

## A Life That Actually Works

### Part 6: Choices

Matthew 7:13-27 - [Watch Online](#)

#### **Summary:**

Most of us agree that the historical Jesus was an amazing and remarkable person. His understanding of human nature and his teachings on loving our neighbor have changed the world. And, most of us agree that if we applied his teaching to our lives it would make things go a lot better. So why don't we? It all comes down to what we choose.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What has stood out to you, challenged you, or intrigued you as we've gone through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount?
2. Jesus said we will know people by their fruit. Who's someone that displays this kind of good fruit Jesus was talking about? Give an example or two of their fruit.
3. Read Ephesians 2 vv8-9. If we are saved through faith in Jesus alone, why do you think Jesus, in his sermon, placed such an emphasis on our hearts and actions?
4. Jon said, "The life that actually works is right in front of us. We simply have to choose to accept it and live it one choice at a time." What's one choice this week you can make to put this life into practice?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

#### **Main Points:**

[01:44] We all want a life that actually works but we're not all willing to DO what actually works.

[03:14] A life that actually works is the result of what we actually choose to do.

[04:23] We have two choices... a life of destruction or life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

[08:24] The proof of who we are is what we consistently choose to do.

[09:58] Jesus doesn't just want agreement... he wants obedience.

[11:39] Living in the Kingdom of Heaven isn't what we say we believe. It's showing what we believe through our choices and actions.

[13:58] The life that actually works is a life of allegiance to Jesus evidenced by a transformed heart AND life.

[18:00] A life that actually works brings life to everyone around it.

#### **This week's practice [16:28]**

Prayers...

Jesus, thank you for loving me. I choose to accept you as my king. Because you died and rose again, I choose to trust you to give me true life now and forever. Please take my life, make it yours. Live in me and through me so others can see your love.

Holy Spirit, Let me work with you as you transform me into who I was created to be. Let me see what you are doing around me and give me the desire and ability to join you in it.

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## Transcript:

**IN:** Most of us agree that the historical Jesus was an amazing and remarkable person. His understanding of human nature and his teachings on loving our neighbor have changed the world. Most of us agree that if we applied his teaching to our lives it would make things go a lot better. So then, why don't we?

It all comes down to what we choose... so let's talk about it together.

**WE:** I want to be in good shape.

I want to be healthy, I want to have energy to play w/ my kids, I want to fit into the clothes in my closet that I've been saving.

But I'm not.

It's not b/c of my body type/genes or anything... parents are in pretty good shape

It's not b/c I don't believe exercise and diet will work.. I definitely believe/know it...

It's not b/c I don't know how to get into shape... I know the names of the muscles I want to work, I know the names of the specific exercises will strengthen those specific muscles.

I know the great feeling of really exercising and feeling accomplished and having that rush afterward.

I have the same amount of time in my day as everyone else.

I know lots of people in good shape... they even invite me to work out with them

I'm out of shape b/c I haven't been willing to actually take the steps, discipline myself, change my lifestyle to do the things that will give me the results I want.

You know where I'm going with this don't you?

**We all want a life that actually works but we're not all willing to DO what actually works.**

Jesus showed us what that life looks like and told us how to experience it...

A life focused on seeking the KoH on earth now...

- Pledging allegiance to Jesus as our king
- Merciful, meek, seeking justice for all, forgiving even our enemies, not seeking revenge.. but peace
- Not just trying to follow rules but actually having our heart change to love others
- Rejecting the need to impress anyone else
- Choosing not to worry about things we can't control anyway.
  - Including our self-worth so we have no need to judge others.

And many of us (JF or not) agree and say, Jesus is so insightful and so right about so many of these things.

Not many people disagree w/ the truth and wisdom in the sermon on the MT.

But, we can know all the right things, believe all the right things, wholeheartedly agree this is the best way to live... even surround ourselves with people trying to live this out... and still not actually LIVE and experience a life that actually works.

So as Jesus closes his teaching about the KoH and what it means to live in it... he shows us what it takes to actually have this life...

**A life that actually works is the result of what we actually choose to do.**

**GOD: V. 13-14** Pretty intense.

Narrow and wide gate... what's he getting at?

In context w/ the rest of his sermon it doesn't seem he's specifically talking about going to heaven or hell...

- This translation loves to put the word Hell in whenever possible...
- Better wording would be "way of destruction."

He's talking about life now.

We can either live/experience true life in the KoH now or continue on the path that leads to a life of destruction

- Physically, spiritually, emotionally, relationally.

**We have two choices... a life of destruction or life in the KoH.**

So he says... Can only enter the KoH through the narrow gate...

Seems well... narrow... BUT it's not narrow b/c it's exclusive... it's a path offered to anyone and everyone. Anyone can live it if they choose it.

It's narrow b/c so few actually choose it...

- B/c as we've seen throughout this teaching... It's difficult. It seems illogical. It doesn't "work" in the way we think and define "working"

Choosing the narrow way requires a conscious choice and deliberate practice... it doesn't just happen.

On the other hand... the path of destruction has a wide gate b/c it seems to be the *easiest* and therefore it's the most popular

- Don't have to change anything. Just go with the flow of life.
- Do what seems right in the moment
- Don't have to rely on anyone but yourself
  - Your work ethic, your goodness, your skills, ability, wealth

But as we've seen this choice leads to emptiness, fear, worry, chaos, anger, exhaustion... destruction.

Of course we want to make sure we choose the right way... we want to get things right...

- I mean who would purposely choose to have a trail of destroyed relationships, opportunities, dreams...

So we look for help... and we find so many voices telling us what to choose, which path to take, telling us they have the answer.

Who do we listen to... what do we believe... what path actually leads to the life we want?

