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MATTHEW

CHAPTER 7:13-29
THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In our study of the Sermon on the Mount – Jesus has just taught the disciples when it is OK to judge and when it is not.
1. In a nutshell He has told them that they cannot know a persons “heart-motive” so it is best to leave that to the Lord.
 2. However, we also discovered in our study that the saints will one day judge the angels and we will discover in later study that we are to judge the fruit in a person’s life – so we need to know how to accomplish both things!
 - a) Jesus helps us with this by telling us that we need to first take care of the “log” in our own eye before we can help anyone else. He didn’t say we shouldn’t help a brother or sister with the speck in their eye, only that we should take care of our own sins first.
 - b) And we closed last week’s study with the Lord telling the disciples (and therefore us!) that to keep these things straight we need only to ask Him in prayer and He will give us what we need to judge correctly.
 - (1) Then we ended with the famous “Golden Rule” of verse **Mat 7:12**
Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
 - (2) But please remember that we cannot separate the “Golden Rule” from the rest of the teaching on this subject. Remember also, that when you see the “therefore” it means that what follows is predicated on what has already been taught.
- B. This morning, we will conclude the Sermon on the Mount as we conclude chapter 7.
1. In His final words on this great teaching – Jesus will contrast the 2 ways and 2 foundations.

II. MATTHEW 7:13–14 (NKJV) — 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.

- A. Isaac Watts wrote this in the 1700’s:

Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there;
But wisdom shows a narrower path,
With here and there a traveler.

“Deny thyself, and take thy cross,”
 Is the Redeemer’s great command;
 Nature must count her gold but dross,
 If she would gain this heav’nly land.

The fearful soul that tires and faints,
 And walks the ways of God no more,
 Is but esteemed almost a saint,
 And makes his own destruction sure.

Lord, let not all my hopes be vain
 Create my heart entirely new;
 Which hypocrites could ne’er attain,
 Which false apostates never knew.

1. Jesus was most likely referring to the private and public roads of his day.
 - a) Jewish records show "a private way (road) was four cubits broad (**7 feet**), a road from city to city - eight cubits (**14 feet**), a public way sixteen cubits (**28 feet**), and the way to the cities of refuge thirty two cubits (**56 feet**)."

T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 100. 1, 2. Vid. Maimon. & R. Sampson in Misn. Peah, c. 2. sect. 1. & Maimon in Sabbat.
2. The word translated in the New King James as “narrow” - is the word “strait” in the King James.
 - a) It means narrow of course, but it also means “pent up”, “very difficult to enter” (Barnes Notes), “with obstacles close about” (e-sword).
 - (1) Keeping with the private road being only 7 feet across and the average person’s shoulders being around 2 feet wide – there would only be room for 3 people to walk comfortably on this road!
 - (2) Whereas the wide road would accommodate 14 people shoulder-to-shoulder with no problems!
 - (a) And I can testify personally having been in Old Jerusalem – there are passageways that even one person has a difficult time getting through. This is the concept Jesus is trying to get across.
 - (b) And, at the end of most roads was a gate to the city. The broader the road, the broader the gate. The narrower the road, the narrower the gate!
 - (i) Then, beyond the gate was the door – even yet smaller.
 - (ii) Isn’t it interesting that Jesus refers to Himself as the “door” in **John 10:7–10 (NKJV) — 7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may**

have it more abundantly.

3. Hell is a superhighway with many entrances and many luxuries, but the road to heaven is steep and narrow and not nearly as many “pastries” along the way.
 - a) If you want to know what path you are on, just look around. If most of the world is on the same path – it is most likely the wrong one!
 - b) If it requires no sacrifice and it is convenient and easy – you most likely took a wrong turn.
 - (1) Oh, also you will have lots of “help” on the superhighway!
 - (a) And you will have many so-called “friends” telling you that you are doing great!

III. MATTHEW 7:15–23 (NKJV) — 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!’

A. How will we be able to identify these “false prophets”, these “ravenous wolves”?

1. We are to look at what they’re “producing” with their lives.
 - a) You see you get figs from a fig tree and grapes from a grape vine. They reproduce “after their kind” as the Lord created them to do.
 - b) The “fruit” of that tree or vine is a result of the tree itself. If the tree is healthy so will be the fruit.
 - (1) If the tree is “bad” or diseased the fruit will also be bad! If it bears fruit at all!
 - (a) If a person is not getting their nourishment from the River of Living Water (Jesus) – the fruit that it bears will reveal it!
2. So here we see that - we ARE to judge the “fruit” of a person’s life.
 - a) It may take a little time for the false prophet, the ravenous wolf, to show their true colors – but it will eventually make it way to the top.
 - (1) That is at least one of the reasons that Paul told young Timothy **1Ti 5:22 Do not lay hands on anyone *too* hastily and thereby share *responsibility* for the sins of others; keep yourself free from sin.** When it came to church leadership.
 - (2) **Mat 7:22-23 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!’**

IV. CONCLUSION

A. **Matthew 7:24–29 (NKJV) — 24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” 28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.**

1. The key here seems to be “doing” not just “hearing”.
 - a) Both men “heard” the truth, but the wise man acted upon those words!
 - (1) True Christianity isn’t just hearing and sitting, it is hearing and doing!
2. As Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount – the people were amazed that He had such wisdom and spoke as though He knew what He was talking about!
 - a) You see – Jesus was “real” and He wants His followers to be real also.
 - b) He didn’t just want them to “jump through the hoops” of religion. He wanted them to do what was “right” because they loved Him!

V. **JAMES 1:22–25 (NKJV) — 22 BUT BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOURSELVES. 23 FOR IF ANYONE IS A HEARER OF THE WORD AND NOT A DOER, HE IS LIKE A MAN OBSERVING HIS NATURAL FACE IN A MIRROR; 24 FOR HE OBSERVES HIMSELF, GOES AWAY, AND IMMEDIATELY FORGETS WHAT KIND OF MAN HE WAS. 25 BUT HE WHO LOOKS INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY AND CONTINUES *IN IT*, AND IS NOT A FORGETFUL HEARER BUT A DOER OF THE WORK, THIS ONE WILL BE BLESSED IN WHAT HE DOES.**