WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS NOW
Matthew 7.13-14

MT 7.13 “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.

Intro
If ever there was time when we need to hear a certain Word- it is now
• Whenever there was a time when we needed to see the movement of God- it is now
• Whenever there was a time when we needed to feel God’s presence- it is also now

All across the world- and everywhere you look, people clearly need the Lord
• You can tell by the crises
• And the challenges
• And also the doubt
• And there so many examples that reveal it

Illus: I Don’t Want To Go To Church Today
A mother went to wake her son for church one Sunday morning. When she knocked on his door, he said, “I’m not going!”

“Why not?” asked his mother.

“I’ll give you two good reasons,” he said.

“One, they don’t like me. Two, I don’t like them.”

His mother replied, “I’ll give you two good reasons why YOU WILL go to church. One, you’re 50 years old. Two, you’re the pastor!”

In young people, you can tell by the way they challenge today’s ethical and moral foundations
• In older people- you tell by their reaction to the challenges to their traditions they grew up with
• And the rest of us are in between
• We are so exhausted by the time the weekend comes we want to pull the covers over our head and sleep

1. But Between What The World Needs- And What We Want- There Is Conflict, Frustration, And Doubt

Illus- Serenity Prayer
You might remember that great prayer- attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr- called the Serenity Prayer…

God, Grant Me The Serenity To Accept The Things I Cannot Change
Courage To Change The Things I Can
And Wisdom To Know The Difference

Short terms benefits are so seductive…
• I would rather have ice cream- but the doctor says to eat fruit and vegetables
• I would rather be on vacation at the beach- but my checkbook says I gotta go to work
• I would rather like to be righteous and not have to work for it- but Jesus says righteousness is reserved for those who do the will of the Father

Illus- The Diamond Ring
There once was a young man who promised his girlfriend he would buy her a diamond ring for her birthday
The girl was thrilled to hear this
So she goes to the beauty parlor to look beautiful on her birthday
She bought new clothes and new shoes- had her hair done and make-up

Finally, the day she's been waiting for arrived
She looked elegant, gorgeous...the dream girl for every man
Everybody was focused on her

Now, the young man had this idea- to have a party for her- and pick her up in a limousine
So when her birthday arrived
The limousine driver went to her house first
And they picked him up after work

When they boyfriend came out the limousine driver opened the door- and he gave her a gift
It was a simple doll, the kind that little girls might be thrilled to have
But the girl got mad
She thought that he would give her a diamond ring
So she threw the doll across the limousine and into traffic

And as she did, the boyfriend stepped out into the street, and not seeing the oncoming traffic he was hit by a car going 45mph
He was rushed to the hospital
But nothing could save him
And so he died trying to get her birthday doll that she threw out in the street

The girl couldn’t stop crying- she was in a state of shock- as she felt responsible for him for dying

And at the funeral the girl remembered all the good times they had
But she still had the doll
She hugged the doll tightly, full of love and regret

Later- after the funeral- she was shocked to find out that the doll was actually a talking doll
She pulled the string and the doll said this…
"Happy Birthday Sweetheart, Will You Marry Me?"

And in the inside of the pocket of the little doll she finds a ring with a note that said…
Here Is Your Diamond Ring
Hope You Like It
I Love You

Now the girl cried even louder and shouted, "I'm Sorry, I Didn't Know, I Love You Too"
But the guy was gone forever

Ques- And the moral of the story?
We should learn to appreciate whatever comes our way
Because it might just be what we actually need and not what we want

Even today, the world takes only nominal interest in Jesus
Like the doll thrown away as an unwanted gift
Jesus meets every need, but so few see it
They are myopic
And they can’t get past the immediacy of the moment

2. Needs And Wants Can Be Confusing - But Jesus Clarifies Matters - And Cuts To The Core Of Every Issue

As Jesus says,

**JN 3:19** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

**Illus- Worship Services**

In our worship services, we have gotten into the habit of saying a few things to get us thinking along these lines

We might say, for example…

- “God Is Good- All The Time; All The Time- God Is Good”

Others include things like,

- “Turn To Your Neighbor And Say, God Loves You And So Do I”

Another common one,

- “This Is The Day The Lord Has Made; Let Us Rejoice And Be Glad” (Psalm 118.24)

These are just a few promises that can be relied upon

- And they express the difference- between need and want
- To see the world rightly, and not just doing what we want to do

**I. WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS TO SEE IS THE CHRISTIAN DOING WHAT HE HAS BEEN CALLED TO DO (vs. 13)**

**MT 7:13** “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.

**Illus- What The World Needs Now**

"What the World Needs Now Is Love" is a 1965 pop song written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David

- It was sung by Jackie DeShannon
- It made the top ten on the pop charts
- And it made number one in Canada

But what you might not know is the song was written during the Viet Nam war

- A time when there was a lot of controversy and conflict

**1. Jesus Says The Narrow Road Is There- But You Must Be The One To Choose It**

**Illus- Highway 17**

Back in 2010 when I was commuting to Craven County, I was living in a house on the Roanoke River

- Back in those days, I wasn’t the pastor, and hwy 17 was new to me
- So I would stay on the more familiar hwy 11 until I get to hwy 55

But when some people heard this, they were offering all kinds of advice- lots of chatter- talking at once…

- 17 Is Faster
- You Are Going The Long Way
- Why Are You Doing That
• You Can Save Time The Other Way
  • Just Turn Her, Go There, Drive By This, Turn On That

Of course, I never asked for it- but I got it
  • I’ll never forget listening to half a dozen people talk all at the same time!

Ques- But did I change my mind?
  • Nope. I chose the one I knew- that was safest- with more lighting- in case I had a breakdown
  • But now the road is finished, and I drive highway 17 all the time

Ques- Do you ever wonder about the choices you have made?
  • If you had taken this job?
  • Had you married this boy?
  • If you had stopped smoking earlier?
  • If you had saved more for a rainy day?

