

THE Upside-Down Kingdom

21
DAYS OF PRAYER

21 DAYS OF PRAYER FROM THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT THAT
WILL TRANSFORM YOU FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

Robert Watson



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Introduction

In terms of sheer impact, no speech has transformed the world more than the one given by Jesus on the mountainside. In fact, most great speeches are simply piggybacking on the thoughts and principles in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. And it begins with some of the most shocking, upside-down statements ever made.

Jesus preached a new way of living so that we might learn to live as free citizens of this Kingdom wherever we are in the world. But to do so, we must be willing to unlearn, recalibrate, submit and prayerfully apply the teaching of his sermon.

As we take the truth of God, testified to brilliantly by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, and apply it to our relationships with God and with people, the result will be transformation. It will not be just the appearance of transformation on the outside, but true transformation from the inside out.

Over the next 21 days, let's pray through the most remarkable speech of all time together. And, while we are sure we will be left amazed, even more than that, we will be transformed. And, as we are transformed from the inside out, God can use all of us to continue turning the world upside down.

Better together,

Scott Ridout
President, Converge



²³Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

²⁴News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.

Everywhere Jesus went in his few short years of ministry a collision went with him. It was a collision between the realities of his heavenly Kingdom and the brokenness of our fallen world. It is at this point of contact we see the sick healed, the dead rise, the demon-possessed set free, the lame walk, those shamed given a new identity, the blind receive sight, new wine when the wedding feast lacked. Most important, a new way of living is preached so that we might learn to live as free citizens of this Kingdom wherever we are in the world.

Prayer

Father, lead me on this journey of learning and applying. Reveal truth to me each day. Help me see what I can't see that is wrong in my thinking. I acknowledge your ways are higher than my ways. Your thoughts are higher than mine. I begin these weeks by acknowledging the power of your Kingdom and my desire to experience you and your Kingdom more deeply than I ever have before. I want to experience you not just when I stand face-to-face with you, but in the here and now. Lead me. My desire is to follow you. Amen.





Day 2: The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-11

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said:

³ *"Blessed are the **poor** in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

⁴ *Blessed are those who **mourn**,
for they will be comforted.*

⁵ *Blessed are the **meek**,
for they will inherit the earth.*

⁶ *Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness,
for they will be filled.*

⁷ *Blessed are the **merciful**,
for they will be shown mercy.*

⁸ *Blessed are the **pure** in heart,
for they will see God.*

⁹ *Blessed are the **peacemakers**,
for they will be called children of God.*

¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are **persecuted** because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

¹¹ *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds
of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your
reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were
before you."*

What would you say is the greatest speech in all of history?

In modern times, the speeches likely to come to mind are Lincoln's Gettysburg address, Churchill's "Never Surrender" speech or Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. It could be you think way outside the box and would credit Chris Pratt's "Teen Choice" awards or William Wallace's big-screen motivational speech to rally Scotland against the tyrannical King Longshanks. All were great speeches.

But in terms of sheer impact, no speech has transformed the world more than the one given by Jesus on the mountainside. In fact, most great speeches are simply piggybacking on the thoughts and principles in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. And it begins with some of the most-shocking, upside-down statements: "the Beatitudes."



Look back over the highlighted words associated with "blessing." What? It's as if Jesus spilled water on his notes right before addressing the crowd. The Beatitudes are completely contrary to the thinking of the day. In the minds of the crowd, those who were blessed were the conquering, powerful, arrogant and indulgent looking down on the lower classes from their ivory towers. Yet, Jesus declares out of the gate to the crowd of misfits, you are blessed. Why? Because they are with Jesus, and the upside-down Kingdom is at hand. And, more important, they are postured to receive what Jesus is ushering in.

Prayer

Father, search me. Reveal any area where I am relying on my own power, talent, position, performance or potential when I should be relying on you. Forgive my pride. Thank you that regardless of any of these things I might be tempted to rely on, I am completely blessed simply because you are with me. May I begin to understand more of that truth today. Be with me as I sit and as I rise, as I speak and as I listen. Keep me aware of your presence throughout the day and of the blessing that comes from knowing you are with me. I am blessed beyond imagination. Thank you. Amen.

