

"The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

Part 6

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: In our study of the Sermon on the Mount we have been looking at the conclusion of the sermon which also contains the purpose of the sermon. The purpose of the Sermon on the Mount which Jesus preached was to bring His listeners to a place where they would make a decision to enter through the "strait gate" in order to get on the "narrow path" which leads to eternal life.

Now we know that the "strait gate" is Jesus Christ.

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.

There is no other way to the Father except through Jesus Christ therefore He is the Gate.

Jesus had preached the Sermon on the Mount in order to strip His listeners of their self righteousness and bring them to the place where they were able to see their sinfulness and their need of God's mercy and forgiveness. He was not looking for applause for the sermon but Jesus was looking for a decision. It was His desire for each person who heard the sermon to enter through the strait gate and to walk on the narrow path.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

Now in our study we have looked at the "strait gate" and how difficult it is for people to enter through that gate.

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 spiritual battle raging for the eternal destiny of every lost soul. Satan uses 2 methods to keep people from going through the strait gate.

1. The world.

Satan knows every person has a sin nature and he will do all he can to use the temptations of the world to appeal to the lust and the desires of the flesh. So for a person to come through the strait gate it is a great battle. It requires a person to say, "No" to a life of sin and, "Yes" to a new life in Christ.

Let me show you how people are losing this battle today.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

⁹ *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

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

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

*¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, **but had pleasure in unrighteousness.***

During the great Tribulation God will send a strong delusion to those who had heard the Gospel before the rapture but they refused to repent of their sin and come to Jesus Christ because they found temporary pleasure in their sin. They may be convicted of their sin and they may even see their need of forgiveness but they love the darkness more than the light and so they will not strive to get through the strait gate. They are surrendered over to the desires of the flesh.

All the temptations of this old world are used by Satan to keep people from entering the strait gate. The world is the first method which Satan uses to lead people to destruction.

2. False teachers.

The other method which Satan uses is false teachers who stand at the wide gate and direct people onto the broad path which will lead them to eternal damnation. This is the subject which we have been looking at for the past couple of weeks.

Notice Matthew 7:15

Jesus knew the danger of the false teachers and so here in this verse He gives to us a warning about them. So far we have looked at 2 points concerning false teachers:

1. The definition of false teachers.

When sin came into the world it plunged the entire human race into sin. We are all born sinners and on our own we could never find our way back to God.

Romans 3:11

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

In the Old Testament God began to rise up men whom He would use to call man back to Himself and they were known as prophets. In our day God has raised up pastors, teachers, and evangelists whom He is using to call men back to Himself. When God began to rise up the prophets Satan immediately began to rise up his own false prophets to lead people through the wide gate and down the broad way. In our day Satan uses false teachers to do the same. That is exactly why Jesus is giving to us this warning here in Matthew 7:15.

2. The danger of false teachers.

Notice Matthew 7:15

Jesus refers to the false teachers as "ravening wolves". Ezekiel gives us one of the best descriptions of the danger of false teachers.

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.

Let me just remind you that behind every false prophet in the Old Testament and every false teacher in the New Testament and in our day are sent by and fueled by Satan. That is why they are pictured as such savage people. There is demonic power and influence behind them and that is exactly why they are so dangerous.

This brings us to where we are in our study tonight.

3. The deception of false teachers.

Notice Matthew 7:15

I want you to pay very close attention to the word "inwardly". The idea is that on the outside they appear to be harmless but on the inside they are ravening wolves.

I want you to also notice that they come dressed in sheep's clothing. In our minds we picture someone with a sheep skin draped over them and

they slowly sneak in so that they can get close to the sheep and then steal one or several away. That is not what Jesus is speaking of here. In Jesus' day shepherds dressed in garments which were made from the wool of their sheep. The mark of the shepherd was that he would be a man dressed in wool or to put that in biblical terms, he would be dressed in "sheep's clothing". If we would have lived back then we would have been able to identify the shepherds by their clothing because they wore garments made from wool.

Notice Matthew 7:15 again.

