

Faithful Fruit

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[0 : 0 0] And if you have your Bible, open it back up to Matthew chapter 7. Matthew 7. Question, I wonder, did anybody here grow up in a church tradition that did altar calls?

Alright, got a Baptist in the back, right? Yeah, in America, in Presbyterianism, probably like here, not so many of the altar calls as people like to call them, but a lot of my Baptist friends would have that.

And what it would be would be usually during the end of the service, end of the sermon, there would be this call to make a decision for Christ, whether for the first time or, you know, sometimes kind of wrongly you would get it as like you need to be saved again.

But, you know, bow your heads. Oh, I see that hand. Does anybody want to give their life to Christ and come forward? And I'm not trying to mock it, but what I tell my Presbyterian friends and my Baptist friends is, you know, Presbyterians, we do that too.

It's this thing called the Lord's Supper, right? There's this altar, and what it's supposed to remind us of is a call to covenant faithfulness, right? And so, if you've never believed, you look and you say, oh, what is that to me?

[1 : 1 0] And if you have confessed Jesus as Lord before, again, you come again, almost like a Joshua 24, choose this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

It's this covenant renewal. It's this, you know, there's the altar, the body and the blood on the altar, not in a Catholic sense, but it's this visual to say, what am I doing with my life?

Am I committed to this? What is the call that has been placed upon me? The reason I mention all of that is because Jesus is at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus gives a sort of altar call at the end.

You know, as he's wrapping it up, the greatest preacher ever, he ends with a challenge. A challenge. And as he's setting it up, you know, there is this sort of altar call towards two different ways of living.

If you remember, it starts, the Sermon on the Mount starts with Beatitudes. These statements of unexpected blessing and the real root of them that we found, the history of them in the Old Testament is in wisdom literature.

[2 : 1 6] And in the wisdom literature in the Old Testament, it's constantly contrasting two ways of living, right? The wise person or the fool. The way to life or the way to death. And that's what Jesus does.

He comes full circle here and gives all these different contrasts. Because you see, if you're reading through the whole Sermon on the Mount, what Jesus is very concerned with is kind of what we were reading about in James 1.

Whole person righteousness. A righteousness in the kingdom of God that is not skin deep. It's not surface level righteousness. It's not self-righteousness.

But it's a righteousness that actually comes from knowing the king. And so at the end, he concludes and he goes, like, I'm for real about this. I'm being serious about the kingdom.

And he gives these two different, these diametrically opposed things. Here's the path that leads to the way to life or the way to death. Here's the false prophets. Here's the true prophets. Here's bad fruit. Here's good fruit.

[3 : 1 1] Here's the house that's built on a rock. Here's a house that's built on the sand. And in it, there's a challenge, a decision, right? To be made. And whether it's for the first time or the millionth time, is to get off the fence and to enter in and to come to the king.

So that's how he's wrapping up. Before we get into what's in the heart of those things and unpack it, let me pray for the preaching of God's word. Lord, would you sober us to the challenge and call to

self-examination that this passage gives us.

Would you also help us to hear your invitation of love that yearns for us to admit our hunger and to feed on you. We pray this in the name of our king, Jesus.

Amen. Two simple points for our outline, and it's this. There is a warning and there's an invitation. A warning and an invitation. So first off, a warning.

And Jesus, he starts our passage by warning against false prophets. Verse 15, beware false prophets. How many people were thinking, you know, what I really need is to come to a Sunday evening service and to be reminded again I need to watch out for false prophets.

[4 : 31] Right? Got it, Nate. Check. If I'm walking downtown the city center of Glasgow and there's some guy who says that he's going to tell my future, I need to beware. There. Thanks, Nate.

Let's pray. Let's go home. No. In the Old Testament, a prophet, so many times when we think of prophet, we think of somebody who predicts the future. And a prophet would do that. But the prophet's actually primary task wasn't foretelling but forth telling.

The prophet's task was to speak the word of God to his people and to enforce the covenant. To speak God's word and to enforce covenant faithfulness. We had an example of that this morning from 2 Samuel.

