



## Matthew 7

Matthew 7  
Tape #8006  
By Chuck Smith

We're in the final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount. And Jesus begins this part with the statement, *Judge not, (7:1)*

Now as we have observed, the manner of the teaching of Jesus is to state a principle and then amplify it and illustrate it. And the basic principle here is to judge not, but of course, we must ask, what does He mean by that? And as we read in its context, we realize that a lot of people have misinterpreted this, and those who are living in sin; if you begin to talk to them about their life in sin, they will say, "Brother, you're judging me," as though it is wrong for you to rebuke them or to speak to them about the sin that they are committing.

In the very context, in just a few verses, Jesus will say, "Don't cast that which is holy unto the dogs," or "Don't cast your pearls before swine." That involves some judgment. I have to discern who I can share God's glorious truths with, and who I shouldn't. A little further down in the chapter, Jesus will say, "Beware of false prophets." How can I beware of a false prophet unless I discern the person to be a false prophet. So that involves some bit of judgment and some bit of discernment.

And so Jesus is just not saying, "Don't judge." What does He mean then, "Judge not." There are certain things that I cannot judge that I am often prone to want to judge and that is, I cannot judge a person's heart, I cannot judge their motives. I am not to be hypercritical and condemning. And that is a judgment that we are often guilty of. "Did you see the way he looked? You know he's up to no good." "Well, how do you know that?" And, "He only did that because..." as though we know what's in his heart, as though we know the motive.

If we hear of someone who has sinned and we hear that they have repented of that sin, and we say, Oh, I don't believe he really has repented. Wait a minute, how do you know? You see, that is a judgment that I am not allowed--to judge a man's heart, to judge a man's motive, and yet, we are prone to do that. It may be that he hasn't truly repented, it may be that he has. But if a brother repents or declares, "I repent, forgive me," then it is my obligation to forgive. Whether or not it is a true repentance in his heart or not, I don't know. But I am to forgive. I'm not to judge what is going on in his heart.

I can judge by the fruits of a person's life. I can observe their life and the things that they are doing. And if the things that they are doing are contrary to the plain, clear teaching of the scripture, I can judge by what I see going on in their lives. What I can't judge is what I can't see and that is what is going on in their heart.

Now many times, we are in a position where a person has asked for forgiveness, has declared their repentance, and I am not certain whether or not they have truly, fully repented; but because I can't judge that, I have to accept them, I have to receive them. And I have learned through the years that not all who say I repent have truly repented. And I have been burned by forgiving those who said that they had repented. And I, no doubt, will be burned again. But I would rather, if I err, err on the side of mercy and grace and forgiveness than err on the side of wrong judgment. If I err on the side of grace and mercy, God's going to forgive me. If I err on the side of judgment, then I'm going to have to answer to God because that is a sin. So judge not, that is, in a hypercritical condemning way as though I know the heart and the motive of that person.

But then Jesus tells us why we are not to judge.

*Judge not,*

[first of all]

*that you be not judged. (7:1)*

If I am guilty of wrong judgment, then I will be judged for my judging wrongly. Secondly,

*For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again. (7:2)*

When I judge someone else, I am then setting the standard by which I am to be judged. Now let me suggest that you are much more lenient with your faults than you are the faults of others. You're much more understanding, you're much more forgiving of yourself than you are of others. How horrible our sins look to us when someone else is committing them!

You remember the story of David, after his horrible sin with Bathsheba, and then the ordering of her husband to the frontlines where he might be killed in battle. And when the prophet Nathan came to David and said, "David, a man in the kingdom, very wealthy, had everything a man could possibly desire. Next door to him there lived a man who was extremely poor. He had only one little ewe lamb that he loved dearly, it was like a pet, he kept it in his house, it slept in his bed. The rich man had company coming for dinner and he ordered his servants to go by force and take that one lamb from his neighbor and slay it so he could feed his company." And David was infuriated. He said, "That man shall surely be put to death!" Oh yes, our sins look horrible when someone else is committing them. But then Nathan said, "David, you are the man." Oh well...

