FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · DAY 2 · HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)

Student Lesson

Jesus Teaches Me: Hear and Do! | The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29)

Text: Matthew 5:1-16; 6:9-13, 33; 7:12, 24-29

The Sermon on the Mount and the Wise and Foolish Builders

Matthew 7:28-29 tells us how the first audience reacted to the Sermon on the Mount: "the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." The scribes quoted other rabbis. Jesus said, "But I say to you." He spoke as the One who has the right to tell us how to live.

The sermon is a blueprint for disciples. It starts with character (Matthew 5:3-12). Your attitude is one of the keys to how you will receive the words of Jesus. It moves to influence: salt and light, so that others "may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Then Jesus goes to the heart: anger as well as murder, lust as well as adultery, honesty without oaths, and love for enemies (Matthew 5:21-48).

In chapter 6 Jesus addresses motives. Do you give, pray, and fast to be seen by people or by God (Matthew 6:1-18)? The pride of doing good to be praised by others is still with us. Then He addresses priorities: treasure in heaven, a single focus, freedom from worry, and "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:19-34).

Chapter 7 calls for decisions: how we treat others (Matthew 7:1-12), which road we take (7:13-14), which teachers we trust (7:15-23), and which foundation we build on (7:24-27). Notice that both builders heard the same words and faced the same storm. Storms come to everyone. The only difference was obedience.

Jesus taught by words, by actions, by being close to people, and by stories. But He never taught just to inform. He taught to transform. James says it plainly: "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). Following Jesus is not proven by how much we know, but by what we do with what we know.

> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."
>
> **Matthew 7:24 (NKJV)**

Four points to remember

- Jesus is the greatest Teacher. He taught "as one having authority" (Matthew 7:29).
- Jesus teaches us how to live: be salt and light, love others, pray, and seek God first (Matthew 5-7).
- Hearing is not enough. The wise person hears Jesus and does what He says (Matthew 7:24; James 1:22).
- A life built on Jesus' words stands strong when storms come (Matthew 7:25).

Background

- Jesus sat down to teach (Matthew 5:1). In that culture, rabbis normally sat while teaching.
- Many houses in Galilee were built of stone. Dry streambeds could flash flood in a heavy rain, washing away anything built on sand.
- Luke 6:20-49 records a similar sermon, sometimes called the Sermon on the Plain.
- "Authority" (Matthew 7:29): the scribes quoted earlier teachers; Jesus spoke on His own authority ("But I say to you," Matthew 5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44).

Discuss

1. What does it mean that Jesus taught "as one having authority"? How should that change how we read His words?
2. Jesus addresses the heart, not just actions (Matthew 5:21-28). Why does He go deeper than outward rules?
3. Matthew 6 talks about doing good to be seen. Where do you see that temptation today, including on social media?
4. What does "seek first the kingdom of God" look like for a student?
5. Read James 1:22. How can someone deceive themselves by only hearing?

Live it

- Choose one command from Matthew 5-7 and practice it every day this week (for example, Matthew 5:44 or Matthew 7:12).
- Pray the model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) slowly each morning, thinking about each line.
- Do one good work quietly this week without telling anyone (Matthew 6:3-4).

Further reading: "31 Days with Jesus" at The Preacher's Pen (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/): Day 14: The Sermon on the Mount (Embracing Jesus' Blueprint for Faith); Day 18: The Parables of Jesus (Lessons for Life); Day 20: Jesus Teaches on Prayer.