The prophet Nathan, great name, he goes to King David, the king, the monarch, the ruler of God's people. And what does he do? You're not living like a king should.

And he enforces covenant faithfulness. There's these checks and balances, right? The king doesn't do what a prophet does. The prophet doesn't do what a priest does. And there's no mixing of them. Saul kind of gets in trouble by taking on as king these priestly duties at one point.

[5 : 37] But what the prophet would do, they would come and they would say, no, you need to embrace the covenant from the heart. And it wouldn't just do that to kings but would also do that to God's people. So so many times the warning is, hey, listen, exile is coming.

So what should you do? Is it just, oh, well, he just predicted the future. Let me sit back and I guess that's going to happen. Just embrace it. No, no, no. The point was that they were supposed to turn and repent and turn to God and to embrace the covenant from the heart.

That's what a prophet is doing. So a false prophet then that Jesus has in mind is someone who comes and twists the meaning of God's word.

And rather than encouraging people towards covenant faithfulness, they misapply God's word. And so many times what they're doing is doing it for selfish gain.

Instead of leading the people towards God and covenant faithfulness, instead they end up leading the people away, which is destruction. It's actually a major concern throughout the New Testament.

[6 : 40] It's not the only place. You know, Jesus mentions beware of false prophets. Paul mentions it to Timothy. In 2 Peter, he goes on this long discourse about warning about false prophets who are going to come.

In 3 John, everybody's favorite book, there's this guy named, I don't know how to pronounce it, Diotrephes. And John warns against him and basically say, rather than being a shepherd who's actually caring for God's people, he's doing all these things for his own reputation.

Instead of putting on humility and guarding God's flock, it seems like he's trying to boost himself up. And what Jesus does in our passage is he compares a false prophet, a false teacher, to a wolf in sheep's clothing.

They look so harmless, but inside they actually don't have what is good for the other sheep around them. Instead they want to devour. The leaders of God's people in the Old Testament, in a place like Ezekiel 34, they're called the shepherds of God's people.

And what are they supposed to do? They're supposed to care for the sheep. And the indictment that comes from God through Ezekiel to the shepherds and the leaders of the people of Israel is you are not caring for the sheep.

[7 : 48] They are starving and they are at risk of being devoured by hungry animals because instead you're eating all the things for yourself and you're looking out for numero uno.

Jesus is called what? The good shepherd. That's what they're supposed to do. And how are Jesus' disciples supposed to diagnose false teachers from true teachers, false prophets from true prophets?

You know, a wolf, if it's a smart wolf in sheep's clothing, it's not announcing itself. It doesn't have a name tag that says, I'm a wolf, right? It's not saying, hey, you know, I have a disguise on, but I'm

actually a wolf.

And you don't find out until it's too late. When Jesus says then, what are you going to do? How are you going to see this? Verse 17, it's by their fruit. And he switches metaphors then and he says, a healthy tree bears good fruit and an unhealthy tree bears bad fruit.

Simple as that. And what he's saying is that eventually what one does will expose who you are, what's going on in your heart.

[8 : 56] What you do exposes what you believe. You can put it on, you can disguise yourself for a while, but eventually the bad fruit will be obvious. Verse 16, he says, you will recognize them by their fruits.

Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Answer, no. A bunch of people live in the city in Glasgow. We don't know what's going on in the countryside in the Middle East.

The answer is no. And in fact, this is why you have commentaries. I was reading a commentary by D.A. Carson, and he said that everyone in Jesus' day would actually know that when Jesus says, are grapes gathered from thorn bushes, there was a buckthorn, and it would have these little berries that would be blackberries.

And from a distance you would look, and you wouldn't be able to tell if it was a grape or if it was this blackberry. It wasn't until you got close to it that you'd be able to see. And in the same way, there would be thistles that would have these little flowers on them, and again, from a distance, it could look like maybe that's a fig.

