

Lesson 8 – 19 September 2010

The Way Unto Life

Lesson Scope: [Matthew 7:1-6, 12-29](#)

Lesson Focus

Chapter 7 concludes the Sermon on the Mount.

In it Jesus presents a righteousness that exceeds "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (Matthew 5:20). They had an outward profession of godliness, but they did not actually possess it. On a later occasion,

The new birth is the gateway through which man enters the narrow way Jesus stated that "they say and do not" (Matthew 23:3).

One truth we must understand is that the broad way begins much like a funnel at the broad end, but it quickly becomes narrower as it binds, burdens, and destroys. The contrasting thought to this is that the narrow way is like entering a funnel at the narrow end, but it broadens into Christian liberty and a life of service

This lesson makes personal righteousness practical for every person in everyday life. Without the inner presence and power of the Holy Spirit, however, all our efforts will be futile and these lofty standards unattainable. The sobering reality is that only one path leads to eternal life. The road to heaven is a restricted course that man travels as he voluntarily meets the conditions.

Lesson Aim: To observe characteristics of those who will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Theme Verse: [Joshua 24:24](#). And the people said unto Joshua, The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey.

Lesson Text

`Judge Not"

Matthew 7:1-7

Judge not, that ye be not judged. ²For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. ³And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? ⁵Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

⁶Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you. ⁷Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Matthew 7:12

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

"Enter Ye"

Matthew 7:13-14

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: ¹⁴Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

"Beware of False Prophets"

Matthew 7:15-20

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. ¹⁶Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? ¹⁷Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

"Heareth ... and Doeth"

Matthew 7:21-29

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

²²Many 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? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

²⁴Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. ²⁸And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: ²⁹For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Questions for Study

"Judge Not"

1. What do these verses reveal about man's natural tendencies?
2. How does the truth of verse 2 work out in interpersonal relationships?
3. What are some likely reasons why verse 12 is commonly called the Golden Rule?

"Enter Ye"

4. In what ways is the one path broad and the other narrow?
5. What is involved in finding the narrow way?

"Beware of False Prophets"

6. How can we identify the hypocrite and the false prophet?

"Heareth ... and Doeth"

7. What was lacking in the lives of those asking the questions in verse 22?
8. How can we become established on a firm foundation and build upon it?

Analyzing the Passage

The first clause of Matthew 7:1 is often quoted alone to suggest that all judging is wrong. In the context Jesus is teaching against unrighteous judgment. Compare with John 7:24. Unlike God's judgment, man's judgment is based on limited knowledge and is easily prejudiced.

Beam (Matthew 7:3-5) refers to a large piece of lumber. In contrast, a mote is a twig, particle of wood, or chaff.

Strait (Matthew 7:13-14) means "restricted, narrow." Narrow (Matthew 7:14) speaks of a way of difficulty or affliction. Wide and broad (Matthew 7:13) indicate a spacious path with room for any to enter without restriction. The narrow way allows no room for fleshly expression. The broad way begins with open acceptance of anything and everything, but it progressively restricts and binds a person more tightly into the bondage of Satan.

Ravens wolves (Matthew 7:15) describes their dangerous nature. Aggressive, cruel, and devouring wolves are a sheep's worst enemy.

Principles and Applications

"Judge Not"

1. Those who will enter heaven evaluate themselves and others according to the Scriptures (Matthew 7:1-2). We tend to make room for our own weaknesses and failures while condemning others for lesser faults. This helps no one. In fact, it will hinder us, and it often hinders others as well. Most importantly, it is unscriptural. When we look at ourselves honestly and deal with the beams in our own lives first, the motes in the eyes of others do not seem so obvious.

2. Those who will enter heaven are more concerned about correcting themselves than about correcting others (Matthew 7:3-5). We will welcome the help that others offer for our spiritual growth. We also will search our own lives before addressing a fault in someone else.

3. Those who will enter heaven want to help others enter also (Matthew 7:5). The people we live with and work with sometimes need help, just as we do. If we are truly spiritual, we will not excuse or ignore those needs. Instead, we will address the problem with the same humility and love that we would want others to show in approaching us.

"Enter Ye"

4. Entrance into the narrow way is by the way of the new birth (Matthew 7: 13-14). The new birth involves effort and travail. We must understand our Sinfulness and our inability to reconcile ourselves to God. We must surrender totally to God and be committed to do His will in every area of life. Dying to self is both an initial and a daily experience of crucifying the carnal desires of the flesh and of living in victory over sin. Nothing can enter the narrow way that defiles.

