

1-1-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Something More in 2023

Purpose: Provoke people to a live a deeper and more productive spiritual life in 2023.

Truth for Today: Jesus wants us to be more than a believer but a committed follower of Him.

Text: Matthew 7:13-27

Topic: New Year, Commitment, Mentality, Obedience

Series Title: Something More

Series purpose: Provoke people to a deeper and more productive spiritual life.

Something More in 2023

I. Introduction

A. New Series: Something More... a challenge to a live a deeper and more productive spiritual life in 2023, i.e. I will challenge you to be more than a believer but a committed follower of Jesus Christ.

B. Review series: Jesus Said What? Sermon on the Mount. Today I'm going to finish the SOM and use it as a foundation of the new series because Jesus Himself challenges us about our commitment to follow Him.

C. Title: Something More in 2023

D. Truth for Today: Jesus wants us to be more than a believer but a committed follower of Him.

E. Today we're going to look at 4 challenges Jesus gave at the end of the SOM that challenge people to respond to what He taught. Jesus will: (1) Contrast the narrow verses the wide road, (2) Actions speak louder than words, (3) Our relationship with God is validated when we do His will, (4) We can build our lives on the rock of God's Word; everything else is sand. Jesus wants to show us in 2023 that Christianity is more than a belief system but a faith that's lived out every day. The choice we make will affect us for eternity.

II. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023, so I'll choose the narrow path that leads to life.

A. [Mt. 7:13–27 (NLT) “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. **The highway to hell is broad**, and its gate is wide for the **many who choose that way**. 14 But the **gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.**] Contrast: God’s Kingdom/ hell; wide and narrow, few and many, easy and hard.²

1. AC/DC Video: Highway to Hell 43-1.04. Jesus said hell wasn't a party place but a place of darkness and eternal torment that lasts forever.
2. Jesus makes it clear that there are two ways in life that are set before all people; it is thus important that the right choice be made⁴

B. In the narrow gate it's hard to be merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness' sake, let your light shine in a dark world, lust, adultery, divorce, oaths, revenge, love your enemies, helping the needy, hypocrisy, prayer, fasting, money, worry, judging, persistence in prayer, and practice the Golden Rule.]

C. There is tension in our salvation between the role of faith and works. Jesus isn't saying good works save us but saved people do good works. [Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV) For it is by grace you have been saved, **through faith...9 not by works**, so that no one can boast.] [James 2:17 (NIV) In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action (ESV works), is dead (meaningless).**]

D. It's easy to start the Christian life. We believe in Jesus and turn to God. It's hard to truly live the Christian life and follow Jesus. Following Jesus sometimes involves sacrifice and suffering, sometimes persecution and pain, sometimes rejection by friends and family but in the life to come He promises will be worth it. Most people don't choose His way. The wide path is easier now. There's little pain or hardship. There's no self-denial, no suffering, and no rejection from the world. But in the end the people who chose the wide path of the world will wish they'd have chosen the narrow path of life.

E. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023, so even though living the Christian life is hard at times I'm going to stay on the narrow path of God's Word.

III. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023 so if my actions don't line up with God's Word, I'm going to make some changes.

A. [Vs.15 "Beware of **false prophets** who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. 16 **You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act.** Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 **A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit.** 18 A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. 19 So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20 Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, **so you can identify people by their actions.**] Pharisees

1. False prophets are synonymous with false teachers. We can tell if a person is true or false, by the way they act, what they do rather than what they say, i.e. by the fruit they bear, not their social media posts, or how cool they dress. Look at their family, character, doctrine, are they after our money for personal benefit, what kind of reputation do they have from people who really know them. [Acts 20:30 (NLT) Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following.]
- B. Life application: Christians deceive themselves when we say one thing but do another. It's called being a hypocrite/ pretender. We can fool people, even ourselves, but not God. I don't want to be a false believer or a hypocrite.
 1. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023, so if my actions don't line up with God's Word, I'm going to make some changes.
- IV. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023, therefore, I'm going to try my best to do God's will every day.
 - A. [Vs. 21 (NCV) "Not all those who say 'You are our Lord' (*ESV Lord, Lord*) will enter the kingdom of heaven. **The only people who will enter the kingdom of heaven are those who do what my Father in heaven wants.** 22 On the last day many people will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, we spoke for you (*NLT prophesied*), and through you we forced out demons and did many miracles.' 23 Then I will tell them clearly, 'Get away from me, **you who do evil. I never knew you.**'
 1. Professing/ deceived Christians prophesied, cast out devils and did miracles. Surely this was a sign God was with them and they were genuine. Nope! They didn't do God's will, they were evil and had no personal relationship with Jesus.
 2. How could this be possible? "3x in his name". Someone can act in a person's strength or authority, eg., stole identity on FB. Or using a stolen cc., 7 sons sceva
 3. T *I never knew you...* means "I have nothing to do with you" or "You are complete strangers to me!" or "You were not my people (or, my followers)" ² These Pharisees were anointed pretenders.
 4. *These lawless, wicked people*" acted contrary to the Law of God. E.g., taking revenge, judging, committing adultery, "You have neglected to live according to the will of God; away with you!"²

B. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023, then, I'm going to try my best to do God's will every day.

V. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023. I'm going to build my life on the rock; I'm going to listen and follow Jesus's teaching.

A. [Vs. 24 “**Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise**, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. 25 Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. 26 But **anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish**, like a person who builds a house on sand. 27 When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”] complete destruction, completely ruined², Pic^{5,6}

1. The foundation of a house or our spiritual foundation, determines our ability to withstand the storms of life. The rock foundation represented the Lord Himself and the truths He'd been presenting. The sand represents any other POV.

2. The Sermon on the Mount concludes with a promise and a warning² Jesus said if we build our life His way, we'll survive life's storms. If we ignore His words, we'll face destruction. He gave us 2 options. Now we're responsible for what we do. [James 1:22 (NLT) But **don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.**]

VI. Conclusion

A. I want something more in my spiritual life in 2023. (1) I'm going to stay on the narrow path. (2) If my actions don't line up with God's Word, I'm going to make some changes. (3) I'm going to try my best to do God's will every day. (4) I'm going to build my life on the rock of Jesus's teaching.

VII. Response

A. Altar

B. Prayer

C. Souls

VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [Matthew](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 33). Victor Books.

2. Newman, B. M., & Stine, P. C. (1992). [*A handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*](#) (p. 195). United Bible Societies.
3. Blomberg, C. (1992). [*Matthew*](#) (Vol. 22, p. 129). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
4. Morris, L. (1992). [*The Gospel according to Matthew*](#) (p. 172). W.B. Eerdmans;

IX. Supplemental Material

- A. After correcting the Pharisees about misapplying the OT and confronting their hypocrisy He exhorted His followers to)1) store treasures in heaven, (2) not worry about tomorrow, (3) judge and not condemn, (4) be persistent in prayer, (5) live by the Golden Rule. He now concludes the SOM with are now followed by four warnings: (1) The wide and narrow way, (2) false pophets, (3) truly knowing the Lord and (4) building our life on the rock of Jesus' words.²
- B. Elaborating on the Golden Rule, Jesus presented the clear way of access into righteousness. The righteousness He demanded (Matt. 5:20) does not come through the **wide ... gate** and the **broad ... road**. Rather it comes **through the small ... gate** and the **narrow ... road**. In light of the whole sermon, it was obvious Jesus was comparing the wide gate and the broad road to the outward righteousness of the Pharisees. If those listening to Jesus followed the Pharisees' teachings, their path would lead to **destruction** (*apōleian*, "ruin"). **The narrow gate** and road referred to Jesus' teaching, which emphasized not external requirements but internal transformation. Even the Lord Jesus acknowledged that few would **find** the true way, the way **that leads to life** (i.e., to heaven, in contrast with ruin in hell).¹
- C. Acts 19:13–16 (NLT) — 13 A group of Jews was traveling from town to town casting out evil spirits. They tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus in their incantation, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!" 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a leading priest, were doing this. 15 But one time when they tried it, the evil spirit replied, "I know Jesus, and I know Paul, but who are you?" 16 Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them, and attacked them with such violence that they fled from the house, naked and battered.
- D. Vs. 21, *In your name* occurs three times in this verse. The phrase "in someone's name" may have various functions: (1) appealing to the person

mentioned; (2) acting or speaking in that person's strength or authority; or (3) appealing to or mentioning one's relationship to that person.

- E. *Cast out demons* is translated "exorcised demons" by T. The Greek verb means "drive out" or "expel," generally with the notion of force. In the New Testament it is used especially of the exorcism of demons who have taken control of a person²
- F. Before translating *cast out demons*, translators should read the discussion at 4:24 on *demons*, since the way a language refers to casting out evil spirits depends on how spirit possession is spoken of. *Cast out* may be "chased spirits from people," "removed evil spirits from people," "took the evil spirits from behind people," or simply "made the evil spirits leave people." In some languages this phrase may be "freed people from the power of evil spirits."²