

Sermon On The Mount Part 11

The Narrow Path

Matthew 7:13-23

Memory Verses: Matthew 7:21

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

As we've covered the Sermon on the Mount it has become apparent that Jesus cares about our attitudes and our actions. Be righteous and do not lie. Be steady and be not easily be angered. Be poor in spirit and forgive. Be pure and do not commit adultery. Be humble and do not do your works to be seen by men. Be dependent and spend time in prayer. Be gracious and do not judge others motivations.

Not only has he given us the right attitudes and the right actions, but he also gives us the application. Be salt which preserves and light which shines. Let the world see our good works of the law so they will see the good love of our God and be drawn into his light. This is Christianity at its essence.

And so now we come to the two part conclusion of this series. This week we will look at false or fake Christians and next week we will look at building on a firm foundation. Look with me if you would in **Matthew 7:13-23**. This passage should either fill you with joy or fill you with dread. For those who walk the narrow road with good fruit, they can be assured that one day Jesus will say to them; well done my good and faithful servant. But for those who walk the broad road with rotten fruit it will not end well. Which one are you today? Maybe you don't know.

If you thought you were on the narrow path with good fruit, but you were actually on the broad path which leads to damnation, wouldn't you want to know? Wouldn't you want someone to warn you; to help you correct your course? Well, that's what this passage is for. It's a warning. It's a caution for those who may be slipping off of God's path, and it's a reminder to those on the narrow path to bring those on the wrong path onto the right path.

And of course this is where it gets tricky for those of us in the church, because anytime we try to help someone back onto the path we are told what? You can't judge me! Right? And that's where this week's message dovetails with last week's message. We are clearly called to not judge the blatantly lost and we shouldn't judge anyone at all without love and their spiritual discipleship in mind. That is what we discussed last week. But, the Bible in no uncertain terms makes it clear that we are to judge those who call themselves believers as to draw them back to Christ when they are veering off the path. Another word for this kind of judgment is called "accountability." **Accountability is always for the sake**

of discipleship and should always be done in a spirit of love. And how exactly do we discern accountability between each other in the church? By examining their fruit and their walk.

Today our purpose is simple. To warn those of you who think they are on the narrow path but aren't, and to encourage believers to keep those in the church close to Christ in accountability. **Real Christians don't let their friends wander into eternity without knowing Christ.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see here is that... **We Know We Are On The Narrow Way When It's Neither Easy Or Popular.** **Verse 13** says, "enter by the narrow gate." There are two metaphorical gates which all of humanity must enter into eternity through. One is wide and one is narrow. One is easy and one is hard. One is popular and one is the road less traveled.

Looking back now, I know that from age 16 to 19 that I was slipping off the narrow path at an alarming rate. I managed to keep my "Christian" cover intact but my soul was becoming increasingly far from Christ. There were very few sins that I wouldn't justify in my life and anger was controlling almost everything I did. That was until one day Paul, the RA of my dorm, stopped by my room to discuss the fact that I had been caught smoking cigarettes which was not allowed by Liberty Students. In my defense I talked about how hard life had been recently and tried to have a little pity party for myself, but he wasn't letting me off the hook. But instead of writing me up and having me punished, he looked me in the eyes and said something like; "Shevi, I know it's hard, because the Christian life is hard. But it's time to grow up. You can either be a man for God or you can keep pretending your a man when you are really still a boy! At some point you are going to have to choose which road you want to walk." He wasn't unfairly judging me, he was simply pointing out my sin so that I could recorrect my course. If Paul hadn't been straight up with me that day, who knows where I'd be now? He kept me accountable and led me back onto the narrow path.

Listen, the Christian life is not easy and it is not popular. You are still going to have struggles and life is still going to seem unfair. Not only that, this world will be against you. Your beliefs will not be popular and your morals will not be in the majority. You will be an outcast of society. Sure, going along with what's culturally popular would be much easier. You could jump on the woke bandwagon and cheer on the sexual revolution and the LGBT cause and you would probably find life a little easier going. Everyday more and more supposed Christians are jumping on that train. But remember the words of Christ... "the gate is narrow and hard and only a few find it."

