

Study Guide



Matthew 7:13-20 – Choose Carefully January 21, 2018

Welcome (40 Minutes)

Be intentional to have authentic relationships...

Worship (5 Minutes)

As the group transitions from of a time of fellowship to a time of intentional study of the word, it is important to facilitate that transition with a time of worship. This can look like praying together, singing songs together, or rejoicing in what the Lord has done throughout the week.

Word (45 Minutes)

As we look at Jesus' five discourses in Matthew, we see Matthew and the other disciples "at the feet of Jesus." These teachings are in the context of Jesus' calling and equipping the twelve apostles to go and make disciples of all nations. In our nine months of studying Jesus' five discourses of Matthew we will be sitting at the feet of Jesus learning the ins-and-outs of being disciple-makers ourselves. Our prayer is that we will be challenged to understand that we were saved in order to be disciple-makers and that we will be inspired to sit at the feet of Jesus to be equipped for our calling to be disciple-makers.

For further study on this weeks study please check out the following pages...

Action Step

Talk and plan with your Community Group on inviting guests to come visit Community Group with the goal of getting them plugged into the next Connection Group starting on March 4th.

Calendar

January 31st— Youth Camp Registration
February 4th— Youth Super Bowl Party
February 5th— Camp in the City Registration
February 9-10th— IF Gathering
February 11th— Member's Meeting
March 4th- April 15th— Connection Group
March 16th- 18th— DNOW

Welcome (40 Minutes)

As you fellowship with one another, please be intentional about sharing what the Lord is doing in your lives. Get to know one another and encourage one another. Are your conversations pointing one another toward Christ?

Worship (5 Minutes)

If you are looking for a song to sing this week, here are the lyrics to "[There is a Fountain](#)":

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

Lose all their guilty stains, lose all their guilty stains
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains

Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
'Til all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more

Be saved to sin no more, be saved to sin no more
'Til all the ransomed church of God be saved to sin no more

E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supplied
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die

And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die

Commentary: Read Matthew 7:13-20

We come to Matthew 7:13-20 and we see that the main body of Jesus' Sermon is now over, and we come to verse 13 and the application or conclusion of Jesus' Sermon begins. He begins verse 13 with an emphasis on the necessity of choice, "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 (vs. 13)." The time for the decision has come. Is it to be the kingdom of Satan or the kingdom of God, prevailing culture or the Christian counter-culture? Jesus continues with his teaching and describes the two ways (wide and narrow) and the two teachers (false and true).

Let's discuss the two ways, the wide and narrow way. As we see the wide way is easy. There are many people on it. There is plenty of room on it for diversity of opinions and laxity of morals. Stott says, "It is a road of tolerance and permissiveness. It has no curbs, no boundaries of either thought or conduct." Whoever is on this road may choose their own desires, they may follow their own inclinations. They choose to follow the human heart in its fallenness. The things chosen on this path, John Stott says are, "superficiality, self-love, hypocrisy, mechanical religion, false ambition, censoriousness. They are things that aren't learnt or cultivated. No effort is required to practice them, effort is only required to resist them." The gate for this way is wide. Whoever enters this gate leaves nothing behind. They carry their sin, self-righteousness, or pride with them. It is easy. It leads to destruction.

In contrast, we have the hard way, the narrow way. Few have chosen this path. The path is clearly marked. It is the revealed truth, God's truth. God's truth imposes a limitation on what they believe and on how they may behave. Pastor Tracy mentioned, people on this path must constantly remind themselves of their complete dependence upon God for his physical, material and moral provision. Their goals must not be set contrary to God's will. Christ is the only thing that should capture their heart's affections. They must constantly train their hearts to desire obedience from a heart that loves the Lord and is overwhelmed by his grace. The gate on this path is narrow, the people on this path must leave everything behind to enter this gate. They must leave their sin, selfish ambition, covetousness, even if necessary family and friends. No one can follow Christ who has not first denied himself. This gate is Jesus Christ ("He is the door and if anyone enters by him, he will be saved. John 10:9)." Although this path is "hard" and "narrow," God's yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matt. 11:30). This path leads to eternal life.

