

SOTM - The Two Ways (Matthew 7:13-29)

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

1. WELCOME TO THE BRIDGE - I'm Jared and here's why we're here.
2. NEXT WEEK!
 - a. 3 services - open seats = 's open door for discipleship!
 - i. Grab your discipleship guide!
 - b. Becoming One!
 - i. Whether you're single, married, marriage on the rocks - this is for us!
 - ii. I don't think in terms of sermons - but series - and this one could change your life or the lives of someone you know - so invite someone!
3. TODAY - we FINISH our study of THE MOST FAMOUS SERMON BY THE MOST FAMOUS PREACHER!
4. And the way Jesus concludes his sermon is by calling for a decision...
 1. According to Harvard Business Review (I know I don't look like the kind of guy who reads that) but, apparently the average American makes 35,000 decisions a day...
 2. You might be wondering why you're so overwhelmed - here it is.
 3. And if you're a mom of kids - you make somewhere around 47 billion decisions a day.
 4. Some are forgettable.
 - a. Coffee or tea.
 - b. Left lane or right lane.
 - c. Watch one more episode... or finally go to bed.
 5. Most of those decisions don't change our lives.
 6. But every once in a while... **you make a decision that changes everything.**
 - a. Who you'll marry.
 - b. Where you'll live.
 - c. Whether you'll forgive.
 - d. Who you'll trust.
 7. As Jesus finishes the Sermon on the Mount...
 8. He isn't giving us more information. *He's asking us for a decision.*
 9. Throughout chapters 5, 6, and 7...
 10. He has described life in His Kingdom.
 11. Now He puts the most important decision in front of us that we will ever make: **"What are you going to do with Jesus"**
 12. That's the question behind every illustration Jesus gives today...
 13. Two gates. Two trees. Two professions. Two foundations.
 14. Different pictures. One decision.

13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy^[a] 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.

1. Jesus begins with a command. Not a suggestion.
2. **"Enter through the narrow gate."**
3. Notice He doesn't say,
 - a. "Consider the gate."
 - b. "Study the gate."
 - c. "Admire the gate."
4. He says, **Enter.**
5. **Christianity has never been about *admiring* Jesus from a distance. It's about *following* Jesus.**
6. Jesus says there are only two roads because there are only two destinations.
7. One leads to life. The other leads to destruction.
8. Our culture tells us the broad road is safest because it's crowded and Jesus says the opposite.
9. Here's the problem: the broad road is broad *because it asks almost nothing of you.*
 - a. No repentance.
 - b. No surrender.
 - c. No submission.
10. It simply says, **"Follow yourself."**
11. Jesus says, **"Follow Me."**
12. That's why the gate is narrow.
13. Not because God is trying to keep people out.
14. But because there's only one Savior.
15. Jesus doesn't merely show us the gate.
16. **Jesus is the Gate. But that gate is only as big as Jesus himself.**
17. BUT THIS IS SO BINARY - THIS SEEMS SO "NARROW MINDED".
18. That's exactly right - there really are only two paths.
- 19.
20. A few weeks ago we were boarding a plane for camp.
21. As we got to the gate, they stopped Caiden.
22. His carry-on looked just a little bigger than everyone else's.
23. They handed him that little metal measuring box. You know the one.
24. Everyone behind us is waiting. We're all holding our breath.
25. Why?
26. Because if it doesn't fit... you're checking the bag.
27. In that moment there were only two options.
28. Leave the baggage... or miss the flight.
29. Jesus says the narrow gate works the same way.
30. You can carry your pride... or you can carry Christ.
31. You can carry your self-righteousness... or you can receive His righteousness.
32. ***But you can't carry both.***
33. We all come the same way.

- a. *Empty-handed.*
 - b. *We bring our sin and our selves...*
34. Contrary to everything we believe - grace can only be received.
- a. *It can never be earned.*
35. The road you choose today determines the destination you'll reach tomorrow.
36. *Can I ask you an honest Question: What road are you on today?*
37. **Every illustration Jesus gives asks the same question: What will you do with Jesus?**

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. 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.'

