

# THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE

## Real or Fake?

Matthew 7:13-27

INTRODUCTION: Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes, plainly describing the new life He offered to the crowd gathered to hear this new prophet who had come on the scene.

Most of them did not yet know that Jesus was The Prophet whom God told Moses He would send. They did not recognize yet that the humble man who taught so differently than the scribes and rabbis, that He Himself was the Messiah.

They had no idea He would pay the penalty for their sins by giving Himself to die in their place upon a Roman cross.

During this long and very comprehensive teaching, Jesus taught the people how to pray, an essential spiritual discipline Jesus had been practicing since childhood.

This morning I want us to cut to the end of Jesus' message in that sermon. Most Bibles take this passage in Matthew 7 and break it into four parts by subject. There is nothing wrong with this. Each of the four parts will stand alone, and in fact I have preached on each of the four parts separately at one time or another.

However, the parts have a strong thread that runs from one to the other, binding them all together. The thread running through each of these teachings is not only interesting, but important.

Jesus is acknowledging that among those who identify as His followers will be those who are real, genuine disciples. But there will be others who say they follow Jesus, but they don't. They are fake.

**It is important to consider what Jesus says about real and fake followers for two reasons.**

- **So we don't fool ourselves.**
- **So we are not fooled by others.**

Let's read the first part of Jesus' message.

Matthew 7:13–14 NKJV 13 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Jesus says, **THERE ARE ONLY TWO TYPES OF PEOPLE.**

- **Those headed for destruction** which is a reference to hell and the Lake of Fire.
- **Those on the path to eternal life** to live with their Lord forever.

Let's talk first about those on the path that leads to life everlasting.

- **Jesus said the gate to this path is narrow.** Many have rightly said that the gate is one man wide.

John 10:9 NKJV I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

John 14:6 NKJV Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Romans 10:9 NKJV ... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

- **Only those who have trusted Jesus as Lord of their lives are saved.**
- You may be thinking that this is mighty narrow minded thinking these days. You are right! That is exactly what Jesus said, "The gate to the path that leads to life is narrow!"
- And my friend, not all the opening in the world will broaden the gate one tenth of an inch! A person enters on the road that leads to eternal life through faith in Jesus as his or her Lord, or they do not enter at all.
- **And Jesus said it is a difficult road to walk.** It is not always easy or convenient to obey Christ. Those who truly follow Him are often ridiculed and even rejected by the world, just as Jesus Himself was.

Have you entered? Have you trusted in Jesus as the Lord and Master of your life? Have you surrendered control of your life to the Lord Jesus, so that He is Lord over you?

If not, you can today. You can enter through the gate that leads to eternal life this very morning. But if you do not enter by going through the gate of trusting Jesus as your Lord, you remain on the road that leads to destruction.

Now, let's talk about the other type of person.

- **Those headed for destruction**

This is a sad conversation. I do not enjoy it, but it is needful, because in our positive thinking, all affirmation culture, there are many who do not think they themselves are on the path headed for destruction, but in reality are speeding down the highway to hell.

Who are those headed for destruction? Jesus said the gate and road are broad and many, many people are on this road. Sadly there are far more on the broad road of destruction than on the narrow road of life.

- We can say in general, **Anyone of an age of understanding who has not trusted Jesus as Lord**, but so we are clear we will say specifically that this includes ...
- **Atheists and agnostics**
- Certainly, **All who worship another god**, whether that be Buddha, Allah, the pantheon of Hinduism, or any other.
- **Those who worship Yahweh, but have not trusted Messiah Jesus as Lord.** This includes Jews but also includes a multitude of non-Jews who say, "Well, I believe in God."
- Even **Those who believe in the historical Jesus, the cross, and even the resurrection ...**
  - **But they depend on their own merits to go to heaven**, believing that their behavior is better than most, so surely they will pass the judgment.
  - **Or they depend on their good works** to gain admission to the eternal realm.
  - **Or they depend on their church affiliation** as if God just transferred their name from the church roll to the Book of Life. They are Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians, or Baptists! They are members of a non-denominational church, but if they have not personally trusted Jesus as the Lord and Savior of their lives, they walk the broad road that leads to destruction.

Now there are certainly some who walk the road leading to destruction who know they are headed to hell. They acknowledge it and even joke about it, although I do not think that any person could really believe what the Bible says about hell and talk casually about going there.

But folks, most people who are walking the broad road of destruction do not think that hell is their destination.

- Many of them think they will go to heaven when they die.

- Some of them think there is a halfway house between heaven and hell where they will get a second chance to sort things out.
- And some, too many I am afraid, who self-identify as Christians, but they have never surrendered control of their life to the Lord Jesus. Jesus is not their Lord. They themselves are their Lord, and they do what they please. If this is you, don't let it continue to be you!

**The ones I am labeling as fakes are the ones that say, "I am a Christian," but they have never trusted Christ as their Lord and Master.**

And Jesus addresses this in the very next part of His sermon. He tells us.

**THERE IS ONE WAY TO DETERMINE IF A PERSON IS REAL OR FAKE.**

Matthew 7:15–20 NKJV 15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 **You will know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 **Therefore by their fruits you will know them.**

Folks, this is not rocket science, and it is not difficult to understand.

**When Jesus is Lord over a life, He changes it for the better.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

**Use this in your own life as a measure.** If you say you are a Christian, in what ways has Christ made you new? What are the old things that are made new?

**Use this to test those you are allowing to be influencers in your life.** Are they exhibiting godliness? Are their lives yielding righteousness? Is their influence in your life producing righteousness? **BY THEIR FRUITS YOU SHALL KNOW THEM!**

Then Jesus, said, ...

**NOT EVERYONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE GODLY IS REAL.**

Matthew 7:21–23 NKJV 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

**The people who truly have Jesus as the Lord of their lives are the people who do the will of the Father.**

- **Trusting Christ does not just make us more religious.** By the way, there is nothing wrong with casting out demons and doing wonders in the name of Jesus. There are times, Jesus told His followers to do those very things. But doing those things or pretending to do those things is not proof that Jesus is your Lord.
- **When we obey Christ, we do the will of the Father.**
- **When we do what the Scriptures say, we do the will of the Father.**

And finally, Jesus tells us (It is the final point of Jesus' sermon and of mine.) ...

### **THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT REAL FOLLOWERS OF JESUS DO.**

Matthew 7:24–27 NKJV 24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

- **People on the road to life build their lives on the solid rock – Jesus Christ.**
- **They obey and practice the Word of God.**
- **They endure the storms.**

CONCLUSION: I have two questions for you:

Where are you? **Are you on the road that leads to life** because you have trusted Jesus as your Lord, your Master, your Savior?

- You have the confirmation of a changed life. Jesus has made you different and better!
- You are building your life on Christ.

**Who are you allowing to be an influencer in your life right now?**

- What is the fruit of their own life like?
- In following them, what kind of fruit is their influence producing in you?