But when you judge, you are setting standards. You see, the Bible tells us that we will be judged pretty much according to what knowledge that we have. Jesus speaks about the one who "did things that were worthy of many stripes and because he did not know the will of the Father, he will be beaten with few; because unto whom much is given, much is required; and to whom little is given, little is required." (Luke 12:48) So if you are judging a person for a particular action, that indicates that you know that action is wrong. So then if you are guilty of that very thing, then you are guilty of the violation of what you know to be wrong. Maybe he didn't know that was wrong. So you're setting the standard of measurement by which you one day will be judged.

And then Jesus gives us the fourth reason, or the two could be combined as one, and the third reason why we're not to judge others, because we really can't see clearly to judge what's wrong in another person's life.

*Why do you behold the sliver that is in your brother's eye, but you don't consider the six by twelve that's in your own eye? (7:3)*

[The beam.]

*Or how will you say to your brother, Let me take the sliver out of your eye; and, behold, the beam is in your own eye? (7:4)*

So we are not to judge because we can't really see clearly. Our judgment is always flawed by our own imperfections. I've got a beam in my eye, and thus I can't see clear enough to take the sliver out of my brother's. Jesus said,

*You hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of your own eye; and then you will be able to see clearly to take the sliver out of your brother's eye. (7:5)*

And then right in the context, He says,

*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. (7:6)*

There is a scripture that speaks about the dog returning to its vomit, and a pig to its wallowing in the mire. There are people who are so closed to the Gospel, hearts are so hardened, they are so far gone that when you seek to share with them, they only turn it against you. And what the Lord is saying is that you're not responsible to argue with that person and convince them of the truth of the things of God. We are to witness to all. We are to share with all what God has done for us, but then it isn't my responsibility to talk people into receiving Jesus Christ. And so Jesus is just saying that you're not to take the holy, wonderful things that God is doing in your life and in your heart, maybe that special work of the Holy Spirit in your devotions, and to share them with people who have no appreciation or understanding of the deep things of God that are taking place in your life; exposing it to ridicule and to scorn.

And then Jesus turns to the subject of prayer, and He declares,

*Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: (7:7)*

Wonderful promises in prayer. And these are only a few of the tremendous promises that Jesus has given to us concerning prayer. "Ask, and you shall receive," very positive. "Seek, and you shall find; knock, and it

shall be opened unto you." Very positive. "Whatsoever things you desire, when you pray," Jesus said, "believe that you receive them, and you shall have them." (Mark 11:24) "Ask, and you shall receive." (John 16:24) It is, first of all, important to note that Jesus is talking to His disciples. Going back to the first verse, "Seeing the multitudes, he went into a mountain: and when he sat down, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying...." (5:1,2)

Jesus is teaching the disciples, He is not teaching the general public. He is not giving a wide, open promise to answers to prayer to just anybody, but he is giving it to those who have committed themselves to be His disciples. And what does that commitment to discipleship entail? Jesus said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself [first], [second] take up his cross, and [third] follow me." So when Jesus said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you," He's talking to those who have come to the place of the cross in their own life. The denial of self, they're not looking for themselves; but they have taken up the cross, they have reckoned the old life, the old nature, the old man to be dead, crucified with Christ. And their desires aren't for their glory or for their enrichment, their desires are for the kingdom of God. They're following Jesus Christ. And to that man who is so dedicated and committed to the selfless life, to following Jesus, he can have assurance that he can ask and will receive, he will seek and he will find, he can knock and it shall be opened.

