

# Now & Not Yet (&) (Together continued & the Kingdom of God)

Matthew 7:24-27 (The Wise & Foolish Builders)

## I. Intro...

Good Morning Friends.... Welcome & Welcome to everyone who is listening via our Podcast... The Blank page & [www.deannester.com](http://www.deannester.com)

I have to tell you that I am honored to be among you good people and I want to thank you for choosing Park Chapel as a community where you can “Connect with Jesus” as well as connect others to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. That is what God is doing here, and we pray that He will continue to allow this to happen among us all.

Today we are going to conclude a conversation that we began on Easter Sunday. We’ve called this series the & series because we’ve been dealing with some very common, but contrasting terms that seem to permeate our language and our thoughts. And so ‘till this point we’ve had a great discussion on...

Life & Death  
Faith & Doubt  
Heaven & Hell  
Grace & Works  
Sinner & Saint  
Now & Not Yet

And finally this morning we need to have a conversation about the words “Now” & “Not Yet”. Primarily we are talking about “The Kingdom”. Two quite common and synonymous phrases that Jesus uses throughout his teachings are; “The Kingdom of Heaven”, & “The Kingdom of God”. Now you could spend too much time trying to figure out the differences between these two terms Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven, but I want to merge them for us like this. They are the same thing. If the New Testament author was writing primarily to a Jewish audience, he would refrain from using the name God or Yahweh out of respect for the Hebrews who wouldn’t say God’s name out loud. And thus the phrase “Kingdom of God” would become the “Kingdom of Heaven”. They are the same thing.

So a good mental exercise to maintain throughout today’s talk is this. As I meander down this winding dirt road and move from topic to topic, I want you to keep in mind this whole talk is about...

**God’s Kingdom, we’ve been waiting for it to come, but it is already here!**

PRAYER... (dean put your prayer here.)

## II. On Morality...

Turn with me in the scriptures to Matthew 7:24... (therefore... Sermon on the mount)

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Matthew 7:24-27

Now I want to start today’s conversation here because, the summation of our Christian walk hangs in the balances of these words. So simple, and yet so profound. Jesus is closing his talk, his amazing sermon, by saying; “**Hey this is important stuff!**”

Now who is the hearer in this illustration? If you are the hearer, you are like a what? There you go! You are like a House. Now the only difference is the idea of practice. You either put Jesus’ words into practice and you don’t crash, or you don’t put these words into practice and you crash. Within this parable or metaphor you have: strong & weak, solid & soft, up & down, you have eternal or temporary, & you have life & death.

Wow. You get the sense that Jesus is telling us some real big stuff! You know what I mean? Yeah, we should do those things. And so this brings up the “super-text” of morality. Everything that he is talking about in this famous sermon points us to what is **moral** or **good**.

### A. **The School.**

Now many of you are educators. We have many teachers and leaders within our school systems whether home, private or public. And your want to fill our young people with knowledge, all types of knowledge; math, reading, spelling, science, spanish, athletics, etc... But in recent years past we’ve seen “moral knowledge” taking a back seat. No one would tell you that moral knowledge is without value, but we’ve complicated it a bit in the name of “religion”. So we have this knowledge, powerful life truths, that in many ways cant get passed on to our young ones in their day to day life because of societies new-found fear of religious fanaticism.

You see, you've heard me say this before, but if Jesus was the master, and in many places throughout the new testament he's addressed as just that. If Jesus is the master, than what is he the master of? Well **he is the master of the art of living**. The problem is that Jesus, in the eyes of our law-makers stands out as one who is "religious", and not as one who has knowledge. And this results in the kind of "trade-off" that costs us dearly.

B. **The Church.** (thinking about the church as a whole... the holistic church)

Now you would think that the church herself would be a centerpiece of the moral life of Good & Evil, but currently the church has separated itself from morality. In thinking on this, I've narrowed this idea down to two words; **Following & Believing**. You see it's one thing for us to believe in Christ. And believing in him is a major step! This is big stuff, but it is another thing to **Follow him!** Following Jesus. Now that is putting our faith into action. **Following Him, staying close to Him and learning to be like Him!** Walking with Him through the gospels and stopping where he stops to speak in order to listen, taking note of his manner and compassion. This is what it means to be a Disciple.

**But we spend most of our energy on believing.** (now it's important at this point that you don't go to guilt, because if your hearts and mind go to guilt it causes us to cringe. Cringing and guilt cloud our thinking and we need to think clear on all of this.)

But the church spends most of it's energy on **believing** and it's close relationship with salvation. (Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. Acts 16:31) Believing is wonderful. What a great first step into the Kingdom of Heaven. But all too often as **the church** we stop there.

Now remember what were talking about. **God's Kingdom, we've been waiting for it to come, but it is already here!** Maybe our hang ups here are social dis-connect. You see when **we** think of "Salvation", we are only thinking about forgiveness of sin. We have this idea of: **"Well my sins are forgiven, what else is there to do but sit on the highway of life, broken down with my hood up, waiting for the angelic (triple a) AAA to come and haul me out."**

That's not what Jesus was talking about. He was saying: "You! Yeah You! If you hear these words of mine **and put them into practice you will begin a solid, purpose-filled, and eternal life in the Kingdom of God!**

It feels to me, like so many of us, stop short of experiencing the Kingdom of Heaven to it's fullest.

**Many of us want to be “Christians”, but we don't want to be “Disciples”.**

### III On “The Kingdom of Heaven” Now & Not Yet

So let's talk about “Kingdom” What is it? For now let's just use this idea... “What you have say over... is your “Kingdom”. So think of it like.. you house, family, your things. It's your “Kingdom”, or your “Queendom” :) (Illustration of grabbing a woman's purse.)

So if we begin thinking about “*The Kingdom of Heaven*” as being **living**, **active**, and **among us**, it changes how we go about our prayers and our observations. For the last couple of years as I have found myself praying the “Lord's Prayer” and I get to that beautiful part:

*“Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.”*

It has taken on a more personal meaning. In many ways I find myself praying for **more** of God's Kingdom in my life today.

Listen to a couple more verses here... Jesus is talking here... He says:

“But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.”

Luke 11:20

in Luke 17:20:

“Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, “The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For, in fact the kingdom of God is among you.”

Luke 17:20

You know when we stop and think about it, this isn't and isolated problem. It isn't just an issue of the Pharisees. You and I still have problems with this. You know I think that dealing with the Kingdom of God as this far reaching thing that may happen somewhere way down the road is so much easier for us. In many ways it relieves us of our responsibility to “**Be**” a part of God's Revolution or Kingdom of Heaven now and the many responsibilities that come along with it.

Sometimes, while using the wrong filters, living in the Kingdom of Heaven can feel like a drag. If we only look at “the sermon on the mount” it seems so unattainable and perfect. We think of this as impossible!

A few days into our work-out routine or diet & then we quit. And after missing a meal or a day or two in the gym we find ourselves bailing on the whole idea. We tell ourselves that we just can't do it. And yet Jesus is begging us. He's the one with the power, He's the one who knows how we were made. Jesus knows the power of prayer. Jesus has faith in us! By saying:

“Hear these words! Please.”

He's saying: “Put them into practice!”

Live a life that can experience the goodness of greatness.

& He's saying: “Father may your kingdom come on Earth as it is in Heaven Today.”