

Fork in the Road

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2-5 Daylight Sav. Albania Tip. CMCS. Empowered to Connect.
- B. Slide6 Women's retreat: Registration begins today. 4/15-17. Twin Peaks. *Mission Possible*.
- C. Slide7-9 Good Fri Comm. Crosswalk. Easter services.
- D. Thrive moved upstairs 131.
- E. Slide10,11 City Serve - TY. Javier, Chris, Team Leaders.
- F. Prayer: *1st read last 2 verses (28,29)*. Astonished/*ek-Play-sonto* = being amazed to the point of being overwhelmed. *Let's make that our prayer*.

II. Slide12 **Intro:** Fork In The Road

- A. The concept of **2 ways**, *1 leading to life and the other to destruction*, appears throughout *the Hebrew Bible, Graeco-Roman literature, and the Dead Sea Scrolls*.¹
 - 1. Literature containing this motif *contrasts opposites* for the sake of gaining perspective. [e.g., wide/narrow; easy/hard; destruction/life; many/few]
- B. Slide13 **The Continental Divide** of the Americas, is the name given to the principal, and largely mountainous *hydrological divide* of the Americas, that separates the watersheds that drain into the Pacific Ocean from those river systems which drain into the Atlantic Ocean. [Starting in **Alaska**, running through **Canada**, through the **center of the U.S.**, through **Mexico**, then through **South America**]
 - 1. They say **a house** situated on top of this Great Divide determines whether a drop of rain fall will end up in the Pacific or Atlantic...*determined by a fraction of an inch*, on where it hits the peak of the roof. Δ
 - 2. In this portion of Scripture we are shown *the Scriptures Great Divide*.
 - a) You'll choose *one of 2 roads*. You'll be *one of 2 trees*. You'll be *one of 2 disciples*. You'll build on *one of 2 foundations*.

III. Slide14 **2 ROADS (13,14)** *1 unto life, 1 unto destruction*

¹ Faith Life Study Bible, Logos, Mt.7:13

- A. Picture the countryside back in Jesus' day, a land where *bandits and robbers* did their dirty deeds. Travelers would commonly use one of two roads.
1. The popular highway, the wide road, was the one in which caravans traveled. It was the easier route. The traveler had access to water and other comforts of life, and it was shorter. But it also was the road for *robbery and murder*.
 2. There was another road, a narrow path trodden by wise men. But it was long and difficult, winding back & forth around steep mountains & hillsides. But the travelers would reach their destination safely.
 - a) So the road of pleasure is wide and full of luxuries but the dangers are great and the journey ends in serious loss.
 - b) The road leading to life is narrow and difficult and few were found on it (orig Aramaic). To travel this way one must deny himself from physical comforts, which tend to destroy the Spirit, and must take up his cross to march through life, until he reaches the gate of paradise, where happiness and eternal life are in store.
- B. Slide15 Our culture & generation is so scared of being *narrow minded*. *Why is God so narrow?*
1. It's His Protection for us. Also, He makes it a simple choice from only 2 paths.
 - a) If God had 15 rt paths for us, *the enemy* would still come up w/15,000 wrong paths.
 - (1) Instead God made it very simple with **one way**.
 - b) Jesus said, *I am the door/gate. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.* Jn.10:9
- C. The Way has always been *narrow, lonely, & costly*. It demands self-denial, & calls for strictness of obedience, & watchfulness of spirit, *nevertheless, enter in the narrow gate*.
1. Few - God's people have always been the *remnant*, the *small minority* in the world
- D. You can't walk on both roads...they're going in opposite directions.
- E. Picture coming to a pass while *backpacking*, where the rocks are so narrow you must slip off your backpack *i.e. all your baggage* to be able to slip through.
1. Do you have baggage you need to rid yourself from today, that has been keeping you from entering the Narrow Way?

IV. Slide16 **2 ANIMALS (15)** [vs.15-23 are connected] *Pretend to be sheep, Prove to be wolves.*

- A. **A Wolf Turned Shepherd** - Aesop's Fable (Aesop, a slave & storyteller believed to have lived in ancient Greece between 620 & 560 BC)
- Slide17a** A Wolf had been prowling around a flock of Sheep for a long time, and the Shepherd watched very anxiously to prevent him from carrying off a Lamb. **But the Wolf did not try to do any harm.** Instead he seemed to be helping the Shepherd take care of the Sheep. At last the Shepherd got so used to seeing the Wolf about that he forgot how wicked he could be. **One day** he even went so far as to leave his flock in the Wolf's care while he went on an errand. **But** when he came back and saw how many of the flock had been killed and carried off, he knew **how foolish to trust a Wolf.**
 - The Moral Of This Tale** - "*Once a wolf, always a wolf*".
- B. **Slide17b** Jesus teaches that *false prophets* are distinguishable by their **deeds**, **just as righteous people** can be identified by theirs.
- C. Our Topics in this section include False *Prophets* & False *Professions*.
- D. An early church Father said, **The church is something like Noah's ark was: if it weren't for the judgment on the outside, you could never stand the smell on the inside.**
- I'm the 1st to admit **the Church** has its problems, **but** never to be compared to the problems **outside** of it.
- E. **We must not only beware of our Way (13,14) but also of our Leaders.**
- Men will come claiming Jesus as Lord & offering to *lead the way* into His kingdom
 - But their lives will be marked by a public rather than a private piety.**
 - But such men could **never** lead us into an experience of the kingdom.
- F. **THE WARNING** - Beware of who they are.
- If a shepherd only Warns the flock but never Feeds them, they will die of malnutrition. If he only Feeds the flock & never Warns them, he is simply fattening them up for the kill.**
 - We must** try the spirits of those who profess to be sent of God.
 - We must** see beneath the sheep's clothing & spy out the wolves.
 - Read** Acts 20:28-31

