

MORNING CHAPEL MESSAGES

The Sermon of the Mount

MATTHEW 5:1-12.

GOOD MORNING! Our LORD JESUS CHRIST taught his disciples a series of special lessons that we refer to as "The Sermon on the mount." The contents of this "sermon" was written for our learning. Therefore we are safe in saying that this "sermon" has to do with the every day of every Christian's conduct in this present life. we can truly speak of it as the "Christian Manifesto,"

Let us begin with when the Sermon was preached, and where the Sermon was preached, and to whom, the LORD JESUS preached this "Manifesto of the Kingdom of God"

The gospel tells us that this "sermon" was preached when the LORD JESUS was "going about all Galilee;" that "*Seeing the multitudes, [he] went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them*"

The great multitude of the common people were in the background, the LORD had just gathered to himself the men he had chosen to be his witnesses, LUKE tells us that following this "sermon to his disciples, the LORD publicly ordained these men to be his apostles.

Through these men to whom the LORD preached this "sermon," the written gospel is to reach to the ends of the earth, that everyone who names the name of CHRIST is to consider that this sermon is written for their learning.

"JESUS opened his mouth and taught his disciples, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Because it is written for our learning it is imperative that we study it to show ourselves approved unto God workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Every student, if he would profit from his study of scripture, must be a believer in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and must believe that all scripture is God's word, and must, at all times, depend on the Holy Spirit to illumine the portion of scripture that is being examined.

Nine times the words "*blessed are*" is spoken in the introduction to the LORD'S "Sermon" and every "*blessed*" is a paradox, and contradicts the usual thoughts of men.

Our LORD JESUS takes the negatives of this world, the things that are in themselves painful, and sets them up as blessings! When we think of our trials and tribulations as being against us, we are misreading the beneficent purpose of God with his children. "*The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. ... Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.*"

Only in the power of the Holy Spirit of God can any one of us live by the instructions that are laid down for us in the gospel. *"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son JESUS CHRIST, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."*

"Love divine, all love excelling, Joy of heaven, to earth come down! Fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown. Finish then thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be; Let us see thy great salvation, perfectly restored in Thee: Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place, Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.:
AMEN.

MATTHEW 5:3.

GOOD MORNING! Our LORD and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST, said in his sermon on the mount: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ... Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."*

We Christians are more or less familiar with these declarations of blessedness, but the chances are that most of us do not know what these beatitudes really mean to our lives.

What is *"poverty of spirit?"* Do not allow worldly explanations to rob you of that which God's word is saying to you. Our LORD is not saying that weakness is preferable to manliness. "Poor in spirit" is not the opposite to "high spirited." Rather, to be "poor in spirit" is opposite to being of "a proud spirit."

The natural man is bent on trying to save face; to hide his weaknesses and short-comings; but when one is responding to God's will for his life, he is trusting the resources of heaven to be the strength and victory that God has purposed for his life.

Spiritual health is only available to the mendicant spirit: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit. ... Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."*

This then is the blessedness of "the poor in spirit;" and this is the blessedness of "hungering and thirsting after righteousness."

My recognized poverty makes me ready to receive the true treasures of the kingdom of God.

Would you know the blessed life? come to the LORD in the way the precious old hymn puts it: "Other refuge have I none, hangs my helpless soul on thee."

This "blessedness" that promises heaven's response means for every believer the blessedness of belonging to the kingdom of heaven, and being filled with true righteousness.

The Bible shares with us a letter "postmarked heaven," in which the reigning LORD counsels a self-righteous, self-sufficient, self-congratulating church, to *"Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent."*

We have looked at two of our LORD'S blessed are declarations. The other seven have the same heavenly emphasis For *"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."*

I hear thy welcome voice that calls me LORD to thee, for cleansing in thy precious blood that flowed from Calvary. Though coming weak and vile, thou dost my strength assure; Thou dost my vileness fully cleanse, till spotless all and pure. Tis JESUS calls me on to perfect faith and love, to perfect hope, and peace, and trust, for earth and heaven above.
AMEN.

MATTHEW 5:13.

GOOD MORNING! We are reading from our LORD'S Manifesto of the Kingdom of Heaven, in which he is teaching his disciples, -those who, by faith, were committed to him, -those who believed on his name.