But you see, if you were making wine, you wouldn't be. You wouldn't be confused. You'd be up close, and you'd be able to see. If you wanted, you're putting some figs on your salad for dinner, you wouldn't be grabbing this little thistle flower thing that looked like a fig.

[10 : 13] You'd be up close, and you would be able to see. You'd never mistake it. And D.A. Carson, he says this. He says, from a certain perspective, false prophets can look like real prophets, and even their fruit may appear to be genuine, but the nature of the false prophet cannot be hidden forever.

Sooner or later, he will be seen for what he is. In other words, you can only pretend for so long. And now, before we continue, two important things.

In preaching on this, the right response is, I'm not trying to stir up a bunch of heresy hunters here. You have like a hundred heresy hunters who are going to go out and scour the Internet and try to find all the false teachers out there.

In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, if you remember, Jesus has actually not too long ago said, it's very important not to carry this judgmental spirit that is trying to find specks in everybody's eye while we're ignoring the logs in our own eye.

And so it's important not to go, well, that person's theology is a little bad. Probably a heretic, and we never actually examine ourselves. And yet, at the same time, false teachers must be identified.

[11 : 25] And the second thing I want to make clear as we're going along is that Jesus is not teaching that a person is saved because of their good works. In this analogy, right, the good fruit, it doesn't make the tree alive.

It shows that the tree is alive. I'm pretty sure I heard that from somebody else, so I'm going to repeat it. A good tree, a tree that's bearing good fruit, it doesn't make a tree alive, right?

Like, oh, fruit, oh, that tree must be alive. That fruit made it alive. No, it's showing that it's alive. In the same way, our good deeds, our good works, they do not make us alive in Christ.

They show that we're alive in Christ. The fruit you bear in your life, it doesn't make you alive in Christ. It shows that you're alive in Christ. And then Jesus follows up this principle applied to false teachers.

And the commentators are kind of like, is this to everyone or is this, again, just to the false teachers? I'm not sure, but when he gets to the house built on the rock or the sand, he's definitely applying to everyone.

[12 : 30] And I think he's applying this statement to everyone. He says in verses 21 to 23 here, he says, Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of the Father.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who again was noted this morning and quoted, he writes this, he says, Humanly speaking, we can understand and interpret the Sermon on the Mount in a thousand ways, but Jesus knows only one possibility, simple surrender and obedience.

Doing and obeying it, hearing and obeying his word, he really means to get on with it. Maybe you heard this famous preacher illustration.

I don't know who came up with it first, but I've heard many preachers give it, so I'm going to give it again. There's this man in America in the mid-1800s named Charles Blondine. And Charles Blondine was famous because he was a tightrope walker.

And he was an amazing tightrope walker. And the place that he would like to walk on tightrope and perform for the crowds was over Niagara Falls, these huge waterfalls, right? And he'd stretch out his tightrope, and he wouldn't just walk across Niagara Falls, a feat in and of itself.

[13 : 41] But Charles Blondine was a showman. And so he would do different things. Like one time he took out a stove onto the middle of the tightrope, and he cooked himself an omelet, and he lowered it down to the people who were on the Maid of the Mist, the boat that would be there to look at Niagara Falls.

And he would do all sorts of different things, stand on his hands. And a lot of times he would take a wheelbarrow out and take different things out and perform. And the crowds just ate it up. They loved it. I mean, it's the mid-1800s.

What else are they doing, right? And so they would go, and he, again, the consummate showman, would say different things and say, how many people think that, you know, I don't know, I can spin around on this tightrope.

We think so. You believe? Yeah, I believe. And he would do it. And then he would say, how many people think that, you know, I can stand on my hands on this tightrope. I'm embellishing now.

We believe. We believe that you can do it. And then he would say, how many people think that I could take in this wheelbarrow one, a person from the crowds, and I could take them across Niagara Falls in this wheelbarrow.

[14 : 49] And everybody would go, we believe, we believe, we believe. And then he would ask, who wants to get in the wheelbarrow? Not a single hand would go up. And I don't blame them.

You see, they would give their assent, but how much did they actually believe? They would hedge their bets, right? Yeah, we believe. Oh, you can definitely do it with that guy.

