

Today we come to the conclusion of this fascinating sermon on the Christian life – its values, benchmarks and precepts. It is a sermon of who is saved and who is not. It is a sermon of who belongs to God’s kingdom and who is of the lost world. Two weeks ago Jesus defined the blessings of the kingdom. He taught the blessing of being a Christian outweigh poverty, pain, and persecution. He also told us the fate of those who inflict persecution on believers. Last week Jesus defined true Christian character and his redemptive love that goes far beyond the expectations of the world. Today in conclusion Jesus addresses a believer’s commitment to him. The words of Jesus and all of Scripture including the writings of his Apostles give depth and the boundaries and the promises for this life and of eternity for those who commit to the Christian life, who commit to be followers of Jesus, for who Jesus is their Teacher and Master. In this conclusion to his sermon, Jesus gives us three ways in which we are to relate to what he has taught and how these teachings are to impact our lives; they are, Seeing what Jesus says, Bearing what Jesus says and Doing what Jesus says.

SEEING What Jesus Says

Reading from Luke chapter 6 beginning at verse 39, “**He Jesus also told them a parable: ‘Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, “Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,” when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of**

your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.' ”

The first thing to observe is what Jesus says about being blind. To see spiritually involves our senses of seeing, hearing and understanding his words, but beyond this, one must accept Jesus' words as divine truth before one does anything about them. If we do not fully believe Jesus' teachings, they will have little impact. So Jesus begins his conclusion by asking us to see ourselves as blind people in need of a guide. This is the absolutely essential place where we must begin - admitting our spiritual blindness apart from Christ. We will not see Jesus's words as we ought nor hear his words as we ought nor will we internalize them as we ought and without seeing hearing and internalizing Jesus' words into our heart and mind we will not follow them as we ought. If we think we can get by with our own wisdom or the wisdom of the other blind guides who offer themselves to us - we will indeed fall into the pit of this world. Admitting our spiritual blindness is the first step to seeing what Jesus says is eternal truth.

A practical example of what I am trying to communicate can be found in the writing of neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks. In 1995 he wrote about Virgil, a man who had been blind from early childhood. When he was 50, Virgil underwent surgery and was given back the gift of sight. But as Virgil and Dr. Sacks found out, **having the physical capacity for sight is not the same as seeing.**

Virgil's first experiences with sight were confusing. He was able to make out colors and movements, but arranging them into a coherent picture was more difficult. Over time he learned to identify various objects, but his habits - his behavior - were still those of a blind man who had lived over 40 years as blind. Dr. Sacks asserted in his writing, “**One must die as a blind person to be born**

again as a seeing person. It is the interim, the limbo . . . that is so terrible.” It is the same in one’s spiritual life - to truly see Jesus and his truth means more than observing what he did or said, it means dying to oneself and being reborn with spiritual sight - a change of one’s identity. We can no longer live as a blind person in this fallen and dark world, but as Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth God makes believers new creations.

Our blindness while in the world, of course, is not absolute. Even a pagan or an atheist can see Jesus as a good person or teacher. Even Islam believes Jesus was a prophet, but not the Christ. So a little light does get past the log in the eyes of those who are spiritually dead and this is what makes admitting our blindness to spiritual things so difficult. We can see that we can see some things, but how do we know that there is more? A person was once asked how he liked his new glasses said, “I like them just fine,” and then continued, “except that everything looks sharper than it really is.” Even with his vision corrected, he was still allowing his previous, default sight to define his new reality! You may not see this as a log in your eye, maybe you relate to having a filter that changes what comes into your eye and defines reality. In photography class we learned how to use different filters and lens to change the reality of the photo and this made something different from the real. What people saw when they looked at the photo was an altered reality. This is what Satan has done with the world.

So, our spiritual vision is distorted by sin, by the filter Satan uses to give people a false altered reality or by the log in their eye. This false reality will continue until we come to believe in Christ and until this happens a person has no way of knowing how much of what they perceive as reality - has be altered. It is sin that places the log in ones eye and keeps one from seeing the truth. This is easy to illustrate by using a focal point of our society. Think about the abortion issue.