This Manifesto, this Sermon on the Mount, is the LORD'S message to all who, by faith, claim a relationship of grace to the LORD and Saviour, JESUS CHRIST. "Ye," the LORD said, "*are the salt of the earth.*"

Among all of the gifts the LORD has given to his own is the new relationship in this present life. "*Therefore if any man be in CHRIST JESUS he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.*" Because all born-again ones belong altogether to the LORD, they have a significant place to fill in this world.

Salt is a commonplace necessity in all our lives, what would we do without salt? Here the LORD JESUS makes salt a symbol of God's children in this present life. What salt is to natural things, so is the Christian to spiritual things.

Were it not for God-fearing men and women in any state, in any country, in any town, in any home, it would morally rot! Because of sin.

Salt is the strong, pungent antagonist of all manner of material corruption, and the LORD is saying to his own, to those who truly believe on his name, "You are the custodians of moral health, the enemies of moral disease." Wherever anything in the life of this earth tends to become rancid there is the real need of the LORD'S salt.

What sort of rottenness threatens this earth's life? Need anyone ask? Human society without the influence of CHRIST'S presence and the change he makes, is a smelly, dead thing; for when the decadent influences of the natural man touch any of the vital, lovely things of this earth, rottenness sets in.

The question is, How is the evil influence to be met and resisted? The sons and daughters of the kingdom of heaven are to be healthy enough, and pungent enough to encounter the evil and to stay it in the same way salt stays rottenness.

The evil in politics is to be confronted; the evil in the world of merchandise is to be met with truth; Christian salt is to be the positive influence of the community, and of the national and the international scene; everywhere Christian salt is to provide the sweetening and healing and cleansing influence without which the very essence of decency would be swept away.

There is another quality to salt that is also representative of the Christian. Salt is a wonderful additive for bringing out flavor in food. Many things would be insipid were it not for salt. The Bible asks, "*Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*"

In many foods a pinch of salt brings about a transformation. Well that is one of the qualities of a Christian life. Think of the dullness that overloads the daily routine, think of the tastelessness of a selfish life! "All is changed when JESUS comes to stay."

Our LORD added a final word on this subject: *"But if salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted?"* Another scripture makes the application: *"Let your speech be always with grace seasoned with salt."* Salt and grace! What a union! And how meaningful this union is! You child of God, in your home in your neighborhood, in your city, in your state are the salt of the earth. Our LORD saith to his own, *"Have salt in yourselves."*

AMEN.

MATTHEW 5:14-16.

GOOD MORNING! The "Sermon on the Mount," found in the Gospel According to MATTHEW is our LORD'S teaching his own disciples how God wants them to live their lives in this world.

He said: *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Light is needed where there is darkness. Christians *"shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life."* Christians are those who are to *"walk as children of light."* Christians are to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."*

What does light do? Light illuminates. Light shows up things the way they are. When you turn on the lights in the house, you can see things just the way they are. Even so a life that has been made right by the gospel of CHRIST, is an illuminator in the world that *"lieth in darkness and the shadow of death."*

When our LORD ascended to the throne as the reigning LORD, he gave his people the responsibility of being lights in the world. Our world cannot behold the LORD JESUS CHRIST, but it can behold his people.

The LORD is the light of the Christian's life; every one who follows the LORD JESUS, *is walking in the light as he is in the light, and is having fellowship with the Father of lights and with the Son of God.*

We are the reflectors of his light. God hath shined into our hearts, giving us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of JESUS CHRIST our living LORD.

The nature and property of light is to illuminate, Our LORD in his instruction is saying be what you are, do not, by wrong living, unconcerned moving about, selfish reclusive conduct hide your light under a carnal obstruction.

Let your light so shine. ... God has freely bestowed his grace in your life, he has justified you by his grace, the Holy Spirit lives within you, you have open communication with the throne of Grace; and the commandment of your LORD is to let your light so shine that men may see your good works, the works which God has called you into his service to be doing; therefore you are to let your light so shine that men and women, seeing your good works, are influenced thereby to glorify your Father which is in heaven.

The Christian's light is to so promote the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, that those who are sitting in darkness may see the LIGHT and themselves become believers in JESUS CHRIST the LORD.

