

Lesson 10—Beware of False Paths

Introduction

In the final section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus moves from teaching to testing. He calls His listeners to respond—not just by hearing His words, but by living them. His message comes to a climax with a series of stark contrasts—each one showing that there are only two ways to live:

- Two **gates** and **paths** (7:13–14): one narrow and life-giving, the other broad and destructive.
- Two **trees** (7:15–20): one that bears good fruit, the other bad.
- Two **foundations** (7:24–27): one built on obedience to Christ, the other on empty words. (covered in the next session).

First, He describes two gates and two roads—one narrow and difficult, leading to life, and one broad and easy, leading to destruction. Then He warns about false prophets—those who appear genuine on the outside but are inwardly dangerous, producing bad fruit and leading others astray.

This section confronts us with the reality that **not all roads lead to God**. Not all who claim to follow Him truly do. It challenges us to examine the voices we follow, the path we're walking, and the fruit of our lives. It reminds us that the way of Christ is not popular—but it is life-giving.

I. Matthew 7:13-14

A. Observation

1. What themes or key ideas are in this passage?
2. List at least two or three observations for these verses in the space below.

B. Interpretation

1. Describe the two “gate”s and the people who pass through them.
2. What do these verses teach us about free will? Has God already chosen our path for us? Why or Why not?

3. What do these verses teach about universalism (the teaching that all will be saved)?
4. How would you summarize this section in one sentence?

C. Application

1. In your spiritual life, would you say you are doing what is difficult or what is easy?
2. Would you say others consider you to be walking a path different than the rest of the world? Why or why not?
3. List at least one fact or command stated or implied in this passage that are relevant to your own life:
4. What will you do this week to better implement this fact or command into your life?
5. Suggested Practice — The Narrow Path Checklist: Choose one area where it's tempting to follow the crowd (friends, media, finances, etc.).
 - a. Ask:
 - 1) What does the wide path look like here?
 - 2) What does the narrow path look like?
 - 3) What is one decision I can make this week that keeps me on the narrow path?
 - b. Write down your answer and pray over it each morning. Keep the path clear—and your eyes on Christ, who walked it first.

D. Teach It

1. How would I explain there is right path and a wrong path to someone?
2. How can I demonstrate taking the hard path in my own life?
3. Conversation Starter: “Why do you think most people go the easy way—even when they know it leads somewhere bad?” Follow up with: “What’s one choice you’ve made that felt harder but honored God?”

II. Matthew 7:15-20

A. Observation

1. What themes or key ideas are in this passage?
2. List at least one observation for each verse in the space below.
 - a. Matthew 7:15
 - b. Matthew 7:16
 - c. Matthew 7:17
 - d. Matthew 7:18
 - e. Matthew 7:19
 - f. Matthew 7:20

B. Interpretation

1. Should we trust everyone who looks like or seems to a Christian?
2. What kind of fruit is a clue to a false prophet?
3. What do these verses have to say about teachers in denominations?
4. How would you summarize this section in one sentence?

C. Application

1. Have you ever followed what a person has taught as opposed to what you believed God's word to say?
2. How can you make sure you are not being led astray?
3. How would someone describe your fruit?

4. List at least two facts or commands stated or implied in this passage that are relevant to your own life:
 - a.
 - b.
 5. What will you do this week to implement at least one of these facts or commands into your life?
 6. Suggested Practice — Fruit Inspection Time:
 - a. Pick two “voices” in your life—these could be preachers, authors, influencers, or friends. Ask:
 - 1) What kind of fruit do they produce in my life?
 - 2) Do they lead me closer to Scripture—or just closer to them?
 - 3) Are they consistent in character, or do I see warning signs?
 - b. Then ask the same of yourself: What kind of fruit is my life producing at home, in church, at work, or online?
 - c. Write one habit or influence you may need to change to bear better fruit—or avoid bad fruit.
- D. Teach It
1. How could I lovingly warn another about a false teacher?
 2. How could I speak and act in a way that shows my faith is not in a man, but in God?
 3. Conversation starter: “What do you think makes someone a trustworthy teacher of God’s Word?” Follow up with: “How can we recognize the difference between charisma and true character?”

Conclusion

Jesus never said the right path would be the easy one. In fact, He says the opposite. The road that leads to life is narrow, often lonely, and requires discernment. But it is the only path that leads to the Father.

Matthew 7:13–20 reminds us that not every influence in our lives is from God. Some people—especially those who teach or lead—may look spiritual but are false at the core. That’s why we must test the fruit, examine the path, and cling to Jesus’ words.

Next time, we’ll look at the final warning in this chapter: those who claim to follow Christ but do not truly do the will of the Father. For now, let’s each ask: Am I on the narrow path? Am I following truth—or just appearances? And what kind of fruit is my life bearing?