Not with me, right? Faith is not just assenting to the facts. It's getting in the wheelbarrow. In verse 22, what I think is probably the most sobering words in all of the Bible.

Did you hear that? Not everybody says to me, Lord, Lord, on the last day we'll be entered the kingdom of heaven. And if you notice in what they say, first thing is they have a very orthodox confession.

They don't say God, God. Like there's a God in general out there. Lord, Lord. Let's use the covenant name. These people who've got their doctrine right.

[15 : 52] They could take a test and they get 100%. Not only that, but they don't just say Lord. They say Lord, Lord. In Semitic language, to show emotion, you would repeat yourself.

Think of David when he's mourning for his son. What does he say? Absalom. Absalom. These people who sing and worship. And it looks like they mean it.

There's passion behind this. Not only that, but they've clearly done mighty works, they said. It doesn't say that that's a lie, right? They've done big stuff for God.

These are folks who've gotten stuff done in the kingdom. Now, is confessing Jesus as Lord a bad thing? No. It's actually pretty key to being saved, right?

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved, Paul says in Romans 10. It's not a bad thing. Is having passion for God a bad thing?

[16 : 47] No. It seems to actually be a kind of a required thing. Is doing good works for the Lord a bad thing? No. In fact, it's kind of the point of this end of the Sermon on the Mount and this sermon that I'm giving to you.

Not just to be a hearer, but also a doer of the word. So what's the problem? It seems that these people have managed to do all of these things. And avoided God.

They've done it not for Jesus' sake, but for their own. And it's merely surface level righteousness. It is possible to profess faith without possessing it.

It's possible to profess faith without actually possessing faith. Jesus is saying you can know all the doctrine. You can attend all the Bible classes. And you can be a member of a good, solid church for many years.

And you can never drink, swear, steal, and lie. And you can give your money to a lot of charities and do mighty things that make people say, Wow, look at that guy or girl. But there's a way to outwardly conform and for never actually to grip your heart.

[17 : 58] To make it look like you're laboring for God's kingdom, but you're just laboring for your own. And this isn't a hypothetical in Jesus' ministry, right? There's this guy named Judas.

At the beginning of his career he said, Yes, you're the Messiah. And he went out and he was sent out two by two and did mighty signs in Jesus' name. But he never knew Jesus.

I love Christmas trees. We recently had the sad thing in the last few years. The whole family seems to have allergies now towards Christmas trees.

So we got a fake Christmas tree. Way more cost effective. But I grew up with a fake Christmas tree. And man, do I love real Christmas trees. It feels more like Christmas when you can smell those pine needles.

I love the look of them. I like going out as a family and picking one out. If maybe you've ever gone out and you've chopped it down yourself. They look so nice. Permeates the room with Christmas cheer.

[18 : 55] But here's the thing. When you go and you get that tree and you bring it home, it is dying. You can dress it up with all the ornaments and tinsel and things like that and have the lighting in the room just look right.

But it has been removed and cut off from its life source. And it's dying. And the brown pine needles will eventually start to show.

Did you notice the last example that Jesus gives? There's these two houses, right? Two houses. If you Googled it on right move, the inside of them, they would look exactly the same. The craftsmanship, all of that stuff.

What's the difference? It's the foundation, right? One of them is built on a rock and the other is on sand. And the rains came down and the floods came. Do we sing that song here?

In the Middle East, it wouldn't rain often. But when it did, it would come down in buckets and there would be these flash floods. And so it would be vitally important that your house had a firm foundation. I was watching a video this week.

[19 : 58] I was like, I've got to see videos of this. In America, on the beaches, a lot of times there's these really nice houses and they'll basically be on stilts. Because if the tide comes in, you have to be high enough.

If it comes in far enough, you don't want your house to get flooded. And that's fine most of the time, but all of a sudden a hurricane comes. And I was watching this one, this house, this beautiful house.

It was like that. Just sucked away. What sort of house are you building?