There are many barriers that are obstructions to the light of the gospel of CHRIST, false humility is one, indolence is another, the fear of man, worldliness, are dark covers which must be torn down by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit of God.

Charity, holy diligence, godly courage, and willing obedience to the will of God, are the things that make good light holders.

We Christians are citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and we are to live and serve and love as those who have been delivered out of the kingdom of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. For this is your life!

AMEN.

MATTHEW 5:17,18.

GOOD MORNING! It was in his "Sermon on the Mount" that the LORD JESUS made his declaration concerning the Old Testament scriptures: *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. ... For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

Consider the depth of this declaration. *"I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."* This gracious mission of our LORD is opened up for us in other Scriptures: *"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ... For CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."*

The whole New Testament declares JESUS CHRIST the LORD to be the end (that is, the carrying to completion) of God's holy law. God's law that is presented to us, -written for our learning, is the Holy Bible that we are privileged to listen to and to read and to study and to live by.

Let us examine what this declaration says about the word of God, -the scriptures of truth. *"Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

God himself is the Giver, the Preserver, and the Illuminator of the Holy Bible. Men have, for the last hundred and fifty years, been publishing their own faulty, 'tampered-with-texts,' attempting to make Bible students believe that they must depend upon human scholarship for an up-to-date BIBLE, discarding the one way God instructed that his word was to be copied, "word for word," not thought for thought, nor any other way but simply accepting the word of God to say what it means and mean what it says.

Man's thoughts are not equal to God's thoughts, nor are man's ways, God's ways. In the prophets we read that *"it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps."*

Fellow Christian, it were well for us to hold, to read, and to practice, the Bible that will not pass away as long as heaven and earth remain; because, God's word is forever settled in heaven.

When our LORD quoted the scriptures, and he did so in all that he said, he did not have any of the original manuscripts, he had a copy that had been faithfully copied from an earlier copy that had been faithfully copied in harmony with the instruction of the LORD to the Levites.

Only a word for word copy of a faithfully copied manuscript will bring us the unadulterated, indestructible inspired word, of the Living God.

May we notice that the smallest details of scripture are preserved, for the jots and the tittles complete the words of holy scripture.

The Saviour followed his declaration about the word of God with instructions that described the difference between a true citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and one that was like the scribes and the Pharisees, who obeyed their own traditions rather than believing and practicing the law of the LORD. *“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*

The “righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees” was outward and self-serving, rather than inward and pleasing to God.

The Bible was given to us by the inspiration of God, in order that we might know the truth of God and the plan of God for our lives and the salvation that he so freely offers to us in CHRIST JESUS the LORD. Do you Live by the word of God that our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST came to carry to completion? The faith way is the true way, believing on the LORD JESUS CHRIST as he is presented to us in the scriptures.

AMEN.

MATTHEW 5:20.

GOOD MORNING! In his Manifesto of the kingdom of heaven, the LORD JESUS made a declaration concerning righteousness: *"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

It is quite clear, from this declaration, that our LORD put a high emphasis on righteousness. The New Testament Epistles are the true and authoritative application of the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms.

Here is one such lesson: *"Brethren, my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. For CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."*

There are, according to the scriptures, two kinds of righteousness: God's righteousness, and self-righteousness, and we are taught by scripture the significance of "righteousness," by the statement that God has provided his own righteousness in the person of his only begotten Son; and we are further instructed in the scriptures, that, *"We are all, (by nature) as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God."*

Then, all self-help, and human works, by which men seek to be right with God, are what the LORD JESUS was calling the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. These religious leaders considered that they could make themselves approved with God, they were rejecting the Saviour God had provided, they were rejecting the one way for a righteousness that was acceptable with God. *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."*

The kind of righteousness that the LORD JESUS said was unacceptable in the kingdom of heaven was an external "works-righteousness;" For, *"By grace are ye saved, through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."*

True righteous living is the outward expression of the righteousness of faith. *"Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our LORD JESUS CHRIST: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*

Again the scriptures complete the picture of the kind of righteousness that belongs to the kingdom of heaven. *"But of him are ye in CHRIST JESUS, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD."*

For each one of us it is the blessed privilege to, by faith, receive God's righteousness, which is JESUS CHRIST the LORD. It is written: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD JESUS, and shalt*

believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

JESUS, my Saviour, and my LORD, Thou truly righteous One, Have thou thy way in all my life Till by the cleansing and purifying power of thy gospel I shall become like thee. (2 Cor 3:18 KJV) *But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

AMEN.

