

WHO ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

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November 22, 2020

Matthew 5:21-48

1. Jesus Christ is the author, the focus, and the interpreter of God's Word.
2. On the Mount of Transfiguration Peter, James, and John saw Jesus conversing with Moses, who represented the Law, and Elijah, who represented the Prophets.
3. Then the cloud of God's presence overshadowed them, and they heard a voice coming out of the cloud saying, "This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him." Luke 9:35
4. Peter, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time **the Spirit of Christ within them** was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look." 1 Peter 1:10-12
5. If we would know, and properly apply the Word of God, we must depend upon the Holy Spirit rather than just trusting in people.
6. Paul made that clear in 1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; 7 but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; 8 the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; 9 but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

10 For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. 15 But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. 16 For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.

7. My goal today is to identify the problem Jesus was dealing with in the verses we are considering along with His answer to the problem.
8. Jesus highlighted the problem in Mark 7:1-9.

The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus **observing the traditions of the elders**; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other

things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "**Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?**" 6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. 7 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' 8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." 9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.

7. What Jesus said here was not a commentary on the Law of Moses, rather it was an attempt to correct man's misinterpretation and misapplication of the Law.

NOTE: The Law as interpreted by the Jewish elders dealt primarily with externals rather than internals.

8. A summary of these verses implies that in relationship to the Word of God men often get it wrong, Jesus is always right, and in Jesus Christ men can get it right.

9. Here Jesus repeatedly stated, "You have heard, but I say."

10. He was telling His listeners that what they were hearing at the Temple and in their synagogues related to keeping the Law was not in keeping with God's original meaning or intent.

11. In His discourse He included six examples.

I. The elders were wrong about the scope of the Law. 21-26

A. They did not understand that it involved more than outward actions towards others.

B. Jesus said they would be judged by their thoughts and their unwillingness to seek reconciliation with others.

II. The elders were wrong about issues related to morality. 27-30

A. They did not understand that an outwardly moral person could be immoral in God's sight.

B. Jesus taught that immorality has its root in a person's heart, and that it is to be dealt with decisively.

III. The elders were wrong about what the Law meant related to divorce. 31-32

A. They thought that the provision related to certificates of divorce was for their benefit, rather than for the protection of their wives.

B. Under their interpretation a wife could be sent away for almost anything as long as she was given a certificate stating why she was sent away.

C. Jesus stated that the only valid reason for divorce was infidelity.

NOTE: Under Divine Inspiration the Apostle Paul added desertion by an unbelieving spouse. See 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

IV. The elders were wrong related to vows. 33-37

A. They used vows as a way to control and manipulate people.

B. Jesus pointed out that our word on any matter should be enough, and that a person of integrity should simply say, "Yes," or "No."

V. The elders taught that the Law allowed retribution. 38-42

A. The purpose of the Law was to limit the application of justice to fit the crime.

B. Those who administered justice were to be the duly appointed authorities.

C. Jesus taught that from a personal perspective we are not to be retaliatory; rather we were to be accommodating, forgiving and redemptive.

VI. The elders taught that love had its limits. 43-48

- A. They taught that the responsibility to show love did not extend beyond those who showed love towards us.
- B. Jesus stated that our love towards others is to mirror God's love towards us.

APPLICATION

1. Many people today teach and embrace a legalistic approach to Christianity, when in reality, Christianity is about living out an intimate relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Rather than constantly worrying about rules we ought to be constantly focusing on our relationship to God, and if that relationship is what it ought to be our lives will be in conformity to His will and purpose.
3. As we live out our lives here are some questions we might ask ourselves that were suggested by Martyn Lloyd Jones.
 - a. Has God been supreme in my life today?
 - b. Today have I lived to the glory and the honor of God?
 - c. Do I know Him better?
 - d. Have I a zeal for God's honor and glory?
 - e. Has there been anything in me that has been unlike Christ—thoughts, imaginations, desires, impulses?
4. I would add one more, and that is, "Does my knowledge of God's Word equip me to discern what is of men and what is of God?"