

## **Inside Out [A Righteous Choice] Discussion Guide**

### **Summary**

In this final message of the Sermon on the Mount series, Jonathan walks through Matthew 7:13-27, where Jesus presents three powerful contrasts: two gates, two trees, and two houses. Each parable serves as a tool to examine our lives. The narrow gate calls us to surrender and genuine faith in Jesus as the only path to righteousness. The two trees remind us that real transformation produces real fruit, and that you cannot fake what flows from your heart. The two houses illustrate that the storms of life will come for everyone, and what matters is not the appearance of the house but the foundation it rests on.

The core message is that righteousness cannot be earned through religious performance or moral effort. Romans 3 makes clear that no one is righteous on their own, and that we are made right with God only by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. True transformation happens from the inside out, not the other way around. When we genuinely surrender to Jesus, our hearts are changed, and good fruit flows naturally from that relationship. The invitation Jesus extends is not a demand but a call to come home to the Shepherd, build on the solid rock of who He is, and let Him transform us from the inside out.

### **Intro Prayer**

Lord, we come with open hands and honest hearts, knowing that You see us fully and love us completely. As

we dig into Your Word, we ask that You quiet the noise around us and the noise within us. Help us not just to hear these truths but to truly receive them. Where we have been building on sand, show us. Where we have been performing instead of surrendering, reveal that to us gently. Holy Spirit, do what only You can do. Transform us from the inside out. We don't want a surface-level faith. We want the real thing. Meet us here today, and let this time together be one where You move in each of our hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Ice Breaker**

What is one decision in your life, big or small, that you really struggled to make? How did you finally land on a choice?

## **Key Verses**

- Romans 3:10-12
- Romans 3:23
- Romans 3:21-26
- Matthew 7:13-27
- Matthew 12:33-35
- 1 Peter 2:24-25

## **Questions**

- Jesus describes two gates in Matthew 7:13-14. What do you think makes the wide gate so appealing in everyday life? Where do you see it showing up most in your own choices?

- Romans 3:10 says 'no one is righteous, not even one.' How does honestly accepting that truth change the way you approach your relationship with God?
- Jonathan said that the narrow road is not right because it is harder, but that it is harder because it requires surrender. What does surrender actually look like in your daily life? What is the hardest thing for you to surrender?
- In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus says He never knew the people just who did works in His name. What is the difference between doing things for Jesus and being in a genuine relationship with Him? How can you tell the difference in your own life?
- Matthew 12:34 says 'whatever is in your heart determines what you say.' What does the fruit of your words and actions reveal about what is happening in your heart right now?
- The sermon pointed out that the rain falls on both houses in Matthew 7:24-27. How has a storm in your life revealed what your foundation was actually built on? What did you learn from that experience?
- 1 Peter 2:25 describes a turning back to the Shepherd. Is there an area of your life where you have been wandering and need to turn back? What would that look like practically this week?
- Jonathan said that when you truly understand you have been forgiven and declared righteous through Jesus, it transforms how you live. You move from trying to earn acceptance to living out of acceptance. How does that shift change the way you approach your faith on a daily basis?

## **Life Application**

This week, take 10 to 15 minutes each day to honestly examine your foundation. Ask yourself: In this area of my life (a relationship, a habit, a worry, a goal), am I building on the rock of who Jesus is, or am I building on my own strength, approval, or circumstances? Write down one specific area where you sense God calling you to change your foundation. Then take one concrete step toward surrendering that area to Him, whether that is through prayer, a conversation with a trusted friend, or simply confessing it honestly to God. Let transformation begin from the inside out this week.

## **Key Takeaways**

- Jesus presents a clear and intentional choice between two paths: the narrow gate that leads to life through surrender to Him, and the wide gate that leads to destruction by accommodating our pride and self-reliance.
- Genuine righteousness cannot be manufactured through religious performance or moral effort. It is a gift received through faith in Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the law and became our righteousness.
- Real transformation flows from the inside out. Just as a tree produces fruit according to its nature, a heart that has been genuinely changed by Jesus will naturally produce good fruit in words, actions, and character.
- The storms of life fall on everyone, Christian or not. What determines whether we stand or collapse is not the appearance of our lives but the foundation we have built on. Jesus is the only foundation that holds.
- Jesus is not looking for people who just do things in His name. He is looking for people who are in intimate

relationship with Him. That relationship is what produces lasting change and genuine righteousness.

## **Ending Prayer**

Father, thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word that does not change. Thank You that You are not asking us to earn Your love or perform our way to righteousness. You have already done the work through Jesus. Help us to carry this with us: that we are standing on solid rock, not because of what we have done, but because of what Jesus has done for us. Where we have been wandering, bring us home. Where we have been performing, free us to simply be in relationship with You. Let the fruit of our lives flow from a heart that has truly been transformed by Your grace. Give us the courage to choose the narrow gate, not just today but every day. We love You, Lord. It is in the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.