But it isn't just to everybody and it isn't just to ask anything you want. Lord, I would like a new Lexus. No, it's not just for me to ask for luxurious things to consume upon my own lust; that has been crucified. I've denied myself to follow Jesus, the self life. And then Jesus went on to say,

*For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (7:8)*

And then going on in the subject of prayer,

*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? (7:9)*

*Or if he ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent? (7:10)*

*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (7:11)*

Again, Jesus using the typical argument of the lesser to the greater. You, earthly fathers, who are evil, if your child should come to you and say, Daddy, I'm hungry, can I have a sandwich? You don't say, Go chew on the rocks outside, kid. If he asked for some fish, sardines or whatever, you don't give him a serpent. Now if you, earthly fathers, as filled with faults as we are, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more... Sometime if you want an interesting study of the New Testament, look up in the concordance the 'much mores.' It makes a very fascinating study because it is always a study that deals with the argument from the lesser to the greater. "If you, earthly fathers, know how to give good gifts, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?"

Luke's gospel, as he records the statement of Jesus--maybe here or maybe Jesus repeated it at another time, in a different setting--but Luke tells us this teaching of Jesus, and in Luke's gospel, Jesus said, "How much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit, [good things, oh, what a good thing the Holy Spirit is], how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him?"

And I think that that's a very important consideration because there are those who have boogieman stories about people who have been seeking God for the Holy Spirit, and somehow received some kind of spurious experience in which some demonic force took over their life and, it was horrible, what happened to them as they were seeking the Holy Spirit. What a blasphemous concept of God that is. How that blasphemes the very character and nature of our heavenly Father, to think that a child could be asking Him for bread and He would give them a stone, or to be asking for the Holy Spirit and He'd give them some false, spurious experience. Not the nature of our heavenly Father.

Now Jesus begins to make the application to the teachings that He has brought in the Sermon on the Mount. First of all, the final kind of the rule that covers all the bases. You want the rule that just covers everything?

*Therefore,*

[This is always a concluding kind of a thing: therefore, sum it up]

*whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (7:12)*

This is it. This is what it's all about. It is doing unto others or doing for others what you would like to have them do for you. This is called the Golden Rule, and it was in essence given by Buddha years before Jesus. Only Buddha put it this way: "Don't do to others what you don't want done to you." As you look at it, it looks like it's just about the same thing. There's one big difference. Buddha put it in the negative, don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you. Jesus put it in the positive, do unto others what you like them to do unto you. Putting it over into the positive.

The law and the prophets. Again, Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment. He said, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength and love thy neighbor as thyself, and in these are all the law and the prophets." (Matthew 22:36-40) Loving your neighbor as yourself, doing for him what you would like done for you. Now you back over these injunctions of Jesus, on judging and all, and put it in that light and I think that many things that we would do would be different; if I only did for you what I would like to have you be doing for me. I would like understanding, I would like compassion, I would like mercy, I would like forgiveness, and thus, I must be compassionate. It's an interesting thing that the critical person is the person who is quite often criticized because he's critical. And you want to get even with him. And so if you want people to really criticize you, just go around criticizing them in everything they do and you'll find that soon you'll be criticized for everything you're doing. Judge not, lest you be judged.

So, there are two paths that you can take in life. The one path leads to eternal life, the other path leads to destruction. And so Jesus declares,

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and there are many which go in thereto: (7:13)*

The broad path, the broad gate is the popular way, it's the way of the world. Don't think that as a Christian we're going to be able to be a majority, and legislate a righteous community. You're up against the majority. We're living in a sinful world. And those that are going with the flow of the world, broad gate, broad way, many.

*But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it. (7:14)*

Take a look at the path you're on and the big question is, where is it leading you? The path that you are walking in life, does it lead to eternal life or is it leading you to destruction? It is so painful and so hurtful to see people who are walking a path that is destroying them. But we see it all the time. People engaged in habits or in activities that are destructive. Are you? We look at the world today and we see the destructive practices in the world. And we are aware of how destruction these practices are. And yet, people continue in them. They will not give up the path, though it is destroying them. "There is a way," the scripture said, "that seems right unto man, but the end thereof [that's the issue] is the ways of death." (Proverbs 14:12) The one path leads to destruction, the other leads to life. And then, you've got to,

*Beware [because there are] false prophets, which are in sheep's clothing, (7:15)*

They'll be pointing you to the path that will lead to destruction. They will be encouraging you and enticing you towards a path that leads to destruction. There are many religions in the world and oftentimes, we hear people say, "Well, I'm confused, I don't know what religion to believe. I don't know what religion to practice."