You know, do we read Jesus' words and just think, oh, how nice. Do we actually do them? The one who's both the hearer and doer is like the one who builds his house on the rock.

Who enters the kingdom of heaven, verse 21, the one who does the will of the Father. Now, let me apply this in a few ways before moving to the next point. Maybe you're sitting here tonight and you are terrified.

[20 : 59] It terrifies you because you're actually afraid to admit your struggles and your shame. You're afraid that this passage might be talking about you. Let me urge you, first off, is just to go to God with that and to tell somebody else.

Let the conviction that you feel actually be a bridge to repentance. Because we actually believe that the repentance in our reformed faith, the repentance that we have actually isn't a work in ourself. It actually comes from the work of the Holy Spirit. And so if you feel that conviction and this desire to move towards the Lord and say what is actually true about the type of life that you're living, it's just surface level righteousness.

It's just to look nice for everybody else. But if they knew what was underneath, you're so scared. But listen, if you feel that movement, let that be a bridge towards going.

The only way that that's actually going to happen is through the Spirit working in your life. What kind of fruit is Jesus talking about? There's lots of different things. Go through the Sermon on the Mount. But one of the things actually comes right before the Sermon on the Mount.

[22 : 00] You know what Jesus announces? He says to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. That our repentance, our turning away from our sin, our uncovering it for what it is, trying to manage our

life and to keep it together on our own, to turn away from that and to turn towards Jesus.

That is one of the fruit. That is how fruit comes and that is a fruit. Thank God for that. That repentance counts within that. Romans 2.4, it says that it's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance.

It doesn't often feel like that. It might not be feeling like that right now. Because a lot of times, the way that that comes, the way that repentance comes is because a storm comes. And it rips us apart. And we feel like we're drowning.

But you look back and you go, that was God's kindness, actually. I literally know that in my own life. From God's hand being heavy upon me and not wanting to repent of sin, but feeling it pressing down.

And it was so hard. And I look back and I go, that was your kindness. Didn't fully get it probably until I became a parent. And you see, like, oh, that's what it means.

[23 : 11] This other level of knowing what it is of God as Father. To say, this is what it's like to bring hard things into my life, but actually because you love me. I have those gross things where, you know, you try to get, your kid is choking because they have a cold or something like that.

And they need to get the saliva out. And your job is to remove it. And it's disgusting. And you're a little, like, you know, six-month-old. It's like, hey, we had this great thing going on where you were cuddling me.

And I would cry out. And you would comfort me. And now all of a sudden, you're sticking this thing up my nose. And it feels like torture. And it would be hard. You're like, I'm sorry. I promise I love you.

You know, I was more committed to than my child not crying. It was them breathing. Had a professor in seminary. His name was Robert Yarborough.

He talked like this. And he would wear, like, a lumberjack flannel shirt to class. And it was because he was a lumberjack before he became a theologian. And he would bring in these visual illustrations.

[24 : 13] Now, he started his classes with a devotion. And he'd usually bring in a visual. And so one time, he brought in a chainsaw. Because he cut down trees. And why not, right?

And he told this story about when he was chopping down this one tree. He was kind of by himself. And he said in his heart, he committed to do, he didn't tell us what it was.

He just said a very wicked, evil thing. He's going to finish chopping down that tree and go do that thing. And the tree fell on him. And he looked at us.

And he said, thank God for that tree. Oh, your life's cooler than mine. Can we say that, though? Like, thank God for that tree.

That's his kindness, right? What he stirs inside us. So don't let these warnings just be something that pushes you further away. But actually draws you in to him. Second application is don't mistake gifts for fruit.

[25 : 12] It is a very dangerous thing within God's people when we're all about gifts that people have. And we actually don't care about the fruit of the Spirit.

It is a dangerous thing to operate the gifts of the Spirit apart from the work of the fruit of the Spirit being born in our lives. And we need to work then.

It's not just something like on your own. But to create a culture within the church, an ethos that actually desires and promotes that. Because it's such an easy thing through the little comments that we make.

