

# Matthew 7:13-27

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[ 0 : 00 ] When I used to live in the North East, I would listen to this radio station called Sun FM. I liked it because it had great music, great humour and of course it talked a lot about football.

What was not to like I thought. But it also had these really, really annoying moments. They had these incredibly long advert breaks. I don't know if you get that when you listen to the radio now. Maybe you know what I'm talking about.

So they were advertised competitions, cars, washing detergent, when Sunderland were playing that weekend. I would always know what they were advertising, but towards the end they would start speaking so quickly that I would just miss it.

The most important bit that I thought. The terms and conditions apply. Maybe you know, you've heard this before perhaps. You know, it was a great offer, a great offer within reason.

A reason which the company had set for themselves. You know, and sometimes we come across terms and conditions when we browse the internet, don't we? We need to tick that little box before we can proceed to the next page.

[ 1 : 14 ] How many of us actually read it. And within these terms and conditions they contain warnings. Warnings and instructions from the company for the use of the product.

Now where we are today, towards the end of the Sermon of Mount. Jesus reveals the terms and conditions. The terms and conditions and the warnings about being a Christian.

And what Jesus says here are not often talked about. Perhaps, maybe the majority of the time, we skim read or perhaps we ignore them.

Just like the terms and conditions that we might come across in our world. You know, we may ignore reading, terms and conditions. But we cannot ignore the rules they state that we must abide by.

And what Jesus says here in this portion of scripture are absolutely crucial for us. These warnings demonstrate to us what it looks like to live in his kingdom.

[ 2 : 19 ] And Jesus gives four of them. Warning number one. The way the world lives looks appealing. Look there at verses 13 to 14.

Jesus describes two paths of life that people take. The path of the broad road with the wide gate. And the path of the narrow road and the small gate.

Let me tell you, this wide gate looks much more appealing, doesn't it? A spacious road. It accommodates the crowd. It accommodates the big cars.

It accommodates their friends with all the luggage. Imagine this. Imagine going on holiday without a weight restriction. What would you take?

Pack whatever you like. Take whatever you like. The broad road with the wide gate is the world's way of living. No restrictions.

[ 3 : 16 ] Come as you are and live as you like. Do whatever makes you happy. And this way is very popular. Notice that many enter through it.

Loads of people. A crowd and even some of your friends. This world's way of living looks more appealing compared to the life of the small road with the narrow gate.

Those small little commuter bikes would fit through there. And this world's way of living is easier to live than in God's way. Because living in God's way requires much more of it.

Now I don't know if you would have come across this in the media. It's been going on for a number of years. But in Northern Ireland there was this bakery. A Christian bakery.

And they were asked to do something which they couldn't do as Christians. They were asked to put this message supporting gay marriage.

[ 4 : 21 ] And they refused to do this message. Was it far easier for the Christians at that bakery to put the message on the cake rather than refuse the business?

The way for the people of God's kingdom is not one of living with ease. But one of persecution. Being called bigots.

Being taken to court. Which is what happened to them. And this is what Christians are called when we tell people what the Bible says about things like homosexuality and marriage.

It is much easier to go along with what the world says and does than to risk being persecuted. For that's what it's like.

That is what it is like when we hear God's words and put them into practice. The world doesn't like it. So we are persecuted. And it's sad to say that many church denominations have crumbled under the pressure of living the way of the world.

[ 5 : 30 ] Rather than being obedient to what Jesus has said. Jesus here gave warnings to his disciples about two ways to live. The intention is to warn them to consider the cost.

To consider the cost of following him and the persecutions that come with living according to his word. But you see. Notice there that following God's way is worthy of a cost.

Notice the promise of this narrow way. It leads to life. The trials that we endure are worth it because of this promise.

Do you notice that? Verse 14. It leads to life. Living God's way leads to life. And persecution comes with being a disciple of Christ.

But it is the right path to be on. It is the only path that leads to life. And this is what we are seeing in our house group studies at the moment in 1 Peter isn't it?

