



“Asking Honest Questions”

Matthew 7

Small Group Plan

The Sermon on the Mount consistently presents a radical way of life. 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 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?
- How do we feel when our “options” are reduced or removed?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— PEOPLE —

GATES ... ROADS ... DESTINATIONS ... TRAVELERS

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

— RELIGIOUS PEOPLE —

TREES ... FRUIT

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 thorn bushes, 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.

- Where does bad religion draw its power?
- Jesus says, “false prophets” wear “sheep’s clothing.” What disguise does bad religion wear today?
- Why does Jesus use such a vicious description as “wolf”?
- Contrast the “fruit” of bad and good religion?

— CHRISTIAN PEOPLE —

SINCERITY ... SUBMISSION

Matthew 7:21

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.

- How is it possible to call Jesus “Lord” without submission and obedience?
- What will grow in the life of the one who continues to be in God’s presence while at the same time resisting His power?

— ACTIVE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE —

WORDS ... DEEDS ... RELATIONSHIP

Matthew 7:22-23

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!”

- How is it possible to be very involved in Christian activity and ministry without really coming to know Jesus?
- If Jesus is not in the picture — i.e. “I never knew you” — why would someone be involved in ministry — “prophecy, miracles”?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- What “*broad*” roads did you travel before you met Jesus?
- How did He “*narrow*” your road and bring focus to your life?
- What did you have to leave behind in order to travel His “*narrow*” way?
- Why do some dislike the idea that there is one “*gate*” and one “*road*” to life?
- Which “*fruit of the Spirit*” (Gal. 5:22-23) 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.