MATTHEW 6:1-18.

GOOD MORNING! Our LORD, in his “manifesto of the kingdom of heaven,” -his Sermon on the Mount, spake plainly about spiritual realities, as the following statements from his "Sermon" shows: *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. ... And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: ... But thou, when thou prayest, enter thou into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. ... Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: ... But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”*

May we give our attention to that which our LORD is saying that we are to “take heed to?” We are to be giving alms to those in need; we are to be praying always with all prayer and supplication; we are to give ourselves to fasting, in order to carry forward some particular need that has been thrust upon us; but, we are to take heed that none of these things are done with the purpose of seeking men’s approval and praise, or of advertising ourselves before men.

Each of these things, alms giving; and personal prayers and supplications; and fasting to meet a need in ministry; is to be done between ourselves and our Father in heaven.

Perhaps we have failed to perceive the place “motive” has in things spiritual. Wrong motives can completely negate our alms giving; our personal prayer life; our personal involvement in some particular serving that we know needs spiritual strength.

“Take heed to the motive.” Our LORD is warning us against one of our most subtle foes, a foe that, by hanging people-praise on what we are doing, will completely ruin the results and cause a regression of true spirituality in our own lives.

“Take heed.” It is not that we are to hide our ministry, but that we are not to be caught up in human praise, for it is one of the great distractions of the Christian’s service for JESUS’ sake. *“Ye serve the LORD CHRIST.”*

To be serving the LORD in a way that seeks the praise of men is to merely gain that which we are capable of doing. The LORD said: *“They have their reward.”* That is all the reward that will be forthcoming.

The rewards of men is as insubstantial and short-lived as the blast of the trumpet which is blown before their selfish benevolence.

Let us reach for the eternal reward, not for the trifling things of time. The Christian's heavenly commission is to be doing the will of God from the heart, serving the LORD CHRIST, not the will of man. The "open reward" will come when our LORD JESUS CHRIST shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the gospel of

our LORD JESUS CHRIST. ... When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. *“To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I have overcome and sit with my Father in his throne.*

AMEN.

MATTHEW 6:19-23.

GOOD MORNING! Our LORD JESUS, in his teaching, emphasized where his people were to place their treasures: *Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

All who claim allegiance as citizens of the city of God ought to recognize that God's word, which is the guide book for this our earth life, writes much on the seat of our affections, which is the heart.

In the PROVERBS, wisdom personified pleads: *"My son give me thine heart."* The book of the Law sums up man's duty with these words, *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."*

The prophets of the LORD wrote some shocking things about the human heart: *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"*

The apostles, the Holy Spirit instructed writers of the New Testament text, write concerning the heart: *"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."*

Oh yes! the heart, which is the seat of our affections, counts with God. What we are living for determines the kind of life we live. If our affections are altogether in the things that belong to this earth life, if we are depending solely on this earth to safely keep our treasures, then we have settled for far less than God's purpose is for our lives. The missionary apostle writes: *"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. ... For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."*

There is no comparison between this earth's safety deposit boxes and that which our God has already provided for us in heaven. The treasures we lay-up in heaven, are eternally safe from the corruption of moth and rust, and the thieves that abound in this vale of tears.

In the light of eternity, to be unmindful of the permanent things that have to do with the life to come, is to be short sighted indeed.

"What is your life?" the scripture asks, and the true answer is given, *It is even a vapor, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."*

The wisdom of the eternal world is: *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the*

earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

There is wealth which outlasts this present life and there is a faithfulness which will surely be rewarded when time is no more.

The rich farmer our LORD tells us about in the gospel, lived as if his tomorrow's were his to plan, but he went to a paupers grave, having no treasures laid up in heaven.

Everything that is good, and for the good of human life, can be transformed into heavenly treasures; then, by the grace of God, this is the direction to which our affections should be turned.

May the LORD direct your heart into the love of God, and into the patient expectancy of the return of JESUS CHRIST our reigning LORD.

AMEN.

