

"The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

Part 5

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: In our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have come to the conclusion/purpose of the Sermon. The main focus of the sermon is found in Matthew 7:13-14 and in these verses Jesus has brought all of His listeners to a place of decision. He has brought us all to a cross roads where we are faced with the greatest decision we will ever make in our lives.

Notice Matthew 7:13-14

Jesus gives a command to "ENTER" the strait gate. His command has a sense of urgency for He knows the window of opportunity is small for sinful people. He speaks of two gates, two paths, two groups of people, and two eternal destinations. There is only ONE Gate which leads to the path of eternal life. This gate is narrow and when we come through we must come alone, we must come empty handed (for there is nothing we can offer to God for salvation), and we must STRIVE to enter in.

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**.

There is a struggle when people choose to enter through the narrow gate. The flesh loves the world and sin and Satan does all he can to

keep people from the narrow path. Satan is great at convincing people to enter the wide gate for at the wide gate there is no need of repentance or humility. You can enter the wide gate with all your personal merits, self righteousness and your pride as well as your sin. But while that path is also marked "THIS WAY TO HEAVEN" let us remember that Satan put the sign up and he is a liar. He is in the business of doing all he can to lead people straight to hell.

One of the ways Satan does this is through false teachers and that is exactly why Jesus spoke the words which follow Matthew 7:13-14.

Notice Matthew 7:15

Last week we started into this verse and we took the time to lay a foundation which will help us for this week.

I. The Warning Concerning False Teachers

A. The Definition of a False Teacher

To really understand false prophets and false teachers we must know where they have come from and why they are here. Ever since sin entered into the world man has chose to walk his own path which leads him directly away from God. On his own man could never find his way back to God.

Romans 3:11

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

But God in His love called men in the Old Testaments who were known as prophets to call man back to Himself. This started with Able whom Jesus tells us was a prophet.

As God's love was exercised in this way Satan began to rise up men who would be counterfeit prophets and they would lead men through the wide gate and down the broad path. Therefore, we can understand that false prophets were placed within society to lead people away from the narrow gate and ultimately lead them to hell. In the words of Moses we get a small glimpse of how God viewed the false prophets.

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 to be put to death because their words were so deadly.

Now there are three points about a false prophet we need to understand:

1. **He was commissioned by God.**
2. **His message was directly from God.**

But this makes me ask a question, "How were the people to know when a prophet was a counterfeit and when he was a true prophet?" I ask this because they did not have a Bible to carry as we do nor were the Old Testament saints indwelt by the Holy Spirit. So, how did they know?

3. **The message of the prophet would come to pass exactly as they spoke it.**

Deuteronomy 18:17,20-22

¹⁷ And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken.

²⁰ But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die.

²¹ And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

²² When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

B. The Danger of False Teachers

Notice Matthew 7:15

Last week in our study I commented on the first word of the verse which is "Beware" and I told you last week that when we see this word we should give our utmost attention to what is being said. But there is more here which we did not get into last week and it is the actual meaning of the word.

The word "**beware**" means "to listen closely to what is about to be said". In the context we are looking at it also has the idea of "keeping our minds **from** that which we are warned about" and here in this context we are to keep our minds from the teaching of false teachers. Jesus wanted us to be careful not to expose our minds to the twisted teaching of the false teachers.

You see, Jesus knew how deceptive their teaching can be and that is exactly why He warns against us exposing our minds to their teachings. Peter tells us about the results of their teaching.

2 Peter 2:1-2

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.

² *And **many** shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.*

The word "many" tells us they will be very deceptive in what they teach. With their words they will convince many to follow them. This is the same "many" which Jesus speaks of who are on the broad path who have entered through the wide gate. These false teachers are so dangerous that it would be better for you and me to face a lion than

one of these teachers. The lion can only harm the body but the false teachers will poison and pervert the mind.

The number one enemy of the sheep in Palestine was the wolf, a natural enemy, roaming the hills, seeing a flock and at the right moment as it trailed the flock coming out of its hiding place and snatching that sheep and ripping it to shreds and a sheep is totally defenseless against a wolf. Now a good shepherd according to John 10 is always on the alert for the wolf, a good shepherd cares for his sheep so he watches, he's awake, and he is alert.

Now I want to show you something in John 10 and as I do I want you to think with me for a moment.

John 10:11-12

¹¹ I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

¹² But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

In these verses we see 3 different people.

1. The good shepherd.

Jesus is "The Good Shepherd" because He loves the sheep (which is you and me) so much that He gave His life to save the sheep. Now there are "good shepherds" today who would be pastors. They would be "good shepherds" with a small "g". They are called to be Pastors and they are determined to protect the flock at all costs. In these Pastors Christ is clearly manifest in the love they have for the flock.

2. The hireling.

This man watches over the sheep but he is only in it for personal profit. It is all about personal recognition or personal monetary gain. When trouble comes this man will forsake the sheep because he is not committed to protecting the sheep his position is just a "job" to him.

3. The wolves.

These are the false teachers who come in and they devour the sheep. The "wolves" in Palestine were the greatest enemy of sheep and false teachers are the greatest enemy of God's sheep.

Let me show you our verse again.

Matthew 7:15

¹⁵ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

The wolves which Jesus speaks of in John 10:12 are the same wolves He is speaking of here in Matthew 7:15. But what we need to see is that the wolves are "ravening". The word "ravening" comes from a root word that means "to seize or to carry off by force". Let me show you the wording of Ezekiel for God describes them almost the same way to Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 22:23-27

²³ And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

²⁴ Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation.

²⁵ There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

²⁶ Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

²⁷ Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

False prophets were pictured as wolves who desired to tear apart their prey. False teachers are also pictured the same way for they also desire to carry the sheep away and devour them.

Now I want to show you one more passage which will help us to see how dangerous false teachers really are. In the letter which was written by Jude he writes concerning apostasy.

Let me start by showing you Jude's main concern.

Jude 1:3-4

³ Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

⁴ For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude then goes on in his letter to talk in detail about false teachers. Then as we approach the end of his letter he instructs his readers to do several things.

1. We are to be sure our lives are in order.

Jude 1:20-21

²⁰ But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

²¹ Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

2. We are to reach out to 3 groups of people.

a. The doubters.

Jude 1:22

²² And of some have compassion, making a difference:

This is hard to grasp in the KJV. But Jude is telling his readers we are to come alongside those who are doubters and we are to encourage them. Possibly the idea is that they have been made to doubt by the false teachers.

b. The unbelievers.

Jude 1:23a

²³ And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;

These are the people who are on their way to a Christ less eternity.

It is the next group we need to look at very closely.

c. The religious.

Jude 1:23

²³ And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

In the KJV we miss what is being said here. There are 2 groups of people which Jude refers to here in this verse. The unbelievers headed for hell and the "religious" who are headed for hell.

Let me show you how the Amplified Bible words this verse.

²³ [Strive to] save others, snatching [them] out of [the] fire; on others take pity [but] with fear, loathing even the garment spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality.

In the Greek it is very clear that we are to reach out to all people but to those who have been deceived by false teachers we are to reach out with fear. Why fear? Because the poison of false teaching is like leprosy; it is very contagious and it can even poison our minds.

Conclusion:

False teachers are so dangerous God tells us that when we approach those who have been poisoned by them we are to do so with fear. False teachers are to be viewed as savage wolves. They are sent by Satan and they are very deceptive with their words. When we come back we will look at the "deception" of false teachers which will help us to know better how to recognize them.