Now I want you to get this: when Jesus said to beware of false prophets who would come in "sheep's clothing" He was not saying they would come in dressed like a sheep, **he was saying they would come dressed like a shepherd**. Let me show you some verses which will help you with what Jesus is saying here.

Matthew 3:1-4

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

² *And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

⁴ *And the same **John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins;** and his meat was locusts and wild honey.*

We are told of the way in which John the Baptist dressed for very good reason. Prophets, like shepherds were known for the way they

dressed. Prophets dressed in very rough clothing. When we read of John being dressed in a camel's hair garment we think of something which would be very soft and plush. John's garment was far from soft and comfortable. His garment was made from straight camel hair and would have not been anything which we would have desired to wear. It would have been very uncomfortable and there was a reason why he wore that very garment. The garment reflected that which was in his heart. With his outer garment he was making the statement to all others that he had come away from all the comforts of this world and his focus was completely upon the mission which God had given to him. This rough dress was the mark of all prophets even many years before John. The Old Testament prophets were always known by the way they dressed.

Therefore, if someone was going to be a false prophet guess how they dressed? In rough clothing just as the true prophets would dress and that is exactly what they did. The false prophets would dress in a prophet's "costume". We get a small glimpse of this in Zechariah.

Zechariah 13:4

⁴ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive:

This was exactly what Jesus was concerned about in Matthew 7:15. False teachers will play the part of a true believer and you and I will not be able to recognize them from their outward appearance.

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.

Application:

Before we move on to the next verse we need to consider some of the false teachers which exist within our society today. Every false teacher will probably fit into one of three categories:

1. The apostates

An apostate is someone who has walked away from the church. They were in the church for a while but they never were saved. They gave the appearance they were saved but they just turned and walked away and now they do all they can to prove the Bible to be wrong. They completely deny the Authority of the Bible. These people are very easy to identify.

2. The heretic

A heretic is someone who is a professed believer who denies certain doctrines of the Bible. This person can be a little harder to identify for some because they will be someone who claims to stand on the Authority of the Bible but only on certain doctrines. They may stand right beside of you and defend a certain doctrine but when it comes to another doctrine they will teach that it is not true. An example of this

practice would be someone who professes to believe the Bible but denies the Genesis record of creation.

Both of these false teachers can be easy to spot if we listen long enough but it is the 3rd group which we must be careful of.

3. The deceivers

This is the group which Jesus was pointing to in Matthew 7:15. These are not Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses for they would fall into the first 2 groups. These teachers who will stand in the pulpit and preach, they will talk about Jesus and they will talk about the cross. They will talk of the resurrection when Easter comes around and they will celebrate the birth of Christ when Christmas comes. They will write books and many will buy their books. They will have radio programs and television programs. They will mingle with the Christian crowd and they will have many followers. They will sound just like the true teacher of God's Word. These are the people Jesus was so concerned about. Peter and Jude both wrote about these false teachers.

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.

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,

These false teachers have crept into many churches today and people don't even realize they are sitting under their teaching. All of this makes me ask a question, "How can we know them?"

I want you to really pay close attention to what I am about to say for this will help you recognize these false teachers. You will not be able to identify them by what they say but you will be able to identify them by what they DO NOT say.

These false teachers will speak about Jesus, the cross, the resurrection and the birth of Christ. But you will not hear them speak of sin, judgment, wrath, hell, repentance, the blood of Christ, and the consequences of sin. They will preach messages which will make people feel really good and they will be careful never to touch on anything which would make their listeners feel uneasy. Peter gives us some valuable information about the style of these false teachers.

2 Peter 2:1-3a

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.*

³ *And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you:*

The false teachers are only concerned about having a large following. They will be careful to say nothing that will offend their followers because it is from their followers they have personal gain.

Conclusion:

Our society is full of these false teachers and many are deceived by them. Proof of that can be seen when someone names them as false teachers because then many will come to their defense.

These false teachers will dress like pastors, they will sound great, they will make you feel good, they will smile and speak the name of Christ but you will never hear them speak of sin, judgment and wrath. Be careful not to get caught up in their teachings.

In Matthew 7:15 Jesus was warning us about the teachers who are deceivers.