

## "The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

### Part 1

#### Matthew 7:13-29

**Introduction:** Tonight in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have come to the conclusion but it is going to take us a while to get through the next 17 verses. Tonight we shall only deal with the first 2 verses within this conclusion.

#### Notice Matthew 7:13-14

These two verses are the climax of the Sermon on the Mount. Everything which Jesus has said has been leading to these two verses. Jesus presents within these two verses two gates and I want you to see what He is doing within these two verses. With His Words which He has spoken in this sermon He has been walking His listeners down a path on which they were permitted to view what God requires of people of the Kingdom. Now in that journey He has brought every one of His listeners to a crossroads or to a fork in the road. Jesus has brought every one of His listeners to a place where they must choose. They can take one of two roads.

Let me remind you about something very important concerning our Lord which is seen in Luke.

#### Luke 19:10

*<sup>10</sup> For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Jesus had come to this earth to be the Savior of man and while He was here He was seeking the lost to bring them to the understanding they

were far short of the Kingdom and then to offer to them the forgiveness of sin.

That very Truth is seen in the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus explained God's requirements for the Kingdom in Matthew 5-7:12 and now here in the verses before us He has brought them to the place where they must choose which road they will travel.

Throughout the Bible God presents man with the opportunity to choose the way of life or the way of death. God brings man to a cross roads.

### **Joshua 24:15**

*<sup>15</sup> And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; **[This was a cross roads]** whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*

### **Jeremiah 21:8**

*<sup>8</sup> And unto this people thou shalt say, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. **[This was a cross roads]***

### **1 Kings 18:21**

*<sup>21</sup> And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. **[This was a cross roads]** And the people answered him not a word.*

### **John 6:66-68**

<sup>66</sup> From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

<sup>67</sup> Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? [**This was a cross roads**]

<sup>68</sup> Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

Notice the words of one poet:

*"To every man there openeth a way,  
And ways and a way and the high soul treads the high way,  
And the low soul gropes the low,  
And in between on the misty flats the rest drift to and fro;  
But to every man there openeth a high way and a low,  
And every man decideth the way that he shall go."*

God gives to man the opportunity to choose the road upon which he will walk. In our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have come to the cross roads and all of Jesus' listeners must make a choice. You see as we listen to this sermon which our Lord has delivered He does not want our applause but He wants our heart. His desire is that all who read this sermon will come to the place where they see how far short they are of reaching the standards of the Kingdom and that they will then cry out for the mercy of God.

Now there is something which we need to understand about the contrast in **Matthew 7:13-14**. In these verses there are two paths, two gates, two groups of people, and two destinies.

**Matthew 7:13-14**

*<sup>13</sup> Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

*<sup>14</sup> Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

We need to grasp on to what it is that Jesus is contrasting here because many people miss this and it is so important. When you first look at the verses and you consider what is said here you find yourself thinking that the contrast within the verses is between the saved and the lost, or between the Godly and the ungodly, or between the righteous and the unrighteous. That is true in a sense but there is more here.

The contrast is between true religion and false religion. Let me put it another way; the contrast is between Christianity and Judaism (which represents all false religions). I point this out because when we read this we tend to think all who are not saved would be pictured on this road that leads to destruction. All who are not saved are headed for destruction in the Lake of Fire but the ones who are on the path of destruction in the text we are looking at are those who are following after false teachers and false religion. Just to back this up let me remind you that the entire way through the Sermon on the Mount Jesus has been contrasting the Truth of God's Word with the teaching of the Pharisees.

The two paths that Jesus speaks of within these verses would both be marked as "This way to heaven" but only one is the True Way to

heaven. **Remember this**; Satan marks every path of false religion as the way to heaven. There are no signs on the paths of false religion that say, "This Way to Hell". That would not be deceptive. If we were to boil down all the religions of this world we would find that there are really only two religions and they are; "Salvation through the completed work of Jesus Christ and "man's efforts to work his way to God" or "Grace and Works". There are many "False Religions" in this world but they are all about human achievement and Satan just wraps each one in a different package. These two ways are put forth in Matthew 7:13-14. He is not talking about the people who have no religion for we know the direction they are headed. Jesus is contrasting "false religion" with "true salvation".

