

INTRODUCTION

- * "Focusing on the Messiah in the book of Matthew" ... Matthew was a Jewish man writing about the Jewish Messiah to a Jewish audience.
- * The Message of John and Jesus was the same: "Repent (*metanoia* - *change the way you think*) for the kingdom of the Heavens has drawn near!"
- * That message then permeates all of His other messages as He teaches, and demonstrates to, His followers how to become "fishers of men."
- * Over the past two weeks, we have been considering what is commonly referred to as the sermon on the Mount. This section of teaching reveals the Standards of the Messianic Kingdom. Jesus (the Messiah) speaks with the authority of a king - The King!
- * The Standards of the Kingdom are different from those of the world - hence, the need to change the way we think! They are also Higher Standards; they are standards which look to the Perfect of God! Instead of looking at the outward acts, Jesus called upon men to examine their hearts.
- * Jesus continued that teaching by revealing that the Kingdom Standard is also a Definitive Standard ... there is NO middle ground.
- * In today's passage, we see Jesus draw the line: You are either focusing on men and the world ... or ... You are focusing on God and His kingdom!

INSTRUCTION

I. A DIFFERENT STANDARD (Matthew 5:1-16)

II. A HIGHER STANDARD (Matthew 5:17-48)

II. A DEFINITIVE STANDARD (Matthew 6:1-34) ... *You can determine your focus by asking yourself two questions ...*

A. Whose Applause Are You Seeking?

* *You are seeking the applause of men, or the applause of God!*

* *Your heart will be revealed when performing three spiritual disciplines*

1. IN YOUR G_____ (v. 1-4)

2. IN YOUR P_____ (v. 5-15)

a. The P_____ Your Praying

b. The H_____ of Your Praying

c. The T_____ of Your Praying (cf. James 4:3-4)

d. The E_____ of Your Praying

3. IN YOUR F_____ (v. 16-18)

a. The F_____ of Fasting (v. 16)

b. The F_____ of Fasting

SUMMARY: Those who seek their applause from men have their reward. Those who perform these spiritual disciplines out of a heart focused on God will be rewarded by God.

B. Whose Treasure Are You Seeking?

* *You are seeking the treasure of men, or the treasure of God!*

* *Your heart will be revealed in three specific areas*

1. IN YOUR I_____ (v. 19-21)

2. IN YOUR D_____ (v. 22-24; 1 John 2:15)

3. IN YOUR A_____ (v. 25-34)

SUMMARY: Those who seek the treasures of the earth will serve materialism and will experience the balance of their reward here on the earth. Those who seek the treasures of heaven will serve God and will experience the balance of their rewards in the Kingdom eternally!

IV. A PRACTICAL STANDARD (Matthew 7:1-29)

INTROSPECTION

- * SO WHAT IS YOUR FOCUS IN LIFE? ARE YOU SELF-FOCUSED, OR GOD-FOCUSED? MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHAT WOULD GOD SAY?

- * WHAT CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE TO YOUR LIFESTYLE?

WILL YOU TAKE A MOMENT, RIGHT NOW, TO ASK GOD TO CHANGE YOUR HEART AND TO HELP YOU BE FAITHFUL TO BE MORE KINGDOM-MINDED?

- * IS THERE A NEED TO "CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK" ... AND, THEREFORE, ACT?

INTERACTION ... Thoughts & Questions to ponder for later discussion

It may be helpful to re-read the passage before the discussion.

- * Read Acts 4:23-31 and 12:11-16. What is correlation between these verses and Jesus' teaching regarding prayer?
- * Read Philippians 4:6. How does this relate to this segment of Jesus' teaching in His sermon on the mount?
- * How do these kingdom mindsets and focus apply to the church as a body?