

Building Houses!

Matthew 7:21-29 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.' "Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- What part of this passage stands out to you? I remember the first time I heard this from their point of view. I was trying to imagine their experience - what they heard, how they reacted, and the implications. "Many will say to Me" is what Jesus taught. Can you imagine hearing that? As C.S. Lewis espoused, He was either the Son of God, liar, or lunatic. The text ends with the crowd's reaction: He was teaching as one who had authority.
- But what else do you hear in these passages? Warnings? Yes. Why? Did He come to condemn or save? If we allow God to have control and authority in our lives, will it save or kill us? I was asked to preach on authority, and I'm happy to do so. I hope to instill a balanced and truthful concept of God's authority. We do not serve a cold and distant God. We follow a Lord, Savior, and Father who deserves our service because of who He is and what He's done.

Genesis 1:1, 26-27, In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth . . . Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

- For the purpose of today's study, let's acknowledge two fundamental truths: That God rules over us because He created us and that He loves us in that we were made in God's image.

Psalm 8:3-8 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

- We've also learned, by God's grace, because of His position of authority, that He permitted humanity to take part in dominion over creation. We may not stop to think about life in these terms, yet there it is in scripture.

Hebrews 2:5-9 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels;

you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to Him, He left nothing outside His control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him. But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

- However, a man would enter our world, experiencing the same trials and tribulations as we do. He was also given authority, but it would exceed that of any other man or woman. His jurisdiction was above par, and so was His loyalty to the Father and humanity.

Daniel 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and He came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

- **Matthew 26:64** Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."
 - He was spoken of long ago and unashamed of His role. He understood His purpose. He also had a kingdom that could never be destroyed.

Colossians 1:15-20 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything He might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross."

- To be clear, while Jesus is the creator of all things and people, we, as His body, have a tremendous appreciation of His lordship over the body, which is the church.

1 Corinthians 15:20-28 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under His feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that He is excepted who put all things in subjection under Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all.

- In case it hasn't been made crystal clear at this point, Jesus would reign as King over all - the only exception being the Father. He was wholly devoted to Him.

Luke 4:5-8 And the devil took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and said to Him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. If You, then, will worship me, it will all be Yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, " 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'

- So, Jesus serves as our great example of love & obedience, but we must never forget: He's our King.

Hebrews 1:1-2 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.

- Let's listen to Him, brethren. This leads us to our next area of focus. We are to go to the Word to have the mind of Christ.

John 18:33-38 "So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You over to me. What have You done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world." Then Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world-to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice." Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?"

- We could easily devote a lesson to the authority of Jesus' teachings. However, because of our limited time, I aim to acknowledge that He held all authority but wouldn't be physically present forever. So, Jesus continued His work through the Spirit. The Spirit would communicate God's will through apostles and prophets.

John 14:25-26 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."

Ephesians 3:1-6 "For this reason I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles—assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you, how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

- Jesus Christ was the cornerstone of God's building, and the apostles and prophets were the foundation. Did you notice how not only did Paul give credit to the Spirit, but Paul himself was communicating God's will through the written word? Not saying Paul's oral teaching wasn't authoritative, but what needed to be known and preserved was written down. Take note of Peter's writings:

- **2 Peter 1:20-21** "knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
- **2 Peter 3:15-16** "And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures."

1 Corinthians 2:10-13 "these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the

spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."

- Brethren, if we want God to build our lives (and don't we want Him to be the builder?), then we need His guidance. Jesus came into the world and spoke the truth. The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles and worked through prophets. They wrote down the word of God, which has been preserved, and it guides our lives.

- **2 Peter 1:3** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
- **Jude 3** Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.

Conclusion: **God does good:** You remember the God of Israel who through Moses declared, **Deuteronomy 10:12-18**, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing."

Matthew 9:6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - He then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home."

What kind of home are you going back to today? Who's the builder? Jesus didn't come to condemn, brethren. He came to save us from the wrath to come.