

Matthew 7:13-29

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[0 : 00] Chapter 7, verses 13 through 29 is where we will be at. We will be finishing up what is commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. We'll get to that in just a moment. As you're turning there, I want to encourage you, some of you, a number of you are going through reading plans and reading through Scripture this year.

I want to encourage you to stay the course and stay on track. I know that it's very easy to get discouraged and to get kind of a little bit off track or a little bit frustrated at times.

And I want to encourage you to do that. I know there are some who are reading through it chronologically. I look forward to hearing how that goes. Some of you are reading it straight through Genesis to Revelation. I'll wait a couple more weeks before I really encourage you guys.

I'll wait until you get to Numbers and Leviticus. And then I'll really, really encourage you guys as you're trying to pronounce those names and get through those things. But we know they're in there for a reason. I mean, I'm often asked on the one that I personally follow and why there's so much jumping around and why there seems to be so much going back and forth between the Old and the New Testament.

And I've shared with those who have asked me privately, and I try to share here publicly as well, but I wanted to take today and encourage you that by reading that, we begin to see the fulfillment of things in Scripture.

[1 : 14] Now, keep in mind, I've read that same reading plan now for probably nine or ten years, and it took me a number of years before I saw these things. So I just want to maybe highlight what you are seeing as you're following that reading plan in case maybe you're getting a little frustrated.

You're reading currently through that reading plan Genesis and Ezra, your Old Testament text. Keep in mind that what you're reading is you're reading the beginning and the new beginning, right? Genesis is the beginning of all things, and Ezra is the new beginning as they come out of Babylonian captivity.

You read this morning or this afternoon if you haven't read it yet. I don't want to kind of tell you the inside, tell you the events before they happen, but I'll tell you the events before they happen. You read Matthew 9 and you read Acts chapter 9.

If you have not read it yet, I want you to pay attention to this. In Matthew 9, Jesus does a number of things. First, he heals a paralytic. He heals the centurion's daughter who has died, or he raises her from the dead.

And he cries out to his disciples, pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send laborers into the harvest. Okay? Three things. He was a paralytic. He raises the young girl who dies.

[2 : 23] And the Greek word that he says there is, talithakum, which literally means little girl arise. So he goes into the upper room and he says, talithakum. And then he tells the disciples to pray to the Lord of harvest that there will be laborers into the harvest.

You flip over your pages and you go to Acts chapter 9. You see God answering these things. Because Saul, on the way to Damascus, is met by a shining light.

He is a laborer called to the field of harvest. Right? Because the Lord says, I have shown him what he will do. I will use him as an instrument for the Gentiles and speak to kings and all these things.

So he is literally fulfilling that by calling Saul, also known as Paul. And then you see, at the end of Acts chapter 9, Peter healing a paralytic.

Now, wait a minute. What did Jesus say in John chapter 15? The things that I do, you will do as well. Peter heals a paralytic. And then at the end of Acts chapter 9, Peter is called upon to go to the house of a woman named Dorcas, who has died.

[3 : 27] And she is there and she is laid in an upper room. And in this upper room, he goes to her and then he uses her Greek name, which is Tabitha. And he says, Tabitha kum.

Jesus said, talitha kum. Little girl arise. Tabitha kum. I don't think Tabitha means little girl. Okay? Because she was an older lady. Her name. And arise. So all I'm wanting to do is encourage you.

Scripture says but one thing. And it says it all the way through. And we pray the Lord give us eyes to see it. This is what keeps us pressing forward as we are following our reading plans.

Right? If you're reading a different plan, there are things just like that opening up before you. All I'm asking you to do is continue to look and see what God's opening up before you. And stand each day and go, oh, wow.

Because every time we open up the Word of God, we have a right to go, oh, wow, look at that. Be amazed at Scripture. And if you are amazed at Scripture, you will continue to absorb Scripture.

[4 : 24] And you will continue to go to Scripture. And you will continue to hunger for Scripture. And you will continue to thirst after it. And it will be the thing which pushes you forward. Just my pastoral encouragement this morning before the text.

Okay. Matthew chapter 7, verses 13 through 29. If you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together. And we read the Word of God. Record it for us in the Gospel of Matthew, the 7th chapter, starting in verse 13.

