

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: Matthew 7:13-20

A Christian's Relationships (to false prophets)

I. Review: SOM in a Nutshell

A. Introduction to the Sermon

1. The Spirit-given character of a Kingdom member (Matt 5:1-12)
2. Persecution may come (Matt 5:12), but Christians are still salt and light in the world (Matt 5:13-16)

B. Body of the Sermon

1. Jesus fulfills the entire OT (Matt 5:17) and consummates all that the OT foreshadows (Matt 5:18)
2. Because the OT is about Jesus, His disciples' righteousness should exceed the Pharisees (Matt 5:20)!
 - i. Six distortions corrected – Anger, Lust, Divorce, Oaths, Revenge, Enemy-Love (Matt 5:21-48)
3. Living under the Fatherhood of God
 - i. The Fatherhood of God cures hypocrisy in your giving, prayer, and fasting (Matt 6:1-18)
 - ii. The Fatherhood of God cures anxiety over your possessions and provision (Matt 6:19-34)
4. Living under the Judgment of God
 - i. God's judgment guards against inappropriate judging (Matt 7:1-6)
 - ii. God's judgment encourages persistence in prayer to our Father and love for others (Matt 7:7-12)

C. Climax of Sermon

1. Jesus' Kingdom compels choices to be made
 - i. Which life direction to take? (Matt 7:13-14); Which influences to absorb? (Matt 7:15-23); Which foundation to build upon? (Matt 7:24-27)

II. Two Roads, Two Influences

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. ¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits." (Mat 7:13-20)

1. What are the implications of Jesus' "two ways"? How does this simplify (and cut against) our cultural impulses?

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live..." (Deut 30:19)

"...for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." (Ps 1:6)

"The LORD detests the way of the wicked but he loves those who pursue righteousness."

(Pro 15:9) *"He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters."*

(Matt 12:30)

2. What do the features of the ways of the world, as described by Jesus, teach us about the nature of sin? What are some areas today where this is the case?

Different Entrances:	Wide gate	Narrow gate
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Different Roads:	Easy/Broad way	Hard/Narrow way
Different Companions:	The crowd	The few
Different Destinies:	Destruction	Life

"I was soon (in the famous words) altering 'I believe' to 'one does feel'. And oh, the relief of it! ...From the tyrannous noon of revelation I passed into the cool evening of Higher Thought, where there was nothing to be obeyed, and nothing to be believed except what was either comforting or exciting." - C.S. Lewis, Surprised by Joy, 63.

"The dislocation of sex-instinct is one of the chief symptoms of the Fall. The world has been 'going to the bad' all down the ages. The various social forms shift, and each new mode has its special dangers: but the 'hard spirit of concupiscence' has walked down every street, and sat leering in every house, since Adam fell...The devil is endlessly ingenious, and sex is his favorite subject... He is as good every bit at catching you through generous romantic or tender motives. as through baser or more animal ones." - J.R.R. Tolkien in a letter to his son Michael. in 1941.

3. What motivation does Jesus give to persuade us to the right choice? How does Psalm 73 explain on why this is such a difficult task in a fallen world?

"In my vain life I have seen everything. There is a righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evildoing." (Eccl 7:15)

4. What "fruit" will false prophets produce? What will it look like (see 3 John 1:9-10)? What can we learn about fruit as we seek to follow Jesus' warning?

"So I exhort the elders among you...shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly;³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock." (1 Pet 5:1-3)

"Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11)

Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.¹⁷ They say continually to those who despise the word of the LORD, 'It shall be well with you'; and to everyone who stubbornly follows his own heart, they say, 'No disaster shall come upon you.'" (Jer 23:16-17)



"Sound doctrine and holy living are the marks of true prophets." - J.C. Ryle

5. How do we follow Jesus' warnings without becoming "heresy-hunters"?