MATTHEW 6:22-34.

GOOD MORNING! Our LORD included these things in his "Manifesto of the kingdom of heaven:" *"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, the whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

Our LORD is talking about God's standards for those who name the name of CHRIST in the everyday of this present life. In the Epistles this declaration is illuminated: *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

The Christian life begins with the personal response of the heart to the message of the gospel. and, in the very moment you receive the LORD JESUS CHRIST by repentance and faith, you are made a child of God and the Holy Spirit of God takes up his permanent abode within your life.

Every child of God by faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and the life you and I are called upon to live as citizens of the Holy City is carefully laid out for us in the scriptures. *"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of CHRIST. ... Do all things without murmurings and disputings. ... That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke. ... Holding forth the word of life. ... For ye serve the LORD CHRIST."*

Every trial, every temptation, every heart-break and every tribulation that the child of God must pass through in this our earth life, has a God ordained purpose. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

Therefore it is God's will that the Christian keep his eye single to the glory of God. As servants of the Living God, we are to concentrate on the essential things that have eternal consequences.

To attempt to divide our loyalty between the temporal and the eternal, is self-defeating. A very explicit passage of scripture speaks to this: *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."*

A man is a servant of that which controls his mind and heart. Some men are slaves of evil passions; some are bound by the love of the temporal riches of this life; some are driven by destructive covetousness. But the very nature of the Christian life that is in CHRIST JESUS is "other-worldly."

Just as there is only one safe place to put our treasures, just so there is only one loyalty, and that is to *"Love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind, and with all the strength, and to love our neighbor as our self."*

Our LORD summed up his teaching on the focus of loyalty, with these words, *“Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”*

To put such a priority in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, is to be saying plainly that we desire a better country, that is an heavenly; and to such a desire scripture reveals that God is not ashamed to be called our God: for he prepared for us a city, a city which hath foundations, in which a place is being prepared for our eternal dwelling.

AMEN.

MATTHEW 6:33.

GOOD MORNING! If there should come to you this pressing, imperative question, "For what are you living?" "What have you put first in your life?" What would your answer be? What is the compelling "must" of your life?

The LORD JESUS CHRIST, in his manifesto of the kingdom of heaven, has declared for every Christian the supreme quest of life: when he said, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."*

For every one of us there are many priorities clamoring for attention: popularity, fortune, pleasure, health, possessions; acceptance; but the peril that is inherit in every one of these, is that they, by their very nature, intend to be life's controlling factor, assuming first place in our affections and in our interests.

Our LORD knows what the pressures of this life are, *"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."*

Whatever may be the avocation of your life? merchant, business man/woman, homemaker, clerk, student, mechanic, mailman, professional man/woman, to name a few; these things are but the avocations, the daily occupations of this present life, but that which the LORD JESUS is talking about is the priority of your vocation!

The apostle writes by Holy Spirit instruction: *"I therefore, the prisoner of the LORD, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."*

Every born again individual is a member of God's family. It is we whom our LORD and Saviour commands, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."* Yes, the kingdom of God is our true vocation, and the kingdom of God is to govern our avocation, and all other things of this earth life.

Your earthly occupation is for you the means by which you serve the LORD in his bringing to its fullness the kingdom of God. Your occupation, rightly chosen and dedicated, is voiced in the prayer, *"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

To attempt to separate your occupation from the guidance of your true vocation, is to have all of life brought into confusion. has not our LORD declared, *"Ye cannot serve God and mammon?"*

We dare not get so busy "making a living" that we forget what we are living for. Moses, the man of God, was instructed to write for our learning, *"Only take heed to thyself, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy son's sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD Thy God in Horeb."* (Horeb was at that place the nation of Israel entered into covenant with the LORD God.)

Each one of us, by repentance and faith have entered into God's grace covenant. Therefore, as the children of our heavenly Father, we must see to it that we make our occupation the expression of worship and communion and devotion to the LORD our God.

Is this the spiritual arrangement of your life? Are you sincerely, from your heart, seeking first God's kingdom and his righteousness? If this be so, then yours is the royal life.

But, and if this is not so, and the things of this earth are mastering you. *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."*

AMEN.

MATTHEW 7:1-16.