Going down to the end of the chapter, which gets us to verse 29. This is the words of Christ here, speaking at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mountain. He says,

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. And God, we thank you for the great privilege of opening up your Word.

Lord, and we pray as we have looked at it and we have read it, Lord, that now that we would have eyes to see it, we pray that we would be opened and transparent before you, O God.

[6 : 54] That you would speak to our hearts and minds. And that we would hear you afresh. That we would know more of you. That we may know more of ourselves. And Lord, that through your truth, come to a greater understanding of where we are at personally.

Lord, we pray that you would just grip us in this moment by your presence and your power. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. the teacher who is Jesus, and trying to learn a great truth from him.

We really have no idea how many disciples, quote unquote, there were. We do know that the crowds exceeded somewhere between 5,000 to 10,000.

[8 : 58] The feeding of the 5,000 is just men. Most estimate that number conservatively at about 10,000 by the time you include women and children. So we know that there were a multitude of people around him when he declared these things.

We also know that the Pharisees and the scribes were present when he declares these things, because at the end of this chapter, it says that they were amazed at his teaching. Not necessarily at what he had said, but in the manner and the way in which he had said it, because he taught them as one having authority.

Now, we're going to get back to the first of these verses, but in order to catch the weight of verses 13 through 29, we need to know how they end. And that is this profession of the Pharisees and scribes that Jesus is teaching them as one with authority.

Now, how do we judge that, or how do we understand that? The Pharisaic tradition and scribal tradition, Pharisees would have been those who studied the law, right?

Don't diss them. Don't discount them. Don't dismiss them. Don't be upset at them, even though we understand how they are used to fulfill the testimony of heaven here later on at the crucifixion of Christ.

[10 : 05] But they really had a desire to know the things of God and to know it accurately. And scribes worked hand in hand with the Pharisees, and the scribes we have to give a lot of credit to, because they are those who would hand transcribe the text, and therefore they are absolutely part of the essential hands that God used to ensure that we have the clear word of God before us, and the accurate word of God.

But in Pharisaic and scribal tradition, when an individual would stand up and teach, he would always stand on the authority of someone else. He would always declare, so-and-so says, and he would always declare of past scribes, or past Pharisees, or past teachers, or past, they would be quoting other individuals.

This wasn't something that was really limited to Jewish thought. This is really something that was prominent in the Greco-Roman culture. Even in the days of secular, what we would call secular or worldly teaching there, there was always, at this time in history, the quoting of past scholars to emphasize the reality of a truth being declared.

That is, if I told you something, it really didn't matter unless someone in the past had agreed with me. We see that a lot today, where we stand up and we want to declare. Now, we want to be accurate, and we don't ever want to come across as if we're giving information that originates with us, when it originates with someone else.

I know that at times, I will tell you who I get this quote from, or who I get this thing from, and we want to give credit where credit is due. And there are a number of times where I can't, because I've told you before, I'm not that well organized, and my mind is like a Rolodex, and when I'm preaching, it's like it's spinning, and wherever it stops, it stops.

[11 : 46] And I don't always remember where that came from. I just know that it's stored in there somewhere, and it comes out. And for that, I apologize. But we understand that we don't want to always just stand on the shoulders of past truth teachers, or past individuals.

But the thing that was unique about Christ is that when Christ stood up to speak, He didn't quote anyone. He stood on His own authority. He declared emphatic truths that rested solely upon the reality that it was He who was saying it.

These things are true simply because Jesus says they're true. Now, this is important. These things are so not because other people have said so, or not because the great scholars from the past have said so, or not even in Roman or Jewish culture because Gamaliel says so, or this person says so, or this trusted theologian says so.

These things are not so because of anyone else. These things are so because the King of Kings says so. And He stands on His own authority.

Now, as we move forward, part of that Matthew chapter 9, and the works that we see of Christ, they are the validation of the King, right? Because if He did all these things, then we must pay attention to these things He said as well.

[13 : 07] So later on, He validates it through His actions, and He validates. That's why we have the place of miraculous happenings and miraculous events and all of these things.

