The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount is the gospel of the Kingdom, the church of Jesus Christ to come (Matt. 4:23). Its principles are timeless. The sermon primarily, and successfully, portrays the supreme value of the soul. Secondly, Jesus gives principles that regulate the hearts of men and divine principles that govern the very conduct of men. Lastly, the sermon expresses the all sufficient authority and deity of Jesus. Moses recorded at Leviticus 11:44, “For I am Jehovah your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am holy.” The Law revealed a way to be holy before Jehovah God to the ancients through the process of ceremonial cleaning. The prophet Jeremiah foretold of a day when the laws of God would be written on the hearts of man and forgiveness of sins obtained through Christ (Jer. 31:31ff comp. to Heb. 8:6ff). The perfect and holy man of God, in the NT days, would be one who had the laws of God written on his heart, that is, individuals whose inner man was governed by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22ff).

The Sermon on the Mount marks the beginning of instructions given to man that would eventually enable him to have complete fellowship with God. Jesus said, “think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy but to fulfill” (Matt. 5:17). God’s expectations of man’s perfection had not changed at the time Jesus delivered this sermon and even now. Jesus reveals in the Sermon on the Mount that God continues to demand perfection. Jesus said, “Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

Man’s Thoughts can Condemn Him

The Sermon on the Mount takes into consideration man’s activities and thoughts. The prophet Jeremiah said that “it is not in a man that walks to direct his steps” in relation to spiritual matters (cf. Jer. 10:23). Jesus preaches the “gospel of the kingdom” (Matt. 4:23) in this sermon and reveals a standard by which man is to walk. One has aptly said, “The greatest of all sins is to be conscious of none.” When we complete a study of the Sermon on the Mount, we are left feeling exposed and bare. We see our shortcoming ever so clearly. The intense sting of guilt is ever enlightening and causes us great fear. Jesus reveals that the emotion of anger, the look of lust, the spoken word of swearing, the thought of
revenge and hatred toward enemies are all sinful. Who among us has not been guilty of such thoughts of sin? We are all condemned in this Sermon, and this is why we are left with guilt, yet not without hope, at its conclusion.

The heart of man is what Jesus is after in the Sermon on the Mount. The Psalmists said, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). Jesus teaches that the thought of sin is just as wrong as the action itself. The heart of man must be trained, and this is the task of Jesus and later the inspired apostles. When man’s heart is right with God, his service will be more than mere mechanical movements. Man’s good deeds of giving, praying, and fasting will be more than mere signs to be seen of men (Cf. Matt. 6:1ff). The conduct of man will have purpose, “laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt. 6:20).

The Deity of Christ Revealed

Jesus delivers a powerful sermon that not only defines man’s conduct but also defines His deity and authority. Six times in the sermon Jesus states the Law of Moses on a particular issue and follows it with, “but I say.” “Who but God could speak thus: with words of such absolute authority, such sublime insight into man’s failures and needs, and the consciousness of the perfection of heaven?” (Foster 485). The multitudes that heard this sermon were astonished and concluded that Jesus’ preaching was done with great authority (Matt. 7:28-29).

A Contrast between Those of the World and Those of Christ

Those who would be of Christ are depicted in the beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-10) (i.e., be poor in spirit, mourn over sin, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, be merciful, be pure in heart, be peacemakers, and be persecuted for righteousness’ sake). Those of the world care for the things of this world. Their motivation is immediate gain. Jesus singles out the scribes and Pharisees and exposes their worldly interest (cf. Matt. 5:20). The scribes and Pharisees were interested in doing their “righteousness before men to be seen of them” (Matt. 6:1). These men revealed in the attention they received from others when they gave to the poor, prayed, and fasted. Jesus tells all that do such things that, “They have received their reward” (Matt. 6:5). The Christian, on the other hand, looks not to the treasures of this life but rather to the treasures in heaven (Matt. 6:20).

A Standard is in Place Whereby Man is to be Judged

Let not the Christian judge others by his own opinions, but rather judge righteous judgments (cf. Matt. 7:1ff; Jn. 7:24). The truth belongs to those who humbly seek after an eternity with God as opposed to those whose care is only for this world (Matt. 7:6). Truth seekers will “seek,
ask, and knock” in diligent effort to walk the straight and narrow path revealed in God’s word (Matt. 7:7-14). Knowing that truth alone saves, we are to “beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15). Jesus explains to the multitudes that said individuals will always be known by the fruit or teaching they represent.

The standard of God’s word determines whether one produces good or evil fruit. Many today are walking in ignorance, and some teach and receive erring doctrines from pure motives; however, when the standard of revealed truth is not upheld, all shall fall into condemnation (Matt. 7:21-23). The standard is the rock foundation of Christ’s teachings (cf. Matt. 7:24ff; Eph. 2:20). All who neglect by design or in ignorance shall lose their soul into eternity.

The Greatest Sermon Ever Delivered?

Jesus gives man the information needed to live a model spiritual life. The Lord prescribes specific instructions regarding man’s character (Matt. 5:1-10), thinking (Matt. 5:17-48), acting (Matt. 6:1-17), goals (Matt. 6:19-24), approach to life (Matt. 6:25-34), efforts in spiritual living (Matt. 7:1-12), and respecting the standard of truth (Matt. 7:15-29). Rather than viewing the Sermon on the Mount as the greatest sermon ever delivered, the Christian today ought to view it as a lesson designed to lay the foundation of faith for the future disciples. Later, the apostles would continue to teach by the authority of Jesus Christ and all those who gave heed did well (cf. II Jn. 9ff).

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Sins of the Tongue

Introduction:

The tongue looses the inward thoughts of a man (Matt. 12:34). At times our tongue may expose inner rottenness and at other times it may reveal our godly qualities (James 3:6-10). The foolish reveal all that is in the mind whereas the wise exercises control (Prov. 10:19; 17:27). The things we say reveal how we view God and spirituality. The things we say reveal how much time we spent in Bible study. The things we say let all know whether we are wise or foolish. The tongue can do much damage and it can do much good (Prov. 25:11).

I. A Perverted Tongue (Prov. 17:20; Eph. 4:29):
II. A Deceptive Tongue (Matt. 24:24; Rom. 16:18):
III. A Disrespectful Tongue (i.e., toward God {euphemisms} and toward others of authority) (Heb. 10:26-31; Jude 7-8):
IV. A Tongue that engages in Gossip (Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13 etc.):
V. A Tongue that Ridicules (II Kg. 2:23; Neh. 2:19; Jer. 20:7):
VI. An Edifying Tongue (Eph. 4:29; Heb. 10:24-25):

Conclusion:

Sins of the tongue occur when we do not have our priorities straight. I display real spiritual troubles when my tongue expresses bitterness, anger, perversion, disrespect, deception, love of gossip, and or when I make fun of others. Let us all be content with a heavenly goal and let love of others motivate us to treat them with godly respect (cf. Phil. 2:3-4).