Oh, that person. Oh, look what they did. Oh, and that's amazing. And you're going to do great things for God. And we actually don't care about the heart. My life, I get together with other ministries.

And everybody wants to know, what's the right program to start? What is the way to do this thing of growing your church or discipleship or this or that? And those things are good conversations.

[26 : 09] In fact, on Monday, I went to a little gathering in Edinburgh. And I learned a lot from some other evangelical leaders within Scotland. It was really, really good. I'm not trying to denigrate those things.

But so many times we want all of that and we don't care about the fruit. Or we say we care about it, but it's an afterthought. So we need this ethos where we can encourage each other towards this.

An ethos that's not nitpicky and loves to compare and gossip and grumble and is self-righteous. Well, then that actually wants us to bear the fruit of repentance and following Christ. All right. So the warning Jesus is giving is that faith, it's not true faith unless it actually bears fruit. And to not just hear what Jesus says, but to actually do what he says. And that doing, it's this act of, it's not an act of self-validation. Right? But instead it's this warning. It's coming and saying, actually, this is what I'm doing is because I am connected to Jesus. [27 : 12] So there's this warning that Jesus gives and it's a very serious warning. But I don't want to end there. It's actually a second point is then that there's also an invitation within this passage. There's an invitation. What do I mean by that?

Well, the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, right? This is, you're preaching on this one section, but it actually is a whole sermon. Take it 20 minutes to read through the whole thing. But, you know, you're going to use that as your litmus for, sermons should be 20 minutes.

They probably paraphrased parts that Jesus did. Could have been a few hours, right? So be thankful for what you're getting right now. But it's a whole Sermon on the Mount. And what he's been getting after is that you can actually find life that is truly satisfying. There is a real true religion, right? There is a real kingdom of God and the king has come and this is what it actually looks like. And his conclusion isn't different.

And the invitation to his hearers is to build their life on the rock. And it seems that Jesus' mind being not just a hearer of the Sermon on the Mount, but also a doer of the Sermon on the Mount.

[28 : 17] And one of the ways to bear fruit is actually by being united to the tree, the source of all life. You see, you and I, we open up again and again the metaphorical refrigerator of life, hoping again and again as we look in that we'll find something that will actually satisfy.

An invitation that Jesus is giving is to actually come to him and to find that thing. To have Christ as your life. It's what the New Testament, as Paul writes about it, he calls it being united to Christ. And we don't have time to go into everything of what it means to be united to Christ, but I want to illustrate it in this way. There is a pastor in America named Joe Novenson. He's a great preacher, very passionate man.

And if you've ever seen Joe Novenson preach, you would see his hands are super expressive. But if you were to look at his hands, you can't help but see them, because he's always waving them about.

You would notice that something happened to his hands. There's this deformity to his hands. And I heard him once share a story of what happened. And it's this.

[29 : 22] He was a young man, and he was working in this metal crafting factory, and there was this accident, and his hands were crushed. Broke all these bones.

Didn't know what was going to happen to him. Didn't know if they had to amputate him, what they were going to do. And so they rushed him to the A and E, and they told him, we're trying to figure out what we can do to save your thumb, because the hand was crushed, and the blood's not flowing to it anymore.

What are we going to do? They said, one option that we have is maybe we'll take the bone from your big toe and put that in your thumb, and that'll save it. But then it'll be kind of hard to walk for the rest of your life.

So instead, what we're going to do is, I wrote this down. We're going to sew your hand to your chest, and your skin is going to feed it, and it's going to grow, and it's going to make this new cone of skin.

And they took a bone from his hip and put that into his thumb, and into his hand, and voila, new thumb, just as good. And so for six weeks, Joe Novenson says his hand is sewed to his chest.

[30 : 26] This hand that is dying, that has no hope on its own, gets sewed to his chest. And the nourishment that had nothing to do with the hand, and everything that had to do with the chest goes to the hand to bring life.

That is what our union with Christ is. Us in him, and him in us. That his life becomes our life.

That he is our representative. His death is our death. His righteousness is our righteousness. His resurrection is our resurrection. His future is our future.

