

Review

- What kind of person will experience God's blessed future?
- What does "full" righteousness look like?
- What is the essence of true religion?
- What is the righteous response to anxieties?
- What is the right way to deal with failure?

7:13-27 A Warning about Responding to the Message

7:13-14 The Broad and Narrow Ways

Jesus does not mince his words. His illustration here is powerful and challenging. We are not to concern ourselves with degrees of success (At least I'm better than that other person), but to recognise that there are only two paths. Are we heading to destruction or to life?

We should not presume to be on the way to life because "those who find it are few". We will need to seek for it ("seek and you shall find"). We will not stumble upon on it.

The way to life is hard ("narrow" but meaning "to experience difficulty or trouble"), while the way to destruction is easy ("broad", metaphorically describing "prosperity"). The call to follow Jesus is hard, not because we have to earn God's favour, but because receiving God's grace requires us to be humbled in repentance, to realign our priorities ("you cannot serve God and money") and to experience persecution for righteousness sake.

7:15-20 "You will recognise them by their fruits"

Christ warns us about what teaching we will follow. They are many who look good and sound wise, but are deceivers who will carry us away from the truth of Jesus.

If we are careful, prayerful, and observant, then we will be able to expose such false teachers. We will see that their lives do not line up with the teachings of Jesus. And so we will know not to follow them or their teaching.

7:21-23 "I never knew you, depart from me"

This section could easily be an extension of the word against false teachers, especially those who impress people with "prophecy... casting out demons... and mighty works [miracles]". But we must all take it seriously for ourselves.

People can be fooled. We can blend it and play the part. But Jesus knows who are his, and he will expose them when they stand before him.

7:24-27 - The Wise and Foolish Builders

Hearing the words of Jesus is not enough. We must respond in repentance, faith and obedience. We must receive and follow him, or we will be left with eternal ruin.

7:28-29 The Crowd marvels at Jesus' presumed authority

The people recognised the significance of all this. Jesus did not just seek to explain the OT scriptures through the traditions of the Pharisees. He spoke as one who had the right to go beyond the written word. He declares the true righteousness which the law was only a shadow of. He does not offer wisdom as a suggestion, but he commands obedience, and he dictates the eternal consequences of our response to him. He puts himself at the centre of it all. If those who follow his word are persecuted, then it is "for his sake". And if people hope to enter the kingdom of God without receiving the words of Jesus, it is he who will stand at the gate saying "I never knew you; depart from me"