[ 6 : 38 ] For anyone who wishes to live a godly life will be persecuted. And look at that result again of those two ways to live. The wide gate and the broad road leads to destruction.

The way of the world. The small gate and narrow road on the other hand leads to life. And that is the warning. Living the way of the world is more appealing.

Is more inviting. It's easier. And look what Jesus says this way leads to.

And many. Even your crowd. Maybe even some of your friends are on this path. And they go to destruction. And living God's way requires us to take steps of faith like that bakery shop.

Putting God's word into practice at times when it costs us. Standing up for what we believe in and not letting the world stay.

[ 7 : 39 ] This could even be perhaps not watching certain programs on TV that your friends are talking about. And not getting involved in work conversations that are unhelpful.

And even avoiding situations that aren't going to be beneficial for you. Gossip. Bad jokes. And it is going to be hard.

Because the world's way of living is appealing. It is much easier to say yes to sin than no. You know and daily we need to make that choice.

Do I follow the way of the world or do I follow Jesus? And notice how many find this way, verse 14. Those who find it are few.

It can be quite lonely living as a Christian. Maybe you are one of 220 people in your world. The only Christian.

[ 8 : 38 ] The only Christian in your class. Or in your family. But listen to that warning of living the world. The way of the world.

That leads to destruction. We need to fight against following what the world says. By following Jesus. And trusting in his word.

By putting it into practice. Now the second warning that Jesus gives to his disciples. Is to beware of people who preach charity about God.

Verse 15. Now these are more commonly called false prophets. Or false teachers. Now these are people who know the word of God. Yet twist it to make it sound like something else.

They stand on a pulpit and preach how God wants his people to live. But they do it wrong. And this leads people to live incorrectly. And false prophets that Jesus talked about here.

[ 9 : 39 ] Were not a new idea. The people of Israel throughout the Old Testament were plagued by them. And if you went to your Bible now. Maybe children this is a challenge for you.

To go to your Bible and start at the very beginning. And find a false prophet in every single book. The one that I'm talking about here in Genesis is Satan.

The false prophet who knew God's word. Yet he twisted it to suit his own needs. And the reason why Jesus tells us to be aware is.

They are ravenous wolves. I've never come across a wolf myself. But you know you see them on television or on planet earth. Wolves steal and kill.

False prophets. They know God's word. Yet they steal the truth and the life that it brings. Steal it away from the people that would hear it. Robbing them of the life that it brings.

[10:42] A pastor once said. There are many in the Lord's service. Who have the word of God. Yet for one reason or another. Only known to themselves. They do not speak it faithfully.

They are either not prepared in the first place. To let the word hurt them. Or they are not prepared to let it hurt other people. It's subtle isn't it?

But false prophets come from within the church. Many leadership positions. And we should not be surprised by this. Jesus tells us that it's going to happen here.

He warned us about them. False prophets who are heading for destruction. And are taking many people with them. They steal the word by watering down difficult truth.

They distort it. And change it in order to attract people to Christianity. And we today. We need to be diligent of anyone who preaches.

[11:42] Does what they say line up with what the Bible says? And we can be so grateful here at IPC. Because we have elders.

Our elders here protect us from threats like this. False teachers are like wolves. They kill. They are dangerous.

And elsewhere in the Bible we are told that false teachers come from within the church. And if you look down there in verse 16. Jesus tells us how we can recognize them. By their fruit.

Now this is not just what someone does. But all that they say and do. Does what they say claim to believe? Is it backed up by their actions?

We don't often know that a tree is bad until it produces bad fruit. And a bad tree producing bad fruit is not useful, is it?

[12:40] It wouldn't be so helpful if you went to Morrison's and found some moldy apples, would you? Bad trees are cut down. They are thrown into the fire. And to know if a tree is bad, it's not a quick and easy test.