GOOD MORNING! Every one of us who would live as God's children are called upon to live, most assuredly must *"commit the keeping of our souls to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator."*

We have been reading our LORD JESUS' discourse in the gospel according to MATTHEW that is known as "The Sermon on the Mount." With this sermon the LORD was teaching his followers how God would have his children to be living their lives in this world.

Our LORD spake certain intensely practical commandments in the closing portion of this "Sermon" and the first of these is: *"Judge not, that ye be not judged;"* the explanation that follows, is: *"For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."*

This commandment and its explanation is picturing, for those whose desire is to do the will of God, the unworthiness, and, yes the cruelty of our criticism, for criticism's sake. Really, what this kind of conduct originates from is the tempter of our souls.

JAMES, by Holy Spirit direction, writes: *"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you."*

Let us do a little closer examination of this business of our critical *"judging."* Someone will be saying, "How can we help but be judging?" Yes, there are certain kinds of "judging," that is right; but not this kind of judging! For here, our LORD is talking about the taking upon ourselves the censorious judgment of a fellow human's life; and by so doing, failing to recognize that such judgment is wholly in the hand of the LORD, and we know that his judgment is just; He is no respecter of persons; he judges all by the same holy judgment.

We must admit that we Christians tend to take our censorious judging rather lightly, because we fail to hear correctly the seriousness of our LORD'S commandment. Our censorious spirit is not a little thing in the LORD'S sight; for the LORD calls a censorious judge a *"hypocrite!"*

Scripture further teaches us that a hypocrite is one who is set on lowering another person's reputation that it may lift up his own.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for where in thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

Our LORD's instruction is: *"First cast the beam out of thine own eye; then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."*

Scripture further instructs us: *“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”*

We live in a world of pitfalls and temptations and the enslavement of the human spirit by the wicked one. We Christians are to be, with the whole heart, helpers and an encouragement to our fellow man; and this we can be if our hearts are right with God, for then we shall be given discernment as to how we can help our neighbor; which is a far distant thing from “judging him.”

LORD, help me live, from day to day, in such a self forgetful way, that even when I kneel to pray, my prayer shall be for others. Others, LORD, yes others, help me to live for others, that I may live like thee.
AMEN.

MATTHEW 7:7-11.

GOOD MORNING! The practical instructions of our LORD, in his "Sermon on the Mount," are directions for the making of a triumphant Christian life, in this world of stress and strain.

Our LORD continued his teaching of his own followers by saying: *"Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*

God, our heavenly Father, *"The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,"* can be depended upon to take good care of his children. Our asking him in faith is for our own strengthening and understanding.

To the Philippian church, the apostle wrote by Holy Spirit instruction, *"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by CHRIST JESUS. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever."*

This word that the LORD JESUS used, "ask," speaks to our family relationship to our Heavenly Father, and is further emphasized by the scripture: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."*

JAMES, by Holy Spirit instruction, writes: *"Ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."*

Quality communication is well established between our Father in heaven and every member of God's family. All of the resources of heaven are opened to us, but, to be sure, there are those among God's family who desire the satisfaction of things that please the natural man and they do complain that their asking goes unanswered.

Like discontented, unruly children, they want what they want, rather than what the Heavenly Father's will is for a thriving, progressive daily life that has the eternal city as the fulfillment of grace.

The Psalmist wrote plainly to this in the rehearsing of the experiences of the children of Israel. *They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: ... And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul."*

It costs dearly for God's child to attempt to manage that which he cannot, by his very nature, manage. *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."*

Really, then, for God's child there are no unanswered "asking." To be a Christian means that by the grace of God we have been received into God's family. Through our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, *"we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."*

Every child of God can stand on this ground, that the family of God is constantly and fully in the care of *"our Father which is in heaven,"* Asking then is a matter of confidence in the word of the LORD that his ear is attentive to his child's needs. Does he not say, *Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of."*

Consistent, and bountiful, and *"faithful, is he by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son JESUS CHRIST our LORD. ... We may be truly confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST."*

AMEN.

MATTHEW 7:13,14.

GOOD MORNING! In the closing application of his Sermon on the Mount, our LORD JESUS makes an intensive gospel appeal: *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

Many scriptures show us "how" we are to enter the "strait gate." We will examine some of them. But, first, hear again the invitation to *"enter the strait gate,"* in order to get in the narrow way that leadeth unto life.