There are many people who try to classify Christianity with one of the great world religions. But I think that there is a vast difference between Christianity and religion. Unfortunately, there are many who have made a religion of Christianity, and that's sad. And man, by religion, is attempting to reach the infinite God. And so you have finite man trying to reach out and touch the infinite God by religious practices, and usually in religions you have some form of self-denial, you have some form of sacrifice, you have some form of penance and self-effacement, in order to somehow appease and please God by your efforts and by your works.

Now when I say that some have made a religion out of Christianity, we realize that there are those who would prescribe certain works in order to be saved; certain requirements, and thus have made a religion of

works out of Christianity. Religions are doomed to fail because it is impossible for finite man to reach an infinite God. You just can't do it because you're finite and He is infinite. And thus religions always leave man with a feeling of emptiness and not quite measuring up. And it's always just over the hill and hopefully on the other side, I'm going to find it.

Buddha was a very interesting person. He taught many wonderful things. As we pointed out, some of the things he said were parallel of sorts to the things that Jesus said. Buddha declared that the problem that we have in life stems from our physical nature and our desire for physical things. And so the way to peace and contentment is to lose all desire for physical things because life, true life, is in the realm of the spirit. Thus, you can never find satisfaction or fulfillment in physical things and man's pursuit after physical things, in order to find happiness, is doomed for failure. He's right, Jesus taught basically the same thing. A man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses, that happiness cannot be found in material possessions, and it is the desire for these material things that creates all of the wars and the strifes and the envies and all among us.

The problem is that Buddha could not give power to the people to live after the spirit, and thus, you will not find a Buddhist who can speak of complete contentment. I've arrived. I have perfect peace and contentment, because it's never quite there, I still am hungry when I don't eat. And that's a desire for physical things. And so the ultimate, of course, is to lose even your appetite where you don't even desire food. Well, how many of you [have] done that so far? I lose it only after I'm through with the Christmas dinner, but that doesn't last very long.

Jesus pointed to the path of the spirit. He said, "I will come and I will dwell in you, and I will give you power by My dwelling in you and by the Holy Spirit. You will receive power to live and walk after the spirit." You see, Buddha left you frustrated but Jesus comes in and fulfills in you that life and walk in the spirit. So beware of those who would lead you into a path of religion, who would prescribe for you the works whereby you can please or appease the wrath of God, or please God. It's "not by works of righteousness which we have done or can do," (Titus 3:5), for "our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6) in the eyes of the Lord. Christianity differs from religion because religion has you doing works to please God, where Christianity would point you to the work that God has done, that you simply must put your trust and faith in what He has done.

Religions would have you reaching out to touch God, Christianity has God reaching out to touch you. And there is the vast difference. And there is a possibility. Finite man could never reach or touch an infinite God, but it is no problem for an infinite God to reach a finite man. And in Christianity, that's exactly what you have, the infinite God reaching down to touch the finite man. So "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing..."

*but inwardly they are ravening wolves. (7:15)*

*You will know them by their fruits. For do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (7:16)*

*Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (7:17)*

*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (7:18)*

*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (7:19)*

The results of those religious systems.

