

A Fear That Brings Assurance Sermon Discussion Leader's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To compare and contrast the “wide road” of our culture with Jesus’ “narrow road” and discuss how the ultimate reality & reward of having God as our Heavenly Father shapes our motivation to walk the narrow road.

Sermon Refresher: This week, Dave reminded us that the path that Jesus calls us to walk is one that is often unpopular, one that will be full of sacrifices and one that is meant to be characterized by an ever-growing relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Icebreaker: Share about time when you worked really hard for something and achieved it. Include some of the failures you experienced and or sacrifices you made along the way and what it was like to finally achieve what you were working toward.

Transition: Dave reminded us that often “the greater the reward, the harder you’re going to have to work to get it.” In this section of the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus bucks against our culture’s mantra that “all roads lead to God” and calls us to a narrow road which will require great sacrifice but end with great reward- God Himself.

Discussion:

1. Let’s begin our discussion by reading Matthew 7:13-23, the passage Dave preached on today.

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

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. ¹⁶By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Likewise, every

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good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

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. ²²Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ ²³Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’

2. Compare and contrast what life might look like on the “narrow road” vs. the “broad road.”
3. How would you summarize some of the messages of the “false prophets” of our day and age? Which messages are you personally more prone to buy into and which ones aren’t as appealing to you?
4. Dave highlighted the reality that if we follow Jesus we will often find ourselves in the minority. List some the emotions we experience when we find ourselves in the minority because of following Jesus.
5. Often in our lives we value what people think of us more than what God thinks of us. What would be the result in our lives if we had a bigger view of God and smaller view of people?
6. Dave posed the question: “So, how do you know if you’re on the right path?” Have you personally ever wondered that? He went on to suggest how verses 21-23 can inspire within us a healthy type of fear that could aid us in our walk with God. Contrast how fear could serve either as a healthy or unhealthy motivator for us as it relates to our relationship with God.
7. In verses 21-23, Jesus uses a criteria to determine who will enter the kingdom of heaven on the day of judgement. What criteria does Jesus seem to have in mind as he makes this determination? What did He say was missing in the lives of those He addressed?

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8. If the point of walking the “narrow” road is our ever growing and deepening relationship with Jesus, what changes in your life need to be made in order to make your relationship with Jesus more of a priority?

Sharing and Prayer: Split people up into groups of 2 or 3 and based on what people shared in response to question 8, spend some time praying for each other. Also during this time, have those groups of 2 or 3 think of a few ways they can encourage each other during the week to prioritize their relationship with Jesus.