

## PARABLES OF JESUS

### PARABLES BY TWOS - MATTHEW 7:13-27

- A. The setting was Jesus' teaching on righteousness in the Kingdom.
1. Characteristics of a righteous person: Mt. 5:3-14.
    - a. God's standard of righteousness: Mt. 5:17-48.
      - 1) God demands a righteousness of the heart that is evidenced by outward acts of righteousness, Ezekiel 36:26, *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*
      - 2) The Pharisees redefined righteousness in terms of a set of external standards., Matthew 23:23, *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.*
    - b. Proper lifestyle of a righteous person: Mt. 6:1-7:12.
  2. The Golden Rule concludes the content of Jesus' teaching section, Matthew 7:12, *So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*
- B. Responses to the teaching of Jesus
1. The Two Paths: the saved and the lost (13-14)
  2. The Two Trees: outsiders who pretend to be insiders (15-20)
  3. The Two Claims: those who think they are insiders but are not (21-23)
  4. The Two Builders: insiders who respond and those who do not (24-27)

### TWO PATHS - TWO TREES - TWO CLAIMS - TWO BUILDERS

- A. Parable of the Two Paths (13-14)
1. Jesus commands people to enter by the narrow gate (13a), *Enter by the narrow gate.*
    - a. The key to Jesus' teaching is to follow the right path.
    - b. Examples of making right choices are seen in the Old Testament.
      - 1) Deuteronomy 30:19, *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,*
      - 2) Jeremiah 21:8, *And to this people you shall say: 'Thus says the LORD: Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.*
    - c. R. T. France, *This is not a matter of more and less successful attempts to follow the lifestyle of the kingdom of heaven, but of being either in or out, saved or lost. The two routes lead in opposite directions and their destinations are totally apart.*
  2. Jesus declares that the way to death and destruction is through the wide and easy gate (13b), *For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.*
    - a. A clear distinction is made between the two paths. Here we have the wide path.
      - 1) Description - wide
      - 2) Degree of difficulty - easy
      - 3) Popularity - many
      - 4) Destination - destruction
    - b. Knowing the truth and not doing it leads in a frightening direction.
    - c. Jesus' teaching reminds one of the teaching of James who demands that we live what we believe.
  3. Jesus states that few find the gate to life because it is narrow and the way is hard (14), *For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.*
    - a. The second description shows the complete contrast between the two roads.
      - 1) Description - narrow
      - 2) Degree of difficulty - hard
      - 3) Popularity - few
      - 4) Destination - life

- b. This path leads to the kingdom of heaven, note Matthew 7:21, *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,*
- c. It is a path that begins when one receives the only giver of life, Jesus, John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*
- d. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Christ contrasted this narrow gate and the teaching of the Pharisees, which He viewed as a wide gate and a broad road. Thus He taught that faith in His word, would lead to life, but obedience to the Pharisees' words would lead to destruction.*

B. Parable of the Two Trees (15-20)

1. Jesus warns His followers to beware of false prophets (15), ***Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.***
  - a. Their appearance is like sheep but they are actually wolves.
  - b. The function of a prophet was to receive truth from God and faithfully communicate it to others.
    - 1) What a prophet predicted must take place or he is a false prophet, Deuteronomy 18:21-22, *And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?'— 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.*
    - 2) Even if what a prophet predicts takes place but he calls the people to follow other gods, he is a false prophet, Deuteronomy 13:1-3, *If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, 2 and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' 3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams.*
    - 3) When a prophet exhibits ungodly behavior, he is a false prophet, Jeremiah 23:14-15, *But in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in lies; they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his evil; all of them have become like Sodom to me, and its inhabitants like Gomorrah." Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: "Behold, I will feed them with bitter food and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land."*
  - c. False prophets misrepresent divine revelation.
    - 1) Colossians 2:8, *See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*
    - 2) Acts 20:29-30, *I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.*
    - 3) 2 Peter 2:1, *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.*
2. False prophets are recognized by their fruits (16-18), ***You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.***
  - a. A prophet's fruit is his teachings and actions because a person produces what he is.
  - b. Spiritual health bears good fruit but spiritual disease bears bad fruit.
  - c. R. T. France, *...true loyalty to God will issue in appropriate behavior by his people. However plausible their words, it is by the life they live that you can recognize those who are not true prophets of God.*
3. False prophets are destined for judgment (19-20), ***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.***
  - a. A tree that does not bear good fruit is destroyed.
  - b. A prophet is eventually known by his deeds and not just his words.
  - c. Thomas Bewick (early 1800's), *We ought not to judge men by their looks, or their dress and appearances, but by the character of their lives and conversation, and by their works.*