What path will we choose? Will you choose life, to choose Jesus over comfort, to choose Jesus over ease, to choose Jesus over self-rule, to choose Jesus over acceptance by the crowd?

Jesus continues in verses 15-20 and warns us of false prophets. It is the false prophets who are leading people astray, it is the false prophets deceiving people, devouring them, and leading them down the path that is easy and wide, leading them to their destruction. How do you spot a false prophet? How do you tell if you are being led down the wrong path? Jesus says you recognize a tree by its fruit. You recognize a false prophet by their life and their message. By their character and conduct, and by their teaching. As Pastor Tracy mentioned, a true teacher/preacher of God's Word will display the fruit of the spirit more often than not. It doesn't mean they will be perfect but it does mean that they will increasingly reflect the character and conduct of Christ - humility, gentleness, meekness, love, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control. If Christ is in them then they will start to be like Christ in conduct and character. If not, then beware. We should always inspect the content of their teaching to make sure it is faithful to the Scriptures but we also should inspect the fruit of their teaching ministry to see if it is leading other to trust in Christ and to live for his glory, his rule and his will.

Discussion - Read Matthew 7:13-20

1. What were some takeaways from the sermon? What convicted you? What stood out to you? Explain.
2. In verses 13-14 Jesus describes two paths of life. What is the nature of the gate, the degree of difficulty, the popularity, and the destination of these two paths of life?
3. What is Jesus urging his followers to do in these 2 verses? Is there any conscious decision required to follow the path to destruction? Why or why not? Is there any conscious decision required to follow the path of life? Why or why not?
4. What things do we learn about the people we are warned about in verse 15?
5. What is the purpose of a prophet? How is that purpose subverted by a false prophet (Matthew 24:9-11)?
6. Verse 18 says we can recognize false prophets by their fruits. What do you think is meant by the word "fruits"? Does it mean the fruits or results of their ministries or do you think it means the fruits of righteousness in their lives or could it have both meanings? Look at Matthew 3:7-10 and Matthew 12:33-35 to see some uses of the word "fruits" in the book of Matthew.
7. How long does it take for the fruit of a tree to show up? How long will it take to recognize the fruits of a false prophet?

Walk (30 minutes)

After enjoying fellowship, worship, and time in God's word together, it is now time to pray together as a group and encourage one another in the faith. It is very easy for this portion of the group time to be consumed by the other portions. However, this segment of the group time is crucially important. It answers the question, how do we apply what we are learning in Matthew to our lives today?

Many groups have found that it is helpful to sometimes break up into a men's group and a women's group for the purpose of being able to be more transparent and honest as we encourage one another and keep one another accountable. I encourage you to try this in your groups.

In addition to praying for, and encouraging, one another, this portion of the group time should also be used for planning how your group can participate in God's work outside the walls of our church – "neighbors and nations." Discuss with your group some ideas on how you can be intentional with building relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. What can your Community Group do to impact the area around you?

Here is a list of local ministries Norris Ferry is actively involved in:

Hub/purchased
Young life
Heart of hope
First priority
Ark-la-Tex crisis pregnancy center
Community renewal
Grief counseling
Celebrate recovery
Samaritan counseling
Last call ministries
Golden age ministries
Rescue mission
Luke's lighthouse
FCA

May the Lord bless and encourage you as you are in your groups this week! Know that we are praying for you on a weekly basis and that we are here to help you in any way that we can!

Walk Prayer & Missions

For further information visit
norrisferrychurch.org or contact Jared
Clary (clary@norrisferrychurch.org)

Calendar

February 22nd- March 3rd — South Sudan
March 29th- April 1st— NOLA
June— Serve Shreveport
July— Community Outreach