

Counter Rev Small Group Conversation based on Matthew 7:13-23

Keep this conversation no longer than 35-45 minutes. Draw out the contributions of everyone. Land the time in prayer, but remember to gently coach people who haven't prayed in a group before. Of course, there's no pressure to pray aloud. Encourage people to download the commentary of Matthew 5:21-26 off the website for personal study. Remind people to bring their Bibles to group.

Getting to know each other

- When travelling to a place, what is the most lost you've ever been?

Understanding and applying Christ's teaching in Matthew 7:13-23

- *Optional: if some of your group didn't hear the Sunday message, then play the summary audio clip to the group.*
- *Read verses 13-14.* Although it is not wrong to apply to Christians (narrow road) and non-Christians (broad road), we must remember that Christ is saying this to disciples, not to the whole world (see 5:1). Assuming 'life' and 'death' don't refer to 'heaven' and 'hell' but rather to 'blessing' and 'lack of blessing', how should we apply these words to ourselves as Christians?
- What are the signs, from your experience, that a Christian has opted for the broad road instead of the narrow road?
- Have there been times, perhaps even now, when you've opted for the broad road? In what ways did you experience the death that Jesus speaks of? And in what ways have you experienced the life that Jesus speaks of on the narrow road of full devotion?
- *Read verse 15.* A false prophet is someone who may seem like they're bring a message from God, or at least a message about God and the meaning of life, but in fact what they're saying is spiritually deadly. From your experience, how can false messages / gospels / claims damage people spiritually?
- *Read verses 16-20.* By what 'fruit' do you think we should evaluate the trustworthiness of a person who comes with a spiritual message?
- *Read verses 21-23.* These words are usually interpreted to mean, 'It's not enough to trust in Jesus for salvation or even to serve him; your life needs to be very godly or you're not going to heaven'. But this is a wrong interpretation for two reasons. Firstly, in the preceding verses (v15-20) Jesus is not speaking about disciples, but about false prophets, who have ultimately rejected the gospel, even if they still have some kind of respect for Jesus. Secondly, this interpretation contradicts the rest of Scripture, which affirms that assurance of salvation comes from trusting in Christ (see 1 John 5:12-13) and casting our sinful selves upon God's mercy (see Luke 18:9-14). Why is the usual interpretation so dangerous?

Praying about Christ's teaching in Matthew 7:13-23

- Pray together. Celebrate the assurance of salvation that Christians have. Freshly devote yourselves to the narrow road that leads to great blessing.