

Lesson #14: A Wise Life

Nothing has nearly the impact on the kind of life we will experience than the choices we make. As Jesus wraps up the Sermon on the Mount, He brings clarity to the most fundamental, life-impacting, eternity-altering choices we will ever make. He simplifies and clarifies the big issues so we can choose wisely.

An overview of Matthew 7:13-27

- There are 2 roads - a wide one and a narrow one, with 2 entrances and 2 destinations.
 ~ So choose your path wisely.
- There are 2 kinds of prophets - the false ones and the true ones.
 ~ So choose your teachers wisely.
- There are 2 kinds of Christians - the nominal ones and the actual ones.
 ~ So choose your partners wisely.
- There are 2 kinds of disciples - the obedient ones and the disobedient ones.
 ~ So choose your actions wisely.

Jesus lays out the major options we have in life. And he provides us with sufficient information to choose wisely.

The two roads.

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” —Matthew 7:13-14

The metaphor of a road speaks of a lifestyle based on a belief system that leads to inevitable consequences. In Jesus’ metaphor, He speaks of two very different gates that serve as entrances to two very different roads that lead to two very different destinations.

The narrow gate represents putting your faith in Jesus.

- This choice leads to a life of obedience to Jesus.
- This life of obedience leads to eternal life.

The wide gate represents putting your faith in anything else.

- This leads choice leading the lifestyle you deem best.
- These lifestyles lead to destruction.

The two kinds of prophets.

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.” —Matthew 7:15-20

False prophets

- Their appearance is deceiving.
- Their fruit is bad.
 - Their teaching distorts the Word of God.
 - Their actions betray the teachings of Jesus.

True prophets

- Their message is true.
- Their fruit is good.

The two kinds of Christians.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 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 in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’” —Matthew 7:21-23

There are some who merely profess to be Christian.

- They claim to follow Jesus.
- They perform miraculous deeds.
- They live in disobedience to God’s Word.

There are others who truly are Christians.

- They profess Jesus is their Lord.
- They evidence their profession by obedience.

The two kinds of disciples.

“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. 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. 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” —Matthew 7:24-27

There are wise disciples who live according to the teachings of Jesus.

- The qualities of a practitioner of Jesus' teachings.
- The consequences of practicing Jesus' teachings.

There are foolish disciples who do not apply the teachings of Jesus.

- The qualities of a non-practitioner of Jesus' teachings.
- The consequences of not practicing Jesus' teachings.

Summary of a wise life

I have entered the right gate to travel the right road that leads to the right destination. I listen to the right teachers, I partner with the right people, and I am building my life on the right foundation.

Reflect

- ◆ What road are you on? Really. Have you entered through the narrow gate?
- ◆ Can you spot a false teacher? Is there anyone you listen to you need to evaluate?
- ◆ Are you a practitioner of Jesus teaching, more of a listener? Really.

Do

- ◆ Commit to reading and studying the Bible more so you can spot those who distort the Word of God.
- ◆ Pre-commit to implementing Jesus' teaching before you read the Scripture or listen to a message.