Sermon Study Notes – Key Points, Questions & Application
*Series – "**Words to Live By**" – Mother's Day; Sermon Title: **"3 Questions"***
Pastor Mike Goolsby | May 11, 2026

Key Scripture

- **Matthew 7:13–29** – The closing of the Sermon on the Mount: the narrow gate, fruit and false prophets, true and false disciples, and the two builders. "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."
- **John 10:7, 9** – "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate… whoever enters through me will be saved."
- **John 14:6** – "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – It is by faith alone through Christ alone that we are saved – not by works.
- **Galatians 5:19–23** – The acts of the sinful nature vs. the fruit of the Spirit. A tool for self-assessment.
- **Psalm 37:4** – "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Big Idea
The Sermon on the Mount ends with three unavoidable questions that every person must answer. Your honest answer to each one reveals where you truly stand – and what kind of life you are building.

Context: The Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 7:13–29 is the closing of the greatest sermon ever preached. The Sermon on the Mount is not a collection of moral tips – it is a call to radical discipleship, to decision, and to transformation. Its ultimate issue is the **authority and identity of Jesus as your God and King.**

Three Questions You Must Answer

Question 1: Have you gone through the narrow gate, or are you still on the broad road? (vv. 13–14)

- The narrow gate leads to the kingdom of heaven – God's rule in the hearts of those who believe and submit to his Lordship. It is an already/not-yet kingdom: present now in some hearts, not yet everywhere.
- **Jesus is the gate** (John 10:7). There is no other entry point.
- The broad road looks inviting – spacious, free, doing whatever you want. But it leads to spiritual bondage and destruction. The narrow gate looks restrictive. But on the other side is what Tim Keller called **narrow spaciousness**: true freedom, abundant life, your true country.

- There is no room at the narrow gate for pride in your own good works. That baggage has to be left behind. *Blessed are the poor in spirit* – that is who Jesus is describing in the first beatitude, and who he is inviting in here.

Question 2: Is there genuine fruit – real evidence of transformation – in your life? (vv. 15–23)

- A profession of faith that makes no difference to how you live is barren. There must be consistent, genuine fruit – grown through obedience to Christ.
- **Two ways to assess your fruit:** (1) Self-assessment: read Galatians 5 or 1 Corinthians 13 and ask honestly – which is descriptive of me? (2) Ask someone close to you: a spouse, a roommate, a coworker, your kids. What am I like to live with, to work with, to be parented by?
- **The warning of vv. 21–23:** Some people will do impressive things in Jesus' name – and still hear, "I never knew you." The issue is motive. Are you doing good works out of a grateful heart for what God has done in Christ? Or are you doing them to earn favor with God – transactional faith, quid pro quo?
- The Westminster Confession: works done without a heart purified by faith, not done in response to God's word, not done for God's glory – cannot please God. But **works done from a grateful heart, in response to grace, for God's glory** – these are genuine fruit.
- Ephesians 2:8-10: faith alone through Christ alone saves. First he saves us. Then, out of gratitude, we do the good works he has prepared for us.

Question 3: On whom – or what – are you building your life? (vv. 24–29)

- Jesus gives only two options. There is no middle ground: build on him and his teaching (rock), or build on any other foundation (sand).
- Jesus does not accept that all roads lead to heaven or that sincerity in whatever you believe is enough. **John 14:6**: "No one comes to the Father except through me." We do not claim ultimacy for Christianity as a system – we claim ultimacy for **a person: Jesus Christ.**
- The storms will come for everyone – grief, loss, illness, heartbreak, death. The question is not whether the storm comes. The question is what you are standing on when it does.
- Building on the rock is not a solo project. It means building in faith **alongside others** – in Bible study, small groups, serving, relationships with those who don't yet know Christ.
- **Psalm 37:4:** "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Submitting to his Lordship does not mean you never get what you want. It means your wants are being transformed by the one who created you for abundant life.

Personal Application

- **Answer the three questions honestly.** Not as a guilt exercise – as an honest assessment. Where are you standing? What is your foundation? What does the fruit of your life actually look like?

- **Assess your fruit.** This week, read Galatians 5:19–23 or 1 Corinthians 13. Ask someone you trust what they see in you.
- **Check your motive.** Are you doing good works to respond to God's grace, or to earn it? The difference matters eternally.
- **Don't build alone.** If you are on the edges of Eastminster's community life, take one step deeper this week – a small group, a Bible study, a service opportunity, a honest conversation.

Discussion Questions

1. **Tim Keller described the narrow gate as "narrow spaciousness" – it looks restrictive, but leads to true freedom and abundant life.** Where in your life does following Jesus feel restrictive right now? What would it mean to trust that the narrowness leads somewhere spacious?

2. **Jesus warns in vv. 21–23 that some people will do impressive things in his name and still hear "I never knew you."** What is the difference between doing good works out of gratitude for grace and doing them to earn favor with God? Which motive is more honest in your own life right now?

3. **The sermon suggested two ways to assess the fruit of your life: self-assessment (Galatians 5, 1 Corinthians 13) and asking someone close to you.** Which of those feels harder? What might you learn from actually doing both?

4. **Jesus gives no middle ground: rock or sand, narrow gate or broad road.** Is there an area of your life where you are currently building on sand – on your own ideas, your own resources, or something other than Christ and his word? What would it look like to rebuild that area on the rock?