



# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Through the Bible*

*August 11-17*

*Matthew 7: 21-29*

## *Things to Know*

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## **Studying God's Word *In Community***

*Reminder. Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

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# Sermon Recap

## 1. Not All Who Say “Lord” Know the Lord

Religious words and works mean nothing without a real relationship with Jesus.

## 2. Storms Reveal Foundations

Obedience to Jesus is the only foundation that stands when life gets hard and judgment comes.

## 3. Christ’s Words Demand More Than Admiration

We don’t just admire His authority—we obey it, or we fall.

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# Discussion Questions

## 1. What does Jesus mean when He says, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven”?

What warning is He giving us about mere words or outward religious activity?

## 2. Why do you think people in verses 22–23 are surprised to be turned away by Jesus?

What does this reveal about how easy it is to deceive ourselves spiritually?

## 3. In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, what does the “rock” represent—and how do we build on it practically?

## 4. What do the “storms” in this passage symbolize, and how have you experienced them in your own life?

How did your spiritual foundation hold up?

## 5. Jesus spoke “with authority.” How should His authority shape the way we listen to and respond to His Word today?

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# Read

**Read Matthew 7:21-29 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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## Scripture

**Matthew 7:21-29**

### **I Never Knew You**

**21** "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. **22** On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' **23** And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

### **Build Your House on the Rock**

**24** "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. **26** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

### **The Authority of Jesus**

**28** And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

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Matthew 7:21-29

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# Living on Mission In Community

Jesus makes it clear that true discipleship is not measured by what we say or even what we accomplish, but by whether we obey His Word. The wise builder doesn't just admire the teachings of Jesus—he puts them into practice, even when it's hard, even when it costs something. Storms will come in every life—trials, suffering, loss, and ultimately judgment—and only those whose lives are built on obedience to Christ will stand. This passage challenges us to examine the foundation of our faith: Are we just listening to Jesus, or are we actually following Him? Where in your life is God calling you to move from hearing to obeying?

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

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## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
  - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
2. How did you feed others?
  - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
3. How did you feed your flesh?
  - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*

# *Leader Resources - August 11-17*

## **Small Group Curriculum: “The Foundation of Authentic Faith” - Matthew 7:21-29**

### **1. Session Overview**

**Main Idea:** Jesus calls us to build our lives not on religious words or outward appearances, but on obedience to Him as Lord—this is the only foundation that endures.

### **2. Opening**

#### **Icebreaker:**

What’s one of the strongest storms you’ve ever experienced? What did it reveal about the strength (or weakness) of the structures around you?

#### **Group Prayer:**

Break into groups of 2–3. Ask: *“Is there any way we can pray for your personal walk with God this week?”*

Encourage vulnerability and pray for open hearts to God’s Word.

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Read **Matthew 7:21–29** aloud together. Consider using multiple translations to highlight key phrases (e.g., “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord...’”).

## 4. Teaching Points

### A. Empty Words vs. True Obedience (vv. 21–23)

- Jesus warns that not everyone who claims Him as “Lord” will enter the kingdom—only those who *do* the will of His Father.
- Religious activity (even powerful works like prophecy, casting out demons, miracles) does not equal salvation.
- The shocking statement “I never knew you” points to the absence of genuine relationship with Christ.

“Profession without obedience is illusion.” — D.A. Carson

### B. Wise and Foolish Builders (vv. 24–27)

- Jesus uses a parable to contrast two lives: one built on the rock (hearing *and doing* His words) and one on sand (hearing *but not doing*).
- Both lives face storms—crisis, suffering, and ultimately judgment—but only one stands.
- The difference isn’t in what they hear but in whether they obey.

“Obedience is the true test of faith in Christ.” — John Stott

### C. Authority That Astonishes (vv. 28–29)

- The crowds were amazed at Jesus’ authority—not as a scribe, but as one who speaks with divine power.
- This authority demands a response: not admiration, but surrender.

## 5. Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus says “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom”?
2. What are some ways we can confuse religious activity with authentic faith?
3. In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, what do the storms represent in our lives?
4. What does it practically look like to build your life on Jesus’ words?
5. How do we guard against being merely hearers of the Word and not doers?

## 6. Application Points

- Examine your foundation: Is your faith rooted in personal knowledge of Jesus, or merely outward acts?
- Ask God to reveal any areas where you’re hearing but not obeying His Word.
- Build rhythms of obedience into your week—intentional time in the Word, repentance, accountability, and service.
- Obedience is not legalism—it’s the fruit of truly knowing Jesus.

### Challenge:

What’s one command or teaching of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) that you will intentionally obey this week?

## 7. Closing Reflection and Prayer

### Reflection Prompt:

Jesus ends His sermon not with comfort, but with confrontation. He calls us to examine our hearts and our foundations. Are we deceived by outward appearances? Or are we rooted in the rock of Christ?

## Prayer Focus:

Ask God for grace to obey Him with joy, to resist the temptation of shallow faith, and to stand firm when the storms come.

## 8. Memory Verse

### Matthew 7:24 (ESV)

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

## 9. Leader's Notes

- **Tone:** This is a weighty and convicting passage. Don't rush through it—allow space for silence, conviction, and honest reflection.
- **Goal:** Help the group discern the difference between outward religion and true obedience rooted in knowing Jesus.
- **Encouragement:** Lead with humility—share an area in your own life where God has challenged you to not just hear but obey.