It is a great testimony that as we turn the chapter in Matthew chapter 8, the fishermen are going to be scared out of their wits because they're in the middle of the sea that they spent all of their life upon, and a storm comes up, and they think they're going to die.

And in the front of the boat, Jesus is asleep. Right? It is something that these men who have spent all their life on this body of water are scared to death. They're, oh, we're going to die, we're going to die, and Jesus is asleep.

And they go wake Him up, and Jesus says, oh, you of little faith, be quiet. He tells the wind and the sea to be quiet, and it stops. What does He do? He's validating to the disciples, the apostles, who He is. But what we are standing on now is, these things are so because He says they're so.

And it's important. Because here at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, the King calls for a decision. You have to have a title.

[14 : 06] It is the King's call for a decision. He has told us what it looks like to be kingdom people. He has told us from the Beatitudes to the, really the reinterpretation of the law.

Or now, I don't want to say the reinterpretation, because that's the wrong word. The full interpretation and embodiment of the law. The law is not just the things we do. It is who we are internally. It is who we are at our heart, at our core, the very core of our being.

He has told us what kingdom people look like in their behavior, and how they interact with other people. He has told us what kingdom people look like in their discernment, in their wisdom, and really in their humility.

It's not that they're being the final judge of any other individual, but when they go to that individual, they are going after only examining their own lives, and judging their own walk, and looking in the mirror at themselves, and getting that log that is out of their own eye before they try to get a speck of dust out of their brother's eye.

He has told us what kingdom individuals look like, and now, at the end, he calls for a decision. You're either going to be a kingdom person, or you're not. And it is the call for a decision that comes with such force, and such truth, and such reality, that the way it resonated when he declared it, it still resonates today.

[15 : 19] It is the same call for a decision that every individual must hear. I will give this where it is due. John Stott once said, the church is a dangerous place to be.

The church is a dangerous place to be. And you say, why? Because Jesus here is speaking to those who have heard him.

And having heard, the onus is on us. Because now, there's responsibility.

One of my dear brothers, not of this congregation, but of another congregation, once told me, if I was to discount the sovereignty of God, and if I was to discount the reality that God knows all things, understands all things, he said, I would have told you that it would be better for you not to ever tell me about the gospel.

Therefore, I wouldn't be responsible for the things that I know. He said, but, being in the congregation of God's people brings with it responsibility.

[16 : 32] And this is why we have to rest in the sovereignty of God. You didn't stumble in here because you thought it was a good place to stay dry. You're here because God has brought you here and ordained that you would be here. And he has brought you here to hear what he declares to us, right?

And this is the reality that these truths come to those who hear. And we see this call for decision. There is no one for an in-betweenness in the kingdom.

It's not like you can be a partial member of the kingdom of heaven. You can't be a part of the world and a part of the kingdom of heaven. So you can't be, we don't have what we call dual citizenship, right?

You're not a part of the kingdom of the world and you're not a part of the kingdom of heaven at the same time. There is no such thing because you have to leave one to be a part of the other. It is an emphatic decision that must be made.

And it is the call that is graciously issued to those who hear. And it is the call that God's people are called to graciously issue today. So I want you to see four truths which resonate with this call to a decision.

[17 : 35] Number one, this is an intentional call. Or is it an intentional decision, rather? This is an intentional decision. Throughout this passage, he contrasts two things.

There are two ways. There are two prophets. There are two people who respond to what they say in his name. There are two people who respond to what they hear.

There is this contrast in between the right and the wrong. And there is this highlighting of a decision being made. But the first thing we understand is that to be a part of the kingdom, it is an intentional choice.

It says, Enter through the narrow gate. Enter through the narrow gate. If anyone ever tells you that Christianity is narrow-minded and Christianity doesn't seem to be open to all things and Christianity seems to be a little bigoted, let's say, we are not narrow-minded, we are narrow-gated.

Right? Because we're not trying to be broad and accepting of all, we're trying to be narrow and accurate. Because we need to understand, it says, Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and there are many who enter through it.

[18 : 47] For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and there are few who find it. The ESV translates this, for the way is easy. The path is broad and the way is easy that leads to destruction, but the way is hard that leads to eternal life.

