



ST. MATTHEWS
Experience God's Family

Sermon Title: **Two Builders, one King!**

Sermon Date: **11 December 2011**

Preacher: **Colin Retief**

I want us to look at some teaching of Jesus that comes at the end of probably one of his most popular sermons, the sermon on the mount.

If you were living in the first century AD, and were a Jew and you heard this sermon from Jesus it would have been groundbreaking stuff.

It would have been the kind of teaching that would have made you sit back and re-evaluate everything you had been taught as a Jewish person.

The things that Jesus had to say in the sermon on the mount would have seemed to contradict a lot of what the first century religious leaders would have been teaching.

A lot of the teaching amongst the Jews in the first century, would have had to do with externals, would have had to do with getting it right on the outside, an outward obedience of the law.

And if you read through the Sermon on the mount, you'll see that Jesus emphasizes the fact that although we may seem to get it right externally, we're not getting it right until something happens internally.

The sermon on the mount has to do with the Heart, and the bottom line is that our hearts are evil, we are evil on the inside.

Now you may not want to hear that this morning, but this is what the Bible teaches us.

Paul, in the book of Romans, quotes an Old Testament Psalm and says, "there is no one righteous, not even one".

In other words, we are all corrupted in our hearts, that is what keeps us from knowing and experiencing a relationship with God, and spending eternity with Him.

So I want you to imagine that you're living in the first century, (I know it's early in the morning and some of you are still waking up), but imagine that you're living in the first century.

And you're listening to this new teacher on the scene, his name is Jesus, and he is sitting down talking to his disciples.

And you're quite amazed as you sit there because he is teaching with such authority, there's just something about what he is saying, and he seems to know what he is talking about.

So you're sitting listening to Jesus, and you think you're not such a bad person.

You attend Synagogue every week, You give your money to the synagogue, you're not a murderer, or a thief,

you may have lied on the odd occasion, but those were really just white lies, and you had to do it otherwise you'd be fired from your job.

But as you listen to Jesus teach he starts to make these statements, that make you sit up and take note of what he's saying, listen to what he says.

"You have heard that it was said to people long ago, "do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgement."

So you're sitting there thinking. "Well, I've never quite murdered anyone, but I've certainly been angry.

I've never expressed that anger so that it gets to the point of murder, but Jesus is saying that I'm guilty of the same thing as murder, if I've even so much as gotten angry.

You see, it's the anger itself that is the root of the sin, and it makes you subject to judgement.

Often we try and justify our anger, by assuming that our lives are exceptional, or thinking that there are situations when we are allowed to angry with people.

Like when you're sitting on Koeberg Road in heavy traffic, and a taxi or a bus just pulls up in front of you, we often don't feel it's wrong when we get angry at that and we even justify calling people all sorts of names.

Some of you may ask at this point, what about righteous anger? Didn't Jesus get angry? Wasn't it Jesus who got so angry one day that he went into the Synagogue and threw the tables over?

Yes it was, and there certainly is a time for righteous anger. We need to get angry at injustice, when people are denied their rights.

We need to get angry when people don't give God his rightful place, those kinds of things *should* impact our emotions.

The bottom line is that we should get angry at Sin, our problem is our anger is aimed at the sinners.

And then Jesus says, "You've heard it said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

But Jesus that's a bit harsh. Those are just my thoughts. It's not affecting anyone else's life by me thinking those things.

The truth of the matter is that often it does end up affecting those around you, and even if it didn't, it shows that your heart is not right.

Now you'll notice as you read through the gospels and you take a look at the life of Jesus and those people that he came into contact with, his teaching didn't always go down too well.

And his teaching especially didn't go down too well with those people who lived a very good life on the outside, many of the religious people of the day.

For some people it was quite easy to appear to be living a clean life on the outside, but if you're sitting here this morning and you're a human being, you'll know how difficult it is to keep your thoughts and hearts clean.

What Jesus is saying in this sermon is that we can't measure up to the law.

No human being is capable of keeping the law, because their hearts are not right, you and I are not capable of keeping the law, because our hearts aren't right.

So you may wonder then, what is the point? Why should I even try, if I'm not able to keep God's commands?

What is it exactly that Jesus expects of me as a follower of his? Well, let's look at what Jesus has to say. Matthew 7:21.

²¹ "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Now those seem like pretty harsh words and they are. I don't know if you've ever been rejected. Maybe you've been rejected by a friend, who doesn't really want to hang out with you anymore.

Maybe you've been rejected by someone telling you that they just want to be friends, when you've been expecting something more.

Maybe you've experienced other kinds of rejection, like not making it into a university, or college.

Maybe a friend of yours had a party and didn't invite you.

None of us like rejection of any kind, but all of that rejection pales into insignificance when we look at the rejection that takes place here in these verses. *I never knew you, away from me, you evildoers.*

I don't know about you, but I certainly don't want to hear these words from Jesus. *I never knew you, away from me you evildoers.* These words are harsh and these words are final.

When I was at Bible College, we would on the odd occasion have to ask for extensions on our assignments, and providing we had good reasons the lecturers were quite gracious, most of the time.

But I think if we pushed our luck and took advantage of their graciousness, there would probably come a time when they would put their foot down and say enough, I'm giving you nought.