*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (7:20)*

It is important that we look at our own life. The Lord stresses over and over again the importance of our bringing forth fruit. Jesus spoke of the tree that did not bring forth fruit. How that the master said, "Cut it down!" Jesus came to a fig tree, when He was hungry He found there were only leaves, there was no fruit on it and He cursed it. And the tree immediately withered and died. The disciples were surprised that it so quickly withered and died. Jesus speaks of bearing fruit in John 15, the importance of bearing fruit. "I am the vine, you are the branches. Every branch in me that bringeth forth fruit, He purges or cleanses it that it might bring forth more fruit. Herein is the Father glorified, that you bear much fruit." (John 15:5,8) And that's an easy barometer by which to measure your walk. Is my life really fruitful for the Lord? Am I bearing fruit in my life, in the character, is my walk with Christ being manifested in my character? Has it made me a sweeter, kinder, more compassionate person? Am I bringing forth that kind of fruit? Or am I critical,

hypercritical, judgmental, angry, upset, bitter, snapping at everybody, as I witness to them and tell them of the joy they could have in serving the Lord. "By their fruit you shall know them."

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, is going to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (7:21)*

It's not what you say always. You can be saying the right thing. Not everyone who says... now you can't enter the kingdom of heaven if you don't acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord. Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) "If thou shall confess with thy mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, believe in your heart God has raised Him from the dead, you'll be saved." (Romans 10:9) So no one is going to enter the kingdom of heaven who has not and does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord. But not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, is even going to make it. There are a lot of people that are saying the right things.

There's a fellow over on the mount of Olives who is one of the vendors. And when you get off the bus, he'll say, "Where are you from, where are you from? California? Oh, California, I have a brother in Los Angeles, oh, brother, brother, California, love you brother, love Californians." And he'll embrace you. "Bless God, oh, Californians, praise the Lord. Yes, brother, brother." And after he has embraced you, check to see if you still have your wallet. Guy's a pickpocket! And while he's praising the Lord, he's praising the Lord because he's got your wallet. Now all who say... Jesus said, "Why do you call me, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I command you?" That's inconsistency. Not all who say, Lord, Lord. But you see, if He is my Lord, then I'm obedient and I'm going to be doing what He commands. And so, "Not all who say Lord, Lord are going to enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of the Father."

But then, if you say, oh, yes, it's what you do, that's important. They were even doing things.

*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord,*

[they were saying the right thing, and they were doing things]

*have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (7:22)*

Now let's go back to chapter six in our minds where Jesus said, "Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men to be seen of men." (6:1) Be careful that your motive in the things that you're doing, the righteous deeds, the righteous things, be careful that your motive isn't to be seen and recognized and be praised by men. Doing things in such a way as drawing attention to yourself, and the purpose is that of being applauded or noticed by man. Be careful, He said, that that isn't the motive. But when you do these things, do them as unto the Father in secret, before the Father, and your Father will reward you openly.

So here people were doing things but they were doing things in such a way as they were drawing attention; or using these things to enrich themselves. Oh how it pains and how it hurts me to hear these men talk about faith and to hear them tell people about God's power to heal, and have these healing meetings and these faith meetings and all, and then invariably it comes that push for money. And then you get on their mailing list and you start getting all of these gimmicky letters of "Write your request to me, enclose it in this envelope and enclose an offering with it, we're going through problems and then I will pray for your request. I'll go up to my prayer tower and then I'll cut an inch square out of the carpet where I knelt and I'll send it to you for a generous donation." God help us!

If they've got all of this kind of faith, why can't they trust God for money to supply for their ministries? Why do they make such a big emphasis upon money? Why is it they always get around to support and send in your support and this ministry is a vital ministry for God, but it can't go on unless you bail God out. We're going to go off the air. Poor Jimmy, I think of all the tears he shed, and he's off the air. But why is it that they always get around to that?

Lord, we've done a lot of wonderful things. We've prophesied in Your name, we've cast out devils in Your name, we've done wonderful works in Your name. But there was something wrong.

