



“The Christian Myth”

Matthew 7

Small Group Plan

Jesus calls those of us who follow Him to be completely different from the world in which we live. Our morality is to be deeper because it reaches our hearts. Our love is to be larger because it covers even our enemies. The message of Jesus confronts us on every level, asking us to choose which way we will live. He places before us two kinds of riches, two sources of control, two ways to dream, and now, at the end of the sermon, two gates, two roads, two crowds, two claims, two foundations and two destinations. Will we be persuaded by the majority or ruled by God alone?

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- Where did our taste for “options” come from?
- How has this taste effected or changed us?
- What happens when we bring our “consumer” mind-set to discipleship?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

TWO PATHS

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

- Why is the road to life “narrow”?
- Does “narrow” mean “closed-minded” or “focused”? Explain.
- Why does “broad” accurately describe the way to destruction?
- When Jesus says a few will “find” the way to life, what does this say about the character of those searching?
- Why does Jesus say that those traveling to destruction will simply “enter” rather than “find”?

TWO TREES

Matthew 7:15-20

¹⁵ “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

- From where does bad religion draw its power?
- Jesus says “false prophets” wear “sheep’s clothing.” What are the masks worn by bad religion today?
- Why does Jesus use such a vicious description as “wolf” to describe religion?
- Contrast the “fruit” of bad and good religion?

TWO CLAIMS

Matthew 7:21-23

²¹ Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ²³ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

- Is it possible to think of Jesus as “Lord” without submission and obedience? Explain.
- What will begin to grow in the life of the person who continues to be in God’s presence while resisting God’s power?
- How is it possible to be very involved in Christian ministry without really knowing Jesus (v. 23)?
- If Jesus is not in the picture (“I never knew you”) why is ministry performed (“prophecy, miracles”)?

TWO FOUNDATIONS

Matthew 7:24-29

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone

who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” ²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

- How were the two houses similar and different?
- How do storms reveal what had previously been unseen?
- What are some of the storms that Christians will face?
- The crowds were amazed at Jesus’ authority (v. 29).
How was his authority demonstrated in this Sermon on the Mount?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What broad roads did you travel before you met Jesus?
- How did Jesus narrow your road or bring order and focus to your life?
- What did you have to leave behind in order to travel his narrow way?
- Why do people today dislike the thought that there is only one gate and one road to life?
- Which “fruit of the Spirit” is especially significant to you? Why?
- Why does God put relationship even above words and deeds?
- How can we really know Jesus?
- Close with a time of quiet, personal prayer.