

Problem

Moral improvement does not affect the wicked heart. Only Christ can do that.

Read the following verses (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 5:17-20, 48; 6:1) and discuss the overall context of the sermon on the mount in light of the main idea of the sermon:

The sermon on the mount presents an absolute ethic containing no loopholes for the semi-righteous. It is not about moral improvement. It is about Christ.

People tend to either love the sermon on the mount as a means of self improvement or they hate it in its absolute ethic. Discuss and contrast the following two articles.

Self improvement crowd: <http://www.gotquestions.org/red-letter-Christians.html>

Hatred crowd: <http://andynaselli.com/why-people-hate-the-sermon-on-the-mount>

Its not about your self righteousness (Matthew 7:1-5)

-Read 1 Corinthians 5. How does this relate to this passage regarding not judging due to having a plank in the eye?

-Read Romans 2:1-5. If the point of the sermon on the mount was not self improvement, what was it?

-Read 2 Samuel 12:1-15. How does Nathan illustrate the role of the sermon on the mount?

Its not about their self righteousness (Matthew 7:6)

-How does this sentence stay in the context of Jesus' words above?

-Read John 3:11-12; Matthew 21:23-27 and 9:10-13, to find out.

Its about repentance (Matthew 7:7-11)

-Read Matthew 3:2 and 4:17. How might this section regarding seeking asking and knocking relate?

-Read Luke 13:1-5; 24:44-48; Mark 6:7-13 and Acts 3:19; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20. Was Jesus' overall message about self improvement?

And its fruit (Matthew 7:12)

-Read Matthew 3:7-8 and Galatians 5:13-24. How do these verses shed light on the context?

Christ is the entrance (Matthew 7:13-14)

-Two gates: "I am a good person," or read John 10:1-8. Choose.

Christ is the empowerment (Matthew 7:15-20)

-Two trees: "Sure I get angry and lust sometimes but so does everybody. At least I am not as bad as that one guy. He is such a hypocrite," or read John 15:1-17.

Christ is the appeal (Matthew 7:21-23)

-Two appeals: "I raised my hand in church and said a prayer - I pray every day and I try to read the Bible when I can. I don't curse much and I generally try to treat others nicely," or read John 14:1-7.

Christ is the foundation (Matthew 7:24-27)

Two foundations: "I am trying to make the world a better place. I am making a difference, helping people," or read John 11:17-27.

Its about Him (Matthew 7:28-29)

-Jesus had authority. He cleansed the temple (Matthew 21:12-17) as it was to have been a place of need and grace and instead went to the invalid by the pool of Bethesda. Read John 5:1-9.

-What is the key sentence in this section as it relates to the sermon?

-Read 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2. What is the appeal, moral improvement or repentant faith towards Christ the one who saves?

-Read the following article: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevinwax/2012/04/02/christianity-in-crisis-a-response-to-andrew-sullivan/> and discuss the Main Idea:

The sermon on the mount presents an absolute ethic containing no loopholes for the semi-righteous. It is not about moral improvement. It is about Christ.