

Sermon on the Mount, Week 7

Small Group Discussion Guide, week of Oct 25th

OCT 25TH SERMON SUMMARY

A RESPONSIVE HEART (Matthew 7:13-29)

Following Jesus as his disciples is not about doing more - it's about having soft, receptive, responsive hearts. Jesus gives 4 choices and warnings, each with an implicit call to respond:

- **Respond with faith** (v. 13-14, Jn 10:7-10). Jesus is the gate; the road is following Him.
- **Respond with fruit**, from the heart (v. 15-20, Jn 15:4-5). Be careful who you follow. Fruitfulness comes from our connection to Jesus, as we cultivate a relationship with him.
- **Respond with obedience** to God's leading (v. 21-23). Jesus knows the ones who love Him and seek His will, not the ones who love their own glory and seek to impress others.
- **Respond** (v. 24-29). The wise disciple responds to the words of Jesus. We see our need for God and we seek Him. He enables us to grow as disciples, in faith, fruit, and obedience.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION (optional): Who do you follow? Share briefly about someone you admire, look up to, or follow.

II. THINK AND REFLECT.

In Mark 4 Jesus tells the Parable of the Sower (v. 1-8), then explains it (v. 14-20). Think about how we hear and respond to God's word, calling, and/or leading as you read it (below).

"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

... The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

1a. How is the seed like the words of Jesus?

b. Share some ways, other than sermons, that we hear Jesus’ word and His leading.

c. Why is it wise to respond to His leading? (Talk about who God is and how we benefit from following Him.)

2. What gets in the way of hearing and receiving Jesus’ teachings? Give examples.

a. on the path

b. in rocky places

c. among the thorns

d. Share how you, or people you know, have experienced any of these obstacles to responding to the words of Jesus?

3a. How can we grow to hear, receive, and respond to Jesus better?

b. Share any specific ideas or practices that are helpful to you.

c. Share about one “seed” (if any) that landed on good soil for you in this sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.

III. PERSONAL APPLICATION (Choose 1 of the following if time is limited)

4. In what ways do you have a soft, responsive heart? Share one or more of the following:

- a positive example
- what gets in the way for you
- how you would like to grow in having a responsive heart

5. Is God calling for a response in faith, fruit, or obedience in some area of your life? What help do you need to take the next step?

6. How is God speaking to you about discipleship in this series or study?