

Entering the Kingdom of God

WARM-UP

- What do you like doing in your free time? Why?
- Have you ever wanted to be part of an exclusive club or group? Why?
- Who do you look up to? What you admire about him or her?

WORD

“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.” **MATTHEW 7:13**

(Read also **MATTHEW 7:14-23.**)

In those times, because of the law of Moses and the prophecies that had been passed down, Jesus' listeners were already aware of and concerned with the kingdom that is to come. In this passage, Jesus warned His disciples that the path to the kingdom of God was through a narrow gate that was hard to find, and that the path itself was difficult. Here, Jesus shared three images that help explain the kingdom of God: the narrow gate, the healthy tree, and the true disciples.

1 The Narrow Gate

¹³“Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” **MATTHEW 7:13,14**

The first step toward the kingdom of God is to *enter by the narrow gate*. Many would rather use the wide gate, since it is easier to find and walk on. However, that way *leads to destruction*. On the other hand, the way to the kingdom of God is both *narrow* and *hard*, but it *leads to life*. We are meant to live differently. How did you live differently after surrendering your life to Christ?

2 The Healthy Tree

“So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit.” **MATTHEW 7:17**

Jesus cautioned His disciples to be discerning about anyone who claims to be a prophet. They were to *recognize them by their fruits*. A true prophet and follower of Christ is like a *healthy tree* that *bears good fruit*. But a false one is the *diseased tree* that *bears bad fruit*. Healthy trees automatically bear good fruit as they receive the nutrients they need from the sun, soil, and water. It cannot be the other way around. According to John 15:4, as Christians, how can we bear good fruit?

3 The True Disciples

“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.” **MATTHEW 7:21**

Jesus made a clear distinction between the *workers of lawlessness* and His true disciples. Workers of lawlessness can look and talk just like followers of Christ on the outside, but God is not Lord over their lives, and they do not seek and do His will. As Christians, our words and actions mean little if we do not seek and do God’s will for our lives. A true disciple is one who does the will of the Father. According to Romans 12:2, how can we know the will of the Father?

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APPLICATION

- Have you surrendered your life to the Lordship of Christ, seeking His will and desire for your life? Do you want to surrender your life to Him? How will you seek Him every day?
- What is one thing you can do differently to grow in your relationship with God? How do you think you will bear good fruit?
- Are you actively seeking the will of God for your life? Take time to meditate on some Scriptures this week as you seek to do God’s will.

PRAYER

- Pray that God will reveal more of Himself to you, and give you perseverance to live in the way that leads to His kingdom.
- Pray for wisdom and grace as you abide in and follow Him. Pray that you will discern the true teachers and prophets by their fruits, rather than their words.
- Pray that as you walk with God daily, you will help others follow Him as well. Pray that as you do so, there will be open doors for the gospel among your family and friends.

NOTES



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