

Date: 11-24-2019

Series: The Sermon on the Mount

THE PLACE NONE OF US HAVE SEEN BUT ARE ALL HEADING TO

(Matthew 7:13-23)

We are nearing the end of our short series entitled “The Sermon on the Mount.” Today, and next week will be our last two messages.

Matthew 7:13-29 is Jesus’s conclusion to His Sermon on the Mount. This morning, our text will be verses 13 through 23.

Matthew 7:13–23-----¹³ “**Enter by the** narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. ¹⁵ “**Beware of false** prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷**Even so, every** good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ **Therefore by their** fruits you will know them. ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

When I was growing up in Indiana, I never got to go on a vacation because we had six people in our family and six dollars in the bank. Whenever my dad told us that he would be off work the entire next week for vacation, I never jumped up and down and clapped. “Vacation” in the Vacendak home meant helping dad scrape gutters, pull weeds, clean out the garage, paint the house, you name it. The list went on forever in my mind. When kids in my neighborhood would run up to me and yell in total ecstasy: “We’re going on vacation tomorrow!” my response was, “Sorry to hear that!” But this all changed the year I got married, because, one of the wedding gifts that was given to Kelly and I was an all-expense paid honeymoon in Hawaii. This was the **first time** in my life that I would be flying to a place that I had never been to before.

I don’t know if you have ever thought of this before, but in our text this morning, **Jesus told the large crowd** that was listening to Him that every one of them were also on a trip to a place that none of them had ever been to before. And it is that place that I would like to speak to you about for a few minutes this morning.

Title: The Place None Of Us Have Seen But Are All Heading To (Prayer)

Three times a year I travel to Virginia for five days of classes. And both coming and going, I have to connect through Charlotte, NC. One busy Friday on my return trip to Dallas my plane was late getting to Charlotte and, even though I ran as fast as I could to my gate (I had three heart attacks) I *just missed* my connecting flight to Dallas. I made it to the gate, but they sent me to another gate. They said it was a gate where I could get ticketed for a later flight. When I arrived at that gate, there were about 50 people ahead of me in line. I thought, “Looks like it might be Saturday before I get home.” But after standing there for a couple of minutes, I looked over and, about 75 feet away, I saw a sign that said, “**American Airlines**---Gate 14---DFW---leaves 5:15 PM” and I said to myself, “That flight leaves in just a few minutes!” So I took off running again and when I got to that gate, I asked the person at the computer: “Any seats left on this flight?” And he said, “Nope, all full” and then he walked away. Three seconds after he walked away, a man came out of the door that leads to the plane and I said: “Any seats left on this flight?” and he said, “There’s one seat left.” He issued me a new ticket and I was on my way to Dallas, all because I made it to the right gate, talked to the right person and got the right ticket.

In our text in Matthew 7, Jesus told those who were listening to His sermon, (most of them people who considered themselves good, religious people), that they were all headed to a place where entering the right gate was crucial.

Of course the place that Jesus was speaking of that all these people were **heading to was ETERNITY**. Every person ever born will enter this city through one of two gates, and Jesus wanted to make sure they entered through the correct gate. Notice v. 13. Jesus, speaking **now** to the unsaved in the massive crowd, said:

“**Enter through** the narrow gate. [Why?] For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, [or, hell] and many enter through it.” (NIV)

All of us are headed to where we will live for eternity, the question is will we enter through the correct gate?

Let’s start with the **wrong** entry gate into eternity—the **wide gate**. Obviously a wide gate is easy to get through. A lot of people can get through that gate. In fact, Jesus said **many** enter through it (IOW, the vast majority of humanity).

Some are:

- Atheists who don’t believe in God at all.
- Others are people who believe there is a God but have never made an effort to get right with Him.
- Others are very religious people who think they can earn eternal life through the good things they do, and believe they are probably on their way to heaven.

What we need to see this morning is that this wide gate leading into the world to come will be entered by billions of people—the majority of mankind. And according to our Lord, the One who created all there is, they will find themselves in a miserable place of ruin—hell.

This is the WRONG gate into eternity.