V. **Slide18 2 TREES (16-20)** *1 unto fruitfulness, 1 unto failure*

- A. Every **good tree** produces good fruit - *Teachers of righteousness* act **righteously**.
- B. A **bad tree** produces bad fruit - *False prophets* act **wickedly**.
- C. **FRUIT CHECK**
- D. **The Test** - You'll know them by their **teaching, living, & their effect** upon your minds.
 - 1. Acts 17:11 *nlt* **the people of Berea** were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they **listened eagerly** to Paul's message. They **searched the Scriptures** day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the **truth**.
- E. (19,20) It is **not** our business to **cut down** or **burn...but** to **know**.
 - 1. This **knowledge** is to save us from **coming under the shadow or influence of false teachers**.
 - a) Who wants to build his nest upon a tree which is soon to be cut down?

VI. Slide19 2 DISCIPLES (21-23) *on judgment day the true disciples will be separated from the false*

- A. (21) Contrast **says & does**.
 - 1. Our King receives **No One** into His Kingdom whose Religion lies in **words & ceremonies**; **but** only those whose **lives** display **the Obedience of true Discipleship**.
- B. (22,23) **Lord, Lord** - often occurs as a form of polite address, **but here** it is addressing Him in His Supreme Power in the Last Day.
 - 1. All the **prophesying & preaching** in the world **will not** save **the preacher** if he does not **practice**.
 - 2. **He may even be very successful, even cast out demons!** **Yet**, *the caster-out of demons will be cast out himself*.
- C. **How Did They Do These Things?** [3 possibilities]
 - 1. **They Lied**.
 - 2. **They were done in the power of Satan**. [*eg.* Magicians w/Pharaoh. In the last days Satan will use **lying wonders** to deceive people] [**Wouldn't a demon flee a body, to dupe the one doing the casting, & to dupe the onlookers?**]

3. The Lord could use them in spite of themselves. [eg. Balaam. Judas might have done miracles. Saul prophesying]
- D. 3 times he's known as doing all *in His/your Name*; yet He whose name was used so freely, & so boldly *knew nothing of him*.
1. Have you ever said, *They said that I said WHAT?* [we hate when our name is used wrongly. ie. *Mom said I could!*]
 2. Today would Christ mark you *a poser or impostor?*
- E. Slide20 (23) The words *I never knew you* were used by the Rabbis as *a banishment formula*.
- F. Does He Know You?
1. Jn.10:27 **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.**
 2. 2 Tim 2:19 **Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: *The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.***
- G. Are you His sheep? Here's what sheep do...
1. They **Hear** the voice of their shepherd.
 2. They **Follow** their shepherd.
 3. They **Feed** on green grass [told Peter, *Feed my sheep*]
 4. They also **Rest**. *He makes me lie down in green pastures.*
 5. They also **Praise** Him. Ps.79:13 *So we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture, Will give You thanks forever; We will show forth Your **praise** to all generations.*
- H. Look at **4 important points** of comfort for the *insecure Christian* in Jn.10:28,29.

VII. Slide21,22 **2 BUILDERS** *True/False (24-29) 1 will stand, 1 will fall.*

- A. Many villages were built on hillside slopes (explain pic). Usually the towns were divided by a valley. Houses were both built on rocks, *and in some cases*, one of the walls were hewn out of the rock. These houses withstand the storms cuz they're very durable & secure.
1. **Other men**, because of lack of space and because it was easier, built their homes near the edge of the valley, on the sand. **Since the country is very dry**

and floods seldom occur, there is little fear. But during some rain seasons, the wadi can become a roaring river, washing the house away.

- B. 2 structures - 1 on solid rock/bedrock(for anchoring the structure). 1 on shifting sand.
- C. 2 storm results - 1 on rock stood firm. 1 on sand fell flat.
- D. The 2 builders represent 2 men in this life.
1. They both use the **same material** and the **same plans**.
 2. And the world cannot tell the difference in their 2 houses.
 3. But when the storm comes (the time of testing) the house not founded on the rock crumbles and falls. The true Christian is founded on the Rock, Jesus.
 - a) 1 Cor.3:11 *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have - Jesus Christ.* Build on Jesus, the rock, the foundation of truth, which stands like bedrock
- E. Jesus' key here is simple...obedience.
1. Even the *Mishna* knows (means *study by repetition*, oral traditions, aka Oral Torah), *Slide23,24 To learn is not the main thing, but to practice.*
- F. Jesus knew many would treat Him just as *Ezekiel* was treated (read Ez.33:30-32)
1. All religious teachers have **2 great causes of grief**.
 - [1] Many will not hear you at all.
 - [2] Many will hear, perhaps even admire, yet will no do.
- G. The 3-fold responsibility to enter His kingdom: 1st, make the **right road choice** (self denial). Then, the **right fruit choice** (good root system, good fruit system). Then, the **right foundation choice** (rock/paper/scissors, Jesus, truth).
- H. Communion:
1. Bread -
 2. Cup -