Prayer Journal



Jesus, thank you for allowing me to be part of your mission in this world. You are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, yet you have invited me to be an extension of you and your ministry. I can't think of any greater honor. Give me eyes to see relationships in which I can serve to prevent decay. Help me to shine your light in such a way that it isn't about me and my glory, but yours. May my good deeds cause somebody to glorify you today. Amen.





17“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Once we see Jesus as the fulfillment of Scripture, he then wants us to align our lives to it. Jesus' statements about the commandments take on a deeper meaning than just obeying rules or laws. Jesus says your righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were really "righteous" and lived according to the rules. Jesus gets to the heart of being a disciple—not just obeying commandments but taking on Jesus' righteousness and then being transformed by his love.

Prayer

Jesus, help me to see you in Scripture. Help me to be able to show others who you are and what you have done for us. I pray I can allow you to change me from the inside out. I pray that I live not just outwardly in obedience to commandments to be a “good” person but am transformed by your righteousness imparted in me. Help me to see life and others as you do and to love you and others as genuinely and as deeply as you want me to. In your name, amen.





Day 5: Murder

21^a 'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22^b But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²⁵“Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

Jesus took their religious system and hierarchies and repeatedly broke them down. God isn't concerned with appearances. Appearances are simply how we see one another. God is interested in our hearts, which is how he sees us.

In this teaching, Jesus gets to the heart of murder. The problem is not just the act of taking a life. The root is contempt within our hearts for another life. We might not commit the act of murder, but the seeds of murder have already begun to take root when we see another human being as “less than” we see ourselves. Then Jesus gets very practical. Before the seeds of bitterness or contempt ever have a chance to take root, reconcile with whomever it is you have fallen out with. And notice that Jesus isn’t just talking about those who we are upset with. He gives examples of somebody who has something against you or is taking you to court. Paul reiterates this when he writes we are to live at peace with everybody as far as it depends on us, whether we have been wronged, or we have been the ones who have done wrong.



Prayer Journal



Day 6: Adultery

27a “You have heard that it was said, ‘you shall not commit adultery.’” 28b But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29c If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30d And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Like his teaching regarding murder, Jesus takes adultery beyond the surface to the root of the issue. The seed of lust takes root in the heart, leading to adultery. Rather than drawing the line at adultery, Jesus draws the line at ever planting the seed of lust to begin with.

When, where or how are you tempted to fantasize about others? What boundaries do you need to establish to protect the relationships that matter most?

Father, you know my heart far better than I do. Search me and know me. Reveal any areas I have allowed to operate unchecked. Help me see the value of my relationships and the danger of a lustful path. I know you love me and speak so strongly on this topic because of that love. Help me to enjoy this life without the seeds of adultery that want to rob me of that joy. Amen.





Day 7: Divorce

³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

Although God hates divorce and intended marriage to be permanent, he allowed it because of the hard-heartedness of the people. The laws regarding divorce protected the wife, who was most vulnerable (Deut. 24:1 and Exod. 21:10-11). These protections were far better than those of any other nation at that time. Although these laws called out sexual immorality and provisions for food, clothing and marital rights, by the time of Jesus the Hillelite group of pharisees had created an “any cause” divorce that allowed divorce for “any cause.”

Prayer

Lord, help us live full of grace and truth. Help us to have a heart for what you want for us and to communicate that to others with love, truth and grace. Help us to imitate you and see how much you love those who need you. Help us to have hearts for people going through tough times in their lives, so that we can be light for them in dark times.

In Jesus' loving name we pray, amen.





Day 8: Oaths

³³“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ ³⁴But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.”

A friend unexpectedly passed away recently. He was relatively young and healthy, and his passing was a complete shock to everyone. At his memorial service, I listened to story after story of the kind of man he was. He was generous, he was genuine, and through his faith he is now forever with Jesus. But all his *stuff* remained right where he had left it. None of it went with him.

Jesus is brilliant at not just telling us *what* to do, but rather, how to *think*. Think like a steward. Manage well what belongs to the Owner. And what you can actually own is your integrity and character. Let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no.

