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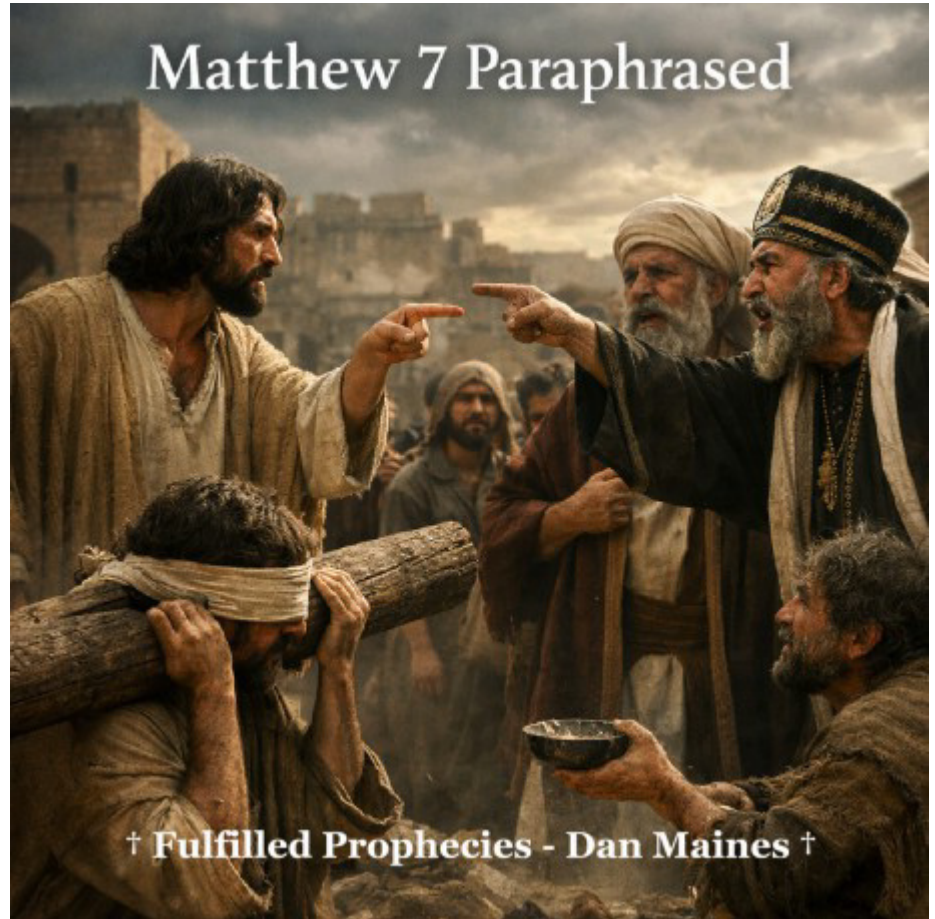
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## Matthew 7 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## Matthew 7 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† Jesus continues teaching about righteous living, warning His listeners not to pretend to be judges over others while ignoring their own faults. His words expose hypocrisy and call people to genuine obedience (Luke 6:37-42).

† The message builds on the earlier teaching about the heart. God isn't impressed with outward religion if the inner life is corrupt (Matthew 5:20; Matthew 6:1).

† In the first century this directly confronted the religious leaders who judged others harshly while excusing themselves, something Jesus repeatedly exposed (Matthew 23:3-4).

### **Matthew 7:1**

Do not set yourself up as the judge over others, or the same kind of judgment will come back on you.

† Jesus is addressing hypocritical judgment, not the act of discerning right and wrong. Scripture still commands believers to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24).

† The warning is about condemning others while ignoring personal sin. The Pharisees were notorious for this behavior (Matthew 23:23-24).

† Early Christian writers also explained this verse as a warning against hypocrisy, not against moral discernment (Didache 4.3).

### **Matthew 7:2**

The standard you use when judging others will be the same standard used when you are judged.

† Jesus explains that God holds people accountable by the same measure they apply to others. Mercy toward others reflects a heart that understands grace (James 2:13).

† The principle of measured judgment appears throughout scripture, showing that the attitude of the heart matters as much as the actions (Luke 6:38).

† First century Jewish teachers often used this same teaching concept called measure for measure justice.

### **Matthew 7:3**

Why do you notice the tiny speck in your brother's eye but completely overlook the large beam in your own?

† Jesus uses exaggeration to reveal hypocrisy. The person criticizing others often has a far greater issue themselves (Romans 2:1).

† The illustration would have sounded humorous yet convicting to His audience because the contrast between a speck and a beam is absurd.

† This teaching exposed the hypocrisy of the religious leaders who accused others while hiding their own corruption.

### **Matthew 7:4**

How can you say to your brother, Let me remove that speck from your eye, while a large beam is still in your own eye?

† Jesus exposes the arrogance of trying to correct others while ignoring personal wrongdoing. True correction begins with humility (Galatians 6:1).

† This verse does not forbid helping others with sin, it condemns doing so while being blind to your own guilt.

