Matthew 7 • The Sermon on the Mount (Part 3)

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Matthew 7, Sermon on the Mount, part 3. It's not a terribly long chapter, but boy, I tell you, Jesus covered a lot of ground in this chapter. Let's put a roadmap up on the screen so you can see it as to where we're going.

Matthew Chapter Seven Roadmap

- Judging
- Sharing foolishly
- Good gifts from the Father
- The Golden Rule
- The narrow gate
- A tree and its fruit
- "I never knew you"
- Building on rock or sand

He's going to talk about Judging. About Sharing foolishly, and that means sharing things of your faith. He's going to talk about Good gifts from the Father. We're going to remind ourselves of the Golden Rule. The narrow gate. A tree and its fruit. "I never knew you." And Building on rock or sand.

We begin with everyone's favorite subject of judging. Verse 1, *"Judge not, that you be not judged." (ESV)*

That's where people mostly quit, isn't it? They stop. They quote it just that far and then they just leave it alone. And they stop because they don't want you to judge what they're doing.

But if you really want to know what Jesus is talking about as it relates to judging, you got to keep reading. You got to see the context of what it is he's saying.

Verse 2, *"For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. [3] 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? [4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when*

there is the log in your own eye? [5] You hypocrite, (and that is the context right there) *first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."*

Stop there if you would, please for a moment. The kind of judgments that Jesus is talking about here, and frankly condemning, are hypocritical judgements. He's saying, don't be a hypocrite as it relates to judgment. To judge is not to be a hypocrite, but to judge hypocritically is to judge someone when you, yourselves are doing the same thing. That's a hypocritical judgment.

And by the way, if you want, you say, well, pastor Paul, I don't know if I've ever heard hypocritical judgment, then you've probably never been on social media, right?

Well, anyway, not going to get into all that, but I need to make the point here that Jesus is not forbidding judgments or making judgements. In fact of the matter is, it's impossible to go through a day without making a judgment. Some of you got in your car this morning and you foolishly judged that it was safe to come to church. I'm just kidding. But you had to make a judgment, didn't you? You do it every day. You do it. Yeah.

And so you could also talk about, when you talk about judgments, you can talk about, making or being discerning is another way to put it. We have to be discerning as people. There's no way to be safe in life without making judgments, and understanding and discerning, what is good or bad, or what is right or wrong, or whatever.

What Jesus wants you and me to do is to make good judgments. He doesn't, He's not forbidding us from making judgment. In fact, He says as much in John chapter 7, let me put it on the screen. It says,

John 7:24 (ESV)

"Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

"Do not judge by appearances, (but look what Jesus says, this is Jesus speaking) *but judge with right judgment."*

Right? Is Jesus forbidding all judgments? No, not at all. He says, don't make judgments hypocritical. Here He says, don't make them by mere appearances, but make a good critical judgment. And by the way, we call this good critical thinking skills. It's something that is becoming more rare today for people to have good critical thinking skills. But the message that Jesus is conveying here

about making judgment is to focus first on resolving our own issues, and then reach out to your brother.

Verse 6, *"Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."*

This is one single verse. It's a full message. I could do a whole message on it. In fact, I've done it. I've done a whole message on this, but as an example of making a good judgment and good critical thinking skills, Jesus is talking here about someone who has a lovely pearl necklace, let's say. And you would look at it, if somebody gave you a beautiful pearl necklace, I dare say you'd be impressed. You'd say, well, that's really, I mean, cause you know where pearls come from. You know all the labor and stuff that goes into the manufacturing of a pearl by an oyster. And you would say, whoa, that is beautiful. And the reason you would say it's beautiful is because you know how to appreciate such things, right?

You know who wouldn't be impressed? A pig. Yeah. You could put a pearl necklace on a pig. I wouldn't recommend it, but I can tell you right now, the pig would not appreciate it. And so this is the point that Jesus is talking about. He's using these metaphors and the pearl that He's talking about, is the holy things of God, right?

The things we talk about on a Sunday morning, Wednesday night, the things you read about every time you open your Bible, those are the holy things of God. And that's the picture that He wants to give you of a pearl.

