

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS



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If we are going to be prepared for the return of Jesus then we need to be acting on His teachings. This is the lesson learned from the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. Those who were ready and went into the wedding feast with the bridegroom are the ones who were referred to as the **wise** virgins. Those who weren't prepared were described as **foolish**.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a **wise** man who built his house on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a **foolish** man who built his house on the sand. Matthew 7: 24,26

When it comes to spiritual matters, the difference between being wise and foolish is that the wise man hears the teachings of Jesus **and acts on them** where the foolish man hears them but ignores them. James makes this same point when he exhorts believers to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Those who hear the word of God and do not act on what they hear deceive themselves.

The teachings of Jesus explain for us how life in the kingdom of God should be lived out. They give insight into the spiritual truths and priorities that His followers are to integrate into their lives. The best way to become familiar with what Jesus taught is to read and reread and meditate on the accounts of His life found in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Repentance

Repentance is a must if we are going to be spiritually ready for the return of Jesus. It is the gateway into the new covenant kingdom of God. Those who repent of their sins will be forgiven and receive eternal life. They are taken out of the kingdom of darkness and placed into the kingdom of light.

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. John 14:6

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17

And that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Luke 24:47

So that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9b

Everyone is born into the kingdom of darkness with a sin nature that seeks its own way. When someone yields to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and repents of their sins, they become a part of a completely different kingdom, the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of darkness, people serve themselves. In the kingdom of God, He is the one we serve. He expects His servants to understand what His will is and to do it. To help us in accomplishing this, He sends the Holy Spirit to live within each believer in order to guide and instruct us in the ways of His kingdom.

Priorities

Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was and his answer gives us the priorities that are to govern our lives:

And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:37-40

A lot of what Jesus taught expounded on those two commandments and provided practical insight as to how they should be kept. Here is a summary list of some of those things. The first few have a common theme of prioritizing the will of God over our own interests.

- People will either serve God or they will seek their own gain. (Matthew 6:24) There is no happy medium to be achieved. Eventually, one will win out and become the master.
- Those who follow Jesus must take up their cross. (Matthew 16:24) Taking up our cross is deciding to do the will of God instead of pursuing our own agenda.
- Whoever loses their life for the sake of the gospel, finds it, and whoever saves their life loses it. (Mark 8:35) This spells out the consequences of either serving God or serving ourselves.
- We should not get caught up in working our lives away. (John 6:27) God has promised to take care of our needs if we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. (Matthew 6:33) Even if we were to gain the whole world, what good would that be if we forfeit our soul in doing so? (Matthew 16:26)

He also taught things that pertain to how we should treat others.

- We should always be willing to forgive others since God has forgiven us. (Matthew 6:14-15) If we forgive, we will be forgiven. If we show mercy, we will receive mercy. If we don't, we won't. (Matthew 5:7)
- Concerning money, we should be generous and give to those who ask of us and expect nothing in return. (Luke 6:35)

- We are not to judge others. (Matthew 7:1-2) The standard that we use to judge others will be used to judge us. Only after we clean up our own back yard will we have the wisdom to help others with theirs.
- We are called on to be servants. (Matthew 20:26-28) In humility, we should emulate our Master who came to serve and give His life for us.
- People will know that we are disciples of Jesus if we love one another. (John 13:34)
- We are also to love and pray for our enemies. (Matthew 5:44) God is gracious to the evil as well as the good and we should likewise be patient and gracious with those outside the faith.

He also gave us insight into how we should personally live before God and the values that should guide us.

- We should never become tolerant of sin in our lives. (Matthew 5:30)
- The treasures we seek after should come from doing the will of God and not be the temporary things that the world values. (Matthew 6:19-21)
- Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth. (John 4:24) The words of Jesus are spirit. (John 6:63) They become our truth when we act on them. God is worshiped through a lifestyle of obedience to the teachings of Jesus.
- Our worship of God should be sincere. (Matthew 6:1-6) When we engage in spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, giving, etc. they should not become a source of pride.
- We are not to fear men. (Matthew 10:28) Men can only kill our bodies but can do nothing to our souls which are eternal. We are to fear God since He is the one with power over our souls and controls our eternal destiny.

If we align our values with those that Jesus taught and integrate His teachings into our lives then we will be ready for the return of Christ. We will have the spiritual discernment and perseverance necessary to endure to the end and be saved, regardless of what that end might be.