† Early Christian teachers emphasized self examination before attempting to correct others.

### **Matthew 7:5**

You hypocrite, first remove the beam from your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

† Jesus identifies the root problem as hypocrisy. The solution is repentance and personal correction first (Romans 2:21-22).

† Once someone deals honestly with their own sin, they are better equipped to help others restore their lives.

† The order matters. Personal transformation must come before correcting others.

### **Matthew 7:6**

Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls to pigs, or they will trample them and turn to attack you.

† Jesus warns that sacred truth should not be wasted on people who openly despise it. Wisdom is needed in sharing truth (Proverbs 9:7-8).

† Dogs and pigs were unclean animals in Jewish culture, symbolizing those who openly reject God's truth.

† The apostles later practiced this principle when turning from hostile audiences to those willing to listen (Acts 13:45-46).

## **Matthew 7:7**

Keep asking and you will receive, keep searching and you will find, keep knocking and the door will open for you.

† Jesus encourages persistent prayer. God's people are invited to continually seek Him with confidence (Jeremiah 29:13).

† The language emphasizes ongoing action. Faith isn't passive but actively seeking God's will.

† Early believers understood prayer as a continual dependence on God rather than a single request.

## **Matthew 7:8**

Everyone who keeps asking receives, everyone who keeps searching finds, and everyone who keeps knocking will have the door opened.

† The promise reinforces God's willingness to respond to sincere seekers (Hebrews 11:6).

† This isn't a guarantee of selfish requests being granted but assurance that God responds to genuine faith.

† The emphasis remains on persistence and trust in God's goodness.

## **Matthew 7:9**

What father among you would give his son a stone if he asked for bread?

† Jesus appeals to common human experience. Even imperfect parents desire to care for their children.

† The comparison highlights the reliability of God's goodness toward those who depend on Him.

† Jewish teachers often used father child illustrations to describe God's relationship with His people.

## **Matthew 7:10**

Or if he asked for a fish, would you hand him a snake?

† The contrast again stresses the absurdity of a loving parent giving something harmful instead of something beneficial.

† Jesus shows that God's generosity far exceeds human kindness.

† The message reassures believers that God is trustworthy when we bring our needs to Him.

### **Matthew 7:11**

If you, being imperfect, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask Him.

† Jesus reveals the greater truth. If flawed humans show kindness, God's generosity is infinitely greater.

† This passage strengthens the believer's confidence in prayer and dependence on God.

† Early Christians frequently quoted this verse to encourage trust in God's care.

### **Matthew 7:12**

In everything you do, treat people the way you want them to treat you. This sums up the Law and the Prophets.

† Often called the golden rule, this command captures the heart of biblical ethics (Leviticus 19:18).

† Jesus summarizes the entire moral teaching of scripture with this principle of love and fairness.

† Loving others in this way fulfills the intention behind God's commandments.

### **Matthew 7:13**

Enter through the narrow gate, because the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and many people follow it.

† Jesus contrasts two paths, one leading to life and one leading to ruin. The majority often chooses the easier path.

† In the first century this warning applied directly to Israel's leadership and the nation moving toward judgment (Matthew 23:37-38).

† The wide path represented the religious hypocrisy and rebellion that eventually brought destruction upon Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 7:14**

But the gate is narrow and the road is difficult that leads to life, and only a few find it.

† True discipleship requires commitment and obedience, not empty religious appearance.

† The small number finding the path reflects how few truly followed Christ in contrast to the crowds.

† Jesus frequently warned that many claim faith but few genuinely follow Him.

### **Matthew 7:15**

Watch out for false teachers who come disguised as harmless sheep but inwardly they are destructive wolves.

† Jesus warns that deception often appears religious and convincing. False teachers operate within the community.

† The apostles later warned about the same danger inside the early church (Acts 20:29-30).

† The imagery of wolves emphasizes the destructive influence of false leadership.

### **Matthew 7:16**

You will recognize them by the results of their lives. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles.

† True character eventually reveals itself through actions and influence.

† Jesus teaches that fruit, meaning behavior and teaching, exposes what is genuine.

† The agricultural metaphor would have been easily understood by His listeners.

### **Matthew 7:17**

A healthy tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces bad fruit.

† The outward actions of a person reveal the condition of the heart.

† Good fruit represents righteousness and faithful teaching.

† Bad fruit exposes deception and corruption.

### **Matthew 7:18**

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit.

† Jesus emphasizes consistency between character and actions.

† Genuine faith produces visible transformation over time.

† False teachers eventually reveal their corruption.

### **Matthew 7:19**

Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

† This warning echoes the message of John the Baptist about judgment upon unfruitful Israel (Matthew 3:10).

† The imagery of burning trees represents divine judgment.

† In the first century this pointed toward the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 7:20**

So then, you will recognize them by the fruit they produce.

† Jesus repeats the principle for emphasis. The evidence of a life reveals the truth about a person.

† Spiritual claims mean nothing without corresponding actions.