Well, then you've got the pig. And that's really referring to anyone who can't appreciate the holy things of God. And there are people in this world who cannot appreciate the holy things of God. And the message to you and me is, if someone can't appreciate it, don't toss it their way, right? Because the warning is, *"lest they trample them underfoot and then turn and attack you."*

I don't know if you've ever been attacked by someone who couldn't appreciate what you were sharing. And by the way, when I talk about sharing, I'll share the Gospel with anybody. I, really, truly, I'll share the Gospel with any. If there's somebody who, I don't, whatever, I don't care. I'll tell them about Jesus and what he did on the cross.

But when it comes to the deep truths of God's words. Many of the things that we talk about that require a spiritual dimension of maturity to understand. And frankly, it required the Holy Spirit to truly grasp and appreciate. Those are

things I'm going to be very careful about sharing with people because it would be like throwing a pearl necklace to a pig. And it's not meant to be denigrating or whatever toward unbelievers or those who don't have the Spirit of God. It's just simply a reality. The apostle Paul explains why people sometimes just can't get it. He did it in 1 Corinthians. Let me show you this on the screen. He says,

1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV)

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The natural person (and the NIV renders this as, *the man without the Spirit,* which is good too. He) *does not accept the things of the Spirit of God,* (in fact) *for they are folly to him,* (foolishness) *and* (he explains why) *he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

There needs to be a work of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer to begin to truly appreciate and apprehend the things, the Holy things of God. So what is Jesus saying? Don't just toss them out.

Social media, hate to rail on social media again, but it's worthy of being railed on. It's just been it's been largely a bad thing, especially for undiscerning Christians to throw their pearls before pigs.

And it's not, it's frankly not been good and people are just going to end up mocking. And so Jesus is basically saying to you and me, keep it to yourself. Share the Gospel all day long with anybody who will listen. But as far as those holy things. Keep it to yourself until they are prepared by the Spirit to be able to understand those things, right?

I never talked to an unbeliever about speaking in tongues. Never. I never talked about spiritual gifts really at large. There's a lot of things I just will not discuss. If somebody is an unbeliever and they're asking, I wouldn't even talk about things related to Revelation and end times, even though that may be sensational and something they want to hear about. It's like, no, no, no, no, we're going to stick at the cross until something supernatural has taken place in your heart. You know what I mean?

Verse 7. *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will*

give him a serpent? [11] If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

Stop there. This section of verses, you'll notice, begins with a rather bold promise, where Jesus says, *"Ask, and it will* (it will) *be given to you;…"* He says, *"seek, and you will find; knock...."* He doesn't say knock and maybe God will get around answering. He says, *"knock, and it will be opened to you."*

Those are fairly strong and dynamic promises. But the idea behind all of those concepts of reaching out or seeking after God is not just asking once. The idea is asking and keep on asking. The idea behind it is to keep on seeking, right? Keep on knocking, right? In fact, Jesus gave a few different stories/parables that illustrated this basic idea. One of them is in Luke chapter 18, and I won't give you the whole parable, but we'll put it up on the screen. And this is the preamble to the parable. It says,

Luke 18:1 (ESV)

…he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

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And the parable that He went on to tell was the one about the woman who kept coming before the unjust judge. Remember that? And he didn't care. He didn't care about people. He didn't fear God. And, but she just kept coming. She kept coming. And eventually he heard her case simply because he wanted her to stop bugging him.

But the point of the parable was to teach by comparison. If an unjust judge can finally be reached because he's irritated by this woman constantly coming to him. Imagine what someone, your Heavenly Father who loves you will do. That was the point.

Jesus is using many times in these parables and frankly, even here too, this element of comparison to emphasize the love of God. And He makes that statement. He says, if you, though you are evil. I don't know if you know it, but you just got slapped. Yeah. Jesus was never terribly concerned about offending people. He said you, though you, and He's talking about people who have a sinful nature. You, even though you have a sinful nature, you still love your kids. And when they ask you for things, you want to please them, right? And

you guys are even sinners and He's saying, myself included, and yet you want to do good for your kids.

Imagine how your heavenly Father, who is utterly pure, full of love, and is not impacted at all by any sinful inclinations. Imagine what He would want to do for you. That's the point. See, that's the comparison and that's what He wants us to see. And so He makes these bold promises to you and me, but we got to be careful. It doesn't mean God's going to grant our every request.