So there's this contrast between the broad way and the narrow way. And there's this contrast that comes to the individual. And Jesus declares here that we must enter through the narrow gate.

And he is sitting before the individuals who are listening to him and he's sitting before us today. You are on either one of two paths. Right? You're only on one of two. It's not like you're walking between the paths.

You're either on the broad path or the narrow path. You're not somewhere between the two. You have to be on one of them. And he says that the only way that you're on them is because you intentionally choose to be on them.

He says that the way is broad that leads to destruction. And he says there are many people who are on that, but our call here and the challenge here is to enter through the narrow gate.

[19 : 50] And then he tells us in verse 14, for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life. And then look at this. And there are few who find it.

Find it. The reality is that's a really cool sound. We need to get that effect in there. Every time I say find it, I don't know where it's coming from, but we need to keep that sound going. And I don't mean to call attention to it either than my squirrel tendency.

I tend to get a little distracted, but that is just so super cool. But anyhow, we just keep moving on. We need to understand here what Jesus is emphasizing. We want to emphasize what he does. That the gate is narrow and there are a few who find it.

Now to find something, you have to be looking for it. A couple of months ago, my wife and I were hiking on a trail up in the Great Smoky Mountains.

One of the greatest times we had because there were no cell phone service up there. No cell phone towers. And it's kind of great to go get lost for a little while. And I had found this trail on an app.

[20 : 50] Yeah, I'm one of those geeks. I have a hiking app on my phone. It's the only app I have on my phone other than the one Braden put on there, right? So an all-trails hiking app. And I found this trail and I knew where I wanted to go.

And there's this cabin in the 1800s that you could go to. And I wanted to go to this cabin and I knew it was there. And I did what every other man does. I found the right way to go and then I found an alternate route to go because some reviews said the alternate route was better.

And that's kind of cool until you get to where there's no cell phone service and you can't look at your app because you don't have that downloadable pro version yet. But that's okay. So we were there and there's this real broad path.

And I said, but they say the cool way is that way. So we went and we kind of looped around and saw all this cool stuff. And to get to the cabin, many people had said, watch out, there are like four wooden steps and you have to be looking for those steps or you'll miss the cabin.

And that's all they said. I said, okay, well, you got to be looking for the steps. Now you got to keep in mind this way that we were on was a really broad way and literally nobody was on it. There wasn't a multitude who found it. There was nobody on it.

[21 : 50] We met one Boy Scout troop coming out and they looked ragged and beat up and it made me feel really good going in because they had like backpacks and staffs and you had all this stuff on their back and I literally had nothing but a lunchbox with some tuna in it.

But it's okay. We were going in and we were making our way on this very broad like gravel road. It was no logging road and I said, this isn't where I want to go because I want to go on a narrow way.

And sure enough, about three miles up, Kerry goes, look, there are some steps. Now we use the term steps lightly. There were a couple logs and I said, well, maybe that's it. Looks like somebody has walked through there in the last 20 years.

So we'll go that way. And sure enough, when you jumped off of this big broad trail, if you were looking for it, you found some logs with the last step being about four foot off the ground and it had been kind of raining like this.

But there was the coolest cabin about another mile off the trail you would have never seen. But you had to be looking for it, right? You had to be intentionally looking for that cabin.

[22 : 47] Now, an artist had lived in that cabin and her and her husband, they'd lived there for years and I was thinking, I know why they lived there because not even the loggers going down the road would have known where that was at. And this was at a time of the year where there were no leaves on any of the trees and you just couldn't see.

I was like, there's no way there's a cabin back here, right? There's no way. And we walked for a little while and there it is. It just opened up and it was so awesome. Side note, it was really comforting eating tuna on the porch of a cabin that had bear claw marks on its doors.

So that was kind of cool. You know, we just tried not to let the smell of fish get out too far into the woods and we ate our tuna and we got out of there. But you had to be looking for it and you had to know where you were going or you would have missed it.

And what Jesus is saying with this is it's exactly the same thing. If you're letting the course of life and the stream of humanity dictate where you go, you will not find it.

If you're just going with the crowd and moving along, this is an intentional stop. It's an intentional looking.