The way of life is a narrow way because, as an the old hymn puts it, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." I cannot earn God's salvation, I do not deserve it, all of my goodness is as nothing in the sight of the Holy God.

Entrance into life is altogether by the grace of God that is received by faith. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. ... For when we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST died for the ungodly. ... Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace."*

CHRIST JESUS the Son of God. is the one true Saviour. *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man CHRIST JESUS; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. ... The LORD JESUS CHRIST is: the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by him, ... His faithful word is: him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."*

The strait way of life is contrasted by the broad way, that leadeth to destruction. Every one of us were, to begin with, traveling the broad way that leadeth to destruction. *"But God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with CHRIST, (by grace ye are saved.)"*

All, who by faith, receive the gospel by trusting on the name of JESUS CHRIST the LORD, are by God's grace *"changed from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,"* and are now traveling on the narrow way of life.

The *"strait gate"* is the place of choice. God's grace has provided this choice, and he makes it clear that *"Whosoever believeth on him (the LORD JESUS CHRIST) shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same LORD over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

Entering the strait gate is by personal faith in God's Saviour, JESUS CHRIST the LORD, because "many shall seek" by their own methods, to enter, and shall not be able.

Again, God has set a time for entering the strait gate that leads to life by saying, Now is the day of salvation, today is the accepted time, today, if you hear his voice harden not your heart.

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins; and sinners plunge beneath that flood, loose all their guilty stains. E'er since by faith I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply, redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die. Dear dying LAMB, Thy precious blood shall never lose its power till all the ransomed Church of God be saved to sin no more.

AMEN.

MATTHEW 7:15-23.

GOOD MORNING! Our LORD in his sermon to his disciples, a sermon that is written for our learning in the gospel according to MATTHEW, lays special emphasis on the discernment between the right and the wrong, the good and the evil, with which every disciple needs to become personally acquainted: *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ... Not every one that saith unto me LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."*

Here are two areas which are of much concern to all who seek to rescue the perishing, and care for the dying. (Which vocation should be entered into by every one of JESUS' disciples, for we all are saved by the grace of God, *"unto good works which God hath ordained that we should walk in them."*)

First, we must say by the word of God that false prophets have been around since the beginning. A false prophet is one who keeps saying, "Thus saith the LORD," but he is misrepresenting, and misinterpreting, and misquoting, God's written word.

God's written word is infallible, but the false prophet tampers with the text, putting his scholarship to the forefront, questioning the text, dividing it asunder, making man and his philosophy the standard of understanding; whereas the truth is that God's word is illuminated to the believing heart by the Holy Spirit. *"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. ... If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."*

False prophets come as salesmen of the "broad way;" they may even have the skill of Simon Magus, who *"gives out that himself is some great one."*

It is not always a simple matter to identify the false prophet, because he seems to have the gift of well-doing, and he generally has the crowd with him, *"to whom they all give heed, saying this man is the great power of God."*

Our LORD said that we can know false prophets by their *"fruit."* The BIBLE puts it this way, if one comes, not confessing that JESUS CHRIST is come in the flesh, he is a false teacher, a false prophet. The fruit of the false prophet is the bitter fruit that is produced by the enemy of the gospel.

It is the nature of false prophets to put their emphasis on human works, human goodness, human ability to obtain the gifts of God, but they omit the simple truths of the gospel; all the while making you, as their student, dependent upon themselves, as the final authority. *"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."*

Every one professing faith in the LORD JESUS CHRIST needs to be asking the LORD for discernment when they find themselves over awed by another human being. The LORD'S apostle wrote, *"I determined not to know anything among you, save JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified. ... That your faith*

should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. ... Of him are ye in CHRIST JESUS, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD."

Every one of God's ambassadors, regardless of their official capacity, serve, not themselves, but he who has called them to minister.

Our LORD said, "*Beware of false prophets,*" be on your guard. It is on this point that the apostle was instructed to write: "*Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To him be glory both now and for ever.*"
AMEN.

MATTHEW 7:24-29.