All the light and evidence and science of genetics and biology and logic is on one side of that debate; giving consistent and clear testimony to the fact that the human fetus is an individual human being by every scientific benchmark that can be brought to bear. The baby has a heartbeat and brainwaves within 8 weeks. Yet this light can make no headway; the truth is blocked by the log in the eye of our society's sinful commitments to sex without responsibility and the pursuit of personal convenience as its highest value. This blindness can be observed in another area, Hebrews 10:24 & 25 instructs us, "let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." We are to be in relationship with each other and not forsake the assembling of believers together. But there are people in whom the light of God in these verses is ineffective against the log in their eye of personal pride and the refusal to be reconciled with their brethren or of their refusal to submit to godly accountability. I am not talking about overt and intentional rebellion. The people I have in mind can read right past these verses without seeing anything contradictory to their lifestyles of individuals and as isolationists, just as many secular people really cannot see the truth - that abortion is murder.

Now, these particular spiritual blind spots are obvious to many, but only if they do not happen to be your blind spots. The difficulty is that we all have our own log in our eye and our own resulting blind spots. The very nature of blind spots is that you do not and indeed cannot see them. So we all desperately need two things: a guide with spiritual sight and secondly, surgeon to perform a "logodectomy" – the removal of the log from our eye. Christ alone is the adequate answer to both of these needs. He is our spiritual guide through the systematic study of his Word; we are to seek his truth and its application to all the questions

and problems of life. Jesus gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit to give us discerning spiritual wisdom. He gives us the second also; he is the surgeon removing the log from our eye, in response to sincere prayer and asking him through his Word to identify and remove the specific blind spots that still remain in us. For either of these to happen we must begin by admitting our need, our blindness, and for our sin to be exposed for we cannot see them, we are blind to them. Jesus and His Spirit are the only ones who can do this. In addition, this is also the reason for developing deep relations with other believers – for your weakness is not theirs and theirs is not yours. God often speaks to us through others he sends, but one must hear with their mind and heart in order to see.

BEARING What Jesus Says

We continue with Jesus' teaching – we are to bear what he says. Reading at verse 43, “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,⁴⁴ for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.⁴⁵ The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

Seeing what Christ says is necessary but not sufficient. Christian truth is not merely academic, but it is all meant for use in the real world, in everyday living. Intellect must lead to action or we cannot really claim even to have “seen”. But even action is not enough; transformation or new creation is the goal. That is why Jesus in verse 40 gives us the principle that the purpose of discipleship – as we learned earlier, a disciple is one committed to learning and living as their teacher. A disciple desires to be like their teacher or master. Is your teacher and master Christ or the world? Verse 40 give us the principle, our teacher, Jesus wants us to

see and verses 43 to 45 illustrates this principle with the mental picture of trees and fruit and good or evil that is in ones heart. We are to become good trees producing good fruit because our very nature is becoming more Christ-like. We are to strive to be good men and women bringing good things out of the treasures of our hearts because it is Christ that now lives in our hearts. Citing chapters and verses of the Bible is not enough; even acting on them in an outward and mechanical manner is not enough. Being like Jesus is the goal and nothing less will do. Dying to self and living for Christ is the goal. As Paul instructed, believers “are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10) When we live as Christ lived our good works flow out of his love that lives in us – we are good trees producing good fruit.

Apostle Peter inspired by God wrote, “coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,⁵ you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:4-5) Jesus removes out hearts of stone we inherit as sinners and replaces it with a heart of flesh. How do we become more like Jesus? By being his disciple. By recognizing our need of him as our life’s guide and he is the eye surgeon of our heart removing the log of sin and we submit to him fully, giving him our hearts and when our hearts are surrendered to him then the mind will follow as we spend time with him in his Word and practicing what he preaches, not in outward straining to fit a mold but in faith and in dependence on his Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that truly transforms us from within. It is by the lifelong process of being his disciple that we grow more Christ-like. There are no shortcuts.