[23 : 53] People don't just happen into the kingdom. You don't accidentally get on the narrow way. You don't happen to pass through the right gate.

You don't stumble across the narrow path. What Jesus is saying is it is an intentional decision. Which means this.

I'm not putting too much emphasis on your decision and my decision. That if there is an inclination to find that gate, then we know that the king is drawing us to himself.

On our own, naturally, we don't look for these things. Mankind naturally goes the path of least resistance. We just naturally do.

And this is why it says that the way is easy that leads to destruction. But the way is hard that leads to eternal life. Right? It's only hard to find. At times, it's hard on it.

[24 : 54] I have found in hiking that the trails that are the hardest are usually the coolest. They have the most to offer at the end. I don't know if it's because you had to work to get there or if it's because the really cool stuff is never really easy to find.

But we see this here, that this is an intentional decision. You don't stumble upon the kingdom. You are led by the king to look for the gate.

Now, later on, we know that he is the gate. Right? We stay this consistent with scripture. He is that narrow gate through which we enter. So we see that it is an intentional decision. Number two, it is observable.

That is, it can be noticed. So he transitions now from the individual who's looking for this gate in this way to the reality that once someone is there, we can observe it in their life.

It is something that is noticeable because he goes in verse 15, beware of false prophets. He says, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. So he brings up the reality and we've seen this before already in the Sermon on the Mount as far as prophets and their place within the nation of Israel and all the place within the kingdom of heaven.

[26 : 03] But he says, beware of those people who are going to come and they look good on the outside. Right? Here he begins to speak to the person who puts on a pretty good show. These are prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing.

So the imagery is like a wolf dressed up as a sheep. You've all seen it. Every one of you have watched Looney Tunes and you've seen Wiley the Coyote put on sheep skin and go walk around the sheep herd until that sheep dog that's hair is over its eyes sees him.

Right? You've all seen that. And it's the same picture that we get here that this wolf comes and he's really, he looks like a sheep on the outside. He walks like a sheep and he's got his head down like he's eating grass like a sheep. But he's really not a sheep.

He's a wolf. But the picture that Christ is giving us is that what we look like on the outside is not a testimony to what we really are. And it is this thing that has been repeated throughout the Sermon on the Mount is that you can absolutely look like you are a member of the kingdom of heaven but truly not be.

And the call for decision is this reality because he says you will know them by their fruits. You can observe them by their fruits. And he gives the picture of good fruit comes from good tree.

[27 : 15] Bad fruit comes from bad trees. Right? We don't expect to get fruit from thistles and thorn plants. We don't expect to get, you know, we don't expect to get an orange from a hackberry tree.

We know it by its fruits. And it is the testimony that what we are on the inside will always, always become evident on the outside.

What we are internally will eventually be revealed externally. It is not a matter of looking good on the outside. It is not a matter of appearing to be a member of the kingdom.

It is not a matter of appearing to be on the narrow road. What we see here is that those who have made the decision for the kingdom have observable fruit in their lives.

They can point to the fruit. Now here is one of the great things that you have that the king tells us, right? Because not only is there a king who is lord over us, there is an enemy who continues to throw fiery darts at us, right?

[28 : 20] So that is just the truth. So we need to know how to combat our enemy. Maybe my battles are different than your battles, but I know that my enemy likes to come to me, and I would dare say he probably enjoys coming to you as well, and casting this thing called doubt in your mind.

Are you really a member of the kingdom? Do you really know Jesus Christ as your lord and savior? Are you really saved? Could you be saved? I mean, look at your life and see that everything is going on here. Look at how you're acting now.

Look at this anger you have, or look at all this stuff that's going on inside of you. Are you really, really saved? And the enemy comes with doubts and shadows and all these things. Here is the beautiful thing about the kingdom of heaven.

If you are a member of the kingdom of heaven, you will have fruit in your life. And all you have to do is to tell your enemy, I don't know about you, but when I see an apple tree hanging from, I see an apple hanging from a limb, I know I'm standing next to an apple tree, right?

