

Following Jesus
15, Principles of Kingdom Living #6:
Stay on the Straight and Narrow
Matthew 7:13-29

- I. Message – “Principles of kingdom-living #6: Stay on the straight and narrow
 - a. The popular path leads to destruction
 - i. Popular: Widely liked or appreciated
 - 1. True axiom of Christian living: what is widely liked and appreciated is rarely Jesus’ way
 - 2. Kingdom living is different! (usually 180 out of phase with world)
 - ii. “13 Enter ye in at the strait (narrow) gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”
 - iii. What is Jesus saying?
 - 1. The path to true life is narrow and hard, few go that way
 - 2. The path to destruction is broad, most go that way
 - 3. Why would they do that? That seems foolish!
 - iv. The broad way is popular because the broad way is easy
 - 1. It’s easy to be religious or irreligious
 - 2. Most people are one way or the another
 - 3. It’s hard to humble yourself and put faith in Christ alone!
 - 4. Not all religious people are going to heaven
 - a. Proverbs 30:12 “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.”
 - b. Romans 10:2-4 “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”
 - 5. It is easy to SAY you are a Christian
 - a. It is easy to say you “believe in Jesus” or “believe in God”
 - b. But that does not mean that are you actually one of His!
 - c. James 2:19 “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”
 - d. Do you have SAVING faith?
 - i. Saving faith triangle
 - ii. Understand, agree, trust (in Jesus only, exclusively)
 - v. The popular way (most liked and appreciated) is to have to DO something

1. This works good for organized religion – do stuff we demand
2. But it doesn't work for God!
 - a. Gospel presentation, Niagara River (row-boat)
 - b. Most people hold tenaciously to other things (oars)
 - c. But they are headed to eternal destruction (falls)
 - d. They must put down their oars and grab the rope (Jesus)
 - e. You can't do both!
 - i. John 14:6 "Jesus only "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - ii. That's pretty narrow
 - iii. Jesus only
 - iv. "When it comes to life-building, the popular way is seldom the best way!"
- b. Popular teachers (may) lead to decay
 - i. "15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits."
 - ii. Sad reality: MOST people prefer false prophets
 1. They are the ones selling tickets to the broad way
 2. They are not inviting to reconcile with God through Jesus alone
 3. They are not preaching what Peter was preaching in Acts 4
 4. Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 5. That's too narrow, and frankly it is not profitable
 - iii. How do you know? Check out the fruit of every "prophet" (v.16-20)
 1. Popular ways to evaluate leaders:
 - a. Degree, college, seminary, ability to speak
 - b. Good looks, size of church, size of TV audience
 - c. Did their book make the NYT best sellers list?
 - i. Nothing wrong with these things in themselves
 - ii. But these are the wrong credentials for leaders
 - iii. How about love God, love others, love the Word?
 - d. I mean, is Jesus actually making a difference in their life?
 - i. Are they displaying the fruit of the Spirit?
 - ii. Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
 - iii. Good fruit (fruit of the Spirit in action)
 1. Leading others to follow Christ

2. Loving marriage
3. Effective parenting
4. Integrity with finances
5. Healthy relationships
- iv. Corrupt fruit
 1. Problems with women
 2. Problems with wealth
 3. Problems with worldliness
- e. Popular teachers often lead to decay
 - i. In their own life
 - ii. Then in the lives of those that follow them!
 - iii. Remember: "When it comes to life-building, the popular way is seldom the best way!"
- c. Popular profession of faith in Christ (may) lead to death
 - i. **21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven..."**
 1. It's one thing to claim many "wonderful works"
 2. It's a whole different thing to know God personally!
 3. Jesus is describing the difference between sayers and doers
 - a. **James 2:14 "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?"**
 - b. Works don't save
 - c. But saved people work! – they bear fruit!
 - ii. What does Jesus want?
 1. The will of the Father
 2. **John 6:29 "Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God (will of the Father), that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."**
 3. **Luke 9:23 "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."**
 - a. Popular profession of faith is not enough
 - b. It will lead to death
 - c. Remember: "When it comes to life-building, the popular way is seldom the best way!"
 4. Jesus really sums it up with His last point (an illustration)
- d. Popular life-building methods lead to disaster
 - i. **"24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock"**
 - ii. Jesus lays out 2 options – **building your life on sand or on the Rock**
 1. Again, one is easy, common, natural. The other is HARD (difficult)

2. Solid foundation vs. weak foundation
 - a. Luke 6:48 "...dugged deep..."
 - b. The houses look the same
 - c. Their ability to stand the test could not be more different
 - d. Only the life firmly grounded on Christ will stand
3. 1 Corinthians 3:11 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
4. Who does Jesus commend exactly?
 - a. "24...whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them"
 - i. Doing Jesus sayings vs. not doing Jesus sayings
 - ii. Interesting that both hear, only one does
5. Remember: "When it comes to life-building, the popular way is seldom the best way!"

II. Conclusion

- a. Applications for today
 - i. Conclusion #1 – Have you entered the narrow gate? Are you saved from your sin and on your way to Heaven?
 - ii. Conclusion #2 – Are you analyzing the fruit of those you are following?
 - iii. Conclusion #3 – How much authority does the King have in your life?
Build your life on Him, the Rock, the true foundation
 1. "28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."
 2. We sometimes congratulate ourselves for "hearing" Jesus sayings
 3. There is no blessing for that
 4. Do you DO them?
 - a. This is where the blessing is at!
 - b. Review of SOM
 - i. Principle #1 – Be Deliberately Different
 - ii. Principle #2 – Don't believe everything you hear
 - iii. Principle #3 – Secret is better than sensational
 - iv. Principle #4 – Get a Grip
 - v. Principle #5 – There is no try
 - vi. Principle #6 – Stay on the Straight and Narrow
 - c. These are the commands the wise men build their lives on!