Now fortunately, there is another entrance gate into eternity which Jesus calls **the narrow gate**. Notice v. 14:

...narrow is the gate and difficult [or, **narrow**] is the road which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

This gate is narrow and the road that leads to the gate is narrow. Why? Because there is only **ONE WAY** to heaven! Jesus said:

John 10:9 ----- **I am** the door. If anyone enters **by Me**, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

The reason few find the correct gate, is because they either don't want God or have believed a lie that they can get to Him through something else or someone else other than Christ.

And my friends, if any of you here think that you will be able to get to God some way other than through Christ ALONE, you are mistaken, not because I say so, but because Jesus is clearly teaching here that there is a right way and a wrong way, and that the right way is **CHRIST** and the wrong way is **everything else**—trying to be good, doing good deeds, loving other people, going to church, getting baptized, turning over a new leaf, meditating, giving money to the church, etc. Jesus said that these will all fail. Why? Because Jesus said:

John 14:6-----“**I am** the way, the truth, and the life. **No one** comes to the Father **except through Me**.”

Have you placed your faith in Christ alone for the gift of eternal life? If you haven't, you are on the wrong road heading to the wrong gate that leads to **eternal** suffering and anguish.

Now as Jesus continues His message, He warns people about listening to teachers who don't know what they are talking about. Jesus calls them “false prophets”: (and He says in v. 15)

Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves.

False prophets look like sheep—like followers of God—but they are really vicious wolves that can rip a person to shreds.

Jesus tells people how to identify a false teacher: (v. 16):

You will know them by their fruits.

Most preachers and even some Bible translations say that their “fruits” are how they act. But that contradicts what Jesus just said. Jesus said, they look like sheep—like followers of God.

So what does Jesus mean when He says, “You will know them by their fruits?”

He means you will know them by what they **say**—what they are teaching. In Matthew 12, Jesus tells us EXACTLY what He means by their fruits:

Matthew 12:33–35-----a tree is known by its fruit ... For out of the abundance of the heart **the mouth speaks**.³⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

In the days of the prophet Isaiah, Israel was turning to mediums and spiritists (who are of the devil) for direction, but Isaiah said:

Isaiah 8:20-----If they **do not speak according to this word**, it is because there is no light in them.

Jesus was warning people. He was warning them that they were in deep, deep trouble, and could end up in the same place as the deceived teachers they were listening to.

And that is why Jesus told **them in v. 21**:

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² **Many will say** to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

The **many** of v. 13 who enter the wrong gate are the **many** of v. 22 who will stand before Jesus in judgment one day and hear Him tell them: “**I never knew you.**”

Before Adoniram Judson became the pioneer of American foreign missions he was a rebel. He finished at the top of his college class and headed to New York City to seek fame and fortune as an actor and/or writer. He had renounced his father's belief in a personal God; his education had taken him beyond such primitive notions. Prayer, of course, was meaningless to him.

But by the age of 20, Adoniram didn't feel right about his life. Disillusioned, he headed back to his home in Plymouth, Massachusetts, stopping for a night at a wayside inn. Adoniram had trouble sleeping that night, because a man in the next room was critically ill and moaning and groaning in pain. Obviously, his neighbor in the next room was dying. In the darkness of his room, Adoniram thought about the possibility of his own death and whether he was prepared for it. At times during the long hours he thought about returning to the Christian beliefs of his father, but then he imagined what his college chum Jacob Eames would say about his father's doctrines. He waited for morning to come so that the terrors of the night would be forgotten.

Early the next morning, Adoniram went to the innkeeper. "That poor old man in the next room. How is he?" he asked.

"He passed away early this morning," came the reply. "And he wasn't old at all. He was a young man, about your age."

For some reason, Adoniram asked, "What was his name?" It was a rather stupid question, because Adoniram certainly didn't know anyone in that section of the country.

The innkeeper replied, "His name was Jacob Eames."

There was no mistaking the name or the identity. It was the young college friend whose religious skepticism had turned Adoniram against the religion of his father.

Dazed, he returned to Massachusetts and to his father. Echoing through his mind was the word lost. But it took three more months of intellectual struggle before he "made a solemn dedication of himself to God."
