

Two Ways

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[0 : 00] Well, we've arrived at the end of the Sermon of the Man. Jesus began his sermon in a very tender way, in a very tender way with a beatitude, but he ends his sermon in a very tact way, warning us that his sermon is not an intellectual option.

It's not a suggestion that we might take or leave. It's not one philosophy among a number of others. But it is the only way to life. It is the only way to life. In the first of his warnings, in verses 13 and 14, the narrow gate, Jesus separates us from the majority into a small community.

And then in the next two warnings, from verse 15 to 23, the tree and its fruit, and the self-disception, he will separate us, even from those within our Christian community, who are not real, who are false.

And the final warning, Jesus, that's from verse 24 to 27, Jesus will separate us, even from those things that are within us, within ourselves that are false.

[2 : 01] That's the tendency we all seem to have, to hear, but not to do those words to Jesus.

So can you see that there is a kind of refining process going on here? There's a refining process in these warnings.

And Jesus lifts us down into reality. If we are not to enter through the wide gate that leads to destruction, we will need Jesus to tell us how to defend ourselves.

We will need him to tell us how to defend ourselves from those who would seduce us into their false ways.

We do need Jesus to tell us. And there's a story about an elderly minister, and he was driving along a country road one day with a young man in his car.

[3 : 12] And this young man liked to argue without religion. And the wise old minister listened. He listened without much comment, except to check on one of the details.

And he said to him, Do you object then to the Ten Commandments? Well, no, said the young man, not to their purpose.

But this is how I feel about it, he said. I hate having a shall or a shant flung in my face all the time. And the minister slowed down the car a little. And they passed a road sign. And then speeding up again, he veered off, studying to the left.

And a few minutes later, this young man touched his arm and said, You've taken the wrong turn. That signpost that he just passed was the one that points to Don Carter.

[4 : 25] Oh, did it, said the minister very carelessly. Well, maybe it is a better road. But I hate being told to go this way and that way by some old signpost.

And so the young man laughed and he said, I get the point. I get the point. We need Jesus to tell us how to defend ourselves from those who would do so.

There's a marketing newsletter that is produced in America. And it's produced to help Christian organizations learn from Madison Avenue.

It gives updates on who is spending what, which celebrities have recently accepted Christ. It reports on the development of the smaller ministries, the ones that are around about the \$1 mark.

And it tells readers about when or how to use secular or when and how to use Christian ad agencies.

[5 : 53] And the Wall Street Journal began reporting on religious broadcasting when they became big business. Some TV religions take in hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

But for all these hawkers of religious soap, the body of Jesus Christ has become a market.

The Christian is regarded as a consumer. The Christian ministry is converted into a business and blessings are measured in terms of profit and success.

What obviously works is giving people what they want, offering a message that promises health and wealth.

And that in turn will support the big prophet. No one has to ask whether the Gospel priest is from God, as long as the success formula would be. Beware of false prophets, Jesus tells us. Beware of false prophets. False prophets wear sheep's clothing, that is they have Christian ways. False prophets appear Christian. False prophets rarely wear wolves' clothing. They are often sheep like they are Christian earnest and they are apparently real. That's why Jesus has to warn us that if a wolf came as wolves there would be little need for us to watch and stay alert.

[8 : 12] But Jesus doesn't want Christians to feel helpless before this false teaching. Because twice in this paragraph he tells us that we will, we will be able to recognize the false prophets by their fruits. By their fruits. Fruit means what they produce. What people actually teach.

Do they encourage faith in Christ alone? Or do they lead others into everything else? The New New Age movement has produced a seemingly endless number of false prophets. And we need to listen carefully to Jesus. We need to listen carefully to his words. Hear his voice and his voice alone.

He is a little brother. He is a little teacher. He is a little child. He is a little dog. He strayed from his owner onto the footy field before the beginning of a game. And then from the ground on one side of the field someone whistled. But soon many were whistling to the dog from all sides of the field. And in the middle of the field this little dog was filled with confusion and fright and he crouched to the ground. And then a boy at the end of the field put two fingers into his mouth and he whistled loudly. The little dog recognised his master's call amidst all the others. He leapt to his feet with ears erect the dog ran swiftly to his master. Do not be seduced by false prophets, said Jesus.

