

WEEK 10 (October 18-24) Sermon on the Mount— “Choose Your Path”
(Matthew 7:13-28)

Starting the Conversation

Two different paths, two different trees, two different confessions, and two different foundations...these four metaphors for the faithful life of discipleship and following Jesus are both awe inspiring and gut wrenching. They inspire us as they invite us into a life of powerful meaning and reassurance that God's salvation conquers every sin and brokenness when we receive Him by faith. They are gut wrenching in that they remind us that we cannot come to God on our own terms. We can only come to Him by God's grace through faith—believing that Jesus is the Son of God who died for our sins and rose again that we might have eternal life AND trusting Jesus with our lives by submitting to Him. There are two paths to choose from. One leads to life and one to death. We become one of two trees, either creating amazing fruit or just existing. There are two different kinds of confession. One agrees that Jesus is the Son of God and one shows allegiance to Him. There are two foundations upon which to build life. One is built on our own efforts and understanding, and it eventually falls apart. The other foundation is built on the goodness and power of God, and it lasts forever. We all have a choice to make by faith—what will your choice be?

Let's Read 7:13–14

Leader: *Jesus begins with a picture of two roads. One is wide, easy, and crowded, while the other is narrow and difficult. The narrow path is not about earning God's favor—it is about choosing to follow Jesus even when it is costly.*

- Why do you think Jesus describes the path to life as narrow?
- What are some examples of the "wide road" our culture encourages people to follow?
- Why can following Jesus sometimes feel difficult or countercultural?
- What does it look like to choose the narrow path in your everyday life?

Let's Read Matthew 7:15–20

Leader: *Jesus shifts from paths to trees. He teaches that our lives naturally produce fruit. Healthy trees bear healthy fruit because of what they are, not because they try harder.*

- What kinds of fruit do you think Jesus is talking about?
 - Why is fruit a better indicator of faith than simply claiming to believe?
 - In what ways does spending time with Jesus shape the fruit produced in our lives?
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Let's Read Matthew 7:21–27

Leader: *These verses are among the most sobering in Scripture. Jesus reminds us that knowing about Him is different from knowing Him. True faith is demonstrated by trust, surrender, and obedience.*

- What surprises or challenges you about this passage?
- What is the difference between acknowledging Jesus and following Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus emphasizes doing the Father's will?
- How can we guard against allowing our faith to become merely external?

Leader: *Jesus ends the sermon with one final comparison. Both builders hear His words. Both experience storms. The difference is not what they hear but what they do with what they've heard.*

- What similarities do you notice between the two builders?
 - What is the one key difference between them?
 - What kinds of "storms" test the foundation of our lives?
 - How does obedience strengthen our foundation over time?
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Closing: *Jesus doesn't end the Sermon on the Mount with information but with an invitation. Every person must decide which path to walk, what kind of fruit to bear, whom they will follow, and what foundation they will build upon.*

- Which of Jesus' four pictures speaks to you most today?
 - Where is God calling you to move from simply hearing His Word to living it?
 - What area of your life needs to be more firmly built on Christ?
 - How can our small group encourage one another to faithfully follow Jesus this week?
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PRAYER

Father, thank You for speaking clearly through Jesus and inviting us to build our lives on Him. Thank You that Your grace makes a relationship with You possible through faith in Christ. Help us not to settle for simply hearing Your Word, but to faithfully live it out each day. Give us courage to choose the narrow path, produce fruit that reflects Your Spirit, trust You with wholehearted faith, and build our lives on the solid foundation of Jesus. When storms come, keep us firmly rooted in Your truth and Your love. May our lives point others to the hope and security found only in Christ. In His name we pray, Amen.