5. Those on the way to heaven are a minority of mankind (Matthew 7:14).

"Few there be that find it." Do we believe that? This means that we cannot be part of the majority and enter the strait gate. We are forced to make a choice. We do not separate from the crowd just to be different. but choosing the narrow way automatically separates us from the masses of humanity who are on the broad way to destruction.

"Beware of False Prophets"

6. Those on the way to heaven are alert and discerning (Matthew 7: 15-20). They know the truth and are as the Bereans, who "searched the scriptures daily. This enables them to discern between truth and error. They also recognize the good fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in the children of God. Those who claim to be Christians but do not produce good fruit are hypocrites.

7. Those on the way to heaven will produce good fruit (Matthew 7:17-20). Every person will produce fruit that reveals his character. This Scripture is very clear, we are to know people by their fruit. This is how we can determine whether a person is on the way to heaven or not.

"Heareth ... and Doeth"

8. Entrance into heaven requires full obedience to God's commands (Matthew 7:21). Anything less than full obedience is not obedience at all. The devil would make us believe that partial obedience has merit. Good talk and a glowing testimony are hypocritical if not coupled with obedience to God's Word.

9. Those who enter heaven have built their lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:24-27). The new birth sets us on the foundation Rock. As we daily crucify self and apply the Scriptures, we are building for eternity. As we obey the commands of the Bible and bear good fruit, we continue to build on that Rock.

Important Teachings

1. Those who will enter heaven evaluate themselves and others according to the Scriptures (Matthew 7:1-2).

2. Those who will enter heaven are more concerned about correcting themselves than about correcting others (Matthew 7:3-5).

3. Those who will enter heaven want to help others enter also (Matthew 7:5).

4. Entrance into the narrow way is by the way of the new birth (Matthew 7:13-14).

5. Those on the way to heaven are a minority of mankind (Matthew 7:14).
6. Those on the way to heaven are alert and discerning (Matthew 7:15-20).
7. Those on the way to heaven will produce good fruit (Matthew 7:17-20).
8. Entrance into heaven requires full obedience to God's commands (Matthew 7:21).
9. Those who enter heaven have built their lives on the Rock, Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:24-27).

Answers to Questions

1. What do these verses reveal about in man's natural tendencies?

Man's natural tendency is to overlook, tolerate, and excuse his own sins and faults. At the same time, he might be sorely irritated by a more mild shortcoming in the life of another. He would rather correct another person than discipline himself.

2. How does the truth of verse 2 work out in interpersonal relationships? People tend to relate to others as they relate to them. If someone is harsh, judgmental, and demanding, other people will respond to him that way. If someone is kind, generous, and considerate, others will usually respond favorably to him.

3. What are some likely reasons why verse 12 is commonly called the Golden Rule?

It is a simple, easily remembered rule with great value. It has universal application.

4. In what ways is the one path broad and the other narrow?

The narrow way begins with full surrender at the foot of the cross. It is a restricted way that excludes self-will and sin. The broad way seemingly has no restrictions and requires no sacrifice, but it leads to destruction.

5. What is involved in finding the narrow way?

To enter the narrow way, one must first experience the new birth, denying self and sin.

6. How can identify the hypocrite and the false prophet?

We must be alert, knowing the Scripture thoroughly. The hypocrite and false prophet are deceptive. We must look closely at how they live and at the results of their influence. Those on the way to heaven will consistently produce good fruit.

7. What was lacking in the lives of those asking the questions in verse 22?

These people seem to have placed a lot of emphasis on the good appear-

ance of their public life and works. They did not know Jesus, and He did not know them. Their motivations in service apparently were wrong.

8. How can we become established on a firm foundation and build upon it? Jesus Christ is the only true foundation. We must lay down self, take up the cross, and follow Him. To hear His sayings and do them is to submit wholly to His authority in every area of life.

Summarizing the Lesson

We are building in sorrow or joy
A temple the world may not see,
Which time cannot mar nor destroy:
We build for eternity.
Ev'ry tho't that we've ever had,
Its own little place has fill'd:
Ev'ry deed we have done, good or bad,
Is stone in the temple we build.
Are you building for God alone?
Are you building in faith and love,
A temple the Father will own.
In the city of light above?
--N.B. Sargent

Research Guide

1. Study John 10:1-29.
2. Read the chapter titled "Self-denial" in *Doctrines of the Bible*.