



## **Matthew 7:28–29**

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

### **Reflection**

The Sermon on the Mount, easily the most profound sermon or series of sermons that have ever been preached, has come

to a close. Even secular authorities rate the Sermon on the Mount as one of the greatest speeches ever given. Muftis and Rabbis and Hindu professors have been reduced to tears by Jesus' words. Ethics professors still draw on its moral teaching as foundational to their fields of study. Many of Jesus' turns of phrases have become idioms in the English language – a wolf in sheep's clothing, turn the other cheek, do unto others what you would have them do unto you, and an eye for an eye.

What's your reaction to the Sermon on the Mount? The crowds, according to our passage today, were amazed. The term in the original Greek, the language that sits under our English translations, is probably better translated as 'dumbfounded.' But

do you notice what they were so astounding by? When Jesus finished preaching the question they were asking each other wasn't 'what do you make of this teaching' but 'who on earth is this teacher?'

Who is this man? No-one has ever spoken like this, and with such authority. Who on earth is this man? A thirty year old carpenter with no formal education speaking words of wisdom the likes of which the world has never seen – not before or since, even two thousand years later. He's nothing like the scribes and teachers of the law who were forever citing other authorities, and various Jewish schools of thoughts, and traditions, and legal requirements that had been added on top of God's word. He's not even like the prophets in the Old Testament who would regularly begin their

prophesy with 'Thus says the Lord.' Jesus' doesn't say 'Thus says the Lord,' he says, 'Truly I tell you.' Who is this man?

The crowds were astonished by his authority. He spoke universal truth – not as a Rabbi from one of the Rabbinic schools but absolute truth applicable to both Jew and Gentile alike. With complete self-confidence he declared who would inherit the kingdom of God, who would inherit the earth, who would obtain mercy, who would see God and be fit to be called God's children. He revealed the true meaning of the Old Testament, declared himself to be the fulfilment of the Law, overturned the practices of the Jewish religious establishment, outing their hypocrisy before God and man. And most extraordinarily Jesus has just concluded his sermon with

these extraordinary words, it's the last day, Judgement Day, and Jesus says in Matthew 7 verse 22 & 23:

22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

In these verses Jesus not only refers to himself as Lord but indicates that he will preside over Judgement Day, that he will determine who enters the kingdom of heaven itself! Therefore, as Jesus has warned repeatedly to close his sermon there are only two possible responses to himself. There are two gates, two roads,

two kind of prophets, two kinds of disciples, two foundations, two kingdoms – the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world – and two destinations, heaven or hell. It all comes down to hearing his word and putting it into practice.

And yet Matthew tells us that despite all this the crowds were amazed – but not necessarily converted. I'm sure some were, but I suspect many left simply amazed and let their hour of salvation pass by.

What is the most important message of the Sermon on the Mount? It is the person of Jesus of Nazareth himself. He's the son of God. He spoke like no man has ever spoken. He practiced what he preached and then he died and rose again that those who believe in him and trust him might

pass from death to life and enter heaven to be with him forever. Do you believe that? Have you committed your life to Jesus? That question is ultimately what the Sermon on the Mount is all about. Ultimately, that's the only question in life of any real importance. Have you committed your life to Jesus? Who on earth is this man? He's the son of God, the king of kings, the lord of lords stepped down out of heaven to live the life that we should have lived and to die the death that we should have died so that through him we might truly live in this life and on into the next. He's shown us how to live as members of the kingdom of God in the Sermon on the Mount but in the end, and exactly how Jesus has brought his sermon to an end, is with the crucial question: Are you saved? Have you accepted Jesus into your heart as your Lord

and Saviour?

## **Think**

Take the remaining time this morning to consider the majesty and the message of the Sermon of the Mount that has now come to a close. Perhaps flick through your bible and relive its highs and lows. Perhaps revisit some of the thoughts that God stirred in your heart as we've journeyed through it, perhaps recommit to some of the prayers that you prayed in response to it. But above all this morning I want you to consider what the Sermon on the Mount has revealed to you about Jesus. Have you felt his presence in his word? His fire, his directness, his wisdom, his humour, his urgency, his love, his guiding hand, his gentleness, his fearlessness



and above all today his authority. How has Jesus reached out through these Scriptures by the power of his Holy Spirit and moved you to know him more personally and love him more deeply and follow him more wholeheartedly? How is your year with Jesus going? How is walking in step with him each day changing you? This morning take the big picture and think about questions like these.

## **Pray**

And then spend some time praying to Jesus. Thank him for who he is and what he came to do. If you haven't given your life over to him, or if you strayed from the narrow path, why not give your life to him right now? Put voice to who he is as he's revealed himself in the Sermon on the

Mount. Confess in your heart and with your mouth that he is Lord, confess your sins before him, turn away from them and turn to him, tell him that you believe in him, that you want to give your life to him, that you trust that through his death and resurrection you've been set free from your sin, that your debt has been paid and through this newfound faith in his name that you are confident of eternal life. Do it now and you'll become a Christian!

If you are a Christian then be reignited in this moment by your first love; how you felt when you first came to Jesus. And pray that this love would only deepen and widen as you continue to walk daily with Jesus throughout the remainder of the year and on into the next. Pray that those around you who have not yet experienced

the love of Christ might graciously have their eyes opened by him, so that they too might share in your joy and confidence of eternal life with him.