In Jesus' first warning he separated us from the majority. In his second he separated us from those active false prophets that are in our church or in our culture. And next he separated us from a group within the church who we might think might deserve special respect. Those who seem to have the greatest ministry. Here we are confronted with Christ-centred Christians. With Christ-centred Christians.

Lord, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name? All they did was in your name, in Christ's name.

[11 : 49] Christians who had preached him, exorcised through him, performed miracles in his name, which means that they believed they ministered by his power. And if it's true that by their fruit fruitfully we know them, then certainly here we have people with real fruit. Great preaching, effective healing, and many miracles. But where on the sermons, on the month, has Jesus commanded any of these impressive things. To be sure it is a gift of God when anyone can preach effectively. When anyone can cast out devils or do miracles. And Jesus later teaches us. But nevertheless, these fruits, these fruits are nowhere, they do nowhere appear in this sermon. They don't appear as Jesus commands, and they don't appear as the will of God. The fruits that Jesus commands in this sermon are much less sensational and much more straightforward.

So we find that it is not even enough for us to ask, are they Christ-centered? We must also ask, do they themselves seek to keep, and do they lead others to keep the commands of Jesus? It's not even enough for us to ask, do they themselves seek to keep, and do they lead others to keep the commands of Jesus?

It's not even enough for us to keep the commands of Jesus? It's not even enough for us to ask, do they win others to Christ? We must also ask, do they themselves seek to do and to move others to do the will of the Father? Do they honor the Sermon on the Mount?

Neither the Sermon on the Mount? Neither the Christ-like, who are the sheep's clothes in sheep's clothing, nor the Christ-centered, those who say, Lord, Lord, are necessarily Christ.

The way the Christ-centered Lord sayers live their Christian life is sensational. Their works are all out of the ordinary. Prophecy is spiritual, speak with power.

[14 : 57] Exorcism is spiritual, speak with power. Exorcism is spiritual, speak with power. Exorcism is doing many mighty miracles, are spiritual acts of power. We have no reason to doubt that these special people actually did what they claimed.

Exorcism is spiritual, speak with power. And that they believe too, that they did all of this in the power of Christ's name. And I believe that we are in the presence of actual successful Christian workers.

Exorcism is spiritual, they believe that Jesus is spiritual, that Jesus is spiritual, that Jesus disowns them. They own Jesus, and Jesus disowns them. They honor Him, and He dishonors them.

They work for him and he separates himself from them. So what can this all mean? Well it is in this story that we learn that it is possible to work for Jesus and yet not work under him. [16:29] It is possible to work for Jesus and yet not work under him. We can be intoxicated by the power of Christ and yet be indifferent or even hostile to keeping his hard commands where they pincher.

That they know Jesus.

They believe that they know Jesus. That they never gave him a chance to know them. They never gave him a chance to know them.

I never knew you, he said. That is they never gave him a chance intimately to come into contact with their real life.

It is strangely possible to serve and to even glorify Christ and yet in actual life not obey him.

[18:13] Many will present their credentials at the judgment day and will not be admitted.

And this should be genuinely frightening for all of us. It means that just as the false prophets, those in sheep's clothing are not the real thing.

So in a similar way are some Christ glorifying Christians. Not the real thing. Not the real thing.

Jesus wants reality.

He wants disciples whom he can know. That is he wants to be Lord of both our message and our life.

And we notice here too. That these Christ glorifying Christians are a little too aware of their successful ministry.

[19:34] Didn't we perform many miracles and mighty works, they said. And I think this shows that they are too impressed with their work.

Are any of Jesus' Beatitudes present here? Is there any poverty of spirit here?

Are any mourning, any meekness, any hanging and thirsting for righteousness? There is a hungering and thirsting for powerful spiritual impact?

But is there any mercy here? Or purity of heart? Or making peace? Is there any suffering of persecution?

Christians believe that prophecy and exorcism and mighty work can be gifts of God.

[20:44] But it is interesting that in Matthew's Gospel, that these great gifts are rarely called the will of God.

So firstly, Jesus warned us of the two ways. He divided us from the immoral majority.

