

INTRODUCTION

- * "Focusing on the Messiah in the book of Matthew" ... Matthew was a Jewish man writing about the Jewish Messiah to a Jewish audience.
- * The Message of John and Jesus was the same: "Repent (*metanoia - change the way you think*) for the kingdom of the Heavens has drawn near!"
- * Jesus is conveying the Standard of the Kingdom; a standard which is different and higher than that of the world, and which is definitive in nature: you cannot serve the world and God at the same time!
- * Last week, we transitioned into the final phase of this teaching in the 'Sermon on the Mount' in which Jesus reveals that the Kingdom Standard is a Practical Standard. The application of this different, higher, definitive standard should bring discernment to those who follow it.
- * Discernment is the ability to judge well. It is the art of thinking critically without being unnecessarily critical.
- * Jesus discusses our need for discernment in three areas: Our Insights (Opinions), Our Path, and Our Foundation. Today, we consider Our Path.

INSTRUCTION**I. A DIFFERENT STANDARD (5:1-16)****II. A HIGHER STANDARD (5:17-48)****III. A DEFINITIVE STANDARD (6:1-34)****IV. A PRACTICAL STANDARD (Matthew 7:1-29) ... The Application of this Different, Higher, Definitive Standard should bring discernment.****A. Regarding Your Insights (v. 1-12)**

1. A CONSIDERATION OF YOUR IMPERFECTIONS (v. 1-5) ... taking care of your own beam first
2. A CONSIDERATION OF YOUR AUDIENCE (v. 6) ... making sure of the receptivity of the one to whom you are ministering
3. A CONSIDERATION OF YOUR IGNORANCE (v. 7-11) ... asking for wisdom from God
4. A CONSIDERATION OF YOUR MOTIVATION (v. 12) ... are you doing for others as you would have them do for you?

B. Regarding Your Path (v. 13-23; cf. Psalm 1; Proverbs 2:1-15)

1. DISCERNMENT IN CHOOSING YOUR WAY (v. 13-14)

a. The Way of Destruction

i. *IT'S GATE IS W* _____ii. *IT'S PATH IS B* _____iii. *IT'S END IS D* _____iv. *IT'S PARTICIPANTS ARE M* _____

b. The Way of Life

i. *IT'S GATE IS N* _____ (*John 14:6; 8:19,23-24*)ii. *IT'S PATH IS A* _____* *cf. Luke 13:24; Joshua 1:7-9** *cf. Mark 3:9; 2 Corinthians 1:6; 4:8; 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:6,7; 1 Timothy 5:10; Hebrews 11:37*iii. *IT'S END IS L* _____ (*John 5:24*)iv. *IT'S PARTICIPANTS ARE F* _____

2. DISCERNMENT IN CHOOSING YOUR TEACHERS (v. 15-23)

cf. 2 Corinthians 11:1-15; Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:18-22; Jeremiah 23:13-15; Ezekiel 12:24-25; James 3:1

a. A Consideration of their F _____ (cf. Matt 12:33; Psalm 1:3; Psalm 92:13-14; Galatians 5:19-24)

b. A Consideration of their J _____

i. *The C* _____ *of False Prophets* (cf. Deut 13:1-5; 18:18-22)ii. *The C* _____ *of Salvation* (cf. 2 Tim 2:19; John 10:14, 27-30; Matt 25:12; Gal 4:9; 1 Cor 8:3; 1 Jn 2:3-4)**C. Regarding Your Foundation (v. 24-29)**

INTROSPECTION

* WHO ARE YOU FOLLOWING?

TO WHOM DO YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME LISTENING?

* WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU - AN EASY LIFE, OR A GOD-PLEASING LIFE?

* DOES YOUR LIFE REFLECT ONE WHO "KNOWS" GOD AND IS "KNOWN" BY HIM?

WHAT KIND OF FRUIT IS BEING PRODUCED ON THE TREE OF YOUR LIFE?

* WHERE IS YOUR PATH LEADING? (IT IS A DECISION THAT HAS ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES!)

* IS THERE A NEED TO "CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK" ... AND, THEREFORE, ACT?

INTERACTION ... Thoughts & Questions to ponder for later discussion

It may be helpful to re-read the passage before the discussion.

- * How does this portion of Scripture apply to us as an assembly?
- * How do we discern "false teachers" today?
- * What are other passages that discuss "knowing God" and it's implication toward eternal life?