of Jews and Gentiles in one body that's why the letters of Paul to the churches to the churches do you get that not to Israel but to the churches becomes so important that's the update that constitutes our present foundation and when you understand that and begin building your life on this revelation you've got a foundation that can withstand anything this old world can throw at you do you have that foundation have you at some time in your life have you embraced

Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord as your foundation for life and for all of living if you have you can have no better foundation than that if you haven't do you realize that you are building your life upon sand Jesus said it's like a foolish person a foolish person the Bible has a lot to say about fools and it's not pretty a foolish person builds their life upon sand why would anyone do that when you have such an incredible loving capable foundation available to you and you know what it's yours for the asking you don't have to buy it you don't have to pay for it you just have to receive it and

I would invite you to do that even right now would you pray with me please other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid which is Christ Jesus father we are delighted that you have provided such a sure solid foundation upon which we can build a life of purpose of meaning of value of understanding of fulfillment all of these things come when Christ is our foundation we are so grateful that you have been pleased to provide him on our behalf and we pray even now that should there be someone here young or old who has never really consciously deliberately received Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord so as to have him for their foundation would you be so gracious as to convict and convince them of that even now as we close in prayer dear folks each and every one of you would you would you be willing to ask

[39 : 33] God right now right where you are would you be willing to ask God what foundation do I have and dear friend if you honestly have to say you don't know then you don't have the right one but you can have because of what God has made available for you because he loves you more than you could ever imagine because of what he's made available to you you can make Jesus Christ your foundation for building your superstructure life upon it and all you need do is acknowledge admit that you know you're not what you ought to be you know you're not what God requires of you and you're honest enough to admit it and then you simply tell

God that you want to make Jesus Christ your Savior your foundation and with questions and doubts and fears that you might have you know one thing you know you want Jesus as your foundation if you will tell God that Jesus Christ will be yours he's never turned anyone away who has ever come to him and in coming to him you simply are admitting your need of him and his sufficiency would you be willing to do that right now in the privacy quietness of your seat I'm not going to ask you to come forward I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand I'm not going to ask you to do any of those things this is strictly between you and God and if you've done that and you want to make a loving

Savior provided for the utterly completely unworthy which we must admit we all are and thank you for this marvelous sermon on the mount despite the confusion that is engendered throughout much of Christendom there are wonderful nuggets and principles and truths here that we've been able to extract from it and build into our lives as well as along with all of the other passages of scripture and we are so grateful for the revelation you've been pleased to give we pray now that you will speak to any hungry heart here today who is vacillating regarding this decision and cause them to know there is no other acceptable foundation than Christ Jesus our Lord his name we pray Amen Amen