- 1. If the first question Jesus asks is, "**Which road are you on?**"
- 2. The second question is, "**What kind of life is growing?**"
- 3. Jesus says,

"Beware of false prophets."

- 1. Notice... He doesn't describe false preachers as obvious. He says they come dressed like sheep.
- 2. That's what makes deception so dangerous.
- 3. *False teachers rarely introduce themselves by saying,*
- 4. *"Good morning Bridge Fellowship... I'm here to deceive you."*
- 5. No.
- 6. They often sound biblical. They may be gifted. Persuasive. Charismatic. Even successful.
- 7. *Here's a fun question: How do you know when you're being deceived?*
- 8. You don't - that's why it's called deception...
- 9. **So how do we know?**
 - a. Jesus doesn't tell us to examine their platform.
 - b. He doesn't tell us to count their followers.
 - c. He doesn't tell us to evaluate their personality.
- 10. He says... **Look at the fruit.**
- 11. Does their life MATCH what they preach?
 - a. My job description (1. Model the life)
- 12. Because fruit eventually reveals what words try to hide.
- 13.
- 14. *Weird way to think about this but might be helpful...*

15. Imagine I walked into my backyard this afternoon... and zip-tied a dozen bright red apples onto my oak tree.
 16. From across the yard... it might fool you.
 - a. It looks healthy.
 - b. It looks productive.
 - c. It even looks beautiful.
 17. But eventually... someone walks close enough... And they realize... *those apples aren't growing.*
 18. *They're hanging.*
 19. Because you can decorate a tree - ***but you can't manufacture fruit.***
 20. That's Jesus' point.
 21. Anyone can manufacture an image for a season.
 22. Fruit isn't produced in a moment - it's produced over a lifetime.
 - 23.
 24. That's why genuine Christianity isn't about perfection. *It's about direction.*
 25. Believers still stumble. Believers still struggle. Believers still repent.
 26. The evidence of saving faith isn't that we've stopped fighting sin.
 27. It's that the Holy Spirit won't let us make peace with it.
 28. ***What is rooted in Christ eventually resembles Christ.***
 29. Then Jesus says something that should stop every one of us.
- "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven."
1. Those may be some of the most sobering words Jesus ever spoke.
 2. Notice who He's talking about.
 - a. Not atheists.
 - b. Not pagans.
 3. Religious people.
 4. People who knew the language. People who served. People who prophesied (or preached).
 5. People who were active in ministry. And Jesus says, **"I never knew you."**
 6. He doesn't say, "I knew you once."
 7. He says, "I never knew you."
 8. Christianity is not ultimately about religious activity.
 9. It's about knowing Christ.
 10. This is what keeps me up at night... I love all that God is doing here - but this one thing rattles in my brain.
 11. Jesus is saying that people sitting in this room right now can:
 - a. Be in church, but not in Christ.
 - b. Be baptized, but not believe.
 12. Can I just tell you - ***Religion is a terrible substitute for relationship.***
 - 13.
 14. So here's the question Jesus leaves us with.
 15. Not... Can you quote Scripture?
 16. Not... Did you grow up in church?
 17. Not... Did you volunteer?

18. The question is... **Do you know Jesus?**
19. And even more importantly... **Does Jesus know you?**
20. Because eternal life isn't earned by religious performance.
21. It's received through a relationship with Christ.

1. So Jesus has now removed two false confidences.
2. The crowd. And appearances.
3. Now He removes one more.
4. Simply hearing the truth.
5. Because hearing Jesus... isn't the same as building your life on Jesus.

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.

1. Jesus now gives His final illustration. *And it ties everything together.*
 - a. Two builders.
 - b. Two houses.
 - c. One storm.
2. At first glance they look almost identical.
3. Both builders hear Jesus. Both builders build houses.
4. Both houses experience the very same storm.
5. *The difference isn't what they heard.*
6. The difference is what they did.
7. One built his life on Jesus. The other simply listened.
8. That's the point of the entire Sermon on the Mount.
9. **Jesus isn't looking for impressed listeners. He's forming obedient disciples.**
10. *Knowledge alone has never transformed anyone.*
 - a. Truth must be trusted.
 - b. Truth must be obeyed.
 - c. Truth must become the foundation upon which we build our lives.
11. Imagine buying your dream house.
12. Fresh paint. Beautiful kitchen. Perfect landscaping. Everything looks incredible.
13. Then six months later...
14. Cracks begin showing up in the drywall.
 - a. Doors won't close.
 - b. The floors begin to slope.
 - c. You call the contractor.

