



Matthew 7:21-27

21 Jesus said to his disciples: ‘It is not those who say to me “Lord, Lord” who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven. **22** When the day comes many will say to me, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, work many miracles in your name?” **23** Then I shall tell them to their faces: I have never known you; away from me, you evil men!

24 ‘Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. **25** Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and hurled themselves against that house, and it did not fall: it was founded on rock. **26** But everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. **27** Rain came down, floods rose, gales blew and struck that house, and it fell; and what a fall it had!’

Other readings: Deuteronomy 11:18,26-28,32 Psalm 30 (31) Romans 3:21-25,28

Our Sunday gospel reading presents the final words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, the first and most famous of the five long discourses of Jesus in the Gospel according to Matthew. The reading puts before us the challenge to take seriously the words of Jesus’ preaching and to put them into practice.

In the first paragraph Jesus speaks about ‘doing the will of the Father’. There is an echo of the words of the Lord’s Prayer. If we pray ‘thy will be done’, then we must play our part to make those words a reality. In the parable in the second paragraph of our reading Jesus compares the actions of the wise man and the fool. There are two ways of responding to Jesus’ words. The lesson is clear.

As he concludes his account of the Sermon on the Mount, the evangelist Matthew is well aware that people often resist the words of Jesus. The first reading, from the book of Deuteronomy, asks us to allow the words of God’s law to enter our hearts and our souls. There is a fundamental choice to be made between the way of life and the way of death. The challenge is ‘set before us today’.

The second reading this Sunday is from St Paul’s great but difficult masterpiece, the Letter to the Romans. ‘God’s justice’, writes Paul, ‘made known through the Law and the Prophets, has now been revealed’. Faith in Christ brings the promises made to the Jewish people to fulfilment.

How can I listen more attentively to the words of Christ?

In the decisions of life do I tend to build my house on rock, or on sand?

We pray for the courage to do the will of the Father.

We pray for those who endeavour to explain the good news to a reluctant world.