

• *Jesus now He warns His disciples to be sharp-sighted and to give attention to the practical obedience to His Word*

The 'Sermon on the Mount' (as it is generally called) was a lengthy piece of teaching that Jesus gave on a hillside north of the Sea of Galilee. Luke picks out some of the highpoints from what must have originally have been much longer. Jesus describes the basic character of the members of the kingdom ^{¶1}. Then He calls them to loving, God-like, goodness towards others ^{¶2}. Now He warns them to be sharp-sighted and to give attention to the practical obedience to His Word. Luke is summarising that part of Jesus' preaching where He was pressing upon His disciples the need to actually respond to what He is saying. '*A blind man cannot lead a blind man...*' ^{¶3}. We remember that Jesus is still on the hillside at the same place where He has just chosen twelve apostles ^{¶4}.

¶1 6:20–26
¶2 6:27-35

¶3 6:39
¶4 6:13

1. Jesus puts to them the need to be sharp-sighted in order to be leaders of others

1. Jesus puts to them the need to be sharp-sighted in order to be leaders of others. The Pharisees are spiritually blind, but Jesus' disciples must be different. What does Jesus mean by a 'blind man'? He means someone who does not see the need of actually practising Jesus' commands – the kind of things He has been saying in 6:20–39. If Jesus' disciples are to lead others, taking them by the hand and leading them into the kingdom of God, they must be clear-sighted about the things that Jesus has said. Otherwise the leaders and those who are being led will both 'fall unto a pit' – they will both ruin their lives.

Verse 40 continues the thought of verse 39. Christian 'leaders' need to be clear-sighted because 'a pupil does not outrank his teacher'. Jesus is still thinking of the fact that many of His hearers will be the future leaders of His people. They must be clear-sighted in understanding His teaching because their pupils are not likely to be greater than them. (The thought is different from that in Matthew 10:24, 25 where a similar phrase makes a different point.) Those who are trained as Christians in the future will take their pattern from these disciples before Jesus as He is giving this famous piece of teaching.

2. They need to attend to their own lives in order to help others

2. Jesus' disciples need to attend to their own lives in order to help others. Jesus uses an amusing picture ^{¶1}. We all have a strange inconsistency in which we can see a speck in another person's eye but are unconscious of a plank of wood in our own! A person with a plank of wood in his eye cannot help others until his own need is met. It is easy to criticise others and want to put them right, but we are not really qualified to do so unless we are able to criticise ourselves first and get our own lives right ^{¶2}.

¶1 6:42

¶2 6:42

3. Jesus presents the need to have a good root to bear good fruit

3. Jesus presents the need to have a good root to bear good fruit. '*No good tree bears bad fruit, and neither does a bad tree bear good fruit...*' ^{¶1}. The thought continues from verse 42, and is explained in verse 44. One has to have a 'good heart' to truly minister to the other person. After verse 42 it is clear what a 'good man' is; he is one in whom there is no pretence, one who has attended to the needs of his own life. What comes out of the heart of an insincere person will never do much good to others or produce much blessing. The heart is a treasure store. If there are good things within, it will be possible to give out good things for others in what one says.

¶1 6:43

4. Finally Jesus challenges His hearers to respond to what He says

- Two house-builders – one on rock and the other on shifting soil.

- A picture of how to build our lives on Jesus' words

- How will we build?

- Only a life built on the words of Jesus will stand

4. Finally Jesus challenges His hearers to respond to what He says. There is a danger about an enthusiastic claim to follow Jesus ('Lord, Lord'), but an enthusiasm which is not matched by detailed attendance to what Jesus says. Jesus explains further with the parable of the two houses. **He is presenting the need to have one's life built on the solid rock of obedience to Jesus** ^{¶1}.

Imagine, says Jesus, two men who each want to build a house. One is careful about how he does his building. He chooses solid rocky ground on which to build, and digs down to the rock before he starts building. When storms and floods come, the house stands firm. The other man is careless, impatient, eager to get a house up but not careful about how he does it. He grabs the first plot of ground he can find on which to build his house, but does not bother about the fact that he is building his house upon shifting soil. Soon a storm comes and a stream of water overflows near to his house. The house collapses. This is Jesus' picture of how to build our lives on His words. If we are careless we rush to get on with living without taking seriously what He has said to us. If we are wise, we listen carefully to what He says. Then we take action. We dig down to the roots of our lives. Jesus has spoken a lot to us about being truly blessed by relying on God ^{¶1}, by being people of love ^{¶2}, by being sharp-sighted in attending to the needs of our own lives ^{¶3}. The question is: will we dig down deep into the roots of our lives and attend to the words of Jesus? The test comes in the day of a storm. It may be the day of trouble and deprivation. Or it may be a day of judgement. Or it may be the Last Day of judgement altogether. Sooner or later a storm will come and will test the kind of life that we have built. At such a time the only life which will survive is one which has been built upon the words of Jesus the Son of God.

¶1 6:46-49

¶1 6:20-26
¶2 6:27-38
¶3 6:39-46

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