

SERMON STUDY GUIDE



“Gates, Trees, and Fruit”- PREACHED ON JUNE 1 & 2, 2024

READ

Read Matthew 5- 7:23. Read it each day, perhaps in a different translation each day (A great resource for looking at various translations is www.biblegateway.com).

DISCUSS

How did this week's verses change your understanding of the Sermon on the Mount? What stood out to you as you continued to read last week's passages? How did last week's practices go for you? What did you learn about yourself and the way you speak and think about others?

STUDY

In this section of Matthew, Jesus brings all of what he's been saying to a head. He's spent the whole Sermon on the Mount talking about what righteousness is and how we ought to live and here we see why—there's only one narrow way to life with Christ. John Stott writes that Jesus “held truth and falsehood excluded [from] one another...” To Jesus, there is a right and a wrong way to live, and he's been showing us that way this whole time. We live in a world where we constantly want more middle ground, an in-between option. How do we follow the narrow road? Let's look at what scripture tells us.

1. Jesus' hearers would have been familiar with the imagery of two gates leading to life and death. It was commonly used in Jewish teachings and other writings from Jesus' time. What does this image mean to you? In what sense is the gate of Christianity small and the way narrow? In what ways is the world's gate broad?
2. Why do you think people dislike the idea that there is only one gate?
3. Shortly before Moses died, he presented the Israelites with a similar choice between life and death. Read Deuteronomy 30:11-20. What was promised as a result of life? Of death?
4. Prophets were known to be false if they led people away from the true God or if their words did not come to pass (see Deuteronomy 13 and 18:21). When Jesus says, “by their fruit you will recognize them” (Matt. 7:16), what kind of fruit is he talking about? How does the quality of the fruit reveal the quality of the tree?

PRACTICE

Spend some time looking at what kind of fruit you're bearing this week. Be as honest with yourself as possible about the ways the fruit of the spirit is evident (or not!) in your life. Read Galatians 5:16-26, paying special attention to verses 22-23. What fruit of the spirit do you see in your life? Pray through areas where you'd like to see healthier fruit, and ask that the Holy Spirit grows that health within you.