

PARABLES

THE STORIES TOLD BY JESUS

The Two Roads
July 12th, 2015

OBSERVE & REFLECT

(This section is designed to encourage us to reflect on and observe the scripture and weekend sermon.)

READ Matthew 7:13-29

- ☀ Read the text at least twice. Try reading the text from two different translations.
- ☀ What do you observe in the text? What jumps out at you and grabs your attention? What questions do you have from the text? Pay attention to any action words or phrases and observe what the implications are.

INVESTIGATE & APPLY

(This section focuses on what the scripture has to say as we dig deeper into the Word. It is oriented to create discussion on the Scripture.)

1. What significance does Matthew 7:13-14 have in the Sermon on the Mount? What do the verses following Matthew 7:13-14 do?
2. What does the Lord focus on in Matthew 7:13-14? Cite some examples from Scripture of God offering men an ultimate choice. Ultimately, what two alternatives does every man have?
3. Read verses 15-20. What specific danger does Jesus point to out that keep people from finding the narrow road that leads to life? Have you experienced this in any way?
4. Read verses 21-23. What specific danger does Jesus point to out that keep people from finding the narrow road that leads to life? Have you experienced this in any way?
5. Why are good works so deceptive (7:22)? How have I seen this to be the case in your own life? Since works are so deceptive, where should Christians look for assurance? How should Christians interact with those who claim to be believers but are not living obedient lives?
6. Read verses 24-27, as Jesus tells another story to continue to make his point. What is the image that he uses? What do both people have in common? What is the difference between the house that fell and the house that withstood the storm?

What is a Parable?

The word “parable” (παροβολε) comes from two Greek words, *para* which mean “alongside”, and *ballo* which means “to throw”. It literally means “throw alongside”. In a parable, something familiar is placed alongside something unfamiliar or mysterious in order to help reveal the unknown. Jesus usually used the natural world, which was well-known by His audience, to teach about the unknown and mysterious kingdom that He was ushering in.

NEXT STEPS

- How do you know that I have eternal life (7:13–14)? What or who are you trusting in? C.S. Lewis said, “The safest road to hell is the gradual one; the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without sign posts.” How can you explain the concepts resident in this quote to unbelievers that you come in contact with? As a believer, how are you seeking to walk through the small and narrow gate in your Christian life?
- Augustine said, “He who believes that God is holy will despair trying to appease Him.” When have you observed your utter inability to please God? How has this changed your view of myself in relation to God? Why is it still so easy to struggle with my pride and self-will? What can you do this week to humble yourself before God and others?