

Walking Out The Value System of His Kingdom

I. The Narrow Gate

(Matthew 7:13-14 NASB) “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

- a. Often, this passage is seen as a simple contrast between right and wrong, but that misses Jesus’ deeper point. The “narrow gate” is a constrained, intentional path that pushes against the default cultural value system. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus doesn’t loosen the law; He tightens it. “Don’t murder” becomes “don’t even harbor anger.” “Don’t commit adultery” becomes “don’t look with lust.” He’s describing a life that narrows us, not out of restriction, but refinement. It’s a process of being pressed, pruned, and purified. Like a filter, the path begins broad but narrows as we grow in love and obedience. The broad way, by contrast, requires no surrender. It’s wide because it accommodates everything and transforms nothing.

(Hebrews 12:10-13 NASB) “...but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 For the moment, all discipline seems not to be pleasant, but painful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterward it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is impaired may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.”

- b. The narrow way isn’t just a difficult road of sacrifice, it’s a privileged invitation into friendship with God. Often, cities had multiple gates, some we’re wide and crowded, the others narrow and known only to few. The narrow gate is the privilege of friendship and honor. We enter the narrow gate through prayer, hunger, and intentional surrender. Jesus here is revealing the dignity of the “difficult” path that leads to life. It’s not the obvious road, but it’s the one that leads straight to His heart. Though it presses and purifies, the narrow way is a privilege that leads to His presence.

(Psalm 25:12-14 NASB) “Who is the person who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. 13 His soul will dwell in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. 14 The secret [friendship; intimacy] of the Lord is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant.”

(Proverbs 3:1-2 NASB) “My son, do not forget my teaching, but have your heart comply with my commandments; 2 For length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you.”

(Proverbs 21:21 NASB) “One who pursues righteousness and loyalty Finds life, righteousness, and honor.”

II. A Tree & It’s Fruit

(Matthew 7:15-20 NASB) “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good tree bears good fruit, but the 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 So then, you will know them by their fruits.”

- a. Jesus continues by giving a sober warning about false prophets (False prophets are not those who occasionally “miss it” in a prophetic word). False prophets are spiritual leaders who, through their teachings and way of life, lead others off the narrow road that leads to life. They come in “sheep’s clothing”, appearing sincere, godly, and trustworthy, but inwardly they are wolves, self-serving and spiritually dangerous. False prophets turn people away from that road often through flattering doctrines that soothe human longings, and leads away from the narrow way. The real danger is not just in what they say, but in how they live and where they lead.

(2 Peter 2:1-3 NASB) “But false prophets also appeared among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their indecent behavior, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words”

(Romans 16:17-19 NASB) “Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18 For such people are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. 19 For the report of your obedience has reached everyone; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good, and innocent in what is evil.”

- b. Jesus says spiritual leaders/teachers are known by their fruit, meaning, that which is produced over time through their doctrine and heart condition. Fruit here is more than outward success, charismatic expression, or the number of people following them; it is the long-term effect of their life and message. Good fruit springs from intimacy with Jesus. Corrupt trees, no matter how vibrant they may seem on the outside, cannot produce good fruit, because their root system is diseased. A false teacher may even say right things, but their heart is disconnected from the heart (will, desires, affections) God and their influence leads others away from purity, repentance, and wholehearted devotion to Jesus (Sometimes they call people to a radical devotion to man instead of Jesus). Sound doctrine and a godly heart will always go hand-in-hand in those truly sent by God as messengers.

(John 15:4-5 NASB) “Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

(1 Timothy 1:5-7 NASB) “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith. 6 Some people have strayed from these things and have turned aside to fruitless discussion, 7 wanting to be teachers of the Law, even though they do not understand either what they are saying or the matters about which they make confident assertions.”

III. Knowing Jesus

(Matthew 7:21-23 NASB) “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

- a. Jesus goes on to say that simply calling Him “Lord” or performing impressive religious acts (signs, wonders, miracles, preaching, and prophecy) does not guarantee entry into His kingdom. The ultimate goal is not about outward professions or spiritual gifts but about truly knowing Him and embracing His value system. Jesus’ declaration, “I never knew you,” makes clear that many who appear close to Him and claim His name are, in fact, strangers, characterized by lawlessness.

(John 17:3 NASB) “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”

(2 Timothy 2:19 NASB) “Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His...”

- b. Religious activity without inward transformation is ultimately futile. Walking the narrow way demands a commitment to embrace the values of God’s heart. Our pursuit cannot be limited to enthusiastic zeal or impressive “stuff” done in Jesus’ name. This is why, after demonstrating powerful ministry (Matthew 4), Jesus paused to reveal His heart and value system. This passage helps us understand what God is truly after: a genuine and intimate relationship with Him, characterized by wholehearted devotion and ongoing sanctification rather than mere words or works.

(Matthew 15:8-9 NASB) “This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 And in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

IV. The Importance of Foundation

(Matthew 7:24-27 NASB) “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.”

- a. Jesus presents His words in the Sermon on the Mount as a foundation upon which we are called to actively build. It's not enough to simply hear His words; we must align our hearts, minds, and lives with them by putting them into practice. The parable of the wise and foolish builders portrays the contrast between those who build their lives on the “rock” of His value system and those who build on the shifting sands of outward religion or cultural values. Life's storms (testing, trials, and temptations) will inevitably come, exposing the strength of every foundation. But the one whose life is anchored in Christ, who hears and obeys His words, will stand firm and secure, no matter the storm. This kind of obedience is the evidence that we belong to the Kingdom Jesus preached.

(James 1:21-25 NASB) “Therefore, ridding yourselves of all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who has looked intently at the perfect law, the law of freedom, and has continued in it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an active doer, this person will be blessed in what he does.”

(John 16:33 NASB) “These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

(1 Peter 4:12 NASB) “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though something strange were happening to you...”

- b. The wisdom of this final teaching in the Sermon on the Mount calls us to action. His value system demands our full commitment and intentionality. Jesus and His words are the immovable “Rock” upon which the framework of our lives must be built. Anything less is destined to fail when tested by trials and temptations. We are accountable for embracing God's value system and acting upon it. Our security is not found in the convenience of culture or the wisdom of the world, but in the foundation of Christ that we build upon. The Sermon on the Mount presents a Kingdom value system that, if embraced, can help us sustain a life of lasting Kingdom impact.

(Matthew 6:33 NASB) “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.”

(Philippians 3:8-14 NASB) “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them mere rubbish, so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 if somehow I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already grasped it all or have already become perfect, but I press on if I may also take hold of that for which I was even taken hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not regard myself as having taken hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”