You don't have to be a believer for terribly long before you realize that or come to that conclusion, because part of being a good father is saying no occasionally. I mean, even us, us human dads learn that lesson. I can't say yes to my child every time because they are asking for things that would ultimately be bad for them. And I know that, they don't. And that relationship continues on between us and our heavenly Father. And that's why James wrote what he did. Let me show you on the screen from chapter 4. He said,

James 4:2-3 (ESV)

You don't have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly…

You don't have, because you do not ask. (and then he went on to say, and then on those times that) *You* (do) *ask* (there are times) *and* (you) *do not receive, because you* (are asking) *ask wrongly…*

And by the way, that doesn't mean that you asked in the wrong way. It means you asked for something that God knew was better for you not to have. All right. And I'm sure that's probably a lot, that happens a lot in our prayers. Even those of us who have walked with the Lord for decades, we continue to ask things for the Lord without the foresight that, of course, God has to be able to know exactly how that's going to impact us.

And so there are times that He says no, but what Jesus is telling us to do here in this section is to keep praying, keep asking, keep seeking and knocking. Don't give up. Don't give up. Don't give up.

I've said this before many times but I often hear from Christians, they'll say, well, I prayed about it, but, and then they begin to tell me how God didn't answer. And my response is always the same. How long did you pray about it? And they'll give different answers sometimes. Sometimes it's a week, sometimes it's a month, sometimes it's a year. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. Then my follow up question is, who told you that amount of time was the time

that you should pray and by that time, God better answer. I mean, that's really the thing that people do, they make assumptions.

They pray about something, they don't get an answer in a certain period of time which they determine is, well, anything longer than that's unreasonable. Right? And so then they come to a pastor like me, who doesn't have the answer of why they didn't get an answer necessarily, except just to say, keep praying, keep seeking, knocking, and so forth.

But we do that all the time. We create a timeframe. We put a time limit on it and we tell God listen, God, here's the deal. I'm going to pray about this for a week. But after a week, I'm going to be ticked if you don't respond. And I'm probably going to write a nasty note to pastor Paul and tell him I'm ticked and ask him what he thinks about it. Yeah. Anyway, don't give up.

Verse 12. *"So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."* You guys know this as the golden rule, right?

Do you know that this basic rule existed long before Jesus's earthly ministry. Do you know that? However, it was widely expressed in the negative tense rather than the positive.

You'll notice Jesus did it in the positive. People knew this rule as expressed this way. You should not do to your neighbor what you would not want them to do to you. And this, it was a very well-known sort of a rule.

But I want you to notice that Jesus switched it around. And rather than saying, don't do what you don't want done to you, He said, do as you would have them do to you. Which when you stop and think about it, it not only makes this command more broad, it makes it more challenging from the standpoint that it's easier not to do something than to do something right. You get me?

It's easier not to do something than to step out and do, and to treat someone the way I want to be treated. I could sit back here and never leave my living room and not do what I don't want done to me. I don't have to go anywhere, do anything, or talk to anybody, but to do, that's a whole different dynamic and emphasis that we need to look at here. Do, the emphasis on doing, right.

Verse 13, *"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. [14] For the*

gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

This is a wonderful insight that Jesus gives us. He tells us that there are different ways. There is a narrow way. By the way, that way is hard. And He says there is a wide way, and that way is easy. And the two ways have very different destinations. The narrow and hard way leads to life. And Jesus said, there aren't that many people that find that way. And the wide and easy way, He says, leads to destruction. And that one's super simple to go down that path. Super easy. A lot of people go down that one.

Here's a question for you this morning. Have you determined to go the more difficult way? Have you decided in your heart, I'm going the hard way. I'm going to take the difficult path. Yep. That's what I'm doing. Have you decided that?

You see a lot of people come to Jesus, but they don't think of it as a difficult, hard and narrow path. And then when they start going through difficulties and challenges, they're really taken aback by the whole thing. And they're wondering, why God isn't coming to the party on their behalf. And some of them get pretty angry. You know that, right?

