

# MATTHEW 7: 13 – 29

## TWO EACH

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We are still on the same hillside at the northern end of the Sea of Galilee and Jesus is still teaching. In fact, He is winding up the Sermon on the Mount. Until this time, He has focused on His disciples. As he has been speaking, more and more people have amassed around Him and now there is a mixed bag of listeners. Some are hearing and believing whereas others are hearing and justifying their own thoughts and actions. At any rate, you can see that there is a change of focus in this last section of the sermon. Jesus ends it with a crash; what we might call a “mic drop” in today’s parlance.

Jesus warns His disciples to examine themselves in order to insure they are truly members of the Kingdom of Heaven and not merely those who profess allegiance. There is a big difference, as we shall see. He then turns His attention to the crowds and challenges them to consider the alternative of following Him or the more popular religious establishment. He then warns the religious establishment of their culpability (responsibility) for leading the people in the wrong direction.

**In these four warnings there are two gates, two roads, two types of prophets, two types of roads and two types of foundations. A choice must be made here! We see volition come into play! There is no middle ground! And this decision has eternal consequences! You are either with Jesus or against Him.**

*13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

Here we find the warnings of the gates and roads.

- The imagery of two paths was a common one in that day. One road led to paradise whereas the other led to Gehena. (Hell)
- The imagery is very straightforward – those who enter the wide gate will find themselves on a broad road that leads to destruction. Those who enter the narrow gate will find themselves on a narrow road that leads to life.

- The broad road is wide and popular and the wording evokes a sense of ease and comfort. But this ease and comfort is deceiving because at the end of this road there is nothing but destruction. (A word used elsewhere for eternal punishment. 2 Peter 3:7, Rev. 17:8)
- Jesus is the minority way insofar as few will dare abandon the popular opinions of popular culture and the religious establishment of Jesus' day.
- Narrow and difficult are synonymous here. The road to life is not necessarily an easy one. In fact, it is like swimming upstream when it comes to dealing with the world.
- Which comes first? The gate or the road? The gate.

*15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

On the narrow path the disciples are to be on the lookout for false prophets. Those who look harmless are really ravenous wolves and what is scarier is that they are within the camp! This brings us back to Jesus' earlier warning on judging others but not being naively accepting either.

So how do we know which is which?

- Become a fruit inspector. Not a microcosm but a trend analysis.
- Paul later tells the Galatians to examine their own lives and the lives of the false teachers. Because those who truly belong to Christ will bear the fruit of the Spirit. **Gal. 5:16-24**
- Listen not only to their message but also their lives to see if they are consistent with the "narrow way" advocated by Jesus.
- Grapes and figs were the staple diet. Thornbushes and thistles were hurtful weeds.
- A vine or tree will only produce fruit that is consistent with its nature.

*21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will*

*declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'*

**Not only will the false prophets infiltrate the community, but some within the community itself will be false disciples.**

- This is a person who has confessed Jesus as Lord but one whom Jesus knows hasn't truly repented as a condition for entering the kingdom of Heaven.
- **A verbal confession can mask an unrepentant heart, so Jesus reserves entry into the kingdom for those that not only confess, but those that also "DO" what He says.**
- But then it's not just doing, but being obedient to the will of God and the kingdom! So one can do things that look good while not being obedient to God's will.
- Some will point to their acts and works and say, "But look what we did for you!"
- Jesus doesn't acknowledge them because they did the right things for the wrong reasons.
- God can and will use a person who is wrongly motivated. **Once again, we have to get down to the heart of the matter. Are we truly seeking God's face and desiring to do His will?**
- **Jesus never emphasizes the external as being the highest sign of allegiance. He demands the inward allegiance to God's will, which will produce the fruit of a changed life.**

*24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.*

*26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*

Jesus uses another illustration here that would have been quickly grasped in His day. The Sea of Galilee was ringed with sand. In order to have a house that would withstand the constant storms and the seasonal floods, you had to dig down to bedrock for the foundation of your home. He uses this metaphor to

warn against a life that is quick and easy to set up, but won't withstand storms, let alone judgment.

- Three little pigs
- How the West was Won or Once Upon a Time in the West.
- Here Jesus calls for a decision. On which foundation will you build?
- Are you thinking long term or in just the here and now?

**“One error is to say, as many young people might, that they need no foundation. The other error is to say, as many of the older generation may, that any foundation will do. The former we see in the postmodern skepticism about finding absolute truth. The latter we see in the politically correct pluralism of modern culture. But the solid rock that has provided true stability, security and hope throughout church history is none other than Jesus, and him alone, and the life of kingdom righteousness that he has announced in the Sermon on the Mount. “**

Boice

*28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

- The “MIC Drop.”
- May the man with the largest bibliography win!
- Amazement is not the same as a commitment of faith.
- Not everyone that was amazed became a believer. Only when a person accepts Jesus' invitation and enters the kingdom of heaven does he or she become a disciple.
- **Don't deceive yourself about your commitment to Jesus.**
- **Jesus' way is not the popular or easy one.**
- **But it is the only one that leads to life.**