When I see a pear hanging from a limb, I know I'm standing next to a pear tree. And when I see love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control hanging from my life, I know I'm standing next to a kingdom but when you can't point to any fruit, then maybe you need to say, well, is me.

[29 : 34] You say, well, are all Christians fruitful? Well, yes, because Jesus also says that if a tree does not bear fruit, it is cut down. Cross-reference this with other scripture.

John 15, Jesus says, I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, now let's say this just as he said, he who abides in me will bear much fruit.

Abiding in Christ will cause the bearing of much fruit. I'm not saying you're perfect.

I'm just saying there'll be fruit. So here's the thing that we look at because we are commanded in scripture to examine ourselves.

Paul says, examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. Well, how do you examine? Look at the fruit hanging from the limbs of your life. I'm not asking you are you perfect? I'm not asking is the bark got some scars in it every now and then?

[30 : 38] There's some limbs that may need pruning. I'm not asking you that. I'm not asking does every leaf look perfect? I'm just asking you are the fruits of the spirit there? What is observable in your life?

Because when we make the decision for the kingdom it is observable. What we are internally will reveal itself externally.

By their fruits you will know them and by our fruits we know ourselves. Number three, a decision for the kingdom is practical.

It is a very practical thing. We like to put the grand scheme things we like to make it so extravagant we like to make it so difficult we like to make it so extraordinary and while it is extraordinary and while it absolutely is extravagant and while it is majestic it is also very practical and I love the fact that the king brings it down to this and this is probably one of the scariest portions of scripture if not the scariest portion of scripture that you will ever read and it goes like this not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven.

and it is scary because it is a reality that resonates more in today's time than ever has in any other time in history I believe.

[31 : 53] Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord the emphasis here on the king is the emphasis on what people say the emphasis prior to this was on how people looked and now we are moving beyond how people look externally to what they are saying with their mouth it is what we would refer to as today lip service right they are saying the right things they are always saying the right words I mean they have Christianese down to a science they know how to talk like a Christian they know how to quote Bible verses when they want to they know how to say everything absolutely right and they even know how to use the word to do what they want to do that makes it look so magnificent because he says this not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father who is in heaven will enter and now look at this they use their lips to do this many will say to me on that day Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name again lip service we were prophesying in your name and in your name cast out demons they were doing exorcism in his name I believe scripture is absolutely accurate so I believe when it says casting out demons it literally means casting out demons okay I don't try to make it say anything that it doesn't say do not cast out demons in your name and in your name perform many miracles in your name we said it right we used the right name the seven sons of Sceva found in the book of Acts

I cast out demons in the name of the God of Peter I mean of Paul and the name of Jesus right and then those seven sons also got overwhelmed by those demons who came out and they left their naked so you know that was kind of embarrassing but other side I know you see all these things that we did in your name we knew what to say we knew how to say in such a way that magnificent things around us happened and I would dare say if we were to go around the congregation we're not going to do it and if we were to take a poll we're not going to do it and if I was to hand you a piece of paper we're not going to do it I'm just saying if and if I was to ask you how many demons you've cast out how many miracles that you have seen happen and how many prophecies you have uttered in the last 24 hours in the name of Christ that many of us would probably be like well none but yet here are people doing what we would say a lot more magnificent things than any of us are doing and what they're saying has power because as we sing and declare but so often do not believe there is power in the name of Jesus because at his name the demons tremble at his name they flee at his name things change because there is power there and here are people who are doing so much more with their words than we seem to be doing and Jesus says depart from me

I never knew you they absolutely know who they're talking about and they know the power in it and they know the power in his name and they know how to say it I know people who can quote more scripture than me a lot of people who quote more scripture than me but I know non-believers who know the Bible better than me who can quote chapter and verse and page they can tell you what page number is on their Bible and quote it and still have no salvific faith at all whatsoever in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior I know people who know more church history than me yet have no faith whatsoever I know people who know more about the things of God than me yet have no faith whatsoever that would save them because it's not a matter of what we say listen kingdom living is a very practical thing Jesus says those who do the will of my father will enter it is not the flamboyant magnificent huge things we do it is the daily living of a kingdom life in obedience to the father that ensures we've made the right decision will you ever cast out demons