It takes time. Trees take a long time to produce fruit. Just the same with false teachers. They pretend to live as Christians. They say and do the right things.

But ultimately they cannot do it for a long period of time. They pretend to be one of us. Wearing sheep's clothing. But when the trials of life come, they show their true nature.

The apostle John in the first verse of three letters to the church. Wrote and warned the church about false teachers. And he gave additional ways to unveil a false teacher. We, the apostles, are from God.

And whoever knows God listens to us. But whoever is not from God does not listen to us. John tells the church that we can recognize false teachers for what they teach.

[13:49] In other words, is their teaching the same as what the apostles taught? Or do they preach a different message of doctrine? And we need to be discerning.

If false teachers are all around them. In different churches. In our schools. And we need to know God's word. And know what it says so that we can protect ourselves, our families and the church. For the impact is devastating. And we don't need to look far over history to see how devastating false teachers are.

They've sabbored the church for the last 2,000 years. Causing churches to split. Christians to be martyred. They've started. They've allowed the way of the world to affect the church.

And there's warning here. It is for our good. Because true life is at stake. And false teachers, they are wolves. They rob people of the truth and life of God's word.

[14:53] And this kills them. And Jesus is the true prophet. And he is the word of God. And he came and backed up what he said by his actions.

And this is who we are to be hearing and listening to. And not the false prophets of this world.

Another warning that Jesus gave his disciples is to be aware that not everyone who believes they're going to heaven will.

Read with me there verse 21 to 23. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And cast out demons in your name? And do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. I would say these are some of the most terrifying verses in the New Testament.

[15:58] I remember coming across a story a few years ago. An elderly woman, a pastor once met. And they had a fairly decent conversation. And he discovered that she was a Christian.

And great. Great he thought. And he asked her where she went to church. But he discovered that she hadn't been to church for a very, very long time. And the reason why she told him, you know, I led the Sunday school for 20 years.

I've done my bit. So I don't think I need to go anymore. That's sad, isn't it? But I don't think that she's the only one.

I think many of us probably think like that in some way. You know, it's rather, it's about what we do rather than what Christ has done. And what Jesus says in these verses is more subtle than this. He's referring to those who are actually within the church. An elder, perhaps. Even an elder will fall on that day of the Lord. An esteemed person regarded by many.

[17:03] They might one day fall. And Jesus here is wanting to get across that there are people who do many works for him within the church. But have no love for him.

And it is our love for God that demonstrates the proof of our forgiveness of sins. Knowing that we are sinners. Knowing that we have been set free.

Knowing that we have been forgiven. It's life changing. It was that what moved the woman who had lived that sinful life. When she had come to Jesus to anoint him with that expensive ointment.

And she loved Jesus much. This was the proof that she had received forgiveness. Her love for Jesus came at a great cost. Her life savings.

Persecution. But yet she knew that she was forgiven. It is by faith that we receive forgiveness. And by love we give thanks and testify to the Lord's kindness in our lives.

[18:10] She heard his words. Believe them by putting them into practice. The people describe in verse 21 to 23.

They do not love God because they do not know his love. They do not believe that they are sinners who are in need of him. They are pretending to be Christians.

Enjoying the benefits of being in the church. Without ever striving to put God's word into practice. And this is how God's people are marked.

A genuine love for him. They know God and God knows them. You know we might ask and that is the question of this passage.

Doesn't God know everything? Yes. Yes he does. But here he is talking about people who have been truly changed.

[19:08] People who love God. Showing that they strive to put God's word into practice. People who have been born again. As in the book of Jeremiah.

I will give them a new heart to know me. That I am their Lord. They will be my people and they will be my. And I will be their God. For they will return to me with all their heart.

And if we have been given a new heart by God. We will want to know him. We will want to hear his words. And put them into practice.

Even when it is difficult. In other words. If you love him. Then you will hear his word. And put it into practice. And Jesus says this to the people who have not been changed in the last days.

Verse 23. I never knew you. Away from me you evil doers. This woman that this pastor spoke to.