Prayer

Father, give me wisdom to discern all that belongs to you in this life. May I manage what you have entrusted me with in a way that honors you. Help me to own my integrity and character. Holy Spirit, reveal any area in which my life lacks integrity. Guide me in building a life that aligns with what I say and do in every area, even when you alone are watching. Amen.





Day 9: Eye for Eye

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

To put this in perspective, 2 Kings 19:35 records an angel putting to death 185,000 Assyrians in one night. Multiply that number by 12 legions ($12 \times 6,000 = 72,000$) and you get a grand total of 13.32 billion. Enough to wipe out earth's population at the time. Dozens of times.

Jesus doesn't run from the injustice or resort to physical violence. He outwits it, placing the ownership on the true perpetrator. Lastly, a Roman soldier was permitted to make a Jewish citizen carry his pack up to a mile but no farther. To go the extra mile would put the soldier in the wrong, forcing him to plead to carry his own pack, humiliating himself and restoring one's dignity.

Where have you felt as if you only have two options (fight or flee) when perhaps there is a third?



Prayer Journal



Day 10: Love for Enemies

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Loving those who love you is easy! Jesus' question is poignant and a bit sarcastic, "Are not even the tax collectors doing that?!" And "Do not even pagans/gentiles do that?" Since their view of both gentiles and tax collectors was very low and since they were supposed to be the people of God, these questions cut straight to the heart of the matter. Aren't you better than a tax collector? Can't you rise above what the tax collectors do? Aren't you better than the gentiles? Can't you do more than they do?

Prayer

Prayer Journal



"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

Although giving was always a part of the worship of Israel, it had become a way to show off their abundance and to boast about what they could give. Jesus' point here is to not be a showoff when it comes to giving. Others do not need to know what you give or how much you give. Giving is truly a heart matter, meant to worship and please God, and should be done without others knowing.

How are you giving? Are you focused on a percent, giving for show or giving to God in secret and out of your livelihood? Are you truly trusting God to provide for you and to bless you in ways that only you will know?

Lord, help me to give in a way that pleases you and you alone. Help me to give my life and resources for you and your Kingdom, and help me to grow in my faith through it. Help me not to seek to impress others but to seek to love you and to love others through what I do and give. Help me to be like the widow who gave all she had. She showed true trust and obedience and in that was truly blessed. Amen.





Day 12: Prayer

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

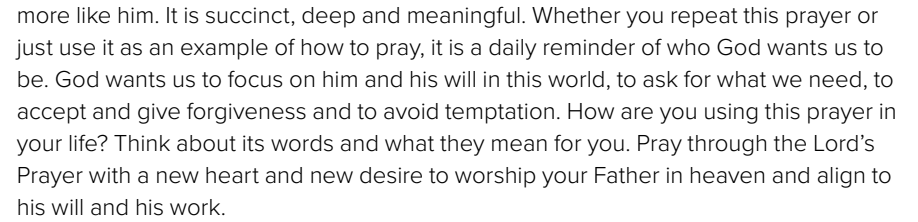
*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*¹²And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

¹⁴For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Prayer is also assumed. Jesus says “when you pray,” not “if you pray.” For Jesus, the question wasn’t a matter of whether to pray or not to pray, but how to pray. Jesus then goes on to give us the greatest example of prayer, the Lord’s Prayer. This prayer has been repeated daily by believers across the world since Jesus said it. And in it, he succinctly shows prayer is about God, praising him, aligning to his will and becoming



Lord, thank you for your example of prayer. Thank you for being a Father who loves us and knows what we need even before we ask. Help us to continually reflect on this prayer's words and seek your will for our lives as we spend time with you. Teach us to love and forgive others and be the people you want in this world. Amen



Day 13: Fasting

*16“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.
17But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

Fasting for Jesus is a part of being in the Kingdom of God. To fast is to go without, so that you can focus on God and his provision for you in your life. It is also preparation. Jesus fasted during his wilderness trial. He knew his reliance and focus on the Father was what would get him through what lay ahead. How often do we think of fasting the way Jesus did? How often do we fast and rely on God for our lives and thank him for all we have?

