

Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' Challenge to Authentic Discipleship –Final Week

Decision Time – Making the Choice to Be a Disciple

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: Using three contrasting word pictures, Jesus challenges his disciples – and us – to make the decision to follow him completely and to reject false discipleship.

1. *1ST PICTURE: TWO PATHS (WALKING) – Being a disciple means choosing to walk the narrow path. Matthew 7:13-14*

- A. We need to begin by assessing what precisely Jesus is talking about.
 - 1. Is he talking about salvation or discipleship?
 - 2. I believe he's talking about discipleship.
- B. The command – Enter by the narrow gate. 7:13a
 - 1. The negative characteristics of the gate: It's narrow, the way after is hard, & few find it.
 - 2. The positive characteristic: It leads to life.
- C. The problem – There is another gate. 7:13b
 - 1. The characteristics of this other gate: It's wide, the way is easy, and it is popular.
 - 2. The negative characteristic: It leads to destruction. (But what kind? [7:27])

2. *2ND PICTURE: TWO TREES (DISCERNING) – Being a disciple means living a life of insightful discernment. Matthew 7:15-23 (Luke 6:43-44)*

- A. Remembering the context – Jesus has just talked about the two paths. 7:13-14
- B. The problem – There are false prophets who will strive to get you off the discipleship path.
 - 1. They hide false motives through pretense and manipulation. 7:15
 - 2. You must discern their character by looking at the fruit of their work. 7:26-20
 - 3. The destiny of these false prophets is hell. 7:21-23
- C. Who were the false prophets in Paul's day? Who are they in our day?

3. *3RD PICTURE: TWO BUILDERS (ACTING) – Being a disciple means hearing and doing Jesus' words. Matthew 7:24-27 (Luke 6:47-49)*

- A. Jesus contrasts two kinds of people.
 - 1. The *hear-and-do* person is like the man who builds his house on the rock.
 - 2. The *hear-and-don't-do* person is like the man builds his house on the sand.
 - 3. Bottom line: discipleship is a life of action, but what kind? *Illus: Bonhoeffer. Not pietistic action!*
- B. Jesus explains a basic truth about life.
 - 1. Damaging storms will come.
 - 2. Some storms are external. Other storms are going to be internal.
- C. There is a huge contrast of outcomes.
 - 1. Disciples' houses might get battered, but they do not fall.
 - 2. Non-disciples houses' don't just fall; they fall badly.

4. *THE DECISION – Being a disciple makes sense because of who Jesus is. Matthew 7:28-29*

- A. Imagine the scene – Jesus is finished. People are astonished. 7:28
- B. Interpreting the scene – They were astonished because he had supernatural authority. 7:29
- C. Imagining the next scene – Great crowds follow him. This has danger written all over it! 8:1