And then there are those pesky New Year’s Resolutions…

Illus- New Year’s Resolutions

According to a 2017 survey, the top three resolutions for 2018 were eating healthier, getting more exercise, and saving more money.
  • Yet according to U.S. News & World Report, the failure rate is 80%, and last only 10 days

Ques- And what about those who know the Bible, but don’t live it?
  • They are poor- when they could be rich
  • They could be happy- but they fight, argue, and complain
  • They could be free- yet they love their bad habits
  • And when life doesn’t work out, they blame somebody

And it’s not that they don’t Jesus- they just do what they want to do- not what Jesus would have them to do

II. THE WORLD NEEDS TO SEE WHAT A SINCERE FOLLOWER OF JESUS LOOKS LIKE (vs. 14)

14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

If we think of the cost incurred in following Jesus, most of us would say it has been worth it
  • But we are the ones inside the church- there are many more outside it
  • But they will not know what it means to say “carry your cross” unless they see the difference

Illus- Prominent Minister That Renounced The Prosperity Gospel

A 09-04-19 article in the Christian Post recently said that a certain minister has renounced the prosperity gospel

He was speaking to his followers on Facebook, where he said…
  • “I am correcting my own theology”
  • “I think it’s an offense to the Holy Spirit to put a price on the gospel”
  • “And I’m done with it”
  • “I think it hurts the gospel”

Now, the thing is, it has been reported that he was worth $42 million

Ques- I only have one question… Will he give the money back?
1. To Follow Jesus Incurs A Cost- And A Real Disciple Is Willing To Pay It

LK 14:25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Ques- And isn’t it an adequate expression of the challenges we face?
• A narrow road is not an irresponsible, anything goes type of road
• Rather, it is the kind of road that incurs a cost
• And that is a choice that many are unwilling to do

III. BUT FOR A DISCIPLE THE CHOICE IS FINAL- THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF RETREAT-ONLY FORWARD MOVEMENT (vs. 14)

You might recall that great verse where he says,
JN 10:28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. 30 I and the Father are one.

Story- Dr. Law and Dr. Grace

There is a story about a man who was having serious health trouble. He had heard about a famous doctor (Dr. Law), the greatest in the land. He went to see him and told him the signs and symptoms he had.

He said, “Doc, I need your help. Do you think you can find out what is wrong with me?” And Dr. Law said, “No sir, I don’t have to think... I KNOW what is wrong with you. You have a bad heart, and unless something is done you are going to die.”

But the man said, “Dr. Law, I don’t think you understand. I’m having trouble with my hands. I spend a lot of time dealing cards while gambling and I’ve even used them to fight with. My hands are giving me trouble.”

And Dr. Law said, “No, it’s your heart.” Again, the man said, “Doc, I’m going to have to argue with you. You may be a doctor, but still you don’t understand me...I’m having trouble with my eyes. I look at things I ought not see. So it must be that I am having eye trouble.”

The old doctor said, “No, my friend, it’s heart trouble.” Again the man said, “But I am also having trouble with my tongue. It says things that are sarcastic and ugly.” But Dr. Law says, “Nope, it’s heart trouble!”

By this time the man is frustrated. Dr. Law understand him. And Dr. Law only said, “These things will be taken care of when your heart is fixed.”

Finally, the man said, “I’m going to another doctor! Would you recommend a doctor for a second opinion?” And Dr. Law said, “There is only one doctor I would recommend and his name is Dr. Grace.”

And so the man goes to Dr. Grace, and he says, “Dr. Grace, I’m scared. Dr. Law says I am going to die!” But Dr. Grace said, “You don’t have to be afraid - I’ve never lost a case. This will be a successful operation.”

The man said, “Dr. Grace, what about the charges and the expense of this operation?” But Dr. Grace said, “Don’t worry; it’s already paid for.” He said, “Who paid for it?” And Dr. Grace said, “A Friend of yours.”

“Oh? I’d like to meet Him.” And Dr. Grace said, “After the operation, I’ll let you meet Him, I’ll introduce you to Him.”

And so the man got onto the operating table and Dr. Grace took the knife and sliced open his heart and out came the blackest heart he had ever seen. Dr. Law was right- he had heart trouble.
Dr. Grace had thrown that old heart away and brought a new one. And with tears of gratitude coursing down his face, the man said, “Dr. Grace, when shall I come back for a check up?” And he said, “No check up will be necessary, the operation was a success and it is permanent.”

And he said, “Dr. Grace, you told me you’d introduce me to the Friend who paid my bill.” And Dr. Grace said, “Come with me.”

And stepping through a door came the loveliest Friend he had ever met.
- When He raised His hands, he saw nail prints.
- On His brow were thorn scars.
- When His robe fell open, he saw the spear print in His side.

Finally, Dr. Grace said, “Jesus. I want you to meet your patient.”

And as the man looked at that scar in His side, he said, “Dr. Grace, I now understand where my new heart came from. He gave me His.”

Conclusion
Once we realize that we have been bought with a price
- That we did not earn, work, buy, or learn our way into grace
- It changes you so you can’t go back

Ques- But who would want to?
- The ones who confuse wants and needs cannot know Christ the way we do
- For he changes you- and everything about you
- And that’s what the world needs to see
- From a sincere Christian, doing what Christ commands them to do

As Jesus says, *(MT 6.31)*
So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

End of Sermon Prayer

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Dr. W. Reese Blanchett 2019
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Disclaimer: I wish to express my gratitude to all the saints before me who are traveling the Narrow Way. Their love and generosity is reflected in my own humble efforts to prepare sermons for the body of Christ. Grace and Peace.