

"The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

Part 4

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: Tonight as we come back to our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have come to what I would consider to be one of the most important studies we will ever do. It just may be THE most important study we will ever do and it will take us several weeks to get through it.

In this great sermon which our Lord preached He has led every one of His listeners to a cross roads where they must make a decision as to which path they will choose to walk. It can be the broad path which leads to destruction or it can be the narrow path which leads to eternal life. This cross roads was the main purpose for this sermon. Jesus had come to seek and to save the lost and the sermon He preached was very sharp and pointed so as to cut away all self righteousness from the lives of His listeners. Jesus was not looking for applause at the end of this sermon He was looking for a decision from His listeners. He was pressing them to make a decision. This is what God does for people; He brings them to the place where they must make a choice. He strips them of all personal merit, all self righteousness and then invites them to come to Him.

Matthew 4:17

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

In Matthew 11:28 we see the compassion of our Lord toward those who struggle to make it on their own merits.

Matthew 11:28

²⁸ Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Isaiah 55:1

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

This is an invitation to the person who has been stripped of all "personal merit". Then we have the last invitation found in God's Word.

Revelation 22:17

¹⁷ *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

God's desire is for all people to come to Him for the forgiveness of their sin.

So far we have looked at several points from Matthew 7:13-14.

I. The Narrow Gate

A. The Urgency to Enter

This was seen in the very first word of verse 13 when Jesus said, "Enter".

B. The Narrowness of the Gate

The narrowness of the gate speaks of repentance. No one can get through the gate with any self righteousness or clinging to their favorite sins. We must come completely stripped in order to get through the gate. In contrast to this is the "wide gate". This is a gate where you can bring all your sinful practices and join the great multitude on the path of destruction.

The wide gate welcomes many and the broad way is full of people who are "religious" but not saved. The narrow gate is Jesus Christ and all must come through Him in order to have eternal life.

John 10:9

⁹ *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

John 14:6

⁶ *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

C. The Struggle to Enter the Gate

This struggle is not recorded by Matthew but it is recorded by Luke.

Luke 13:23-24

²³ *Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,*

²⁴ **Strive** to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and **shall not be able**.

The word "strive" speaks of a struggle and it is far more than a struggle to enter. It is a spiritual battle. The Devil pulls a person in one direction and the Holy Spirit pulls them in another. The unsaved person under the conviction of the Spirit must be willing to say, "No!" to the desires of the flesh and, "Yes!" to the free gift of eternal life and a new life in Christ.

II. The Narrowness of the WAY

After a person comes through the Gate and is saved then they find the path is very narrow. There are 2 points to keep in mind about the narrow way:

1. It is a path of obedience.
2. It can be a path of affliction when we walk in disobedience.

The most sobering thought about the narrow gate and the narrow path is that Jesus Himself says **very few** find it. It is a struggle to get on the narrow path because of the battle over each individual soul.

Notice Matthew 7:13-14

But there is another reason why it is so hard for people to find the narrow path and to then get on the narrow path and that is because standing outside the gate there are false prophets doing all they can to point people toward the wide gate and the narrow path which is far more appealing to the sinful flesh.

Notice Matthew 7:15

I also want you to know that these false prophets are very successful in what they do.

Notice Matthew 7:13-14

Pay close attention to the "***many***" in verse 13.

Notice Matthew 7:22

The "***many***" in this verse is the same group which Jesus speaks of in verse 13. Therefore, the false teachers are very successful at convincing people to enter the path of "religion" instead of "salvation".

I. The Warning about False Teachers.

Notice Matthew 7:15

Jesus begins this verse with a word of warning. He uses the word "**beware**". Now if we see a sign which tells us to "**beware**" it would make us very cautious. The same should be true of Jesus' use of the word **beware**. He is about to warn us of the great danger of false teachers and we need to give to Him our utmost attention.

Now false prophets were nothing new in Jesus day. The Old Testament people had to deal with them on a regular basis.

Deuteronomy 13:1-5

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

² And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

³ Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁴ Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

⁵ And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.

False prophets were so deadly and damaging that God through Moses said when they were discovered they were to be killed.

In Isaiah we are told there were people who actually wanted to hear the words of the false prophets.

Isaiah 30:9-10

⁹ *That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD:*

¹⁰ *Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits:*

There was always an audience for false prophets and there is an audience today also. Some people do not desire to hear the Truth but they want to hear something which makes them feel good. They want their ears tickled.

Then we come to the New Testament and we have the warning here in Matthew 7 and also in Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:11

¹¹ *And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.*

Let us get to the first point in our verse.

A. The Definition of a False Prophet

Ever since Genesis 3 when sin entered into the world man has chose to walk in rebellion against God and left to himself man would not return to God for on our own we cannot find our way back to God.

Romans 3:11

¹¹ *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Therefore, God in His love has chosen certain people to take the message of God into the lost world so as to call men back to Him. These were known as His prophets. A true prophet was known by 2 things:

1. A Divine commission.
2. A Divine message.

In other words the prophet was sent by God on a specific mission and He was given a message from God. The prophet was God's spokesmen. It was not the prophet's message which he spoke but it was God's message which he spoke. We see this when God spoke to Moses.

Exodus 4:10-12

¹⁰ *And Moses said unto the LORD, O my LORD, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.*

¹¹ *And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?*

¹² *Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.*

Now when God began to commission men to be prophets immediately Satan began to rise up false prophets to lead men through the wide gate and down the broad way, he also launched an attack against the true prophets. Let me show you how Satan attacked the prophets.

Luke 11:50-51

⁵⁰ *That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;*

⁵¹ *From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.*

Did you know that Abel was a prophet? Now you can better know why Satan convinced his brother Cain to kill him. As a prophet he was commissioned by God to call men back to God. The Old Testament is full of false prophets however that were commissioned by Satan to lead men through the wide gate and down the broad way.

Jeremiah 14:14

¹⁴ *Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.*

Jeremiah 23:14-16

¹⁴ *I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing: they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none doth return from his wickedness; they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.*

¹⁵ *Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: Behold, I will feed them with wormwood, and make them drink the water of gall: for from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone forth into all the land.*

¹⁶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.

These are just a few verses that help you to see what the people of the Old Testament had to deal with. It is no different in our day. Let me show a few warnings from the New Testament for you and me.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

¹⁵ Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

2 Corinthians 11:26

²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

2 Peter 2:1

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1 Timothy 4:2

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

Conclusion:

We must be on guard at all times because there are false teachers everywhere as you will see when we continue next week.

Ephesians 5:6a

⁶ *Let no man deceive you with vain words:*

Colossians 2:8

⁸ *Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*