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KINGDOM CONSTITUTION  
6. Illegal Immigration.

Any country has to have laws to govern who gets in and who gets out. If you have a free for all at the borders, you'll eventually have chaos **inside** the borders. Why? Because no one knows whose a citizen or not, so no one knows who should get the benefits of citizenship. Real citizens usually get hurt or confused or pay a steep price.

So you have to come in the right way. I have strong opinions on this because I'm an immigrant. Yes, your pastor was a mail order groom. But I am proud to inform you that your pastor is a legal immigrant.

- Here's my green card.
- I filled out the paper work,
- I paid the fees involved,
- I went to the appointments,
- I met the requirements.

Well Jesus said some people don't want to come into the Kingdom the right way. Some want to sneak in. Some want to come in a back door but that makes them illegal immigrants. And Jesus spells out how that hurts the real citizens.

Turn to Matt 7:13. As Jesus addresses illegal KINGDOM immigration, he puts out more contrasting pictures.

- Two different roads with two different gates
- Two different trees, with two kinds of fruit
- Two different confessions
- Two different foundations

### 1. TWO ROADS

He begins with two roads as a summary of a RADICAL choice that the Kingdom puts before us:

Matt 7:13&14

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.

14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

The path toward legal kingdom immigration is clearly distinguished. Here's how you know the difference:

- One gate is small, the other wide.
- One road is narrow, the other broad.
- One leads to life, the other to destruction.
- One is picked by few, the other picked by many.

So Jesus says, pick the small gate. Now, we can't get around this: Jesus thot the stakes

for getting in on his Kingdom were sky high. Life and destruction are in the balance. Heaven and Hell. It's serious folks!

Jesus taught, there is a way to Life and there is every other way. Jesus was no syncretist, he did not subscribe to the "ALL ROADS" lead to God, idea. Obviously! Not when he specifically says there's a road that leads to destruction! In fact, for Jesus there's no third option, there's just two roads. Indifference is just another way of picking the wrong road.

No think of how descriptive Jesus was being...

- The board road is wide so it's very accommodating. Every idea and behavior is permitted. The constricting filter of truth has no place on the broad road. It's downhill. It's easy. You come in through a wide gate which does not ask you to surrender anything on the way in. Just keep all those bags you've been packing around, no need to travel light. Keep your sin, your bitterness, keep your pet ideas about God and Self as false as they may be, keep your Pride intact, keep your Self sufficiency, keep your trophies. The road is easy, so many will therefore pick it.
  
- The narrow road however, is different. Narrow means something has to be accepted, and something has to be rejected. Narrow means a choose is before me! There is something or someone to be obeyed. The narrow road has a filter on it; it will not accommodate my sin or the lies I believe about God and Self. Just like you have to surrender your knives and bottles of water and even your hand lotion at security when you fly into the States, I have to check my baggage at the Kingdom Gate. It's hard, and relatively few therefore will submit to it.

Someone once said that the door to heaven is a low hanging door and only the humble may come in. And this circles us back to the beginning of the sermon:

blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs in the Kingdom of Heaven.  
"Have mercy on me Father, I'm a sinner."

But you may say, I thought the gospel of grace was an end to striving and moral effort! What about when Jesus says "My YOKE IS EASY" in Matt 11? Well, maybe this illustration will help us sort that out.

Raymond Comfort tells the following story: Imagine a passenger on a plane. The Stewardess comes up to this passenger and hands him a bulky parachute. She says, "here's a wonderful parachute, it's a beautiful accessory to any ensemble. AND, it's a free gift from the Airlines we're giving to you to make you HAPPY!" The passenger thinks, "hey what a sweet deal, free no less!" So he puts it on.

Well, it doesn't take long for the passenger to realize that the parachute is uncomfortable, he can't sit properly and all the other passengers are beginning to notice him and laugh at how ridiculous he looks wearing a parachute on a plane.

After just a few minutes he says to himself, "what is the use of this stupid parachute? It's

making my life miserable, it's restricting my movement and besides that, people are mocking me." And in disgust, he throws the thing off and says "boy was I sold a bill of goods."

- this is how we've done evangelism – we haven't sold the gates Jesus way.

So let's go back to the plane. Imagine the stewardess comes up to our passenger and says, "I'd like to announce that that in exactly 3 hours, we're going to have a major engine failure and this plane and all the people on it are going to crash. But, GOOD NEWS, the Airline has decided to give you this FREE parachute."

