

Prepared to Be Effective Withstanding ANY Storm (Matt. 7)

The last 2 articles I entitled "**Born to Be Effective**" and "**Becoming Effective**" - dynamic yet simple solutions of Jesus as He preached **simply deep** into the soul and **deeply simple to those of us who seriously want to be what we were born again to become**"!

When Jesus sat on the mountainside and explained to people some incredibly good news ...statement after statement... simple sounding statements which on the one hand sounded like great news to a hurting lot, yet on the other hand some very stern warnings of the barriers to such a life of blessing if they wanted to enjoy what He was offering them!

They had to **intentionally enter into obedience** to what He was saying ...not **JUST HEAR** the "Words"... but **DOING THEM** would be the **key to a life that was going to stand strongly in the storms of life that surely would come to ALL people.**

Now in the last part of his talk to them, he tells them of **Being Practical (7:7ff)** that trusting Him is not "radical" but sensible and normal"; **Being Serious (7:13ff)** that there would be lonely times ahead and not a lot of options if listening to Him but for sure the quality of life that's made in that serious choice of "narrow road" thinking would be worth it all! **Being Alert** would be another imperative as there would be many voices of those who speak out what's supposedly God's will and Word (prophets) but don't fear ...you'll know the difference since they are actually easily detected as they would be self interested people. They should be noticeable very easily as they will be those leaders who "want you in their following as it's you they want for themselves and their interests ...their interests are not really in you but in their church, their consuming greed for growth or improvement or self satisfaction and not the "road of sacrifice". **You'll easily detect them** but you will have to watch for them!

Being obedient is the last lesson in the sermon out on the mountainside!

There are going to be storms in our lives and that's not one of the many choices we can make BUT the choice **we do have** is one of **obedience to Him** so that the choice as to what happens to us **IN THE STORMS** of life is really our obligation to decide what we do or do not with what Jesus says!

Yes, He leaves us with a life of responsibility ahead of us: "**conscious and deliberate choices**" -in which we **MUST DO** something about what He says in order to **not have** a ***massive collapse** in the same storm in which we could otherwise remain **standing strongly**: and **invincibly so!**

What an amazing difference! At the end of the Matt. Ch.7 Jesus says those of us who "hear" must make the choices, **not JUST listen** and **hear** and **agree!**

We **know** we do need His mercy as well as often needing **other's** mercy. Then getting it depends on whether we give it!

He says there's no mercy if we do not give mercy AND we also have no "right" Jesus says to even ask for any **forgiveness** other than ***in comparison to exactly how we offer forgiveness; genuine forgiveness to friends, brothers, sisters, enemies!**

Standing firm in the storms of tomorrow (yes ...through Christ's empowering and total sufficiency) is going to **depend totally on whether we make those decisions TODAY to hear what He's saying and DO WHAT He's saying!**

Security in tomorrow's storm is planned and prepared for TODAY!

Don't say or pretend you won't have storms! **YOU KNOW YOU WILL HAVE STORMS.** Some of you reading this already know of tough situations facing you which are closer than what's "comfortable" already! They threaten you and challenge you and you **KNOW** you cannot handle it!

Will you keep fretting and worrying and investing and planning so that you don't worry?

You are wasting your time and energy!

Get on the "narrow road" which has the quality of life which is **ETERNAL.** Or don't you want it?

* Jesus says that it's not **ONLY** to do with tomorrow's "storms of life" which come to everyone but also the **final judgment when He comes again** in the clouds of the sky or the final judgment ...to whichever He is addressing ...both are the same in principle: We **MUST live TODAY** in the light of the fact that **He IS coming** and we don't know "when" nor even "the moment" of His return **but it is SURE** ...and to some it will be an **inescapable TRAP** and to others of us it will be **and CAN be an eternal and everlasting liberation!** (see also 1 Thess.5:1-8)

The warning of that is: we should be **planning and preparing for that today!** When it comes ...it will be too late! In the same way, tomorrow's storms are not just "able to be handled when they come". They must be prepared for **TODAY!**

Finally, in Matthew 7:18ff He also tells us that we can bear "bad" or "rotten" fruit and just become useless to God OR man! However, it's possible that we can bear "good" fruit and become **useful** and a **powerful influence of light in darkness** and **salt in the "wound ...the dirt to halt that process of rotting"** that's in the world, not just what's in our own lives!

The choice is our's and the on the basis that He has made His choice to follow through on the consequences toward us of whether we **ACT** on what we **HEAR** or **HEAR** and **NOT ACT** on it ...let's **DO IT!**

The Peace of God **WILL** transcend your heart and mind in Christ Jesus if you so do! His Word Speaks and His Word Acts and His Word is believable and trustworthy!

Taste and See that the **LORD IS GOOD!**