Lord, thank you for teaching us to fast. Thank you for being our example as to why and how we should fast. Help us to fast not just because it's trendy, but because it helps us focus more on you. Help us to seek you for strength and guidance so that we can be better equipped to face the trials in our lives. In your name we pray. Amen.





Jesus goes on to give two examples. First, the eye. When our eyes are healthy, we are full of light and can see clearly. But when they are bad, then all we see is darkness. Focusing our treasure on earth is like having bad eyes. You do not have clear sight. You are blind. The second illustration is of masters. One cannot serve two masters. You can only love and serve one. Then he ends by saying you cannot serve both God and money. In Greek, the word for money is *mamona*, which can refer to “wealth and earthly goods” or to the Syrian god of riches. Jesus may have meant both. To prioritize money, wealth and goods on earth over treasures in heaven is the same as worshiping a false god in hopes of attaining more earthly treasures.





25^aTherefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

Anxiety in today's world is high. People spend a lot of money and time trying to curve their anxiety and find peace. Here, Jesus wants his people to have faith and trust our Father in heaven who is generous and gives us what we need. Jesus states that both birds and flowers are taken care of, live for the day and have beauty — they do not worry. Jesus wants us to learn from nature that just as God sustains birds and flowers, so he will also sustain us because we are more valued than those.

Jesus emphasizes that our Father knows what we need. We need to see him and his Kingdom, and we will get what we need — not necessarily all we want, but what we need. Later, in Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, “Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Jesus wants us to trust in God and rest in him. Each day has enough to worry about. Jesus wants us to focus on today and on our heavenly Father and seek his Kingdom. By doing this, we can curve anxiety and rest in his love, provision and presence.



Prayer Journal



Matthew 7:1-6

3“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? 4How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Recently, I heard a podcast on which someone was asked what the first verse of the Bible was that they memorized. The answer was “do not judge.” He said he had learned that verse before he was even a Christian and used it to combat Christians who judged his life at the time. This represents a common misunderstanding of this passage. Most people think it’s about not judging others in general. However, it states that you should not judge since you also will be judged in the same way. The problem is not helping others see the “speck” in their eye; the problem is we never deal with the “log” in our own eye. As a matter of fact, Jesus says in verse five that you should first remove the log from your eye. Then you can help with the speck.

Throughout this sermon, Jesus has been teaching about the difference between outward religion and acceptance by others vs. inward righteousness and focus on our Father. With his statement about judging, Jesus gets to the heart of the matter. When we judge others, we are focused on what is happening externally. We're focused on what others are doing or not doing and how that compares to what we are doing or not doing. God wants us to look at ourselves from the inside out: To be righteous internally and to seek and trust God, to love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and, in so doing, to love others.

Jesus does not want his followers just to be more religious people, following laws and trying to look good before others. He is not asking for legalism, but too often this is where following him can lead. Jesus wants each of us to look inward, grow in his love and grace and then extend that love to others. Our outward work then does not become something for show or a standard to judge others by. It becomes a reflection of the unconditional love and grace Jesus has shown us.



Jesus, help me look inward to see what I need to change and how I need to grow. Show me how to experience your love, grace and forgiveness today. Help me change outwardly and not judge others, become legalistic or give for show. But help me to reflect your grace and love so that I can be a witness to them in my life and be a light to those around me. Amen.

Prayer Journal



Day 17: Ask, Seek, Knock

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Jesus' very presence on this earth is testament to God's wanting us to know him. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus. In this person, God has revealed himself in such a way that we can begin to understand and relate to his personality, feelings and will. But we play a role in how well we know him.

As if the person of Jesus weren't enough already for God to reveal himself, he gave us the Person of the Holy Spirit. He dwells within us, whispers to us, works through us and connects us by the depths of who we are to one another and to our Father. Our job is to ask, seek and knock for more.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill me new with your presence. My understanding of you is a drop in the ocean and so I eagerly seek to know more of you. In this moment, I simply want to be with you and give you space to speak to me. (Pause. Give time for what God wants to speak or reveal to you in this moment). Amen.





Lord, we know the choice has always been there, choose life. You want us to know you and take refuge in you, but so many choose their own paths and are lost. Help us not only to choose the right path, but to help those around us choose it as well. Help us continue to shape our lives to reflect you and your love, mercy and grace so that we can be lights in this dark world. Amen.





