

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

LOVE KNOWN THROUGH DEEDS

By David C. Robinson, SJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus said to his disciples: "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 in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? Did we not drive out demons in your name? Did we not do mighty deeds in your name?' Then I will declare to them solemnly, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you evildoers.' Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined." When Jesus finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

MATTHEW 7:21-29

Reflection

Beginning with the Beatitudes in chapter 5 of Matthew's gospel, Jesus enters an extensive period of teaching, as he reorients the focus of the Law and the life of faith to nurture a deeper connection with God and one another among the Jewish people. This schooling of the soul concludes in chapter 7 with what can only be called a series of wisdom sayings that aim to deepen personal and communal discernment on the walk with God. Some of Jesus' most prominent sayings are included in the scope of this chapter: **"Do not judge, or you too will be judged;. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."** **"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."** **"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them."**

When his attention turns to the disciples, his tone becomes more somber and threatening. We might be tempted to assume that part of the messianic fulfillment in Jesus would include some painful housecleaning among the less diligent corps of his disciples. If that were so, Peter should have topped the list for apocalyptic punishment, but the post-resurrection narratives show that such was not the case! A more cogent explanation might explore the ways in which apostolic freedom can lead to radical separation through selfishness or neglect. Jesus cautions his followers not to build on the shifting sands of their ego impulses, but rather to rest on the 'rock of righteousness' that undergirds the community of the faithful in their common journey. Even more fundamentally, he is admonishing those who might be tempted to profess their fidelity in florid words, while living a rootless life of inaction and inattention. Discipleship requires a foundational attitude of surrender and a desire to move throughout life, not simply *with* Jesus, but *as Jesus*, for the world. Jesus' conflicts with the scribes and Pharisees almost always stem from their tendencies to demand the people's devotion to traditions they observed by the letter rather than the spirit. Commanding others to fulfill charitable practices they neglected, these 'officials' of the faith undermined the promises of the Mosaic Covenant.

Jesus' simple maxim of 'doing over speaking' resonates strongly in the teaching of Ignatius of Loyola when he taught: **"Love is shown better in deeds than in words."** In our current religious and spiritual communities, we would

certainly benefit from a regular discernment of our personal attention to our actions of charity and compassion, as opposed to our private and public professions of our 'espoused values.' Self-image is no substitute for the graces of a missionary heart!



Jesus Teaching the Disciples
Illustration by Ronsa06

For Pondering

- How do you discern the strength and focus of your spiritual values in day-to-day life?
- Do you find yourself espousing social, political, or religious values that are not authentically manifest in your actions?
- What values that you recognize in the life of Jesus would you most like to nurture in your own heart?

If you enjoy reading our reflections and would like to make a donation towards this ministry, click the button below!

Support CSD



Center for
Spiritual
Development

COMPANIONS ON THE
SACRED JOURNEY



Visit Website

714-744-3172

Join Mailing
List



To “Unsubscribe” from the daily reflections while remaining on our general mailing list, please [email us](#). The unsubscribe function below will unsubscribe you from all emails from CSD. Please know we will never share your information.

Center for Spiritual Development | 434 A South Batavia Street | Orange, CA 92868 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)