### V. 15-20

False prophets- "This is the path that you want to go on...follow me!" But in reality they are running full-speed down the wide road to destruction.

Definitely a problem in religion and church.

- People claiming to speak for God but their main concern is really themselves, getting ahead, building their brand, gaining power
- Build a church/ministry/brand w/o any concern who is used and hurt and used up along the way... don't care about how many bodies are behind the bus as long as the mission is accomplished.

But a false prophet doesn't just have to be a religious leader...

A false prophet is anyone who claims to have the solution/answers we are looking for... and though they seem like they are actually concerned and are definitely adamant that they have good answers/or will at least protect you from THOSE wolves...

They are actually only out for themselves... Their power/wealth/fame/number of followers & clicks

- SM influencers
- Politicians
- Seemingly well-meaning friends/family

Obviously not every church leader/SM influencer/politician is a wolf in sheep's clothing... So how do we know who to listen to?

By their fruit. Look at their fruit... Fruit = Results of consistent choices.

Anyone can say anything they want. **The proof of who we are is what we consistently choose to do.**

What is actually good fruit?

- Wealth /Success /Fame /Influence /Get the job done /Great policy /Stands up loudly for the right causes?

Not according to Jesus... the fruit that actually proves this person is leading us to a life that works... Is everything Jesus has been talking about... love for enemies, being forgiving, merciful, and humble.

Or as Paul put it... proof that someone is actually being transformed by HS in the KoH **Gal 5:22-23.**

But remember... Jesus never tells us just to worry about THEM... it's always, "What about US?"

**V. 21** Scary!

“Lord! Lord!” - they actually call Jesus Lord, they agree w/ his teachings...do all the church/religious stuff... and completely miss the life he offers.

How is that possible? **Jesus doesn't just want agreement... he wants obedience.**

Fun word. What is *obedience*? Doing the will of the Father in heaven... Everything Jesus has been teaching... Law of Love.

Jesus goes even further.

If anyone tells you Jesus never actually claimed to be God show them this...

**V. 22-23** Jesus claims he will be the ultimate judge of humanity. [Crazy or Right]

And as this judge who will he approve of?

Well, you would think performing miracles would be pretty good proof you're in KoH, tight w/ Jesus, right? Wrong.

We can do some amazing things, say we are for Jesus...

But if we are not actually living a life transformed by the HS and permeated with God's love... it means nothing

- Paul- last weeks' reading- **1 Cor 13:2-3**

**Living in the KoH isn't what we say we believe. It's showing what we believe through our choices and actions.**

This is the path to true life...

**V. 24-27** Whoever listens AND FOLLOWS.

- Listening alone does *nothing*.

Following creates the life that will withstand real life.

Can say whatever we want... even go through some of the motions BUT... eventually when real life really comes at us... who/what we are will be proven.

**YOU:** For these 6 episodes we have seen Jesus painting a detailed and soul searching picture of the KoH and He is now asking, “What are you going to choose to do about it?”

One path seems easier and we assume it'll turn out good... but it only produces difficulty and destruction.

The other path seems difficult, illogical, but ultimately it leads to life AND it's not a path we go down alone, gritting our teeth hoping we can figure it out and do good enough...

Jesus never tells us to do something he doesn't give us the ability to actually do.

- **Phil 2:13**

We choose to follow. He empowers us. We choose to work it out and practice it.

So what do you choose?

- Wide or narrow?
- Destruction or life?

This Life is offered to everyone.

It is not about knowing enough about God or the biblical writings, not about holding the right doctrine.

It doesn't matter what we say...

**The life that actually works is a life of allegiance to Jesus evidenced by a transformed heart AND life.**

See **v. 28** "amazed at his teachings"

Different b/c authoritative... spoke for God... not just cute/self-help statements or quoting popular rabbis

Offered himself as the way... unique.

"I am the way truth life. No one comes to the father but through me."

- He is rock wise people build their life on
- To hear and follow is living in personal relationship w/ him
- Not just SAYING we believe in Jesus... even doing good/miraculous things in his name
- It's receiving and walking in relationship w/ King of Kings... having lives transformed from inside/out

When he lives w/ and in us, we begin to think/act/live like Children of God... citizens of KoH he's been describing.

But just like many of us make excuses for not doing what it takes to be in shape...

- We don't have the time right now, but we'll do it soon
- Don't want to be like those crazy health nuts always talking about working out and healthy food taking selfies at the gym
- And besides, I'm not THAT out of shape

We make excuses about why we choose the broad path...

- I'll do it when work/family/school calms down
- I don't want to be one of those religious nuts always talking about religion and using weird churchy language taking selfies while reading the bible
- And besides, my life's not THAT bad

Excuses don't change anything.

Want this life? Done trying your own way, or just going w/ the flow... you are invited to something new. Something more...

You are invited to true life... NOW. A life that actually works now and forever.

Tell Jesus that.

**Pray:** Jesus thank you for loving me. I choose to accept you as my king. B/c you died and rose again, I choose to trust you to give me true life now and forever. Please take my life, make it yours. Live in me and through me, so others can see your love.

If you have made that primary choice... continue it/show it by allowing the HS to transform you one choice at a time... it begins it all.

**Pray:** HS- Let me work with you as you transform me into who I was created to be. Let me see what you are doing around me and give me the desire and ability to join you in it.

**WE:** The life that actually works *is right in front of us.*

We simply have to choose to accept it and live it one choice at a time.

The person who chooses this life will experience true life now and forever and will be used to bring the KoH to others

The family that chooses this life will be a safe haven to each other and to their neighbors

The community that chooses this life will become a light to the world. A city on a hill that cannot be hidden.

- This is the CC we are creating and inviting our neighbors to D,E,S, together.
- Why? B/c...

**A life that actually works brings life to everyone around it.**