

## **The God of the Mountains (6) Citizens of the Kingdom (3)**

In His last address to the citizens of the Kingdom, the King gives instruction regarding the treatment of others. In His command, *“judge not that ye be not judged”*, He is speaking of pronouncing judgment upon or condemning others unjustly.

The Lord Jesus reprimanded the Pharisees about judging by outward appearances, and advised to judge according to righteous judgment (Jn. 7:24). God reminded Samuel regarding judging by outward appearances, *“the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart”* (1<sup>st</sup> Sam. 16:7).

James warned against judging others by their clothing, having *“respect of persons”*, showing partiality to those who are wealthy and well dressed, while looking down on those who are dressed in *“vile raiment”*, or shabby, dirty clothing. Peter would not keep company with a Gentile, until he was made to realize that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

The apostle Paul warned against judging others based on what they believe they can or cannot eat (Rom. 14:1-3). James cautioned against speaking evil of others and judging them. Doing this would be the same as speaking evil of the law and judging the law, which states that we should love our neighbours as ourselves (Jas. 4:11).

Paul appeals to the fact that we will all be judged in a coming day. He wrote, *“But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ”* (Rom. 14:10). We might remember that no sins are judged at the judgment seat of Christ.

The Lord Jesus bore the judgment our sins deserved, and shed His precious blood as the only means of forgiveness and reconciliation to God. Rather, what is judged at the judgment seat of Christ is faithfulness to Him and motives in serving Him.

The King also warned the citizens of the kingdom against hypocrisy. We have the tendency to point out the small faults in others, while ignoring greater faults in ourselves. King David was quick to condemn the man that took his neighbour's lamb, but was guilty himself of having another man killed, in order to take his wife (2<sup>nd</sup> Sam. 12:1-9).

Much of our fault-finding stems from thinking ourselves to be better than others. Paul pointed to the humility of the Lord Jesus as the perfect example to follow. He wrote, *“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves”*. He urged believers to display the same attitude as did the Lord Jesus (Phil. 2:3-8).

The King taught the principles of consistency and continuance in prayer. There seems to be a progression in persistence and passion and urgency suggested in the words, *“ask”*, *“seek”* and *“knock”*. The context seems to indicate that it is a matter of earnestly seeking the mind and will of God in relation to conduct and character in the kingdom of God.

The Lord Jesus said to the disciples, *“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full”* (Jn. 16:24). The Lord said through the prophet Jeremiah, *“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”* (Jer. 29:13). When Jacob wrestled with the angel, he was determined to receive a blessing from God and said, *“I will not let thee go except thou bless me”* (Gen. 32:26).

Our heavenly Father, is infinitely wiser than our earthly Fathers and knows the needs of His children and will ably and amply provide. James reminds us, *“every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning”* (Jas. 1:17).

Answered prayer demands obedience to the will of God and unhindered communion with Him. The Lord Jesus said, *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”* (Jn. 15:7). John wrote, *“Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight”* (1<sup>st</sup> Jn. 3:21-22).

The gate that provides entrance to eternal life is narrow. If a person is going to enter through that gate, they must strive to do so (Luke 13:24), making salvation through the Lord Jesus their chief aim and object. The Lord Jesus said, *“I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved”* (Jn. 10:9). The broad way travelled by many, may have its worldly pleasure, but it leads to destruction.

The King warned the citizens of the kingdom against false prophets and false professors. In his letter to Titus, Paul described certain false teachers, *“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate”* (Tit. 1:16). In a coming day, the King will profess to them, *“I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity”*.

In contrast, the Lord Jesus says of those who are genuinely saved, who have trusted Him for salvation, *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”* (Jn. 10:27-28).

Those who hear the words of the King and seek to live by them, are likened to a wise man who builds his house upon a rock, where wind and flood cannot affect it. Those who hear the words of the King and ignore them are likened to a foolish man who builds his house on the sand, where wind and flood eventually destroy it.

Whether we consider the solid foundation to be the Lord Jesus Himself or the words He taught, the truth remains the same. Isaiah prophesied of the Lord Jesus, *“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste (shall never be shaken)”* (Isa. 28:16).

The psalmist wrote of the Lord, *“He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved”* (Ps. 62:6). Another Psalm reads, *“They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever”* (Ps. 125:1).

James likewise contrasted those who are forgetful hearers with those who hear and apply the teaching to themselves. Those who seek to live by the Word of the King will be blessed. Paul wrote, *“For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified”* (Rom. 2:13). The Lord Jesus said, *“Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it”* (Luke 11:28).

Thinking of the tremendous teaching from the Lord Jesus in what is referred to as the *Sermon on the Mount*, I am reminded of the words of the prophet Isaiah, *“how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings that publisheth peace; that bringeth*

*good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! (Isa. 52:7).*

*Such divine and gracious teaching,  
From the Sovereign's lips we hear;  
Every kingdom subject reaching,  
Serve Him thus with Godly fear.*

*Treating others without judging,  
Envy, malice, cast aside;  
Showing kindness without grudging,  
To the saints for whom Christ died.*

*Ever constant in our praying,  
Trusting God for all our need;  
From communion never straying,  
Kingdom subjects blessed indeed.*

*Thus eternal life possessing,  
Gladly all His teachings own;  
Soon to hear His voice confessing,  
That we to Him are fully known.*

*Through the stormy wind assailing,  
Faithful Sovereign we have proved;  
Resting on the Rock unfailing,  
Safe in Christ can ne'er be moved.*

**Bernie Payne**