

"Are you on the Right Path?"

Matthew 7:13-14

Introduction: This morning we are going to step away from our study on false prophets and we are going to look at a message that focuses upon salvation.

A little while back I spoke with a friend who brought up the subject of the rapture. He was sharing his thoughts about how he believed the world will be devastated when the rapture happens. He was taught to believe cars would be crashing everywhere, there would be planes falling from the sky as the pilots are taken, and many businesses will collapse as the executives are raptured away. He then asked me what I thought, and I could tell that my answer shocked him. I told him I do not believe that the rapture will be anymore than a hiccup in the world. I explained that I believe the world will just continue to move in the same direction as it is now. Now, I do believe there will be voids in some situations but over all the world will hardly notice. When I said this to him, I could tell that it cut completely across the grain of what he was picturing.

His theology had been gathered from the opinions of men through out the years. Some of it came from the book series called "Left Behind". Many people believe exactly what my friend believes and there are two main reasons for their belief.

1. This theology makes for an exciting story.
2. They have not been taught the Scriptures. (This is the main problem today)

The Bible teaches the opposite of what my friend believes and what many others believe. This is what we are going to look at this morning. It is not my desire to cause you to doubt your salvation, but it is my desire to open your eyes if you are not saved.

2 Corinthians 13:5

⁵ Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

We are going to look at a message from Jesus' Words in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 7 Jesus is bringing His listeners to a crossroads where they must make a decision.

In these verses there are two gates, two paths, two groups of people and two destinations.

I. The Two Gates

A. The Strait Gate

Notice Matthew 7:13-14

The word "strait" here means "narrow". It has the idea of a turnstile at an airport or metro station. The Gate here is Jesus Christ.

John 10:7-10

⁷ Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

⁸ All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

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.

¹⁰ The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

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.

Jesus Christ is the ONLY way to the Father. There is no other way. So, what does it mean to enter through the strait gate?

Let me begin by first of all telling you what it does not mean. It is not just praying and asking Jesus Christ to come into your heart. Many have done this, and they have been deceived into thinking they are saved but they are not. I know this because I was one of those people for many years.

First of all for a person to be saved God must be working in the individuals life. The person MUST be under the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

John 6:44

⁴⁴ No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

When the individual comes under the conviction they will then be faced with a decision. Will they cling to their sin, or will they repent of their sin? Now let me show you something else which Jesus taught about entering through the strait gate.

Luke 13:24

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.*

This sounds like Jesus is saying that we must work for salvation, but the Bible is very clear that we cannot work for salvation.

Isaiah 64:6

⁶ *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

Titus 3:5

⁵ *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

⁹ *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

Now let me get back to what Luke wrote.

Luke 13:24

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.*

What is Jesus saying here. In order for any person to be saved they must come to the end of themselves and see that they are helpless to save themselves. They must truly see the sinfulness of their sin and realize they are completely helpless.

This is why Jesus says to STRIVE TO ENTER IN because this is a hard place for anyone to come to. Man's flesh desires to do something that will earn him entrance into heaven.

When a person comes to Jesus Christ, they must come empty handed in order to get through the strait gate. Let me show you a man who came to the GATE and could not enter.

Luke 18:18-23

¹⁸ *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

This man could not get through the gate because he held self-righteousness in one hand and a love for the world in the other.

B. The Wide Gate

Notice Matthew 7:13

This is the gate that leads to the broad path and eventually to eternal destruction. This is the RELIGIOUS gate and the RELIGIOUS path. This is the path which most of the world is on. It is a gate and a path that Satan has marked, "THIS WAY TO HEAVEN". This GATE is wide because when a person comes to this gate there is no need of repentance. There is no need to hate your sin because you can bring your sin with you on this path. This path is broad so that you can indulge in your favorite sins on this path. This path is occupied by millions of people today.

They may attend church, they may read their Bible, they may belong to a church, they may pray every day BUT they have never come through the strait gate. They live a life of sin while at the same time they are religious, but they are not saved. They may claim salvation but there is no evidence in their lives.

Notice Matthew 7:13-14

When a person enters through the strait gate they then walk on the narrow way. The word "NARROW" here means, "TO PRESS" just as one would press grapes to get the sweet juice. It also has the idea of "AFFLICTION". Let me explain what all of this means. When we are truly saved because we have come through the strait gate, then we enter a life of walking on the narrow way. This means that as we walk this path God will NOT allow us to stray very far without experiencing affliction. He will press and squeeze until we repent and turn back to the narrow way.

1 John 3:5-9

⁵ And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

⁶ Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

⁷ Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

⁸ He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

⁹ Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Hebrews 12:6-8

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

When a person has come through the wide gate and is walking on the broad way they can live in sin with no chastening from God. We can see this all around us today. People profess to be Christians, but they continue to live in their sin.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived:** neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul makes it very clear here those who practice sin and are living in sin will not inherit the kingdom of God. In other words those who live lives of sin and unrighteousness are not saved. How can Paul say this?

Because when a person comes to Jesus Christ his or her heart is changed. Let us see something else which Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? **Be not deceived:** neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

¹¹ **And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.**

He reminds them they WERE living in sin before salvation BUT after salvation they were changed.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

¹⁷ Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: **old things are passed away;** behold, all things are become new.

¹⁸ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

When a person is saved their lives will change. Jesus came to save us from the penalty and the practice of sin.

1 John 3:5

⁵ And ye know that **he was manifested to take away our sins;** and in him is no sin.

II. The Two Groups and the Two Destinations

Notice Matthew 7:13-14 again.

The Words of Jesus are very alarming here. The narrow way leads to eternal life, and it is occupied only by a few. The broad way leads to hell, and it is occupied by many. We see these "MANY" again later in this text.

Matthew 7:22-23

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

This is exactly why I believe that the rapture will not disturb the world. We see a picture in Noah's day.

1 Peter 3:20

²⁰ Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Conclusion:

You need to be sure you are saved. If there is any question in your mind, then please see me after church.