

## Thought for Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

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### Read Matthew 7:24-29

As we read these last 6 verses of the account of the sermon on the mount, we see Jesus is tying everything that he has spoken about together. As I said when we started to look at these 3 chapters, when Jesus begins he is just teaching ‘His disciples,’ but here we see chapter 7 ends with; ‘*When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching.*’ So although Jesus began by teaching his disciples, possibly just the twelve, by the time he got to the end there were crowds, why? Because as the very last verse of chapter 7 says; ‘*he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.*’ You will remember we began with the ‘beatitudes’ or what our attitude should be, because Jesus showed us in his life the way to live and as it says in Philippians 2:5; ‘*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*’ Jesus came to show us that the Mosaic Law was given for a reason and that if we live by it, it is the best way to live our lives. Be salt and light, show people that you are a Christian. You shouldn’t have to tell them, they should see by your actions that you follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus didn’t come to abolish the law, he came to live the law. The law lived in his heart, and rightly so because he was the author of the law because Jesus is God incarnate. So as Jesus spoke on murder, adultery, divorce and oaths, Jesus was giving his Father’s definition of what the Law is about, not how the laws that human religious law makers have interpreted them. Jesus showed in the way he lived his life what he thought of ‘an eye for an eye,’ love your enemies, those were the words of Jesus. ‘*When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your father who is unseen.*’ Although Jesus would go off early in the morning to spend time with his Father. It is about spending quality time with God. Jesus never made a big thing of spending time with his Father, but we know he went off to pray because people found him, they went out to find him. One time, after he had fed the 5,000 Jesus sent his disciples to the other side of the lake, in a boat, while ‘*he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came he was there alone,*’ (Matthew 14:23). There is no account in scripture of fasting, but then again, there is nothing in the Ten Commandments about fasting. The latter parts of Matthew 6 and then chapter 7 are very much human traits. We all want to have ‘things’ around us. We believe ‘things’ make us feel more secure. The people of Beirut have had a torrid time for many years. I’m sure they were starting to think that their country was becoming liveable. The war was over, although things weren’t brilliantly comfortable, things had been worse, then the catastrophic explosion has shattered their lives. Suddenly what little they had was taken from them. We have seen it in this country. As Sue and I were driving back from North Wales we heard on the radio that coach companies, many of them family concerns, were feeling devastated. Everything has been fine in the UK for the vast majority of us, but over the last few years owners of coaches have been encouraged to buy new coaches with all the latest safety bits plus being less polluting. The problem is the cost of these coaches is about £400,000 each one. One small operator had just taken delivery when the lockdown came, so never got to take it on the road and the finance company repossessed it, valuing it at £350,000 meaning the owner lost

£50,000. We never know what is round the corner, none of us, a year ago, saw the Covid19 coronavirus coming, so if you ever needed a reminder not storing up treasures, or worrying, then follow the teaching of Jesus, 6:27; *'Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?'* Don't judge others but come to our Lord and Saviour, *'ask and it will be given to you.'* I hope and pray that looking at this Sermon on the Mount has encouraged you to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. In verse 24 Jesus encourages each one of us; *'Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.'* Jesus knew what it was like to 'build something on a rock' Matthew 16:18; *'I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.'* I am sure you are aware that the name Peter means rock. We know that Peter wasn't perfect, we know Peter took some teaching, but once he learned his lesson, he was the rock that could be trusted. What was it Jesus said about Peter? *'The gates of Hades will not overcome it.'* And that is no mean feat. Again it is about coming to that lovely chorus; *'turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face, and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.'* If we don't turn to Jesus, if we turn away from him and go our own way, then we need to be aware of the consequences; verse 26 & 27; *'everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.'* I'm sure you have seen the devastation caused by the explosion in Beirut, one minute people working away, buildings standing, the next obliteration. I remember something similar a few years ago in Boscastle. Rain had come down over a small area which caused a flood which took swept away buildings and a few cars. Unlike Beirut no lives were lost, although several were badly shaken. *'When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.* I could say, he would wouldn't he, after all Jesus is, as Peter said in Matthew 16:16; *'the Christ, the Son of the living God.'* Can you identify with those words of Peter, can you say that you believe, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I pray you can. Amen.

I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene,  
And wonder how He could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.

*How marvellous! How wonderful! and my song shall ever be:  
How marvellous! How wonderful! Is my Saviour's love for me!*

For me it was in the garden He prayed, 'Not My will, but Thine':  
He had no tears for His own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for mine

In pity angels beheld Him, and came from the world of light  
To comfort Him in the sorrows he bore for my soul that night.

He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them His very own;  
He bore the burden of Calvary, and suffered and died alone.

When with the ransomed in glory his face I at last shall see,  
'Twill be my joy through the ages to sing of His love for me.