Well, the guy straps it on and it's mildly uncomfortable, it restricts his movement and all the other passengers are laughing at him for being an alarmist. They start quoting statistics about how safe AIR travel is and that he's being an extremist. What does he say? He says to himself,

I can live with a little mockery because I've got a parachute and there's a jump coming.

During the flight a stewardess bumps someone and spills boiling hot coffee all over him. What does he do? Does he stomp and yell and throw off the parachute and say, this stupid thing! It doesn't even work! No, the spilled coffee doesn't fundamentally disturb him because he wasn't trusting his parachute to keep coffee off of him, he's wearing it for the big jump.

*In fact, if anything the mockery and hardships during the flight make him cling tighter to his parachute... and even make him look forward to the crash!!*

Allen Creek, one of the reasons we don't pressure your seeking friends around here is precisely because we want to give them time to CONSIDER THE COST of the narrow gate. We're not so much interested in mere DECISIONS around here, we're interested in more and better DISCIPLES!

A decision can be the start of something wonderful, but it can also be just verbal or knowledge based thing that's totally unreal.

But I'm getting ahead of Jesus here... so now Jesus moves to talk about two categories of people who take the two different roads: First:

## **2. TWO KINDS OF TEACHERS**

15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

So with the immigration requirements clearly spelled out, Jesus turns to people who try to sneak in under the radar. In these next two sections he's not talking about people who celebrate their lack of faith in Christ. He's talking about people, ostensibly **in** the country,

so called believers, but they're here illegally – those who become teachers.

He uses two metaphors for them:

- one is **Wolves in sheep's clothing**. Of course if they came in like wolves, they would never get in! So because they come in like sheep, we must assume they look a lot like the true citizens of the Kingdom, right?
  - o And it's true. You'll find that famous cult leaders from today and former times use common language, similar concepts and words and mix much truth with a little bit of error. So how do we recognize them if they LOOK like sheep?
  
- Here Jesus quickly changes his metaphor and says **they are like trees** and bad trees always bear bad fruit. You can't tell after planting what seeds are in the ground, but by harvest time, everything is clear.

So what sort of fruit are we looking for? Well, what else does the Bible have to say about fruit? .

- there's the fruit of **sound character**. The fruit of the Spirit is nice delineation of the fruit we should be seeing in a leaders life in the Kingdom. If someone claims they're speaking from Christ, but there is no increase in them of love and joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self control, then we out to question their credentials.
  
- there's the fruit of **sound content**. Jesus would later say, Mt 12:33-34 "Make a tree bad, and its fruit will be bad. ...For whatever is in your heart determines what you say." So part of judging fruit is asking what the teacher is saying? Some teachers have sound character, but they've strayed from the tradition handed down to us by the apostles.
  - o Friends, ideas matter. The atrocities of the Nazis and Soviets were built first not on deeds, but ideas! When you deny ideas that are core to the Christian faith, the gospel gets stripped of it's power and lives stop being changed.
  
  - o Ex: John asks a church to apply the content test to their teachers (4:1) because that church was dealing with proto-Gnostics that denied that Jesus was a real human man. Their content was build on a lie, Jesus was fully man and fully God. So what did it matter, they still like Jesus right? Well, within 50 years, that Gnostic cult grew and became elitist, sexist, dualistic and pantheistic and they had no real comfort or hope to hold to the guilty or the poor. **Ideas matter**.

Right now, Dan is reading a very popular book by a bible scholar called Misquoting Jesus. The author educated at Moody, was on TV on Colbert Report touting his book. It talks about all the variations in the manuscripts from which we compile our new testament. And he makes the point which is very true that there are over 400,000 variations in the manuscripts – which ones are right, he asks?

Well, this sends a lot of Chicken Little's in the church into a panic over data that they never bothered to learn about. They didn't know good content, so they couldn't apply the content test to this scholar.

So they get tossed by his questions, because they have a quasi-Mormon view of inspiration, as if God's book dropped out of the sky from Golden Tablets. If they just read a bit more, and studied, and sought the truth, they would learn (INVESTIGATIONS) that the vast majority, or 99% of the variations are inconsequential, changes in spelling etc, and the 1% of texts whose meaning is uncertain do not affect any core Christian doctrine.

- the DaVinci scandal is built on this same misleading teaching
- the Neo-Gnostics like Elaine Pagels
- the Jesus Seminar
- popular author Bishop John Shelby Spong
- some parts of the Emergent church movement, are buying into this newly renovated Jesus, more friendly to pluralism they fail the content test, friends... why? They are moving away from historic, apostolic Christianity.