People get angry at God, bet you it's happened to you at some time in your life because it got hard. It got difficult and you were tired of it being hard and difficult. And that's because probably you didn't come to that place of really reckoning the way that Jesus has called you as a difficult way and simply made up your mind to say, yeah, that's the way I'm going to go. The hard way, the difficult way, the challenging way. I'm going that way and being okay with it. Are you okay with it? Are you okay going the hard way? I'm seeing stone faces like I'm not sure.

And I think that's if we're going to be honest, some of us aren't really sure. But, just understand, following Jesus is the difficult way, and it's the narrow way. You Christians, you guys are so narrow, yeah? That describes us because we're heading down a narrow path. There's only one way on that path, and His name is Jesus, and that is narrow. Anyone's invited, but it's narrow because it's the only path that leads to life.

Verse 15, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16** You will recognize them by their fruits."* And incidentally, to recognize them by their fruits requires you to make a judgment. Okay? Right?

Can you imagine going to the grocery store and there's a sign over the fruit that says, do not judge. Don't pick up the fruit. Don't smell it. Don't feel it. Don't judge. Thou shalt not judge the fruit. No, it'd be stupid. You have to go in there and you have to make a judgment to decide whether or not they're good. It's good fruit to buy. And it's the same thing with dealing with somebody who claims to be a prophet.

Now we're in the middle of verse 16. Let's keep reading. He says, *"Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? [17] So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. [18] A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. [19] Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. [20] Thus you will recognize them by their fruits."*

And so after warning us in the previous section that there is a wide and an easy path to destruction, Jesus now warns us about some of those who might lure us down that wide and easy path. And He refers to them as false prophets. And these are individuals who appear as believers. But He says that inwardly they are the exact opposite.

And as you know, anybody who claims to be a prophet is someone who is claiming to speak for God, right? And then Jesus tells us how to spot such individuals. And He basically tells us that their true nature will ultimately be exposed in the end.

And to show this, He uses these illustrations of, first of all the wolf. And then He talks about fruit trees or vines. And so He says inwardly, this person is a ravenous wolf. And with a wolf, a wolf can't deny him himself for very long. He can deceive for a little while, but eventually his hunger is going to overwhelm him and he's going to have to act like a wolf, right? That's what Jesus is saying. He says in time, he's going to show himself for his true colors. You'll see it. Right?

And in the same way, when the season of fruit bearing eventually comes, a thorn bush or a thistle, He says here, might deceive for a little while and say, I can bear fruit. I can bear fruit. But when fruit season comes, you're not going to see any. They're incapable of bearing fruit.

And the point is that dangers exist in the Christian life. And time is frankly, one of the best things on your side, as it relates to discerning whether or not these dangers are real or something that you need to really pay attention to because the genuineness of someone's claim to ministry is ultimately going to be seen,

just give it time. And so I think the, really the message here is don't get in a hurry just because somebody seems to be saying the right words. And speaking of the right words, look at the next section of verses.

Verse 21. *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,'* (those are nice words but He says, not everybody who says them) *will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."*

And he even goes on to say, *"[22] On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not* (and then He mentions all these incredible things) *prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' [23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"*

That's what's really going on. They say Lord, Lord, but they're workers of lawlessness. That's what's happening again. We're dealing with something that you see first on the surface, but then ultimately in time, you see what's under the surface, right?

And what's on top of the surface is all the right words. Lord, Lord, the Lord. And we're going to talk about the Lord. Do you know the Lord? And we're going to, we're going to drop the L word because we know that if we say it long enough and maybe even with a nice, with the right inflection, we can draw people in who are undiscerning. And maybe even immature and maybe even ignorant of their Bible.

And Jesus is making us aware in this passage that some of these fake people are going to come and do some pretty incredible things. I mean, in addition to speaking all of the lordship words, they're going to come along. Some of them are going to prophesy and they're going to do it in the name of Jesus. Notice that.

These people say, *"did we not prophesy in your name."* And that means in Your authority. And these people are going to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. And these people are going to do mighty works in the name of Jesus. And yet they will be rejected. Why?

Verse 23, *"And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you;..."* And this is really a simple way of saying that these people have never been born again. Because you see, when a person comes to real, genuine faith in Jesus Christ, I mean, really embraces the cross for what it is, and understands themselves for

what they are, and they come to the Lord by faith, we receive the Holy Spirit. You guys know that.