Well, it's a bit like that with God. He shows us Grace. He is all about second chances, because if he wasn't then none of us would have a hope.

But if you're just trying our luck, just going along for the ride, doing all the things right externally, but your heart is not right, you will hear those harsh words from Jesus, "away from me you evildoer".

Do you notice how Jesus some very extreme examples of people wanting to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Look at verse 22: ²² *Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?'*

Often we think that people are rather spiritual don't we, when we see them do impressive things in the name of Jesus.

But Jesus says here that it doesn't matter what you've done, unless you've done the will of my father who is in heaven.

It boils down to the heart, it all comes down to motive, we can do impressive things, and even do them in the name of Jesus, but who's will are we doing? The will of the father or our will?

Jesus is again making a point about what people do externally, what you do externally isn't going to get you into heaven.

Showing people how great you are, or even trying to show God how great you are, isn't going to get you into the kingdom.

You see, it has nothing do with your greatness, and everything to do with God's greatness, which is why we need to do the will of the father.

Have you ever found yourself doing something good, which makes you feel good about yourself, and it makes you feel more worthy of knowing God and being in a relationship with Him.

It makes you feel that God must be proud of you and he must love you more because of this good deed or whatever it is that you have done.

If Jesus had to say to people on the day they die, "why should I let you into heaven?" what would your comment be? What would you say?

Lord, I gave all that money to charity. Lord I was a good husband and father. Lord, I was a good wife and mother. Lord I taught in kids church for all those years.

Lord I sang in the choir, I played in the church band, I was at church 90 percent of the time. I was even on the church council.

Lord I even preached in church.

Away from you evildoers. I never knew you.

It's important to note at this point that just before this section Jesus has been talking about false prophets, wolves in sheeps clothing.

And Jesus talks about the fact that you will recognize them by their fruit, that a good tree will produce good fruit.

So are you a good tree?

If you're an apple tree, you will produce apples, and if you're a pear tree you will produce pears.

Generally speaking, pear trees don't produce apples and vice versa, unless they're part of some genetic experiment.

ie. If you're a Christian, you'll produce Christian fruit, and if you're not a Christian, you won't.

The question then is, "what is Christian Fruit?". According to Jesus, here, the answer is doing the will of the father.

NB. Producing Christian fruit isn't what earns us our way into eternity, or earn us a relationship with God, But Christian fruit is a response, of someone who has been saved by God.

So: you need to ask, "am I producing Christian fruit?" / or "am I doing the will of the father?"

James 2:14 says: *what good is it my brothers, if a man claims to have faith, but has not deeds? Can such a faith save him?*

So yes, we need to be doing good "stuff", we need to be obeying God's word/s, but it needs to stem from our faith. True faith will produce true fruit.

Throughout the sermon on the mount, Jesus has been emphasizing that our hearts need to be changed, because it's in our hearts where the problem lies.

Jesus ends the Sermon on the mount, by talking about 2 builders. The wise and the foolish. He says that those who hear his words and put them into practice are like the builder who built his house on the rock.

The rains come, the floods come and beat against the house, the house doesn't fall. Why? Because it's foundations were built on the rock.

Jesus also mentions those who hear his words and don't put them into practice, they are like the man who built his house on the sand, the foolish man.

So rain, and floods come, streams rise up, and it falls with a great crash.

So the question that this leaves you with is : are you the wise or the foolish man. Is your house built on rock or sand?

Do you want to be someone who's house is built on the rock? Then hear the words of Jesus and put them into practice.

ie. Do the will of the father. ie. Produce Christian fruit.

Are you a wise or foolish builder?

What have you done with the words of Jesus? What have you done with God's words given to you in Bible.

Many people don't want to accept the words of Jesus, because it means they'll have to accept that they're sinners who need a saviour.

Throughout the book of Matthew, you see people's response to the king. The sermon on the mount is the message for citizens/subjects of God's kingdom, those who are wanting to live under the rule of King Jesus.

Those who want to hear the words of the king and put them into practice.

Jesus wasn't just another teacher, he was the king, the authority. Matthew 7:28 (the end of the sermon on the mount). *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.*

Are you living under the rule of the king? Not just when it's convenient, or when things are going great, but consistently.

Barbara Woodhouse, the famous dog trainer, wrote a book, called, "No bad dogs". I haven't read the book myself, but i was emailed this quote from the book.

"In a dog's mind, a master or a mistress to love, honour and obey is an absolute necessity. The love is dormant in the dog until brought into full bloom by an understanding owner. Thousands of dogs appear to love their owners, they welcome them home with enthusiastic wagging of the tail and jumping up, they follow them about their houses happily and, to the normal person seeing the dog, the affection is true and deep. But to the experienced dog trainer this outward show is not enough.

The true test of love takes place when the dog has got the opportunity to go out on it's own as soon as the door is left open by mistake and it goes off and often doesn't return home for hours. That dog loves only it's home comforts and the attention it gets from it's family; it doesn't truly love the master or mistress as they fondly think. True love in dogs is apparent when a door is left open and the dog still stays happily within earshot of it's owner. For the owner must be the be all and end all of a dog's life."

The real test of our citizenship of the kingdom is found in this: when we have an opportunity to wander away, to disobey, or when things are going bad, when the storms of life come. Are we going to stick with the words of Jesus and put them into practice, and live under the rule of the king?