15. He walks through the house... looks around... and finally says,
16. "The problem isn't what you can see. The problem is what you can't."
17. The foundation has shifted.
18. *Suddenly you realize...* **all the beautiful finishes were only as strong as what they rested upon.**
19. That's exactly what Jesus is saying.
20. **Most people never think about their foundation - until everything starts shaking.**
- 21.
22. Every life eventually encounters storms. Some storms arrive through suffering. Others through betrayal.
 - a. A diagnosis.
 - b. A broken marriage.
 - c. Financial hardship.
 - d. The death of someone you love.
23. Bridge Family, Jesus never promises His followers a storm-free life.
24. He promises something better. A storm-proof foundation.
25. The question isn't whether storms are coming.
26. The question is... **What are you standing on when they arrive?**
27. Because storms don't create your foundation.
28. They reveal it.
29. Now notice something remarkable.
30. Jesus doesn't describe the foolish builder as someone who rejected His teaching.
31. He simply heard it... and did nothing.
32. That may be the greatest danger in a church like ours.
33. Week after week... we hear God's Word. We take notes. We nod our heads. We agree.
34. But agreement isn't obedience. Listening isn't discipleship.
35. Jesus isn't asking, *"Did you enjoy the sermon?"*
36. He's asking, *Will you build your life on it?"*
37. Disciples don't just admire Jesus' words. They surrender their lives to Him.
- 38.
39. Now step back for just a moment.
40. Look at the four pictures Jesus has painted.
 - a. Two gates.
 - b. Two trees.
 - c. Two professions.
 - d. Two foundations.
41. These are 4 different illustrations - but one point.
42. Every picture asks the same question. **What will you do with Jesus?**
- 43.

Conclusion

1. Jesus has spent three chapters describing life in His Kingdom.
2. Now He asks for a response.
 - a. Will you choose the narrow road?

- b. Will you examine your life honestly?
- c. Will you stop trusting in religion... and begin trusting in Christ?
- 3. Will you build your life on the only foundation that cannot be shaken?
- 4. Because one day...
 - a. Every road reaches its destination.
 - b. Every tree bears its fruit.
 - c. Every profession is tested.
 - d. Every foundation is revealed.
- 5. And on that day the only life still standing will be the one built upon Jesus Christ.
- 6. Here's the beautiful news.
- 8. If salvation depended on us finding the narrow road - none of us would.
- 9. Left to ourselves, we'd all choose the broad road.
- 10. We'd all trust ourselves instead of God.
- 11. That's why the gospel is such good news.
- 12. Jesus didn't merely point us toward the narrow road.
 - a. He walked it perfectly.
- 13. Where we failed... He obeyed.
- 14. Where we rebelled... He submitted.
- 15. Where we deserved judgment... He took it.
- 16. At the cross, the only truly righteous Man was treated like the guilty - so guilty people could be declared righteous.
- 17. That's why the gate is narrow.
- 18. Not because God is trying to keep people out - but because there is only one Savior.
- 19. There are not many crosses.
 - a. There is one.
- 20. There are not many empty tombs.
 - a. There is one.
- 21. There are not many ways to the Father.
 - a. There is One.
- 22. His name is Jesus Christ.
- 23. *So don't simply admire the King.*
 - a. Don't merely agree with the King.
 - b. Don't just talk about the King.
- 24. Give your life to Jesus. Trust Jesus for salvation.**
- 25. Because when every other foundation gives way...
- 26. Jesus Christ will still be standing.
- 27. And everyone who has trusted Him...
- 28. will stand with Him forever.

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God

promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

1. PRAYER TEAM!! This a great time to pray with someone!

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said,^[b] "This is my body, which is^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you^[b]
and give you peace."