Our LORD JESUS' "Sermon on the Mount" -his "Manifesto of the Kingdom of Heaven," is recorded for our learning in the gospel according to MATTHEW; and two things tell us that the whole of MATTHEW chapters 5 through 7 is one and the same discourse of our LORD.

The passage we will read today is clearly the closing application of the LORD'S teaching; and the response of the people indicates that this "sermon" was one complete message, *"And it came to pass, when JESUS had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."*

Then, let us, for our own spiritual profit, examine the LORD'S application of this special teaching: *"Therefore whosoever heareth these saying of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."*

There are here some very important considerations concerning the word of the LORD, and the first is that we must be reading the pure word rather than man's commentary. Second, we must receive that pure word to be, what it is, the very word of the LORD to us, and Three, we must do what the pure word of the LORD instructs us to do.

We should be aware how foolish it is to be careless as to where, and how, and with what, we are building our lives. Human philosophy continually pleads for our attention and the heart of the natural man is greatly desirous of satisfying his own aims and purposes; and, it is obvious, that most men and women live their lives totally unaware of the fact that *"the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."*

To begin with, the scriptures clearly declare that every self-directed life ends in the same place, which is, the place of "death and destruction."

The plea of our LORD'S apostles, when they were with him in the Upper Room, was, "We do not know where you are going, and how can we know the way? to them and to us, JESUS said: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."*

Every one of us has much the self-same trials and tribulations, and temptations, and afflictions; for these things are most common to the human family. *"Although affliction cometh not forth out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."*

The LORD JESUS is emphasizing in this his application, that what he has been saying is so important that we must hear what he says, and do what he says, with a willing heart, in order that our lives may be built upon a sure foundation that can withstand the storms that every life must experience.

We cannot avoid the testing of the storms and floods of this earth life, because our lives are building for eternity; and the only life that will withstand the storms is the life that is built upon the written word of the Living God. *“by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, God gives us his promise, in order that we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even JESUS.”*

My hope is built on nothing less than JESUS' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on JESUS' name. On CHRIST the solid Rock I stand All other ground is sinking sand.

AMEN.

MATTHEW 7:28.

GOOD MORNING! This "Sermon on the Mount" that the LORD JESUS' preached to his followers, closes with the statement that *"It came to pass when JESUS had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."*

Let us examine the impact of JESUS' "Sermon" on the listening multitude: *"the people were astonished at his doctrine."* The LORD'S closing words were that his words were the difference between life and death.

The scribes, who were the official interpreters of the Old Testament holy scriptures, spoke from the interpretations made by earlier teachers, because they had no authority of their own. The LORD JESUS spoke with his own authority as the only begotten Son of his Father. The scribes teaching was weighed down with the traditions of the fathers; JESUS' teaching was the pure, unadulterated word of God.

Whatever men do to modernize God's word takes away its distinctive authority, as it did for the scribes, who by quoting human traditions compromised the one true authority, which was God's word itself.

The LORD JESUS came to us from his Father, He is the only begotten Son of God the Father. All of this book that has been called Holy Bible, is The Son of God's word and as the Psalmist puts it, "Thy word is forever settled in heaven."

The writers of the Bible, some have names, some do not, are described as *"Holy men of God, that spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."*

The missionary apostle, instructing the one who must fill his place on the mission field, wrote, *"Preach the word; ... for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. ... They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* He also wrote: *"Hold fast that form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS."*

Thanks be to the grace of God, we do still have a word for word translation of the scriptures, and when we read it, or hear it read, we have the same experience that the two on the way to Emmaus had, which said, *"Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?"*

Scripture interprets scripture to the believing reader. People, listening to men's tradition, do not experience the aim of the scriptures. God's word is not directed to the brain, it is directed to the heart. *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

To the believer of God's word, the Holy Spirit comes as the Illuminator of the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit impresses the sacred scriptures into our lives, thereby bringing us to the place God has purposed for his children. *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we*

all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Just as it was with the people who were listening to the LORD JESUS on that mountain side in Galilee, so it is with us, when with a believing heart we hear, or we read, from a word for word translation of the Holy Bible, it is God's word, spoken to our hearts.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Do you have a true copy of the Bible? If not, waist no time is obtaining one. And when you do, by faith let your eyes be the open door of your heart's adoration as God's word speaks to your soul. *"O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*

AMEN.