But what goes on because of the receiving of the Holy Spirit is a knowing. A knowing between you and the Lord. You begin to know the Lord in ways that go beyond intellect. And He knows you in a way of intimacy that is frankly talked about in the Word of God. In fact, God even foretold this knowing in the Book of Jeremiah. Let me put this on the screen. As he's prophesying the coming new covenant, he says,

Jeremiah 31:34 (ESV)

"...no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

"...no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

And because of that relationship that takes place, when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, there's this knowing. We know. We know God and He knows us. It's a two way street. Yeah. There is never a one way street from that particular standpoint. And so we're basically made aware that these individuals, and Jesus calls them, workers of lawlessness. They never came to the Lord. They don't know the Lord. They're not born again. They're fakers.

Finally, verse 24, He says, *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."* In other words, it had a good foundation.

"26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

And these verses depict for you and me, something that all human beings have in common and that is the difficulties and the challenges of life. You'll notice that He illustrates them using this metaphoric language of rain falling, floods

coming, winds blowing, and actually beating against the house. And the house is a metaphor for your life. It's you, you are the house. And you're either built on a shaky foundation or you're built on the foundation of Christ. The good foundation, the rock, is a metaphor for Jesus. So your life is either built on the foundation of Jesus, or it's built on shifting sands, right? Which is the truths or ideologies of the world constantly changing, constantly shifting, and so forth.

But notice that whether you know Jesus or not, everybody goes through the same issues. We all go through the rains, floods, winds, and the things that beat against our lives. We all deal with it. Your unsaved neighbor and the unsaved person that you're working with, they're dealing with the same challenges that you're dealing with. But not every one of us survives the onslaught of those things, right? And because some people, their lives collapse in utter ruin. And Jesus is giving us insight into what makes the difference here in those who are stable and secure.

And the difference is, look at verse 24, *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them…"* You should underline that, highlight it. It's the key. It's the key to stability. It's the key to security. It's the key to continuation, but you see here that it's not enough just to hear God's Word.

He doesn't say, everyone who hears these words of mine, He says, everyone who hears and does them, right? It's the hearing and the doing that creates the stability and security.

I got the sweetest handwritten note delivered just yesterday from a young wife living in Texas, who has gone through a particularly rough year. This last year she shared with me all the difficult things that they've been going through. Among them are many failed attempts with her and her husband to conceive. They really want to have a baby badly and they have not been successful. And there were other things. There was a repossession of a vehicle and just almost losing their home.

I mean, she, they went through a hard, hard year. And she went on to tell me how she had found our YouTube channel and how the Word of God had, listened to this quote, "seen me through every month of disappointment, every negative test, every tear, and every emotional roller coaster I've gone through in this season." And then she went on to say, "the Holy Spirit has been comforting me and building my faith in an otherwise rough year." And she's been going through the Psalms and she's telling me that it was really rough this year, but you know what, we're standing, we're here, we're secure. House isn't falling down.

And then I got to tell you, I got another note just this morning. I usually don't check my email on a Sunday morning cause I get up early in the morning and I read, I go through my notes again and make sure I'm teaching the right thing. And but for some reason I decided to check my email and I got this note and I'm going to read some of it to you.

This woman wrote and said, “I started my Bible study with you and instantly my relationship with Jesus changed. I was spending four to seven hours per day studying the Word of God. And I particularly want to tell you about my experiences since I started reading the Bible, understanding the Word and walking out the Word in faith.” Obviously that's the key.

She said, “Five years ago, both my children and I were estranged. At first I tried to reconcile and that did not work. I gave up trying as I thought it was hopeless, but since I started studying the Bible with you, I started praying to God and telling the Lord exactly how I felt. Two months ago at the Holy Spirit's urging, I sent both my children an email. Nine days later, they responded. It's been two and a half months and we are still healing, but the relationship is better than it has ever been. During that period of estrangement, my son recommitted his life to the Lord. I'm praying for my daughter daily and trusting that the Holy Spirit will minister Jesus to her.”

She went on to say, “My prayer life has changed. Devotion has become a staple and I have noticed that my husband is now spending more time in the Word as well, just by watching me putting in the time with God. I am better prepared in and out of season to correct, rebuke, and encourage others with patience and careful instruction. It has been 17 months and I have yet to go through the entire Bible.”

