

THE SERMON DELIVERED BY OUR LORD ON THE MOUNT -

St. Augustine provides below an introduction to the comprehensiveness and utmost vitalness of this sermon as the perfect standard of the Christian life

INTRODUCTION

If you will soberly consider the sermon which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke on the mount, as we read it in the Gospel according to Matthew, I think that you will find in it, so far as regards the highest morals, a perfect standard of the Christian life: and this we do not rashly suggest, but we get it from the very words of the Lord Himself. For the sermon itself is brought to a close in such a way, that it is clear there are in it all the precepts which go to mold the life. For thus He speaks: "Therefore, whoever hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it didn't fall: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one who hears these words of mine, and does not do them, is like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

Since, therefore, He has not simply said, "Whoever hears my words," but has made an addition, saying, "Whoever hears these words of mine," He has sufficiently indicated, as I think, that these sayings which He uttered on the mount so perfectly guide the life of those who may be willing to live according to them, that they may justly be compared to one building upon a rock. I have said this so that it may be clear that the sermon before us is perfect in all the precepts by which the Christian life is molded.