† The early church consistently applied this test when evaluating teachers.

### **Matthew 7:21**

Not everyone who calls me Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, only those who do the will of my Father.

† Verbal confession alone is not enough. Obedience reveals genuine faith (Luke 6:46).

† Jesus exposes the difference between empty religion and true discipleship.

† Many in Israel claimed loyalty to God while rejecting the Messiah.

## **Matthew 7:22**

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name and perform powerful works in your name?

† Religious activity alone does not guarantee acceptance before God.

† Jesus warns that impressive works can still exist alongside spiritual deception.

† This exposes the danger of relying on outward success rather than obedience.

## **Matthew 7:23**

Then I will say to them, I never knew you. Leave me, you who practice lawlessness.

† The issue is relationship and obedience, not religious performance.

† Lawlessness describes those who ignored God's commands while claiming spiritual authority.

† This warning again applied strongly to corrupt religious leadership.

## **Matthew 7:24**

Everyone who hears these teachings of mine and acts on them is like a wise man who built his house on solid rock.

† Jesus illustrates the security of obedience. A life built on His teaching stands firm.

† The rock symbolizes the stable foundation of Christ's instruction.

† True wisdom is demonstrated through obedience.

## **Matthew 7:25**

The rain fell, floods came, winds beat against that house, yet it did not collapse because its foundation was secure.

† Trials reveal the strength of a person's spiritual foundation.

† Those grounded in Christ remain stable despite adversity.

† The imagery reflects the stability of genuine faith.

## **Matthew 7:26**

Everyone who hears these words but ignores them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

† Hearing truth without obedience leads to spiritual collapse.

† Jesus contrasts wisdom with foolishness based on response to His words.

† Sand represents unstable belief without commitment.

## **Matthew 7:27**

Rain fell, floods came, winds struck that house, and it collapsed with great destruction.

† The outcome of ignoring Christ's teaching is complete ruin.

† This warning applied directly to Israel's leadership rejecting the Messiah.

† Their rejection ultimately led to national catastrophe.

## **Matthew 7:28**

When Jesus finished these teachings, the crowds were astonished at what they heard.

† The people recognized the authority behind Jesus' teaching.

† His message carried a clarity and authority unlike the religious teachers.

† This reaction frequently followed Jesus' teaching throughout the gospels.

## **Matthew 7:29**

He taught with real authority, not like the scribes.

† The scribes relied on quoting earlier teachers, but Jesus spoke with direct authority.

† His authority came from being the Messiah Himself.

† This distinction set Him apart from every other teacher of the time.

## **Historical References**

† Josephus records the corruption and hypocrisy of the religious leadership in the first century, confirming the conditions Jesus

exposed (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book 20).

† Eusebius later wrote about the moral decay of Jerusalem's leadership before the destruction of the city (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

† Tertullian referenced Jesus' warning about false teachers when discussing corrupt leaders infiltrating Christian communities (Tertullian, Against Heresies).

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† Jesus calls believers to examine themselves before criticizing others. Humility and honesty must come before correction.

† True faith isn't measured by religious talk but by obedience to Christ's teaching.

† Discernment remains necessary because false teachers still exist.

† A life built on Christ's teaching remains stable through every challenge.

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Does Matthew 7:1 mean Christians should never judge anything?

**A:** No. Jesus condemned hypocritical judgment, not discernment. John 7:24 commands believers to judge with righteous judgment.

**Q:** What does the narrow gate represent?

**A:** It represents genuine discipleship and obedience to Christ, which few choose compared to the easy path of compromise (Matthew 7:13-14).

**Q:** Who were the false prophets Jesus warned about?

**A:** In the first century many corrupt teachers and leaders misled Israel, something also warned about in Acts 20:29-30.

**Q:** What does Jesus mean by the good tree and bad tree?

**A:** Jesus is teaching that a person's true character eventually reveals itself through their actions and teaching. A good heart produces righteous fruit, while a corrupt heart produces harmful fruit. Luke 6:43-45 explains the same truth, that the mouth speaks from what fills the heart.

**Q:** What does building the house on the rock represent?

**A:** The rock represents obedience to Jesus' teaching. Hearing His words isn't enough, they must be practiced. James 1:22 says believers must be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

**Q:** Who are the many who say Lord, Lord in Matthew 7:21-23?

**A:** These are people who claimed allegiance to Christ but lived in disobedience. Their religious activity did not equal true faith. Luke 6:46 records Jesus asking, Why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

**Q:** What is the destruction Jesus warns about in the wide path illustration?

**A:** In the first century context, the broad path described Israel's rejection of the Messiah, which ultimately led to national judgment and the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-44 records Jesus predicting that coming devastation because the nation did not recognize the time of its visitation.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Matthew 7:1-29; Luke 6:37-42; John 7:24; Acts 20:29-30; Matthew 3:10; Matthew 23:23-24

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews Book 20; Eusebius Ecclesiastical History 3.5; Tertullian Against Heresies

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