



Message Discussion Guide Week of March 26, 2023

Message: 18 Minutes, Part 5: The Road Less Traveled

Key Scripture: [Matthew 7:13-23](#)

Preacher: Tom Parkinson

Message Highlights:

In Matthew 7, Jesus closes the Sermon on the Mount by focusing on judgment. He teaches us not to judge others in the sense of not condemning them, but that doesn't mean he teaches us not to make judgments at all.

Jesus wants us to make moral judgments – to be able to discern right from wrong and truth from falsehood. There are two primary areas where Jesus wants us to make wise judgments:

- The choices we make.
- The counsel we take.

Making godly choices means learning to decide with the end in mind. The way that appears easiest and that most people are taking won't lead us to the kingdom of heaven. When we make decisions we should ask: What will lead me closer to God's kingdom?

- To follow Jesus means being willing to choose the Jesus way even when it is the hard way, because we know that the Jesus way leads to life.

When it comes to making good judgments about whose counsel we should take, Jesus tells us that we can know a good teacher from a bad through their fruit. Ask three questions:

- Does this person remind me of the character and speech of Jesus?
- How does their teaching influence others?
- Who is getting the glory?

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Have you ever had to make a hard choice about which direction to go in life? How did you make the choice? Whose counsel did you seek?
- 2) While Jesus commands us not to judge others, he also wants us to make wise judgements about the choices we make and the counsel we take:
 - What is the difference between judging others and judging right from wrong?
 - How can we make wise moral judgments without becoming judgmental?
- 3) [Read Matthew 7:13-23](#)
 - How do these verses provide guidance when we have difficult choices to make?
 - How can we identify a “false prophet?” How do we avoid taking false counsel without being judgmental toward the false counselor?
 - What does Jesus say in these verses that inspires you? What challenges you? What confuses you?
 - Why is it that someone can say “Lord, Lord” and still yet not be known by Jesus?
- 4) Why do you think Jesus chose to end the Sermon on the Mount with this teaching? What does it tell us about what we can expect in our own journey of following Jesus?
- 5) Can you think of a time when you had to choose to do the hard thing because it was the right thing? How did you muster the courage to make that decision? How did you feel about it in the end?
- 6) As we come to the end of this series on the Sermon on the Mount, what lessons has God taught you through the series? What will you take away and apply to your life?

Abundant Life Tip: When we follow in the way of Jesus, we are on the path that leads to eternal life. That doesn't mean the journey will always be easy. To stay on the right path, we need to focus on Jesus, keep an eternal perspective, and being willing to choose Jesus' way, even when it is the hard way.