

# SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## SESSION 8

## Matthew 7:13-29 - *Leader Guide*

### WELCOME

Thank you for being a part of this CORE Seminar this semester. We've received a lot of great feedback and we hope that you all have enjoyed them. But, today marks the end of the teaching portion of this semester.

This week we're winding down our study on the ***Sermon on the Mount***. Up until this point, Jesus has instructed His disciples how they should live as part of the Kingdom – even correcting false assumptions about how they should live under God's law. Today we'll be in **Matthew 7:13-29**. In these verses, Jesus closes the Sermon by revealing that He is the only way, how to discern false prophets, and providing direction on how believers should build obedience on the solid foundation of God's Word. We will also see that our judgment has **eternal** significance, how we can discern from whom we **learn** about God's Word, and on what to build our **lives**.

### SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 7:13-20**

In reality, this final section of the Sermon can be summarized by the word **judgment**. If you looked up the word judgment, you would discover that it has different meanings. In this section, Jesus teaches us that we must avoid eternal judgment as condemnation and practice judgment as discernment/ choices. He does this by using three metaphors, such as:

- **Gates** - Broad and narrow
- **Prophets** - true and false

#### **Gates/ Ways**

The two gates/ ways reveals the **exclusivity** of Jesus Christ. Those who view Jesus solely as a great teacher may struggle with this aspect of the Sermon. Jesus is plainly teaching that there are only two ways to live – one leading to destruction and the other to life. Some find the exclusivity of Jesus offensive, yet it reflects the core message of the gospel—that He is the only way to eternal life and salvation. While our culture embraces exclusivity in various contexts, it often rejects the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ. Jesus words verify that when He states, “those who find it are few.”

#### **Prophets**

Dustin Bengé wrote a social media post where he provided characteristics of a false teacher [prophet]. They are:

- They are man **pleasers**.

- They avoid weighty **theology**.
- They minimize the **gospel**.
- They build earthly **kingdoms**.
- They willfully twist **Scripture**.
- They feed the **emotions**.
- And, they compromise **truth**.

In all of these, we learn that false prophets/ teachers can take advantage of those who are unprepared. We'll see how we can test our leaders in the next section.

## QUESTIONS

In our final section of verses, we stated that these verses can be summarized by what word? *[judgment – not condemnation but discernment/ choices]*

**Why do you think the exclusive claims of Jesus Christ – ie. being the only way and the only Savior – are often considered to be offensive?**

**Why do you think so many people follow the broad path and enter the broad gate?**

- Take a look at your life. Is there something you need to change to be sure you're on the narrow path?

**Considering Dustin Bengé's 7 characteristics of a false teacher, which one stood out to you the most? Why?**

- Were there any that you disagreed with? Why?

## SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 7:21-23**

To test false prophets/ teachers, Jesus provides a couple of tests by which we can identify these false prophets/ teachers – **“You will recognize them by their *fruits*.”** Now, there are three types of fruit that a tree can bear – *really 2, but you will understand:*

- A tree can bear no fruit – and be completely barren.
- A tree can bear bad fruit – that cannot be used at all.
- And, a tree can bear good fruit – this fruit produces more fruit and nutrition.

But, Jesus is not talking about apples and oranges here. He is talking about spiritual fruit. Spiritual fruit is first and foremost centered on the individual producing a Christlikeness. Paul tells us in **Galatians 5:22-23** that the gospel will always produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit! So, if we take the examples above of types of fruit and connect it to ministry [to determine whether a prophet/ teacher is false or not] it would look like this:

- A ministry that bears no fruit – is a ministry that is **dying**. It is completely barren.
- A ministry that bears bad fruit – is a ministry that has lost its **witness** and its **effectiveness**. It's known not for the gospel but for its outward appeal. It may look good on the outside but once someone tastes the fruit they discover the quality of the fruit.
- And, a ministry that bears good fruit – is a ministry that produces and **multiplies** and provides **nutrition** through the gospel. The fruit of this ministry frees people to live to the glory of God!