It comes because we are drawn into him like that thumb drew life from the chest. See, our faith, it's not just agreeing with some facts, though that is vital.

It's not less than that. But it is this relational embrace. It is clinging to Jesus. And it's this clinging that brings us into union with him by faith.

[31 : 27] And as we gain his life, in turn, what it means then is to extend that life into the world. To bear fruit into the world is to extend his life to other people.

That's what it means, to bear fruit, to be a doer of the word. Again, maybe I'm using all the preacher cliché illustrations, so forgive me if you've heard this before. Do you know how to spot a counterfeit bill?

You might think the way to spot a counterfeit bill is to get a bunch of different counterfeits and look and to see the patterns that people are doing in order to make counterfeits. And, oh, look, they did that. And that's how you notice.

That's not how they train you to spot counterfeit money. Do you know what they do? They give you a real bill, and you look at that. When you look at it, you feel the weight of it.

You look at the threads in it, the way you can kind of see through it, the lines, the special things that the designers have put in it, and you study it, and you look over it again and again and again and again.

[32 : 29] Because why? You make a million different counterfeits. You never spot all the little things they're doing, but there is one real true thing. So what does it look like to build your life on the rock is to come to the real authentic one, the tree that we cling to, right?

The one that we are united to, and we look at him. We look at the way that he speaks and forgives and cleanses and makes us whole.

It's good to study false doctrine, to notice it, and have examples of people who have done heretical things, so you can see those things. But that's not ultimately what we're obsessed by.

The way we're actually going to spot the false teachers and the bad fruit is by coming to and seeing and embracing and getting to know the king of the kingdom. If you become familiar through time spent with the real thing, you can spot a fake.

That's what we're called to do, is to come and do experience. There's an invitation within this to build your life, to actually experience the love of the king, to actually submit and to find life there, and then to extend that life and love of the king to the world.

[33 : 41] You know, opening words of the Sermon on the Mount, as Matthew describes it, is where his disciples came to him. And that's the invitation that Jesus has. It's not just then. It's an invitation to everybody else to come and to actually find life.

So let me close with this. We moved from America. We got rid of a lot of our appliances, because different plugs. But we brought some with, and so when we got here, we had to buy a bunch of different adapters.

There's no use. You can't, the plug doesn't just go on the wall. You need the adapter. But what we quickly found out, too, is it's not just about having the right adapter, sometimes the wattage and voltage and things like that, or whatever the electrical engineer language is.

It's just never going to work. It's never going to plug it in. It's going to short things out. Bad idea. So what we needed to do a lot of times, we had to get a whole new plug.

We had to buy the new thing, because you needed the new plug. We need to get the right plug for our life. See that there's no use in trying to plug the ethics of the kingdom into an adapter of surface-level righteousness, of half-heartedness, of performative righteousness.

[34 : 53] To be a doer of the word, we need to plug into the gospel, through the doing and dying of Christ, and his love and his forgiveness and his reign, and the promise that the Spirit is ours, and he's actually going to work through those who deny themselves and take up their cross and follow this Jesus.

And if your life is a mess, there's good news. Because he invites you. Where he ends is still where he begins.

What's the first beatitude? Blessed are the poor in spirit. Not those who have all the performative things together, and hey, look at me and all the fruit I'm bearing in my life.

But those who've come to an end of themselves and said, I actually need help. I don't just need an adapter. I need a whole new plug. Let's pray that God would help us towards this.

Father, we thank you that it's not through our riches, but through our poverty, that we can find you. And that there are riches, that there are riches of Christ, which are for us.

[36 : 07] Would you, in your kindness, help us not just to be hearers of the word, but also doers? Would you give us ears to hear and hearts to work? Would you rid us of our self-righteousness? Would you break us of our self-dependence? Would you force us out of our isolation and lead us into fullness of life? Help us to long for something that is not artificial. Would you help our love to be genuine? That we'd be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and the praise of God. All this we pray in the name of the one in whom all good things are found.
Amen. Amen.