

Summer on the Mount, True Faith Redefined, Matthew 7:13-27, 9/1/19

Matthew 7:13-14

¹³ "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

Years ago, before Waze and Google Maps, before GPS, we had paper maps. Rand McNally. What I loved about these maps is it really made you feel like Sir Stanley and Dr. Livingstone exploring Africa. On a real adventure. But it also made it really easy to get lost. I remember driving to a Ski trip in the Adirondacks with my friends in High School and we had the big Map out and we were coming down a mountain pass that had a fork to the left and to the right. So as we get closer I am saying to my friend navigating, OK left or right...Jamie left or right?? Hold on, I can't there is a truck behind me, which way?! Left...NO right! Unfortunately, I went center down into a ditch. Coming down the mountain pass there were only two choices, left or right...there was no middle option. As Jesus finishes his sermon on the mount, telling us what it looks like to live under the rule and reign of the Kingdom of Jesus, he gives us no middle road to his teaching. He presents two roads. Will you or won't you follow me? Which road will you take? The choice is yours and it is the difference between life and death, heaven and hell, between being with God or without God forever.

The Broad Road vs. Narrow Road, Three Distinctions

#1 My Way vs. God's Way

Notice how opposite these roads are. One is enormously wide, 6 lane highway, with a massive entrance gate but on the other side is destruction. The other is "small" word means compressed: it is crushingly narrow at the beginning but on the other side of the gate is broad and wide and leads to life. Like Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. What is Jesus' point?

Christianity is incredibly narrow because you believe salvation is in Christ alone, apart from anything you did to earn it.

John 10:9 *I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.*

John 14:6 *Jesus says no one comes to the father except through me!*

Next Slide "But surely God will accept good people from other religions if they are sincere." But good is a relative term. There aren't any good people, not even Christians! It might seem that way because there are some really bad people out there on the news and it makes us seem relatively good. Your flashlight looks bright, until you shine it at the sun. Remember Isaiah's vision of heaven? ⁵ "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty." Look at it another way, what should you be giving to the God that made you and gives you everything and keeps you breathing and molecules from bursting? Everything! Are you? No! As soon as you begin to realize where you stand you realize you need sheer grace. *Blessed are the broken in spirit*- word means bankrupt. Following Christ starts with spiritual bankruptcy. I have nothing to

merit and I need sheer grace. Christianity is the only one that offers this grace and this is why it is the narrow way.

This is what makes the broad road so well-traveled. Because every religion, every philosophy, says the same thing. Live well, be good, be devout, be sincere...show your record and you will get in. This is the broad road and those walking on it think there is safety in numbers. So many will go down that road of human achievement whether it is through religion, money, security, through good deeds, family heritage, education, science... And will find it leads to destruction, and miss the narrow road. That's sobering. There are only two possible ways, essentially two possible religions, two roads, two gates- My Way vs. God's Way. **human achievement** or **Divine accomplishment**. Only two songs you sing as you enter the gate- I did it my way or Jesus Paid it All.

#2 Deceptive Religion vs. Real Relationship

Notice that both gates present life, paradise, eternity. The broad gate doesn't say, come here to hell, we are deceiving you and if you enter it will wreck your life! But rather, come in here and find life! You are on the road that leads to eternal paradise! And I think this is the imagery that Jesus is presenting, that there are deceivers along the narrow road trying to pull you onto the broad road. ¹⁵ *"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.* In the immediate context, Jesus had in mind the pharisees and their deceptive, empty religion.

[Picture] **Wolf in sheep's clothing**. Anyone adding or subtracting anything from God's Word and the gospel. But Jesus' warning is not just to watch out for the deception of false teachers, but self-deception. In one of the more sobering passages in the Bible, listen to what Jesus says next. ²¹ *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.*

²² *Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?'* ²³ *Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'*

Who are these people? They are doing ministry activities, even miraculous signs and good things in Jesus' name. In fact they call him Lord, Lord. The doubling of the name is a Greek way of intensifying. These are insiders, or at least think they are. How frightening. This means that the broad road could be filled with very religious people, church people who have done great things. It is an Arrow pointed at our hearts. Commentary-*"Here Jesus is striking a common biblical note. How close to spiritual reality one may come, while knowing nothing about its fundamental character."* The Narrow Road's fundamental characterized being properly related to Jesus. Not just recognition of sin, but clinging to a relationship with Christ! **John 17:3 This is eternal life, that they know you and Jesus Christ, the one you sent.**

Signs of Self-Deception:

-The Church becomes a surrogate savior. There could be a false sense of security. Receive communion, got baptized, pray, read the Bible, worship, come every week. Danger in birthright Christianity. Students- you are not a Christian because your parents are, go on a missions trip, come to church.

-We can defend the faith but don't live it. Theological acumen makes us feel self-assured. We may be very proud of how well we know it...You have lots of verses, might even know the Greek, but there is no love

-We do much for Christ but are never with Christ. We are busy spiritually feeding everyone else, but aren't feeding ourselves.

-We measure our spirituality by our gifts not our dependence on the Spirit. How gifted we are as a teacher, encourager, prayer, evangelist, giver.

-We are chasing a Christian High but have no interest in mundane obedience.

Next Slide In other words, the final question is do you really know Jesus? You might be IN church, IN ministry but are you IN Christ? There is a story of a woman who approached William Wilberforce, at the height of his campaign against slavery and said, "Mr. Wilberforce, what about the soul?" She was asking the question, in all of this great and God-glorifying effort to against slavery, what about the fundamental characteristic of Christianity- a relationship with Jesus? And Mr. Wilberforce turned to the woman and said, "Madam, I had almost forgotten that I had a soul." The great man said that he was so concerned about the liberation of the slaves that he had almost forgotten about his relationship with Christ, which must be at the center. Do you really know Jesus and does he know you?

3. Hearing vs. Doing

Easy to hear a convicting sermon or read the Bible, difficult to do it. The narrow road is not only narrow because there is one way, but narrow in the sense that it is difficult. The two words in Greek to describe the broad road are spacious and flat. But the word used for the narrow road is "hard pressed." *2 Corinthians 4:8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair.*

It is a road that makes grapes into wine, coal into diamonds through a pressing process. There is nothing easy about actually following Jesus. If you were sold that version of Christianity you were mistaken.

Matthew 16:24-25

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Surrender to Christ is the difference between hearing and doing.

²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

The broad road is filled with people who may have at once seemed to be Christians, but when the storms came, whether it was suffering, or when God asked them to surrender a relationship, sex life or sexuality, to surrender their status or reputation, to surrender their party lifestyle, or their security in their wealth, their foundation of sand was exposed. And there are some who claim the label of Christian but their lives bear no resemblance to Jesus and what he said, they don't believe the Scriptures, there is no repentance from sin, they are not committed to a body of believers in a local church. Then in what sense are you a Christian? Like me saying I'm a doctor. Where did you go to medical school- I didn't...well how are you a doctor? Well my dad, my grandad, so I am to. I watch a lot of House, ER... So I'm basically a doctor. Have you surrendered your life and lifestyle to Christ? This is a process but it starts with a choice of surrender. That's at the foundation.

Will you follow Jesus? Jesus' call is to enter in the narrow gate. Here's Jesus saying, see that gate? That's me, that's the narrow way. Go in there. It's a commandment. He didn't say ponder the gate, admire the gate. Jesus never said, ponder me, admire me. He said, "Follow me." Invitation.