

The Adventure of Listening to Jesus

Thomas Robinson, *Shaped by Jesus for Life* 6, April 7, 2019

Matthew 7:21-29

²¹ “Not everyone who says to me, ‘**Lord! Lord!**’ will enter **the kingdom of the heavens**, but the one who **does the will of my Father** who is in those heavens.

²² Many will say to me in that day, ‘**Lord! Lord!** wasn’t it **by your name we prophesied**, and by your name we cast out demons, and by your name did many powerful things?’

²³ Then I’ll solemnly declare to them, ‘**Never did I know you!** Get away from me, you whose work is lawlessness.’

²⁴ Therefore, **every person** who **listens to these words of mine** and is **doing them** will be like a **wise man** who **constructed his house on the bedrock**. ²⁵ The **rain** poured down, and the **rivers** flooded, and the **winds** blew and beat on that house. And **it did not fall**, because its foundation was set in **the bedrock**.

²⁶ And every person **listening** to these words of mine and **not doing them** will be like a **foolish man** who **constructed his house on the sand**. ²⁷ And the rain poured, and the rivers flooded, and the winds blew and struck that house, and **it fell**, and its collapse was total.”

²⁸ And when Jesus completed these words, the **crowds were astounded** by his **teaching**, ²⁹ for he was **teaching** them as **one having authority**, and not as the scribal scholars.

Matthew 6:33

³³ “Seek first God’s kingdom and his faithful righteousness, and all these other thing will be added to you as well.”

Matthew 28:18-20 (Jesus meets his disciples after his resurrection.)

¹⁸ And Jesus approached the disciples and spoke them: “To me has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ As you go out therefore, make all the nations (*ethnos*) into learning disciples, plunging them into the identity and name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ as you teach them to hold on to everything all that I have instructed you. And notice, I myself am with you every day, till the very consumation of the age.”

1 Corinthians 12:29 – 13:2

²⁹ Not all are apostles, are they? Not all prophets; not all teachers; not all do powerful things; ³⁰ not all use gifts of healing; not all speak in tongues; not all interpret, do they? ³¹ But seek the greater gifts of grace.

But now I’ll show you a still more excellent way. 13:¹ If I speak in the tongues of humans and angels, but I don’t have love (*agapé*), I’ve become a noisy brass gong or a clashing cymbal. ² And if I have prophecy, and I know all the mysteries and all the knowledge, and if I have all the faith, so as to remove mountains, but I don’t have love, I am nothing!

Luke 9:47-50 (When Jesus’ disciples argued, which of them was greatest.)

⁴⁷ Jesus, ... set a little child by his side ⁴⁸ and said to the disciples, “Whoever receives this little child in response to my name is receiving me, and whoever receives me is receiving the one who sent me. For the smallest one present among all of you is one who is great.”

⁴⁹ John responded by saying, “Master, we saw someone casting out demons using your name, and we tried to stop them, because they weren’t following with us.”

⁵⁰ But Jesus said to him, “Stop stopping them! For one who is not against you is for you.”

Jesus’ Astounding Authority

Jesus: “Change your way of thinking, for the kingdom of heaven has come near!” (Mt 4:17)
Seek God’s kingdom! You don’t create it. It’s here, real! Do you know reality to see it?
The change of mind is in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount & his signs of healing and life.

People flocked to Jesus for healing power, but felt something more – authority. “But I say to you” unfolds a vision of God, of solid life, of faith and everyday practice. Doing “the will of my Father” is the same as “listening to these words of mine and doing them.”

Mighty Works by Your Name! ... I Never Knew You!

The idea of power is intoxicating. (I’ll use the ring for good!) Disciples wanted to be great, kingdom officials, fighters of demonic power, mighty deeds. Jesus rejects such a focus because we see power through our world & experience – conflict, domination, glory.

God’s power of self-giving love was unfolding toward true victory in cross & resurrection. As God’s kingdom comes (“on that day”) only the power of life changed by Jesus’ words is true. Amazing displays of power are part of the problem. As the power of God’s Spirit broke in, many pushed it toward competition, control. Paul says that no manifestation of spiritual power is true unless it manifests God’s self-giving love.

How Do You Build a House on Bedrock?

Jesus: Listen to my words and do them! Not as law like Pharisees. But as a life adventure, a quest to know God’s reality – bedrock – in the midst of so much delusion – sand.

Listen to Jesus’ words: This is where God’s story, Law, prophets, has been headed. Blessing!
You are salt/light: God’s glory in your beautiful deeds. Refuse anger, contempt. Choose reconciliation even over worship. Don’t let power, lust determine relationships, but faithfulness. Tell the truth without reinforcement. No bargaining with God. Refuse retaliation, violence, possessiveness. Give more than was taken from you. Don’t let defending possessions control you. Love to the uttermost, even enemies. This is God’s heart. Never settle for less. Your standard & My promise is God’s perfection.

Focus on a real relationship with God not on a display of piety. Secrecy helps. Pray for God’s realm to come on earth not vice versa. Forgive! Find the freedom God gives. Possessions are temporary stewardship. Don’t let them be master. Only God is master! Practice trusting God. See his work everywhere, birds and lilies. Refuse to be anxious, knowing that he knows what you need. Your life is bigger than things. Seek his kingdom!

You’re not the judge. You’re self-deceived. Trust God and be bold: ask, seek, knock. The road looks hard but it leads to life – the very best, beauty, meaning, security, God.

Every house gets hit by storms, trouble. No exemption. What the world sells as security is part of the storm. Only a life founded in the bedrock love that is God’s heart will stand.