I don't know maybe not will you ever utter a prophecy maybe not will you ever perform many miracles maybe not I can't say no I can say maybe not are these the things that will ensure you're in heaven absolutely no because kingdom living is very practical I don't want a grand list of big things we have done for the kingdom I just want to know how the kingdom affects our everyday life on a practical level that ensures that we're doing the will of the father and Jesus says this the will of the father is that you believe in he whom he has sent who is Jesus Christ you can do your job as you're doing it today or tomorrow when you go to work tomorrow your job can be radically transformed by the will of the father simply by believing

Jesus Christ has called you to do what it is you're doing he's called you to be a broom pusher and you sweep better than anybody because Jesus called you to be a broom pusher not anybody else it will radically transform the way you sweep the floors if it's not your supervisor who called you to do it but it's your Lord and Savior who's called you to do it then it transforms the way you do it and it is a practical thing there's an author named Brother Lawrence I don't know anything else about him other than his name was Brother Lawrence and there's a classic Christian book put out by Brother Lawrence and it's called Practicing the Presence of God it's a little short book but Brother Lawrence the whole precept of the book is how you can be the best dishwasher that's ever been by practicing the presence of God you can be the best floor mopper that's ever been by practicing the presence of God you can be the best of everything by practicing the presence of God because friends listen to me kingdom work is practical practical sometimes the practicalities become magnificent and you do have to overcome demonic influence and you do have to depend on him for the miraculous and you do have to trust and lean upon the power that's in his name but it's always on the bedrock of practical living

[38 : 18] I've got one more and I do apologize for my taking of your time it is intentional observable practical but I have to say this fourth one before I let you go it is eternal the decision we make for the kingdom is eternal the last contrast is a contrast between not what people say but what they do we have seen the people who look right on the outside sheep's clothing over a wolf we have seen people who know the right thing to say those who say Lord Lord and now we see those who hear the right things and this is where it becomes dangerous to be a part of the kingdom of heaven Jesus says therefore everyone who hears these words of mine so now we're seeing the contrast between people two people who hear the same thing but lives look eternally different there is one who hears and takes action he digs deep he gets down to the bedrock he lays the foundation of his house upon that bedrock he goes as deep as he can to ensure that when that rain comes and the flood comes and the winds blow and the storm beats against his house it doesn't go anywhere and then there is the one who hears but takes no action he's content to have just as pretty of a house because you don't see the foundation anyway

I mean it looks alright on the outside my house is just as pretty as that one well it is until the rain comes and the flood comes and the wind blows and that one falls the emphasis here is you only have but one chance to lay a foundation Paul says I lay no other foundation than that which has been laid which is Christ Jesus my Lord and if our lives are not built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ friend notice this the wind the flood the rain the storm it comes upon every every individual just because your foundation is right does not mean you don't go through the storms it just means that when the storms do come they don't have the same effect having your life founded upon the foundation of Jesus Christ does not give you security or does not give you a removal of all storms it just means in the storm in the storm as the book of Hebrews says you have an anchor for your soul that the storm doesn't have the same effect but the reality is is the decision made for the kingdom is an eternal decision everything everything else rests upon that decision you're not going to happen upon it you're not going to stumble upon it but everything from this point forward rests upon it and the king challenges the people where do you stand and it's the same call that resonates in our lives and the same call that is to resonate from our lives to those around us as Jesus brings the sermon on the mountain to a close he calls for a decision so I as I close today call for the same decision where do you stand examine your heart examine your mind this is the call

I issue to myself as I look at this passage and this is the call that we have to issue not to the neighbor beside us or to the person that's in our mind but to the individual who is us I know that's very bad English but we look at it ourselves and we say where do I stand in relation to that call and once I know that my life is upon that foundation I say where do those around me those loved ones the ones closest to me where do they stand may I live my life in such a manner in such a way that it has an eternal impact upon them as well let's pray Lord I thank you thank you for this day God I thank you for your word I thank you for the examination of your word in our own lives Lord as it opens me up and examines me searches me Lord may we wrestle with that internally before we ever try to display it externally may these truths become a reality in our lives for your glory and yours alone and we ask it all in Jesus name Amen Amen

Thank you.