This then is how we should measure our spiritual progress. Are you more like Jesus than you were a year ago? Do you love more redemptively and unconditionally than you did a year ago? Do you think like Jesus more than you did a year ago? Do your priorities reflect His priorities, as your Teacher and Master, more than they did a year ago? Is your meat and drink to do the will of the Father? Are you more Christ-like than you were a year ago? If not, what have you been doing? You have just wasted an entire year! If one wastes a year then they have not achieved anything for the kingdom. Without surrender to Christ and a commitment to living like Christ one is nothing but blind, an aimless wander, getting nowhere while leading other blind people into the ditch, and trying to operate on the log in their eyes from the darkness of the world! Let us not be satisfied to be his professing believers; let us be his disciples indeed and so become more like Christ – more like our Teacher – more like our Master and living for his glory.

DOING What Jesus Says

You have heard the saying we should not be humans doing but humans being. Our society emphasis it is all about “me” and in general we do not take time for others. As Christians we need to understand “being” what Jesus teaches us to be, does not take away the need of doing what he says. Reading verses 46 to 49, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house

was great.” Taking Jesus’ teachings into ones heart gives one a desire for the only “doing” that is of value. It is a doing that flows out of spiritually being born anew and flows out of Jesus’ love that is now in us.

If we are truly seeing what Jesus says and becoming what he says, then we will not be going through the motions but will truly be doing what he says as we live as our Teacher, as we submit and give our lives to following our Teacher. This is where the rubber meets the road. For then, we will not just be theoretically committed to forgiving our debtors, but actually accepting them back into fellowship and closing the books on their offenses. We will not just be theoretically committed to the truth of Scripture but actually studying and living by the whole teaching of Scripture. We will not just be theoretically committed to evangelism but actually giving sacrificially to missions and witnessing for Christ effectively ourselves because now we are truly representing Jesus in more than just our words. Then we will not tithe out of being theoretically Christians of obligation but giving of our money freely for his kingdom work for Christ is our treasure. The question we must ask ourselves this morning is, “How much of our commitment to these things is merely theoretical?” If the answer is “too much,” you will not change it by taking my words as a guilt trip. You will change by truly seeing what Jesus says, bearing what he says and then doing what he says.

The consequences of seeing, bearing, and doing - or not - are laid out graphically in verses 48 to 49, the familiar parable of the two houses. The wise man built his house upon the rock, the foolish on the sand. What we are building of course is our lives. If our lives are not built on the solid foundation of what Jesus says and built on that foundation by seeing, bearing, and doing as our Teach instructs, then we will see everything we have spent our lives focused on come to nothing. One’s life is built upon Christ or it is built with one foot in the kingdom

and one in the world and we know that no one can serve 2 masters. Man can lay no lasting foundation, the only lasting foundation that will weather all the storms of life must be laid by Jesus Christ.

The foundation is important! Indeed it is the most important part of any building and the foundation of life is the Word of Christ, and the only building on that foundation that matters is seeing, bearing, and doing as our Teacher and Master instructs in the divine words of the Bible and then living for his glory because of our love for Jesus.

Closing

What the Lord is saying here in this passage is, "Take me seriously!" Do not just go through the motions of religion. It is a waste of time. It matters, it eternally matters, whether you see and understand what Jesus is saying, whether you are letting him guide you and letting him take the log out of your eye, whether you as a result are becoming more like him. In you are surrendered to him then you are able to live and do what he says, not in mechanical conformity but because it flows from the treasure of your heart and your love for Jesus. Much is at stake - whether your life will be fulfilled or futile, worthwhile or wasted, erected on the Rock or sinking in the sand. The storm is coming. How will your house withstand the flood? These are the questions you need to answer. What is truly your treasure? What you see, bear and do will testify will define what your true treasure is.