

Deciding to Follow Jesus

Jesus Says: A Series on the Sermon on the Mount Part 16

Matthew 7:13-27

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Happy Valentines Day!

- Since this day is a day most people celebrate their significant others, and many of you do not have significant others yet, and since I like to help you all out, I have some helpful Bible-centered and Christian-centered phrases that might help you get a significant other. Show slide show.

Decisions

- Who we want to date is a big decision.
- We make decisions all the time. Since you came in here you've made hundreds of decisions.
 - What food am I going to get, drink, portion size?
 - Do I walk or ride, and which route?
 - Who will I talk to first?
- Research shows that adults on average make 35,000 decisions a day.¹
- Right now you are trying to make the decision of whether or not to look on social media or listen to me.
- We make decisions all day long, and some are bigger than others.
- But one thing is for certain: Everyone must make decisions. No matter how indecisive you are, you cannot avoid making decisions. Not making a decision is a decision.
- Tonight we are going to be discussing the greatest decision any of us are going to make in this life, a decision that everyone will have to make: Am I really going to be a follower of Jesus?

Matthew 7:13-27

- Tonight is our last night in the Sermon on the Mount. We've been here since August.
- What have been some of the most challenging teachings of Jesus for you? What has resonated most with you in the Sermon on the Mount?
- Jesus in 7:13-27 is going to tell us that we're going to have a decision. Are we really going to follow Jesus and His commands or not? You have a choice: to listen to Jesus, and put His words into practice, or not.

¹ Joel Hoomans, "35,000 Decisions: The Great Choices of Strategic Leaders," *Leading Edge Journal*, March 20, 2015, accessed on February 13, 2018.

<https://go.roberts.edu/leadingedge/the-great-choices-of-strategic-leaders>

Many decide not to follow Jesus. (Matthew 7:13-14)

- The gate to follow Jesus is narrow. Not many find it and go through it.
- Why do many decide not to follow Jesus? It is hard.
- It is really easy to not follow Jesus. (7:13). It is much easier to just look after oneself. It is easy to not sacrifice on behalf of others. It's easy to hate your enemies/those who don't love you.
- It is hard to remain pure. It is hard to pursue holiness. It is hard to treat everyone as if they are made in the image of God. It is hard to follow Jesus (7:14).
- But it is totally worth it. If we go through the narrow gate, we will find life, eternal life, the life that God has always wanted you to have, the life he has been preparing for you.

You can tell if you're following Jesus by your fruit. (Matthew 7:15-20)

- Jesus is making it really simple for us here. If a tree is bearing bad fruit, it can't be a healthy tree. Good trees bear good fruit and bad trees bear bad fruit.
- You can tell if you're following Jesus by your fruit. In other words, what kind of fruit are you bearing in your lives?
- Fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*)
 - Love
 - Joy
 - Peace
 - Patience
 - Kindness
 - Goodness
 - Faithfulness
 - Gentleness
 - Self-control
- It's the *Fruit* of the Spirit not *Fruits* of the Spirit. You can't have 3 of these and not the 6 others. When the Holy Spirit works in your life, eventually you will grow in all of these areas.
- According to Tim Keller, fruit is used as an image because...
 - Christian growth is *gradual*.
 - The growth of the Spirit's fruit is *inevitable*.
 - The Fruit of the Spirit has *internal* roots.
 - Christian growth is *symmetrical*.²
- Is the Fruit of the Spirit present in your life?

We follow Jesus by doing what he says. (Matthew 7:21-27)

- In my opinion, *Matthew 7:21-23* is the scariest passage of scripture in all of the Bible.
- There are people who think they are followers of Jesus who truly aren't.
- There are very few passages in Scripture that will make you do more soul-searching than this one. Do work with God. Examine yourself.

² Timothy Keller, *Galatians for You* (The Good Book Company), 151-152.

- Those who will not enter the Kingdom, like the foolish man, are the ones who hears the words of Jesus but does not put them into practice.
- To be a follower of Jesus means that we are to do what he says.
- Jesus is more than a moral teacher, but he is not less.
- There are two errors that many people have concerning who Jesus is and our response to him.
 - *Jesus is only a moral teacher.* Jesus did die at the hands of the Jewish leaders and Romans, but he mainly came to give us practical steps to living a good life, but his death doesn't mean much cosmically. We live well so God will accept us. We earn our salvation.
 - *Jesus only came to save us.* Jesus came to merely settle a score between us and God, but His teachings are nice don't mean much.
 - Both of these errors are wrong. Jesus did come to die to save us, and he did come to show us how those in the Kingdom of God should live.
 - Jesus is more than a moral teacher, but he is not less.
- Being a follower of Jesus means that we are covered in his blood and death and have the hope of resurrection, but it also means that we hear from Him and do what He says.
- We must decide to follow Jesus, and in doing so, we do what he says.

You've got to make a decision to follow Jesus.

- Of the 35,000 decisions you will make today, following Jesus will be the most important one.
- If you have not decided to follow Jesus yet, why wait?
- If you have decided to follow Jesus, but are not doing what he says, really follow Him. Take what He says seriously.
- If you decided to follow Jesus and have dedicated your life to following Him and doing what He says, who in your life currently has not made that decision to follow Him, and what can you do to encourage them and point them to Jesus?
- Again, following Jesus is hard. You must count the cost (*Luke 14:25-33*).
- But it is so worth it.
- Jesus wants to give you a new life. He wants you to be reconciled to God. He wants your sins to be washed away. He has already paid the price for you.