

Sunday School
May 24, 2020

-Read: Matthew 7:13-29. This reading is all about choices: between two gates/ways, two kinds of prophets/leaders, two kinds of disciples, and two foundations to base life upon. You can't be neutral when it comes to Jesus. You are either with him or against him.

-Questions to consider and discuss:

- Jesus states that the path towards destruction is easy and wide. In other words, more people are going to choose that path (we witness this when we see the ways in which the world lives and operates).
 - The path towards life, on the other hand, is difficult and narrow. It requires commitment and devotion. It entails sacrifice and persecution. In order to truly be a Jesus follower, one has to make tough choices and choose a harder, but ultimately better way of life.
- Vv. 15-20 talk about false prophets, who disguise themselves as divine messengers and bringers of light, but are ultimately selfish and concerned only for themselves.
 - In true biblical prophecy, there is almost always a combination of judgment and mercy/salvation. It's not *all* doom and gloom on the one hand, but it's not all happy-go-lucky and health & wealth on the other.
 - It should be pretty self-explanatory whether someone is a true believer, acting on behalf of God. Examine such a person's life. Are the fruits of the Spirit that Paul writes about in Galatians 5 present? What is the easiest way to tell if a tree is an apple tree? If there are apples growing from it! Trees that are supposed to bear fruit but don't are only good for firewood. Likewise, humans who don't live in step with the Spirit are going to face destruction and judgment at God's hand.
- Jesus states that it takes more than confessing Jesus as Lord to enter the Kingdom of heaven. It's not good enough to verbally state that Jesus is Lord and Savior, because an oral confession does not always indicate a repentant heart. People must structure their lives to keep in step with the will of the triune God. Faith must produce action.
 - Don't let tricks and gimmicks fool you. Just because someone is able to work a powerful wonder doesn't mean that they doing it in submission to Jesus. Mighty works can come from sources other than God, including demons and even human contrivance (cf. Acts 19:13-16; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12; Revelation 13:13-14).
- Fools build the foundations of their lives on superficial things (money, a lust for power, wanting to be recognized or liked, even on superficial, surface-level, works-based righteousness). The one who is truly wise will build his/her life on Jesus, and therefore, upon God.
 - During the hot summer, the sand surrounding the Sea of Galilee was hard. However, wise builders knew that the sand loosened up in colder weather, and knew they needed to dig several feet below the surface to bedrock in order to establish a good, sturdy foundation.
- What is one takeaway from this teaching from the Sermon on the Mount that you can apply this week?