In the two trees, he divided us from the attractive false pockets. And in the two doers, he divided us from the powerful false teachers. And now, in the next warning of the two houses, he divides us from what is false in those still left.

Jesus has, of course, all his time been dividing us from the false in ourselves, in all the forewarnings. In all four, Jesus is addressing us, and asking us to separate from that in us which is false.

But in this false warning, the knife is sharpest, and the bite is deepest. Christians must not fool themselves into believing that hearing good teaching and studying the Bible is all, by itself, the whole doing of the will of God.

[22:27] The Father's will is that the Son's word be heard in such a way that it is to be done.

The Son's word is to be heard in such a way that it is to be done. The word is so to penetrate the ears that it reaches our hearts and so our hands and our lips and our feet.

But this problem is as old as the people of God. And we read in Ezekiel chapter 33 verses verse 31. They sit before you as my people and they hear what you say, but they will not do it. For with their lips they show much love, but their heart is set on their gains.

There's a story of a missionary in Korea who had a visit from a new Christian. That new Christian lived a hundred miles away.

[23:49] It was a long time ago, many years ago. And this new Christian had walked four days to reach this mission station. And the new Christian recited proudly without a single mistake the whole of the Sermon on the Mount.

said, well, you can imagine the missionary was delighted that he felt that he ought to warn the man that memorizing was not enough and that it was necessary to actually put these words into practice as well as to memorize them.

And the Korean face lit up with smiles. That is the way I learned it, he said. I tried memorizing it, but it just wouldn't stick.

So I hit upon this plan that I would memorize a verse and then I would find a neighbor and put it into practice.

and I found that it stuck. In the story that Jesus tells of the two houses, Jesus first compliments and encourages those who do hear and do his word.

[25 : 17] He compares them to wise people, people who make their life work to do the words of Jesus. These are people who build their houses on a solid foundation.

When inevitable trouble hits the house, a house built on this kind of foundation, the house stands. Jesus doesn't say that the house built on his words. will, for example, glow in the dark or expand into a mansion or be in any way particularly impressive.

house. The only impressive fact about this house is that it will be still standing when the storm is over.

It will be still standing when the storm is over. Nor are we told that a life built on this foundation of Jesus' words will be spared, rains and floods are wind as though Jesus' teaching is some kind of good luck charm.

[26 : 46] Jesus is saying the same storm will hit the wise disciples as hit the foolish ones.

Obedience to Jesus' words is not so much a protection from trouble, it is a protection in them.

It's not so much a protection from trouble, it is protection in them. Just as a rock under a house does not shield from storms, it supports them during the storm.

I don't think this sermon, or these warnings, end happily for those who build wisely. Because it ends with the sound of the crash of the houses of those who have built foolishly.

The story of the two houses is about two kinds of Christians. It's not about Christians and non-Christians. The house that crashes is not a house of those who didn't hear Jesus' words.

The house that crashes is the house of Christians. Christians who find Jesus' words important enough to hear but not important enough to live.

[28 : 33] Nothing very different happens to the house built on sand. It gets hit by the same rain and the flood and the wind that hits the rock house.

But when the storm is over, the house is gone. The point of this parable is that we must build our life on our Lord Jesus Christ for He is our rock.

rock. All our doing is meaningless if it is not built on rock because all will be lost in the storms of life or lost in the final judgment.

And all the materials and the energy are wasted if our life is not built on a solid foundation. The solid foundation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is life. Life is to be found in Him. He not only gives life but redeems and saves it.

[29 : 59] By dying on the cross and rising from the dead, Jesus did not simply demonstrate that He could withstand the temptations of life and the terrors of death and the grave.

He did not just simply demonstrate it. But by doing this He actually built for us a life that can withstand these same forces.

He actually built for us a life that can withstand these same forces. Christ is our foundation because He has been in our state-to-earth situation and He has actually withstood all that is against us.

Adversity, guilt, shame, temptation, terror, death, they might all work against us. But Christ is the foundation that will enable us to stand up against them all.

Christ is the foundation which will enable us to stand up against them all. there is no fury, no fury we cannot weather when Christ is our foundation.

[31 : 38] Amen. 22 and Thank you.