*Because Jesus said, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you. (7:23)*

Jesus would never be a part of scamming people for money. He would never have a part in a ministry that is scamming people for money. Peter said, "Beware of false prophets," and then he tells you that "they seek to make merchandise off of you." (2 Peter 2:1,3)

*Therefore whosoever hears these sayings of mine, and does them,  
[there's the key again... hearing the sayings of Jesus, going back over the Sermon on the Mount, the things that He has just taught us, and doing these things]*

*I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (7:24)  
And the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: because it was founded on a rock. (7:25)*

Foundation, the first things, the gate, you enter the gate to go into the path. Make sure that you've got the right gate. You're gonna build a house, a religious structure, make sure that you have the right foundation. Make sure that you're founded upon Jesus Christ and the Word of God. Not upon a system of man, not upon a system of works, rules, regulations, but you're founded upon Jesus Christ. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood, His righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' Name. On Christ, the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand. I'm founded, digged deep, laid a foundation and when the storm comes, you'll survive, the house will stand.

*Every one that hears these sayings of mine, and does them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: (7:26)*

*The rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew, and beat upon the house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. (7:27)*

Basically, Jesus is saying what we're going to face stormy issues in life. Things are not always going to be smooth. Everyday will not be sunny. There will come storms. And these houses looked alike, except that one had a foundation on the rock, the other had a foundation on the sand. It was no foundation, just built it on the sand, no real foundation. And there are people who have built their spiritual experiences upon experiences.

Oh, I had the most marvelous thing happened to me, I felt tingles all over me. And I'm going back tomorrow night because they're going to fill teeth tomorrow night and then the next night they're going to heal eyes--and all of these things, and people are building their houses upon experience. Just looking for these things upon which to build their faith; your faith cannot be founded upon experience because that fellow who threw away his crutches and walked off the platform may die of a heart attack before he gets to the back door. Experience is a bad thing to build faith on.

You can't build your faith upon feelings. You can't build a house on the way you feel. Oh, I felt so glorious, just like there were oceans of love sweeping over me. What a glorious experience. No, you can't establish... I know I'm saved because I feel this warm liquid love just flowing all over me. My faith has to be founded on the Word of God.

This is what God's Word said, because my faith is going to face a test. It's going to face trials, there are going to storms, and if it's on feeling, then I'm going to feel horrible; and oh, I don't believe I was there, I feel so bad... don't think I'm saved. If it's built on experience, experiences can change and you can have a real change. If it's built on this, every Christian will be prosperous. And so you've gone out, and you've claimed that new mansion, and you claim that new Mercedes and all, bless God, hallelujah, I've claimed it, I've said it, I've spoken it and here it is... Oh, I'm so excited and happy. And then when they come and repossess the house and the car and everything else, what are you going to do then? Faith has to be founded in the Word, he dug and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the hard times come, you're going to stand because you've got the right foundation. You'll weather the storms of life because you've got the right foundation.

*Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished the sermon, ended the message, the people were astonished at his doctrine: (7:28)*

They were astonished at the things... this took them by surprise. And their astonishment, Matthew tells us, is,

*Because he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (7:29)*

The scribes were typical of those in public office who never wanted to be responsible for any decision they make. And so they are always putting you over to someone else, and someone else, and someone else, and someone else, because no one wants to make a decision that one day he might have to be responsible

for. The bureaucrats. And so the scribes, when they would teach, would never say, this is what God's Word declares. They would never teach with just a positive assertiveness. But they would say, Now Rabbi Hallel says, and they would always be quoting what someone else said about the passage. Notice Jesus said, You have heard that it hath been said... but I say unto you... Scribes would never do that. They would never put themselves on that kind of a position of, I say unto you. You heard that the rabbi said this, you heard the rabbi... but I say unto you.

And so they were astonished because He spoke with real authority, not like the scribes, but with real authority. Why? Because He is the authority. He was the One who inspired the scriptures. And thus He speaks with authority when He speaks of the things of God.

Father, we thank You for the Word, a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. And how we thank You, Father, that You sent Your only begotten Son to speak to us in these last days, to reveal to us the way, the truth and the life. And may we follow Him in the path that He leads, though it be strait and though it be narrow, we know Lord that You will sustain us by Your guiding hand and by Your strengthening hand. Thank you Lord for Your Word, may we build our house upon it. In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.