The entire Sermon on the Mount is all about "unmasking" the deception of false religion so as to drive man to see his need of forgiveness and grace. Jesus does this in the "Conclusion" by speaking of many contrasts which we will look closely at over the next several weeks. Let me run down a list of the contrasts: There are two gates; the wide and the straight. There are two ways; the broad and the narrow. There are two destinations; life and destruction. There are two kinds of travelers; the few and the many. There are two kinds of trees; the good and the corrupt. There are two kinds of fruit; the good and the bad. There are two builders; the wise and the foolish. There are two foundations; the rock and the sand. And there are two houses and there are two elements to the storm that He discusses.

Now, every one of these contrasts is designed to encourage the traveler to choose the path which leads to life. Keep in mind that **Matthew 7:15-27** is all about what is found in **Matthew 7:13-14**.

## I. The Narrow Gate

We will deal with the narrow gate first because everything else in this passage is built around this gate. There are several thoughts I want to share with you about the narrow gate.

### A. The urgency to enter.

#### Notice Matthew 7:13

The very first word of this verse is so very important. It is a command given by our Lord to those who are listening to "enter now". When Jesus delivered this sermon He was not looking for applause as I had said but He was looking for a decision. He is telling all who hear to make the decision and enter at this very moment.

Jesus knew that for every man there is a small window of opportunity for salvation. Now some would reject that statement but it is the truth. People think that they can just drift through life and when the right day comes they can go through the narrow gate. There are several problems with that kind of thinking.

#### 1. We have an appointed day to die.

#### Job 14:1-5

*Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.*

*<sup>2</sup> He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*

*<sup>3</sup> And doth thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?*

*<sup>4</sup> Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*

<sup>5</sup> Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

Because you do not know the day of your death you cannot afford to postpone your decision to come to Jesus.

**2. The rapture seals the destiny of those who have already heard the Gospel.**

## **2 Thessalonians 2:8-12**

<sup>8</sup> And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

<sup>9</sup> Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

<sup>10</sup> And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

<sup>11</sup> And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

<sup>12</sup> That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

When the rapture occurs those who have heard the Gospel will be sent a strong delusion and they will believe the lies of the anti-christ. They will die during the great Tribulation and find themselves damned to hell.

**3. Every time a person walks away from Jesus Christ their heart gets harder and harder.**

### **Hebrews 3:15**

<sup>15</sup> *While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.*

Each step away from the grace of the Lord gets easier and easier and if a person is not careful they can harden their hearts to the point where the Holy Spirit ceases to draw them to Christ.

### **Genesis 6:3**

<sup>3</sup> *And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man...*

#### **B. The narrowness of the gate.**

### **Notice Matthew 7:13-14**

The idea behind the word "narrow" is "compressed". In other words to get through the gate which leads to life you must squeeze your way through. There are 2 thoughts from this I want to consider.

- 1. To get through the gate you must let that which you are clinging to on the outside.**

To give you a picture of this gate we could picture a turnstile that you would pass through at a train station or an airport. To get through a turnstile you cannot have baggage. To get through the narrow gate you cannot carry anything. This by the way is a picture of repentance.

### **Mark 1:15**

<sup>15</sup> *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

### **Acts 3:19**

<sup>19</sup> **Repent ye** therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

### **Acts 17:30**

<sup>30</sup> And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth **all men** every where to **repent**:

The point I want you to see is that we must "repent" in order to get through the gate. Some have disputed with me and said that I am teaching salvation by works but repentance is not works it is a change of mind. The point is you cannot get saved until you hate your sin enough to walk away. Jesus does not save us **in** our sins He saves us **from** our sins.

### **Matthew 19:16-22**

<sup>16</sup> And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

<sup>17</sup> And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

<sup>18</sup> He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

<sup>19</sup> Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

<sup>20</sup> The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

*<sup>21</sup> Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.*

*<sup>22</sup> But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.*

Here was a man who came to the "gate" (Jesus Christ) but was unable to enter because of what he was carrying. He had two things in his hands that kept him from entering through the gate. He had in one hand **"self righteousness"** which can be seen in the statement he made when he said he had kept the commandments from his youth. In the other hand was his **"love for money and his love for the wealth of the world"**.

This supports what I have said that we cannot get through the gate clinging to sin in our life. We must hate our sin and turn to Christ in order to pass through the gate.

### **Conclusion:**

Next week we will continue to look at the narrow gate. In closing there is something which I need to say; with the picture of the narrow gate I believe Jesus is dealing with the practice of just saying a prayer to be saved. If salvation was just by saying a prayer then why did Jesus not tell the young man to just pray? The reason was because the gate is narrow and repentance is required to enter through the gate. This man did not hate his earthly life enough to turn from his sin and so he could not get through the narrow gate.