Now, on the opposite side of this, Heresy Hunting is not a legitimate Christian gift, OK? The NT church did not go looking for heresy, they assumed good will and practiced unity. So we don't operate in panic mode. When you do that, it turns us into contentious, factional people, and speaking of fruit, Paul says that factionalism is a sign or fruit of the sinful nature.

The solution is to **learn more**. More scripture and frankly, much more church history so we understand what doctrines have been common to all Christians in all places and what might be a very local or recent. (Pre-trib rapture idea). Some of us may know just enough to be dangerous. Just enough to be anxious about false teachers, but you don't know enough to really know when our faith is under fire and when there's just a legitimate in-house debate. Learn more!

We don't want to get all sideways and be one of those who pass the content test and fail the character test, right? What good does that do?

- so let's not be naïve, and let's not be touchy

### **3. TWO KINDS OF DISCIPLES**

Now Jesus turns from teachers to run of the mill disciples who are just as much illegal immigrants into the kingdom. And here he details two people who sneak in. First group:

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

The first group are those who are illegal immigrants into the kingdom because they've made a **verbal profession only**. Notice these people are hinging their entry into the Kingdom only on what they SAY:

LORD! Look at the respect! They call him master! They have such orthodox words!

In one sense it's really hard to find fault with them because they confess publicly, and they give the proper respect and they confess Christ even through bold public ministry, miracles, casting out demons. What's wrong with this? **Nothing, and everything.** Because it's possible to be a disciple who has talk but no truth. Who has profession of faith but there is no fruit to authenticate it.

And so in response to this person who leans only on a verbal confession, Jesus makes a confession of his own:

I never **knew** you. You might have said great things, but there was no repentance in you, no confession where it mattered, not on your lips, but in your heart.

The Kingdom comes down to, not a list of bold activities, or to saying specific magical words, for words without heart mean nothing. It comes down to **knowing**. Do we have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, or not? If so, there will be more than words, there will be the fruit of increased **love** and **obedience**:

1 Jn 3:18-19 Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth. This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence.

Here's the second illegal immigrant:

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Unlike the person who is relying on mere verbal profession to get in, this person is relying on mere intellectual knowledge. This is a person who is hearing and they have it all up here\*, but it never translates into their life. Jesus put such an emphasis on the importance of application that it makes it sound at times like the way to heaven is by good works.

But the rest of Scripture and Jesus himself later makes in clear how grace is the only way to be justified by God. What Jesus is saying then, is that true belief in him, is synonymous with a radical trust in his Lordship and is always expressed in obedience, action, risk.

***If I say I can carry you on my back and two of you say, "I believe you", but only one of you jumps on, who REALLY believes? The one who acts!!***

So with these two guys. They are both building the same house. And Jesus is clear, they

both hear the words, so the knowledge piece is identical. What then distinguishes them?  
The place they build:

- The rock is a sign of the application of knowledge. Obedience. Putting faith into practice.
- The sand is a sign of inactivity, belief-ism without action.

James letter couldn't make this point more clear. A faith that is just a bunch of ideas in our head is nothing. It's worse than nothing, it's death because we may be tempted to think ourselves fine with God when we're really not. That's dangerous, that's building our house on the sand.

Now you have two houses... they still look the same don't they? What will make a distinction between them? A storm. The onset of trials. Trials come and the person who has mere intellectual knowledge will fall away. Will fade like an old pair of Levis.

One of my good friends at church has a friend that she describes as super zealous about knowledge. Here's a gal who could sniff out a heretic like a police dog at an airport. She was always looking down her nose at Christians who were "off" in her opinion. She had funny legalistic rules about things she could say and not say.

On the outside, she **knows** Jesus teaching. She's a hearer of the Word. Then crisis in her marriage hit. Her husband sought to save it, after almost 2 decades, but she wanted nothing to do with it. She ran off with a much younger man. She's now in the Midwest someplace and you can hear the great crash of her faith-house from here.

***Knowledge only was no solution to her just as Verbal profession only is no solution.***

## **CONCLUSION**

Friends, this is a dangerous part of the sermon. You know why? Because you are now in that group of people who have HEARD Jesus teaching and most of you also have PROFESSED him verbally as Lord, at your conversion and your baptism. Those are not unimportant things! I think Jesus teaches us these warnings specifically BECAUSE he knew we would and SHOULD place great importance on verbal confession of Jesus as Lord, and on knowing his teaching.

But listen to the Master:

***BECAUSE our confession and our knowledge is so important, we must NEVER forget that Our citizenship in the Kingdom must translate not just into what I say and what I believe, but into what I DO.***

That's it, end of sermon.