Isn't that lovely? Guys, I get those every day. Every single day, I get a note from somebody somewhere who just got hooked by the Word of God. And now they, and for some reason they decide to write to me and tell me how life has changed, which is great. I love hearing about it, but I knew that it would because Jesus said, if you hear my Word and do it, you're going to be on a firm foundation.

And if, even if nobody ever wrote me or told me, gee, my life has changed since I started getting into the Word, I would know that it still does that because God's Word says that it does that. It's really cool hearing how God's Word just enables people to stand in the midst of all their hardships. All their incredible heart…

Just this last week, a lady sent me her book that she wrote. It's, and I think it's something like, Where was God, something like that. She lost a child to leukemia, childhood leukemia, went through extremely difficult time.

Somebody during that time of grieving and the difficulty came up to her. I don't even know where she lives. I think like, Arkansas or something like that. Somebody walked up to her and said, hey, there's this guy on YouTube. You should listen to his teachings. And it was our YouTube channel.

And she started listening and she realized how God was just pouring strength into her through His Word. And she wrote this book and she's got all these quotes from me in this book, which is crazy, but, and she spelled my name wrong, which is fine.

But anyway, it's just, this is, it's just incredible when you get ahold of God's Word and you just begin to breathe it. We sang it. This is my daily bread. Your Word, I'm taking it in every day. When you do that and it doesn't, you don't have to listen to my teachings. You can just sit and read your Bible. It's the same, it's the same powerful Word of God. Your life will be strengthened powerfully.

And if you feel right now, like you're weak because the wind and the waves have been bashing against your life, and you're not even sure you're able to hold on, and you're thinking, I don't know what I'm going to do. I'll tell you what to do. Get into the Word like you've never dove into the Word before.

And I mean, anytime you have a free second, turn the TV off, shut your computer, and get into the Word of God, and your life will be strengthened. Period. It's just, it's a promise from the Lord.

Verse 28 and 29, the last 2 verses of the chapter. It says, *"And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes."*

You see, the scribes used to teach by quoting rabbis and their teachings were literally a quotation, after a quotation, after a quotation, after a quotation. And so they would say, as Rabbi Hillel once said, and then they would quote the rabbi. And never once did they speak with authority.

And Jesus, I mean, this, He expressed this unique ownership with the Word of God. I mean, notice what we just read here in verse 24. Did you see the ownership? He says, *"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does*

them…" See Jesus claims ownership of the Word. He spoke with an authority that just blew the people away because nobody did that. He spoke like the Word was His.

And the reason He did that is because the Word was His. He is the living Word of God. And so He could say, whoever hears these words of Mine and does them will be strong and stable and secure. It doesn't mean you're not going to go through hardship. Oh, the winds and the waves, they'll come, the floods will rise, but you will, when it's all over, you'll be standing because I will enable you to stand because you are built on the foundation of My Word. Amen.

Let's stand together. We'll close in prayer. As always, if you need prayer, come on up front here. We'd be happy to pray with you.

Father, we thank You so much for chapter 7 of Matthew. What an incredible chapter. How many amazing things we are told and given in instruction and wisdom.

And Lord, I thank You also for the testimonies of people that bear out the reality of what you talked about in that story about the wind and the waves. Thank You, Lord, for reminding us that that's where stability comes from. That's where strength comes from. It's building our lives on the foundation of Jesus by hearing and doing, walking out the Word of God.

And I pray my Father, God, that every single one of us would be doing that on a daily basis. And I pray specifically Father for the people who are here in this room today, who are going through a challenging time and they're feeling weak and they're not sure if they can hang on.

And I pray my Father, God, that You would do. in their heart, that work that would give them a greater hunger to know You, to know Your Word, and to dig deep into the Word of God, to walk it out day by day. And for them to experience that strengthening and stabilizing of their life that only comes through You.

We thank You for the foundation that is ours in Jesus Christ, and we pray that You would be building that foundation stronger and stronger in each of our lives. In the name of Jesus, our Savior, we pray.

And all God's people said, amen.

Have a good rest of your Sunday.