

PARABLES OF JESUS #7

(The Gate, the Fruit & the Builders) Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: Report on religion in Australia:

- In 1950/60, 60-70% attended church at least occasionally
- The charismatic movement slowed decline during 1970/80/90, mainly affecting protestant churches.
- When Ps John was ordained in 1992 there was a new AOG church starting in Australia every 10 mins during the previous 12 months.
 - The leakage from Catholic, Anglican, Uniting and Orthodox and cultural churches was increasing.
- 2000-2025 – scandals, marriage equality debates, Covid affected all churches / denominations.
- Recent ACC stats claim over 400,000 gathers in ACC churches both large and small across Australia every Sunday
 - Makes our movement second only to Catholic in numbers on any given Sunday.
 - This is an increase of 4.7% since 2019.
- What does Jesus say about living in our generation?
- Jesus is speaking at the end of His famous sermon: “The Sermon on the Mount.”

1. The Gate

Matthew 7:13-14 *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”*

- Two gates; one is narrow, one is broad
- It's a choice – this is personal
- One is a cultural convenience (secular)
 - Popularity is not a measure of truth
- Narrow gate stresses moral cost and dependance on grace
- Being a “cultural Christian” will not cut in this generation.

2. The Fruit

Matthew 7:15-17 *“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.”*

- This is group discernment over naivety
- Who are you listening to?
- Do the podcasters or youtubers have credibility.



- Does the fruit match Christ's message?
- A soft heart willing to repent if needed
 - Practice holiness
 - Seek to represent Jesus
 - Demonstrate love and perseverance.



Matthew 7:21 *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven"*

- Move from information to formation
- Move from ritual to relationship.

3. The Builders

Matthew 7:24-27 *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

- "Therefore" ties the following story with what has gone before.
- Life will test us
- How you stand in the test depends on your foundation.
- Jesus' bold statement *"anyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice... has built His house on a rock"*

Matthew 16:15-16 *"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."*

Matthew 16:18 *And I tell you that you are Peter (a small rock / pebble) and on this rock (massive rock / boulder) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

- The "rock" starts with our confession: *"you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"*.
- Temptation comes from:
 - The world (secular culture)
 - The flesh (natural desire to sin)
 - The Devil (accuser, deceiver, liar)
- The promise is – You CAN overcome (v18)
- If you hear and put into practice what you heard, you will stand.

Questions for Group Discussion:

1. Which way is easiest for you to drift into, and why?
2. What practical tests do we use to judge a teacher or ministry?
3. How would you describe the difference between saying "Lord, Lord" and doing the Father's will? Give examples.
4. What storms have tested your faith recently and what did they reveal about your foundation?