Are you going to be a part of the few who remain faithful to Jesus

and his Word or are you **jumping ship** for something more **culturally acceptable**? You can go the culturally acceptable route if you want. But if you are a part of Stone Creek Church, we will do our best to show you the error of your thinking. Why? Because we love you and because... according to **Luke 13:22-24** one day the narrow way will no longer be open to you. Today is the only day you are guaranteed a chance to enter in. The bottom line is simple; we care about you and **Real Christians don't let their friends wander into eternity without knowing Christ.**

The second thing we need to see is that... **We Know We Are On The Narrow Way When We Display Christ-like Fruit.** Look again at **Matthew 7:15**. As humanity separates themselves to walk either the narrow road to life or the wide road to damnation there will be guides along the way. As your pastor I am a guide. Our deacon/elders are guides. Our small group and d-group and SC Kids workers and SC Students workers are all guides leading you to the narrow path. But there are guides which will lead you down the other path as well. Our culture is stock full of people willing to draw you to the high way to hell. They will entice you to live your best life now or do what feels right and it will seem like love but in the end it will be the cruelest form of hate.

How can we know if our guides are false prophets? **Verse 16**; you will know them by their fruit. If they bear good fruit; Christ-like fruit, then they are of the tree of Christ. If they bear poisonous fruit then beware. **Verse 17-18** makes it very clear; a good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. What fruit. Well there are many different fruits of Christ-likeness, but let's just make this easy for you. **Galatians 5:22-23** tells us what the fruits of the Spirit look like. You want to be led by people like this. You want to be led by people who live according to everything else we've read in the sermon on the mount so far. You want to be led by people who love Jesus, his word, and his church.

And this isn't just for guides. This is for us as well. We are all guides to someone after all. Look at **Luke 6:43-45**. The good person produces good from their heart, the evil produces evil from their heart. So... are you producing evil or good? Are you producing Christ-like fruit or worldly fruit? **Matthew 12:33-37** reiterates this point. Your fruit, your walk, and your words show who you really are. I can't make this any more clear... **If you have no Christ-like fruit in your life, you have no Christ in your heart! Real Christians don't let their friends wander into eternity without knowing Christ .**

Lastly, the third thing we need to see is that... **We Know We Are On The Narrow Way When Do The Will Of God .** Lastly we come to **Matthew 7:21**. Not everyone who claims Christ will be saved or is saved. Only the ones who by faith claim Christ and live according to the Father's

will are true converts. **Luke 11:28** tells us that the only ones who will be blessed are those who hear God's word and keep it. Only the ones who have abandoned their own will for their life and have surrendered to God's will for their life as outlined in his Word are truly His.

This is a huge warning. There are fake Christians around us and we won't really know who they are until its too late. Unless we examine each others lives carefully we may never get close enough to see the fruit which proves true conversion. This is why, if you are a covenant partner, we will try to examine your lives, and if in our examination we find you to be slipping, we will do our best to draw you back to the narrow way. **James 5:19-20** makes it clear; if you help bring back a brother from the brink of his sin then you will save his soul. True Christians don't let other's who claim to follow Christ to wander! Stop letting them wander. Stop letting me wander. Stop keeping others from stopping you from wandering! We need accountability. And we need discipleship. We need to teach others to do God's will. We need to share scripture and memorize scripture and pray for one another. This is why D-groups are so important. If we lose these things we lose who we are called to be. **A lack of accountability and discipleship breeds false Christians.** How are you following God's will? How are you helping brothers and sisters follow God's will? **Real Christians don't let their friends wander into eternity without knowing Christ**

Application

So what do we do? First, examine your walk. Are you walking on the narrow road or the wide road? Does the life you live seem to flow with the world or against it? Second, examine your fruit. Do you have a Christ-likeness about your life? Do you exhibit the fruits of the Spirit? Third, Examine your will. Is your will after God's will as outlined in his word or your own will. And fourth, Are you willing to allow others to examine your life and keep you accountable? Are you in a D-group where you have close brothers and sisters to keep you on the path?

Conclusion

False Christians always bring up their good works. They bring up their church attendance and their giving and their Sunday best. They say, Lord I did it all for you. **Luke 13:26**; we will say that we took communion and we taught Sunday School But in the end none of that will matter unless you lived for Christ. **Luke 13:25**; false Christians will knock and say open up and Jesus will say I don't know where you come from. **Luke 13:27-30**; depart from me, you workers of evil. Into the pits of hell. Others will enter into heaven. The first will be last and the last will be first. But the saddest words of all are reserved for **Matthew 7:23**; I never knew you. We must make sure that people know Jesus and that he knows them. **Real Christians don't let their friends wander into eternity without knowing Christ .**