

Wising Up: Matthew 12v33-13v17

Where can we find reliable wisdom for how to see our lives working and flourishing?

Jesus says his generation needs to open their eyes and 'wise up' spiritually. He doesn't mince his words (e.g. 12v39, 41-45), but calls them to turn and repent. The same is true of our generation. The problem is with the heart and Jesus calls us to turn to him and be given the knowledge that makes all the difference: to be given more and more understanding of the things of God and so have our hearts healed on the inside (13v15).

1) Be Changed by Jesus (12v33-45)

The men of Nineveh turned to God (repented) at the preaching of Jonah. Jesus is the ultimate prophet. "Listen to me," he says in effect, "turn to me and hear my wisdom" (12v41-42). In v43-45, Jesus talks about delivery from demon possession (recall Jesus casting out the demon in v22 and healing the man's speech and sight). It's not enough frantically to try to "put ourselves in order," but to remain empty on the inside (v44). If Christ doesn't come to dwell in our hearts and lives, we end up in deeper darkness (v45).

God doesn't want us to try to sweep ourselves clean. He wants us to turn to Jesus as King and be healed be made full on the inside as we are filled by the Spirit. You have to make a tree good for its fruit to be good (12v33)—there has to be change on the inside. The Pharisees' rejection of Jesus and the Holy Spirit is the result of them attempting to look good on the outside but being evil and empty on the inside, unable to see the truth (12v34-35, 23v27).

People can't open their own eyes spiritually. Healing comes only by turning to Jesus, asking him to change us and asking for the knowledge of God that comes by the power of the Holy Spirit. That's not a one-off thing, it's a pattern of life.

Where do you go for healing of your heart? Is it surprising to see how closely Jesus links our flourishing and healing at heart level to how well we perceive God and his kingdom (13v11-12, 15-17)?

2) Get Understanding from Jesus (13v10-17)

In 13v10, the disciples come to Jesus (they turn to the right place when they don't understand!) and they ask why he is teaching in parables. The point is that nobody can understand the message about God, his King and his Kingdom unless God reveals it to them (13v11). Nobody can know the Father unless the Son reveals the Father to them (11v27). This growth in understanding and illumination is a process, and an abundance is promised (13v12). But if someone is empty and hardened on the inside, even what they think they have will be taken away (v12). How we respond to Jesus' wisdom, to his parables and words judges us (not the other way around). Our response tells us about the state of our hearts, as the response of the people in Isaiah's day to God's word indicated the state of theirs (v14-15).

It is a tremendously precious thing to be enabled to see the things of heaven, the things of the age to come, the things of Jesus and his Kingdom. It's the source of all flourishing and healing and happiness (v16-17). OT saints did not receive the blessing of this age of the Kingdom and of the Spirit. *Let's ask and more and more of the knowledge of Christ and his Kingdom will be given to us (13v12); let's ask and we'll see more of the reality of heaven meeting earth.*

