

CONNECTION Leader Notes – Matthew 7:13-29

January 2, 2011

Key Verses

Choosing a Path – Matthew 7:13-14

13 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.

Evaluating Fruit – Matthew 7:15-20

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.

The Real Deal – Matthew 7:21-23

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. 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?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Hearing the Word and Doing – Matthew 7:24-29

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. 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. 26 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." 28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

Additional reference verses shown below

Discussion Questions

1. What kind of destruction is described in Matthew 7:13? Do we really believe that the "wide and easy gate" leads to destruction? If so, why would a person pursue this path?
2. Since "the way is hard that leads to life" according to Matthew 7:14 why are we often surprised or frustrated when a Christian believer's life is difficult? (I Peter 4:12-14, I John 3:13, II Tim.3:12)
3. What are some of God's purposes for the hardships that Christians face? (Job 5:7, Romans 5:3-5, II Cor.4:8-12, James 1:2-4, I Peter 1:6-9)
4. What are "recognized" fruits of the Christian life referenced in Matt.7:16-20? (Gal.5:22-23, Col.1:9-12, Rom.12:9-18, Col.3:12-17)
5. What is the key point that Jesus is making in Matt.7:21-23?

6. Describe what a “sandy” foundation looks like (Matt.7:26) upon which a person would build his or her life? (I Cor.3:12-14, Jer.9:23-24, I John 2:15-17, I Peter 1:18-19) What must we do to be like the foolish man?
7. What is the “rock” upon which the wise man should build his house according to Matthew 7:24? (I Cor.3:10-11, Ps.95:1-3, Ps.62:5-7) According to Matthew 7, what is required to be like the wise man?

Additional Supporting Scripture by Topic:

Trials add value to our Christian Life:

*A bar of steel worth \$5, when made into ordinary horseshoes, is then worth \$10. If this same \$5 bar is manufactured into sewing needles, the value rises to \$350. And yet if it's made into delicate springs for expensive watches, it is worth more than \$250,000. The same bar of steel is made more valuable by being cut to its proper size, passed through one blast furnace after another, again and again, hammered and manipulated, beaten and pounded, finished and polished until it's ready for those delicate tasks. **M. R. DeHaan**, Broken Things*

In order to mold His people, God often has to melt them.

*“Tribulation has always sobered God's people and encouraged them to look for and yearn after the return of their Lord. Our present preoccupation with this world may be a warning of bitter days to come. God will wean us from the earth some way – the easy way if possible, the hard way if necessary. It is up to us.” **A.W. Tozer***

Foundations and Counting the Cost

Luke 14:26-33 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? 32 "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends [fn] a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Full notes from Pastor Jim's sermon transcripts are available in the foyer in printed form or from the TBC website in downloadable PDF format (bottom of Home Page, select Sunday Sermons, then by date to download in PDF)