Father, give me wisdom to discern truth from lies. Reveal in me any thought, belief or action that is rooted in a lie. If there are any false teachers or teachings I have grabbed hold of, help me to release their teaching and replace it with the Truth. Amen.





21“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?’ 23Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”

First, for any that have ever doubted Jesus' claim to be God, notice who Jesus says we will all stand before on the day of judgment. That's right, Jesus. On that day there will be two types of judgment for two categories of people. As John points out in Revelation, some will be judged by "books" in which their merit will be contrasted to God's standard, and all will be found wanting. The other group will be judged by a "book" (singular), referring to the Book of Life in which the names of those who put their faith in Jesus are recorded.

Paul writes to the Romans, “If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved” (Rom. 10:9-10).

Father, thank you for the gift of salvation. Thank you for ordaining it, Jesus. Thank you for accomplishing it and, Holy Spirit, thank you for sealing it. Jesus, you are Lord. I submit myself to your leading. I believe you paid the debt of my sin on the cross and that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you were raised. Jesus, thank you for clothing me in your perfection, so that I might withstand judgment for all of my sin and enter into eternity with you. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the promise that the same power that raised you will bring life to this mortal body. My gratitude for what you have done for me overflows. I love you. Amen.





Day 21: The Wise and Foolish Builders

Matthew 7:24-29

²⁴"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." ²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law."

The rain is coming.

For all of us, there will be days of trial, but the greatest torrent comes the day already appointed when all the things of this world are stripped from us, and we stand face to face with a Holy God. As Jesus continues his closing thoughts regarding that day of judgment, he draws a proverbial line in the sand before the crowd gathered along the Galilee hillside. Don't just hear these words of mine and nod your head in agreement. Apply them. Put them into practice. True faith is action-oriented.

As the greatest sermon ever preached ended, the crowd was amazed at Jesus' teaching. But being amazed is not the goal. The goal is to be transformed. James echoes this teaching when he writes, ²²"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (Jm. 1:22).

Transformation comes as a result of the right information applied in the context of our relationships.

Expressed in mathematical terms: Information + Application + Relationships = Transformation.

As we take the truth of God, testified to brilliantly by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, and apply it to our relationships with God and with people, the result will be transformation. It will not be just the appearance of transformation on the outside, but true transformation from the inside out.

Prayer:

Holy Spirit, help me to stay in step with you as I apply what I know. May your fruit be evident in my personal life and my relationships. Jesus, I long for the day you will make all things new, including me. But until that day comes, help me to start the journey of transformation by living as a citizen of your Kingdom today. Help me to live out the principles of this new way of thinking, applying the truth of what seems at first to be upside down. I choose to walk this path in faith in you. In doing so, may I be a small part of making the ways of heaven a reality here on earth. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.



Converge is a movement of churches working to help people meet, know and follow Jesus. We do this by starting and strengthening churches together worldwide.

For over 165 years we've helped churches like yours bring life change to communities in the U.S. and around the world through church planting and discipleship multiplication, leadership training and coaching, and global missions.

We're committed to starting missionally minded churches until every people group and community has heard the gospel. We start churches that start churches to see lives changed with Christ's love and truth. Converge provides a clear pathway for you to plant a new church, campus or to multiply your church. We've created proven strategies, systems and training all designed to improve your success so that more people will have the opportunity to accept Jesus.

We are rooted in the gospel and the infallible, inerrant word of God and the need for every person to surrender to Jesus for salvation. Our goal is to give every person the opportunity to hear the gospel, say "yes" to Jesus, grow in faith, be equipped to serve and be sent out. We are committed to seeing vibrant churches in every community, state and country in our reach. We want every person to experience a life-changing, personal relationship with Jesus.

Our churches come together around something greater than a compelling mission. What brings us together is Christ's completed work on the cross. Because of the cross, we have forgiveness from our past, power for our present and hope for our future. As a result, we converge around the cross to take what Christ has done for us and make it known to others.

Connect with us at connect@converge.org or 800.323.4215 to learn more.

