

Choose Your Path

Date 05/30/21

Reading: Mat. 7.13-27

South Cullman

Matthew 7.13-14 Jesus says there are only two ways. Both lives **look** different and **end up** in way different places. THEN, He says something **sobering**; (21-23) Some who think they're on the right path, are not, which means they're on the dreaded path to destruction. That's a passage that needs to make us **uncomfortable**.

It's scary to think that the path I THINK I'm on and the path I'm REALLY on, are not the same. If that's a possibility, that means we need to dig deep to find out where we are.

From the text there are some questions, but, before we start with questions, we first need to start here:

I. Honesty - not a given (even in church); If we're not honest, this is futile -

- A. **Why would we come here and not be honest?** The pesky conscience nagging us. The last thing I want is a conscience that's always bothering me. But, I don't want to change either, (CONFLICTED) so I start **IGNORING** a few things and before you know it, **I've convinced myself I'm something that I'm not.** I feel better, but I haven't made any changes for the better
- B. Once we start down that path, there's not much to stop us because we've started believing our lies; We don't see the need for change; we've quit listening. That doesn't mean we don't hear anything, we hear what we want to hear and dismiss the rest.
- C. **Somehow, some way, if we've created a lie about who we are, we've got to find a way to tear it down,** and then we'll get a good look at where we are. The Mirror (James 1). Find a way to stay in it long enough. Quit walking away to just forget. - Now, questions that help us know -

II. Am I listening Listening to God alone?

- A. **It's a given that we're all listening to God SOME,** but **not a given** that we're listening to God ONLY. Jesus says there are other options. (15); Let suggest something that sounds strange. The real issue is not the false teacher - it's me! That's **not to defend** the false teacher in any way, but to emphasize **the real responsibility lies with me.** The problem is not that I'm listening to false teachers, but that I'm listening to **myself**
- B. **Paul identifies why false teachers exist; people want them around (2 Tim 4.3-4);**
 1. **We get into this self-deceptive cycle because** we're really on a Happiness quest; NOT THAT HAPPINESS IS WRONG, BUT IT CAN'T BE THE MAIN PURSUIT!
 - a. Everything starts being filtered through that question - *will this make me happy?* **The problem: truth inevitably gets in the way, (THEY DON'T RUN THE SAME DIRECTION)** and happiness wins. When happiness becomes more important than truth, I'm listening to me more than I'm listening to God.
- C. Just because we're not getting **ears tickled** on Sunday doesn't mean we're listening to the right things - all it really means is **I can endure 30 minutes of discomfort and then I can go on.**
 1. *Remember how good we are at hearing what we want to hear and dismissing the rest?*
- D. Are there truths/demand/sacrifices I'm avoiding? It's demands honesty to these kinds of questions;

III. Is there proof of me being on the right path in my life?

- A. Originally, Jesus uses the **fruit analogy** to identify false teachers, but, these are universal principles. What it really means, is there has to be **tangible proof of of discipleship in my life**. I've got to be **actively engaged** in things that are consistent with God's will. [An exhaustive list of what God expects out of you is not possible here](#); What we can quickly see from the text, is **proof has to run deeper than just a religious exterior**; (21-23) Some proof didn't equal accomplishing God's will in their lives; We don't get to pick the areas where we want to prove - we have to bear in every area
- B. *What kind of connection do I have with the church*; in what ways do I serve; what does my giving look like, **Ask your children**; [they will know if Sunday is just a front](#); some children not old enough, others too far removed to know, but some, right in the sweet spot. Children might not want to be honest; reality, you know how they would answer.
1. Did you see mom and dad order life in a way that **God was always first**, or was something else always more important? When it comes to church/sports/; who were closest friends?
 2. How hospitable - how many spiritual conversations happened in the home - what kinds of things did we watch - what kind of language - all of these are fruit - God cares about all of those things, and if we don't have them, our claim to being on the right path is just that, a claim.
- C. If we want certainty about our path, deeply contemplate how well I'm bearing fruit in every area

IV. Building

- A. Ultimately Jesus is saying that **listening and acting** (not the same) is like building a house on a good foundation. If you don't, trouble lies ahead. We need to see what Jesus says about how wise it is to listen and obey, and see another principle here too - how important a good foundation is.
- B. A **tendency** - [once the foundation is done, we don't have to worry with it anymore](#); baptized, good moral compass, attend the services. That's not consistent with bearing or building.
- C. On the other side, things that determine our path; **Temptation** (Money; Sex;) **Decisions** (Career, who I marry, date) **Storms** (job less, financial setback, loss of loved one, **pandemic** (some lost - [they had a habit, not a foundation](#); once the habit of coming together was gone, so were they)
- D. [If they were ever on the right path, they aren't any more; we don't build, we won't last either](#).
- E. **What safeguards do I have in place to keep me on the right path?** [Class/Evening = just one way of building](#); We can debate HAVE TO or not - Maybe somebody wants to have than conversation; If you feel strongly about that, what does it say about where your thinking is?

Conclusion:

- I. Confident, if we're honest, listening to the right things (even the hard things), proving (not just on Sunday) Building, we know we're on the right path.
- II. In all likelihood, somebody has concluded, *I'm not on the right path* - that's not me knowing everybody's situation, but knowing the odds; That should sting, uneasy; now you have to decide what to do about it;
 - A. It may be a private thing; It may need to be publicly confessed; or, something you need accountable for -