If the fruit wasn't enough, Jesus provides another test on how we can discern false teachers. In this case, it is someone who knows the right words to "say" but they do not **KNOW** Jesus Christ as Savior. They are superficial in their connection to Christ. They may say things about Jesus, but don't really mean it. Their focus is elsewhere, but they acknowledge the value of empty words and the fulfillment of religious responsibility – but they have no heart, no soul, and no love in their connection to Christ. Meaning, it is possible for a person to preach from the pulpit or teach in the classroom or serve on the mission field AND have no connection to Jesus Christ.

And on the day of judgment, they will **think** that they had served the Lord faithfully by performing all sorts of miraculous and supernatural acts in His name. But the problem with these acts is that they never really had a relationship of love and fellowship with Jesus. Saying His name does not equate to relationship. Saying His name does not equate to Jesus **knowing** them. **Charles Spurgeon** – the Prince of Preachers – once stated, ***"If preaching could save a man, Judas would not have been damned. If prophesying could save a man, Balaam would not have been a castaway."***

## QUESTIONS

**Jesus says we'll recognize false prophets/ teachers by their fruit. What does he mean by that?**

- Do you think that false prophet/ teachers are difficult or easy to identify?
- What kind of fruit would be evidence of a false prophet/ teacher?

**What does it mean to enter the kingdom of heaven?**

- What kind of person will enter the kingdom of heaven?

**How can it be that some people will be able to do many impressive religious things, but will not be able to enter the kingdom?**

- What are some examples of empty religion today?

## SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read **Matthew 7:24-27**

In these verses, Jesus teaches a little bit of construction titled **"Foundations 101."** He equates Himself to the **foundation** on which people should build their lives upon. The wise man builds his house/ life on the Rock, Jesus Christ. When the storms of life come against this house – rain, floods, winds – it proves strong and it **stood**, ***"because it had been founded on the rock."*** Knowing this, it is foolish to build on anything else but Jesus Christ. But – as Jesus teaches – most ultimately decide to build on the sand. When those same elements [rain, floods and winds] hit the home it **fell**, ***"and great was the fall of it."***

We cannot build our lives on something based on **convenience**. – the sand may be more plentiful and convenient than there is rock. It is only those who build their lives on Jesus Christ who will stand in the final **judgment**.

## QUESTIONS

**What is the essential difference between the two builders?**

**How can we follow the example of the wise man who built his house upon the rock?**

## SCRIPTURE

Have someone in the group look up and read [Matthew 7:28-29](#)

The Sermon sets up the rest of the gospel of Matthew with the question of how people will respond to Him. And as you can imagine, when Jesus had finished preaching, the crowd and His disciples were astonished by the authority of His words. It is one thing to be impressed with His **authority**, another all together to understand the **significance** of what He is teaching, and even more significant to **bow** to Him as Lord and Savior.

The Sermon on the Mount ends where Jesus ministry really begins and where the Christian life begins. Are we building on the sand – the things this world has to offer that will all fade away – or are we building on the Rock, Jesus Christ?

## QUESTIONS

**The last verses say, “Jesus taught as one who had authority.” In his day, teachers would often quote a Bible passage and say, “You have heard it was said...,” and then they’d quote many teachers before they would make their point. Jesus said, “You have heard it was said..., but I tell you.” He was essentially saying, “Nevermind how this has been read for a thousand years; I’m telling you how to read and understand it now.” In what ways does Jesus’ teaching here undermine our culture or understanding of life?**

**Think back over the Sermon on the Mount. What are some steps you’d like to take to put Christ’s words into practice?**

## CONCLUSION

Was there anything that stood out to you from **Matthew 7:13-29** today?

- Was there any “aha moment” for you?

Next Week: [Hangout Night or Content Make-Up](#)