C. Parable of the Two Claims (21-23)

1. Those who do the will of God will enter the kingdom of heaven (21), ***Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.***
  - a. The primary work of God is placing faith in Jesus Christ.
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *In Jesus' day it is doubtful whether 'Lord' when used to address him meant more than 'teacher' or 'sir.' But in the post-resurrection period, it becomes an appellation of worship and a confession of Jesus' deity.*
    - 2) During Jesus' ministry doing the will of God meant to accept Jesus as Messiah, John 6:29, *Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*
  - b. Obedience is a product of faith in Christ not faith in one's own actions, 1 John 2:3, *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.*
2. Many will question the fairness of Jesus based on their religious performance (22), ***On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'***
  - a. Some performed wonders in the name of Jesus without a relationship.
    - 1) Judas, Luke 10:17-20, *The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"* 18 *And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*
    - 2) Simon, Acts 8:18-20, *Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."* 20 *But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"*
    - 3) Thomas Constable, *Obviously it was possible for false disciples to prophesy, exorcize demons, and perform miracles in Jesus' name. The authority of His name (reputation) enabled them to do so, not their own righteousness or relationship to Him.*
  - b. Jesus determines who enters the kingdom of heaven at the final judgment, *on that day.*
    - 1) He is the judge Who has been given that responsibility by the Father
    - 2) John 5:22, *The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,*
3. Jesus declares that relationship is the basis for entry to the kingdom of heaven (23), ***And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'***
  - a. Jesus will reject those He did not know.
    - 1) Admission to the kingdom is based on a personal relationship to Jesus.
    - 2) We need to know Him not just know about Him.
    - 3) John 3:3, *Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
  - b. He will declare them *workers of lawlessness.*
    - 1) Thomas Constable, *Many people deal with holy things daily yet have no personal acquaintance with God because they are hypocrites. It is their failure to bow before divine law, the will of God, that renders them practitioners of lawlessness and guilty.*
    - 2) It is not what one says nor what one does that pleases God when it doesn't come from a personal relationship with Jesus.
    - 3) Amazingly, good words and good deeds not based on a personal relationship with Christ are considered lawlessness.
4. Do I know Jesus?
  - a. A frightening thought is to know about Jesus but not to know Him.
    - 1) Alister McGrath, *...intellectual assent can easily become a spiritual liability. It led me to think of "knowing Christ" purely in terms of knowing about Christ...Knowing Christ was nothing more and nothing less than gathering information about Christ.*
    - 2) Donald Coggan, *The journey from head to heart is one of the longest and most difficult that we know.*

- b. We can know Him!
  - 1) John 17:3, *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*
  - 2) A.W. Tozer, *Every man is as close to God as he wants to be.*
  - 3) Philip Yancey, *We are profoundly different, God and I, which explains why friendship is not the primary model used in the Bible to describe our relationship. Worship is.*
  - 4) Let's start with worship and see how a personal relationship with God will develop.

D. Parable of the Two Builders (24-27)

1. The one who hears and does what Jesus says is like one who builds a house on a solid foundation (24-25), ***Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.***
  - a. The rock foundation represents Jesus.
    - 1) There is only one solid foundation
      - a) 1 Cor. 3:11, *For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*
      - b) 1 Peter 2:6-8, *For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."*
    - 2) A solid foundation can withstand any difficulty.
      - a) When Jesus is your rock, there is no temptation that can destroy your life in Christ.
      - b) The result of doing what Jesus commands is assurance.
  - b. The teaching of Jesus must not be ignored.
    - 1) This section contrasts hearing and doing.
    - 2) R. T. France, *...the striking conclusion to a challenging discourse which has left Jesus' hearers with a simple but demanding choice: to hear and ignore, or to hear and put into practice.*
2. The one who does not do what Jesus says is like a foolish man who builds his house upon a shifting foundation (26-27), ***And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.***
  - a. The unstable foundation represents that which is not true, J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Pharisees did not have the truth of God; therefore, those who followed them were building without an adequate foundation.*
  - b. The result of such a foundation is collapse because when temptations come, trust in what is not true cannot withstand the assault.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. Thomas Constable, *Jesus' point in this section was that entrance into the kingdom and discipleship as a follower of the King are unpopular, and they involve persecution. Many more people will profess to be disciples than really are. The acid test is obedience to the revealed will of God.*
- B. R. T. France, *...each in a different way draws out the contrast between a right and a wrong response, between the true and the false, the saved and the lost. This is, then, a rhetorical conclusion to the discourse, aiming to motivate the hearers to take appropriate action.*

<b>RESPONSE OF THE AUDIENCE - MATTHEW 7:28-29</b>
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- A. The crowds were astonished by His teaching (28), ***And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching,***
  1. Jesus was teaching His disciples but many others were following Him and listening to what He said.
  2. They were impressed by what He said, how He said it, but also, by what He did, performing miracles.

- B. They were impressed because He taught as One who had authority (29), *for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*
1. Jesus' authority was confirmed by His miracles, Matthew 9:3, *But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home."*
  2. Jesus acknowledged His authority, Matthew 28:18, *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*
  3. On Jesus' authority
    - a. He claimed to be Messiah, John 4:25-26, *The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."*
    - b. He claimed to fulfill the Word of God, Matthew 5:17, *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.*
    - c. He determines who will enter the kingdom of heaven, Matthew 7:21, *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*
    - d. His teaching amounts to the Word of God, Matthew 7:24, *Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*

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