

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 17-23

**Message Title:** ABSOLUTE TRUTH

**Message Text:** MATTHEW 7:24-29

Before Your Small Group Meeting:

- Watch Pastor Brandon's Message
- Read Matthew 7:24-29

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As a group, read Matthew 7:24-29. What images come to mind with these vivid words from Jesus? As a group, describe the similarities between building a house and building your life on Jesus.
2. What makes you confident that you are building your "house" on the rock and not sand? If you don't know, what actions/behaviors, thoughts, values, or motives has Jesus been changing over time, even ever so slightly?
3. One of the values of Church at Viera is, "We are under scripture - we submit to the authoritative, trustworthy, and unchanging Word of God." Which of these three attributes of the Bible have you found most difficult to embrace? Why?
4. Brandon stated in the message on Sunday that "someone or something has authority in our lives to the extent of our obedience." What keeps us from hearing and obeying the Words of God?
5. Discuss how Sunday's message may give you more confidence in conversations with others who do not find the Bible as authoritative, trustworthy, or unchanging?
6. Have you ever experienced a season of faith deconstruction? If so, please explain. What helped you avoid unbelief, reconstruct on a surer foundation, and give you a stronger faith?

## FOR FURTHER STUDY

### Commentary on Matthew 7:24-29

**7:24-27.** In this third and final challenge to choose between life and destruction, Jesus made it even clearer that the criterion for a righteous life is obedience to Jesus' teaching. His righteousness was diametrically opposed to pharisaical self-righteous works. Note **these words of mine** (7:24, 26). The possessive pronoun **mine** is in the emphatic beginning position in that phrase. Jesus was equating his own words with the will of his Father (7:21). Jesus was claiming to have the same authority as the God who authored the Old Testament Scriptures—a claim he also implied in clarifying the original intent of the law in 5:17-48.

Jesus did not leave it to the crowd to perceive his authority (7:28-29). He claimed it openly. This is quite an audacious claim, unless he actually had the authority to make it. Jesus did not give his skeptics much room to maneuver in their opinion of who he was—he was either everything he says he was ... or he was nothing at all. He must be fully accepted or fully rejected, for no "good moral teacher" would say the astonishing things Jesus did unless they were true. Jesus is God's Son.

**Therefore** in 7:24 refers to the preceding clarification (7:13-23), which justifies the generalizations Jesus made in 7:24-27. Anyone who knows of the coming judgment (7:21-23) but ignores Jesus' teaching is as foolish as a person who builds a house on sand.

The people represented by the two builders share one similarity and one difference. Both "keep on hearing" the words of Jesus. The present tense may imply that both hearers had been exposed to his teachings. In any case, both hearers were now accountable to obey what they had heard. However, the first person "keeps on doing" what Jesus taught, while the second "keeps on *not* doing" what Jesus taught.

The first man was wise; the second man was foolish. The first man found stability and blessing in this life and in eternity; the second experienced calamity in this life and in eternity (the rain, floods, and winds can represent both hardships in this life and God's final judgment).

Notice that wisdom (**the rock**) means to put the words of Jesus into practice.

**7:28-29.** Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount with only his intended audience (his disciples) present, but by the time he concluded a crowd had gathered. Matthew's closing comments to the sermon emphasize that the crowds were **amazed**. Matthew used the Greek imperfect tense to denote an ongoing effect in Jesus' listeners. They just could not get over it. But it says nothing about their commitment. This is the only one of five discourses Matthew recorded in which he commented on the crowd's response. This does not mean that this discourse was unique, for Matthew continued to use the same word of the crowd's response to Jesus' teaching in a more general way (13:54; 19:25; 22:33). Most likely, he wanted his readers to understand that the crowd had this kind of response to Jesus' teaching wherever he went and whatever he taught.

Both the content and manner of Jesus' teaching were overwhelming. Unlike other teachers, he taught with **authority** (7:29). Unlike them, he did not cite other authorities—only his own and his Father's. And it was he alone who decided who would enter the kingdom and on what basis they would do so—through a personal relationship with God.

Jesus' authority is one of the central themes in Matthew. Jesus anticipated the questions of his listeners, "Who is this man that he speaks with such authority?" Matthew is about to demonstrate, by

his collection of miracles in chapters 8-9, that Jesus was precisely who he claimed to be. Matthew now transitioned from Jesus' teachings into a lengthy account of his early miracles (chaps. 8-9) and his delegation of authority to his disciples (ch. 10). Jesus' authority increased the tension between Jesus and the hypocrites that would grow throughout the remainder of the book.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Weber, S. K. (2000). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 1, p. 104). Broadman & Holman Publishers.