

“Kingdom Come”

Sermon on the Mount Series: Fourteenth Lesson, Matthew 7.13-23

TWO WAYS

Learning Objectives - motivation to:

1. Stay on the right road
2. Stay alert
3. Stay sincere

Introduction

- **QUESTION:** Highlights so far?
- Bonus Episode: **Matt 7.1-6** - Condemnation / Discernment
- Contrast with **Matt 7.12**. What that does not look like.
- An anti-postmodernism section par excellence!

1. Two Ways

- **Choice:** common Jewish teaching of the two ways, of life and of death (cf. **Jer. 21:8**; it is developed at length in the early Christian manual, the Didache).
- **The gates**
 - Jerusalem gates varied - some narrow, some wide. Still today.
 - ‘wide’ and ‘narrow’: “‘roomy’ and ‘restricted’ would be better, contrasting the popularity or availability of the two ways rather than the ease of travelling on them;”¹
 - “two different words are used: stene (“narrow,” v13) and tethlimmene (v14), the latter being cognate with thlipsis (“tribulation”), which almost always refers to persecution. So this text says that the way of discipleship is “narrow,” restricting, because it is the way of persecution and opposition—a major theme, **Matt 5:10-12, 44; 10:16-39; 11:11-12; 24:4-13.**”²
- **Leads to life** - the hearers have not entered yet. They must make a choice. Jesus is challenging them to become wholehearted disciples ready for the persecution ahead, and holding on to the promise of life.
- **Many / Few: Luke 13:22-30**
 - **Rev 7:9** - A few could be a large number - over time!
 - A few in each group, generation etc.
- **Find it**
 - “Man cannot see the narrow gate; it has to be searched for and found.”³
 - Ties in with **Matt 7.7-8**.
- Warning - when you see a wide gate, reject it and search for a narrow one.
- **Life:** It’s Jesus! **Jn 10.9**. Find him and you find the gate - and life.
 - Worth it!
- **QUESTION:** How can we recognise when we are ‘going with the flow’?

2. Two Trees

- Old Testament (e.g. **Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 23:9-32**).
- Didn’t take long: **2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1-3; Revelation 2:20**.
 - Wolves: **Acts 20.29-30**.
 - Jesus illustrates and demonstrates what a true prophet looks like - someone who defends the sheep: **Jn 10.11-13**.

¹ France, R. T. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary. TNTC

² Carson, D. A. Matthew. EBC 8. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelien and J. D. Douglas. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.7. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.

³ The Gospel According to Matthew. The Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible 1. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.1. Chattanooga: Leadership Ministries Worldwide, 1996.

- Recognise: Interesting not a doctrinal but an ethical test.
 - Leaving specific issues open for two reasons:
 - Too many potential falsities to list!
 - Wants hearers to focus on the fruit, not the teachings
 - If discipleship is to be real, it must be radical, resulting in a new kind of person, not just a new profession or behaviour pattern.
- Link to previous verses - probably they were making the Christian life 'easier'.
- Fruit: OT theme: **Isaiah 5:1-7** (cf. **Jer. 2:21**)
 - Same image is applied in **Matt 12:33** to the Pharisees. Takes time to see.
 - Good fruit: Fruits of the Spirit. Christlikeness.
 - Three types of fruit:
 1. Character
 2. Teaching
 3. Influence
- Fire:
 - Not just consequences in this life, but eternal destiny.
 - Baptist same thought regarding un-genuine repentance: **Matt 3.10**.
- Rejection warning a theme in Matt, **Matt 7:21-23, 24-27; 13:37-43; 49-50; 25:31-46**.
- What/who was Jesus thinking of?
- **QUESTION:** How can we spot the real fruit (even bad fruit can look good for a while)?

3. Two Claims

- We come now to an example of a specific group of people who could be described as one kind of false prophets—people who were able to make claims of an impressive kind but whose lives did not bear the fruit of righteousness.
- False followers

A. Claims to be a disciple

- Calling him "Lord" (kyrios - sometimes just 'sir' etc, but in Matthew more a term denoting authority). These are people claiming authentic discipleship.
- It could be that they know other commands they should be following but are not doing so - a little like the rich ruler after he had met Jesus (**Matt 19.16-30**).
- It could also be that they are wanting discipleship on their terms - like the men in **Matt 8.18-22**
- Another possibility is that they assume if they are practising these command, which they presumably consider to be most important since those are the ones they brandish at Jesus as evidence of their relationship with him, they are 'safe' with Jesus.
- All pride related.
- Key issue - "only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (**Matthew 7,21 NIV11**)
- Expanded on, **Matt 7.24-28. 1 John 2.4; Jms 1-22-25; 2.14-20**.

B. Charismatic activity

- Prophesying - perhaps this could, today, include preaching/teaching God's Word.
- Driving out demons / Miracles - Jesus is welcoming of anyone on his 'side' (**Mark 9.39-41**), but anyone claiming a relationship with him must do so with respect. For a serious and humorous example of what happens when we try to use the power of Jesus disrespectfully (without true faith in him) see what happened to the seven sons of Sceva in **Acts 19.11-20!**
- "There is no reason to judge their claims false; their claims are not false but insufficient."⁴

Conclusion

- Summary of class....
- Sunday is final lesson - building on the rock
- Two Fridays' time sharing about what been helpful etc.
- Discuss with friends and bring something to share if you like in 2 weeks' time

⁴ Carson, D. A. Matthew. EBC 8. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein and J. D. Douglas. Accordance electronic edition, version 2.7. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984.