[20:11] She did not love God even though she thought she did. And many people believe in Jesus. And that they are Christians. But by their actions they show that they do not love him.

Because they only hear our Lord's words. And yet refuse to put them into practice. In the final warning that we see this evening. That we see the danger of only hearing Jesus' words.

And not putting them into practice. Verses 24 to 27. Let me read. Verse 24. Everyone then who hears these words of mine. And does them will be like a wise man.

Who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell. And the floods came. And the winds blew and beat on that house. But it did not fall. Because it had been founded on the rock.

And everyone who hears these words of mine. And does not do them. Will be like a foolish man. Who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell. And the floods came.

[ 21 : 13 ] And the wind blew and beat against that house. And it fell. And great was the fall of it. Jesus gives an illustration of two men who are building a house.

They both hear his words. But only one of them does anything about it. Only one shows a genuine love for God. Jesus calls the one who hears the words.

Hears the words. And doesn't put them into practice. Foolish. This foolish man takes the easy way. He isn't prepared to make the cost. And build something worthwhile.

He seeks enjoyment instead. This foolish man built his house on the sand. It's staggering to know that he had the same materials.

And the same equipment as the man who built his house on the rock. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died. He died.

[ 22 : 11 ] He died. He died. He died. He died. long time? No? Yeah. Sand, it's a lousy foundation, isn't it? It doesn't take long for the water to come around the castle and very quickly it crumbles, despite doing your best to scoop the water back out and away. This foolish man heard Jesus' words, but he did not act upon him. He took a shortcut, wanting something easy and relaxing. And this is what it's like if somebody hears Jesus' words and doesn't put them into practice. They look like a Christian.

They talk like them. They're involved. Good servants, but show no love for God. Jesus describes the one who listens to his words and put them into practice, like the wise man who built his house on the rock. This man believed the reward for living God's way. Two houses, one on the sand and one on the rock. The foolish man finished his in half a day, but three months later, the wise man was still building. He probably took strenuous work to dig into the rock. But he was preparing for his future. His house was going to be well protected. He was going to be safe from harm. This is true, wasn't it? The rains came down and the floods came up. The house on the rock stayed strong, and yet the house on the sand fell flat. In fact, notice there in verse 27, it beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. This was not a mere sandcastle. This was not a topple or a fall. This was an utter catastrophe.

Both of these men heard Jesus' words. Verse 26. Both of these men were in the church. attended Sunday school. This is why the fall of this house is so devastating. He heard God's words as well. And Jesus, by his word, has given us everything that we need to live as his people in his kingdom, in the midst of this world. Even when hardships and challenges arise, we can stand because his word enables us to use. And hearing and putting God's word into practice enables us to stand up against anything. I don't know what your situation is like at the moment. Perhaps it's a conflict. Perhaps it's an uncertainty of the future. God has given us all that we need to stand against trials and the storms in this life. The foolish man, he fools others, but he cannot fool God and his trials. And it is by the power of God's word that we can stand. That we can live it out. So Jesus gave four warnings to the apostles about living in his kingdom. Each demonstrate the importance of not only hearing God's word, but doing what it says. And these are the words that in fact bring eternal life. The words help us in the difficulties and the challenges. They show us how to live in light of the mess of this world around us. How we are to respond. What we are to do. As we saw earlier, living God's way is hard, isn't it? Let's not take that away. It's easier to live the world's way rather than God's way. But remind yourself of the promise of life at the end.

And you might feel like, this sounds a little bit moralistic, Matt. This is not moralism. This is hearing Jesus' words. Expressing our love for him by doing what he says. And if you do not know God this evening, then these are his words. Repent and believe and come to him by faith. And be a part of his kingdom. Don't be like the foolish man. Let me reread verses 24 to 27. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the wind blew and beat against that house. And it fell and great was the fall of it. Let me pray.

[ 27 : 31 ] Let me pray.