



THREE TOUGH QUESTIONS FOR GOD - How Do I Know I'm Saved?
Matthew 7:13-23 - April 3-9

Main Idea: The true mark of discipleship is the inner transformation that leads to outer love.

Look Back (Remind yourself of the challenge from last week)

Your challenge from last week was to spend 10 minutes each day reminding yourself of the blessings that God has given you that day. Were you able to complete that challenge? How did this change your perspective on how God provides for you?

Look Up (Wrestle with the passage itself)

Read Matthew 7:13-23 together.

As Jesus closes out his sermon on the mount, he points to three comparisons: narrow and wide gates, true and false prophets, and true and false disciples. He compares and contrasts these three things to make one single point: those who truly follow him will be changed, and those who falsely follow him will not.

His initial comparison is about gates, a metaphor found elsewhere in Jesus' teachings (John 10:1-10). One gate is large and popular, yet leads to destruction. The one is small and unpopular, yet leads to life.

Discussion Question: What is the meaning of Jesus' metaphor about gates? How do we see this being played out in our society today? What implication does this have for us about following the teachings of our culture?

Jesus' second comparison is about prophets. Some claim to come from God and have an appearance that is attractive, yet seek to destroy. He says that the way we will be able to tell which is which by what they produce in their lives. Those who produce sinful acts are false, while those who produce the fruit of the Spirit are true.

Discussion Question: A more modern term for "prophet" would be "teacher" or "preacher." With technology, we are able to access thousands of Christian teachers, and so Jesus' warning here is probably more important for us than ever. How do you distinguish between a teacher who is false and who is true? What do you look for in their lives? How could Jesus' previous warning about narrow and wide gates apply to this?

Look Forward (Challenge to do something with it)

Jesus makes one final comparison in the difference between true and false disciples. It is easy to believe that a disciple's genuineness will live out the power of his or her ministry. Yet Jesus says that it does not. Many who were able to do amazing things in Jesus' name actually had a heart that is far from him. The transformation that Jesus brings to his followers is not in impressive products, but in the inner change that leads to outer humility, service, and love.

Discussion Question: When knowing the truth of Jesus' words, why do you think we so often look at human-focused ability? Why are we so impressed with big results instead of humble service? What does this say about us and our values?

Challenge: The warnings that Jesus gives us here seem to point in one direction: a sobering humility. Following Jesus will require a trust that he is changing us that will often look unpopular and unnoticed, but will bear good fruit. This week, your challenge is to look for one opportunity to serve others in a way that is small and will not be noticed or rewarded. Keep your spiritual focus aware of the opportunity that God might give you.

Prayer Challenge: Spend time, as a group, praying for this opportunity, and that God will give you awareness when it comes.