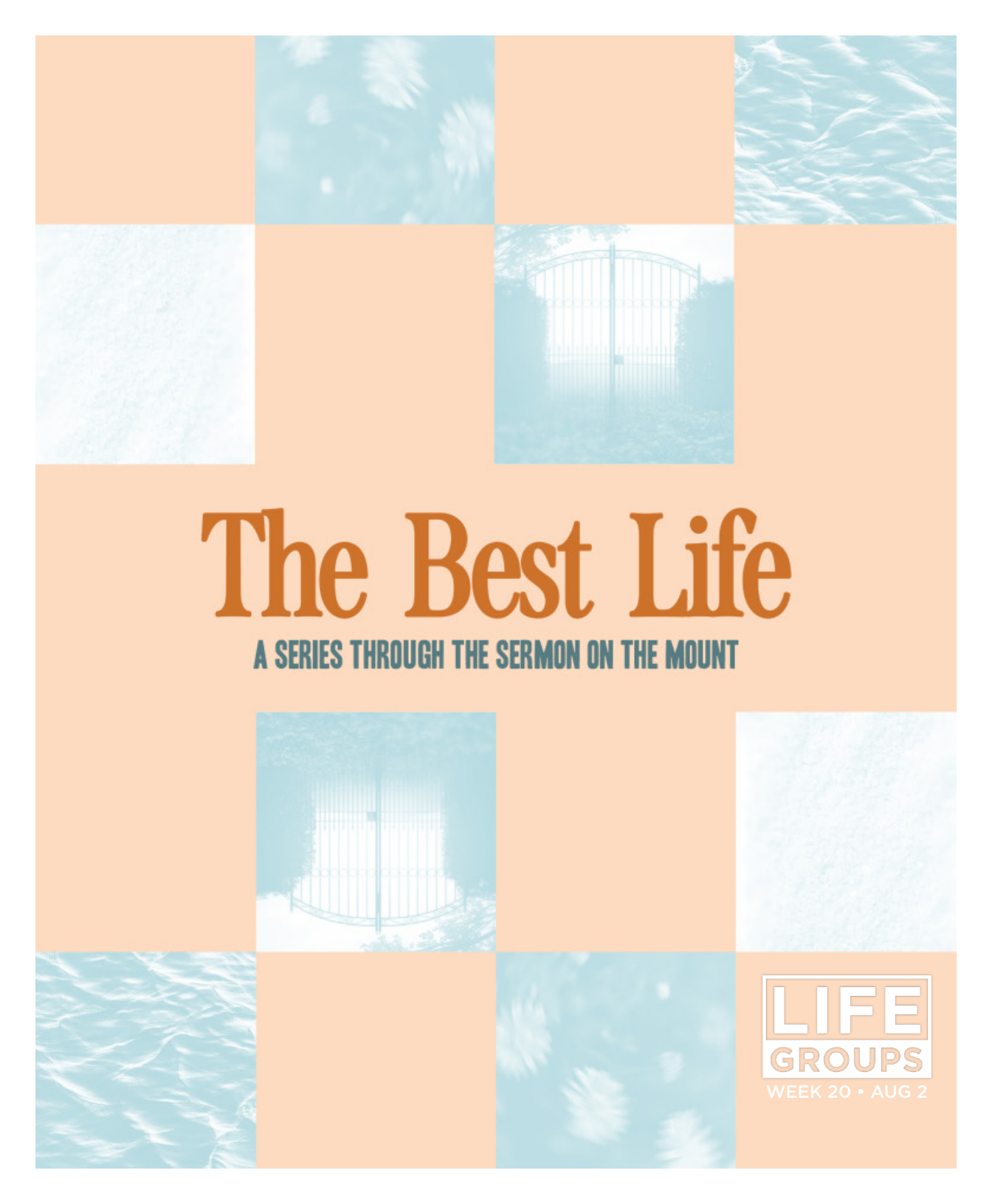




The Best Life

A SERIES THROUGH THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

LIFE
GROUPS
WEEK 20 • AUG 2

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Think of a time you showed up somewhere — a job, a relationship, a group — and realized you weren't quite as prepared or as "in" as you thought you were. What was that like?

BACKGROUND

This passage comes at the end of the Sermon on the Mount and is widely considered one of the most sobering texts in all of Scripture. Jesus has spent chapters 5-7 describing what "The Best Life" looks like and now he closes with a clear warning. The warning is that it is possible to use all the right religious language, perform good works, and still not truly belong to him.

The key to understanding this passage is comparing it to Matthew 5:20, the Sermon's theme verse, where Jesus says that unless a person's righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, they will not enter the kingdom of heaven. The people Jesus warns about in 7:21-23 are people who were performing religious activity without the heart transformation underneath it. The Pharisees weren't people who didn't try hard enough... they were trying very hard at entirely the wrong things. Their external behavior was seeking worldly approval, neglecting true humility and love. Jesus is warning here that religious activity is not the same thing as actually knowing him and being known by him.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Matthew 7:21-23

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one 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 in your name perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. Read verses 21-23 slowly. What specific words or phrases stand out to you? What does Jesus say will determine who enters the kingdom of heaven?
2. Jesus uses the word “many” in verse 22, not “some or a few”. What does that word choice tell us about the scope of this warning, and why do you think Jesus chose to close the entire Sermon on the Mount with this image?



Heart Level: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*

1. In verse 21, Jesus says “not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter the kingdom.” What is the difference Jesus is drawing between calling him Lord and actually doing the will of the Father?
2. The people in verse 22 point to prophecy, driving out demons, and miracles as evidence of their standing with Jesus. What does it tell us about true faith knowing these extraordinary works are not enough?
3. Jesus says in verse 23 “I never knew you” rather than “you never knew me.” What is the difference between those two statements, and what does it reveal about who is ultimately the foundation of our relationship with God?
4. How does this passage connect to everything Jesus taught in Matthew 5-6 about motives and who we are doing things for?



HANDS LEVEL: *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. If you're honest, is your faith more focused on what you do for God or on actually knowing him? What in your daily life reflects the difference?
2. Is there any area of your spiritual life where you've been going through the motions — attending, serving, or using the right words — without it flowing from a living relationship with Jesus? What would it look like to change that this week?
3. Imagine Jesus greeting a true disciple on the last day as an old friend. What would it mean for you to live in a way that deepens that kind of relationship?

Source: Justin Dillehay, "How to Survive the Scariest Passage in the Bible," The Gospel Coalition, (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-process-the-scariest-passage-in-the-bible/>)



MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 7:21

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)