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Preacher: Guest Preacher

[ 0 : 00 ] If we turn now to the chapter which we read in Matthew's Gospel chapter 7 and what we find in this chapter, verse 13 and verse 14, entered by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide in the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many, for the gate is narrow in the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few.

We also find similar words in Luke's Gospel chapter 13, verse 24, where he says, Drive to enter through the narrow door, for many I tell you will seek to enter, I will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door and say, Lord open to us and so on.

Well this is a sermon which the Lord preached. It's known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Surely there is no other sermon to compare with it. One could say it's a summary of the moral law.

[ 1 : 51 ] And from chapter 5 to chapter 7 the Lord preached this sermon and he opened his mouth, we have it in the beginning and he taught the people saying, it begins with the word, bless it, as the pure in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are they who are poor for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled. Blessed are they who are merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are they who are pure in heart for they shall see God. Blessed are they who are peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.

Now what we have here in the sermon is the Lord brings before us a description of the Christian character.

It's one of the periods and said that Christian practice is the best witness to ourselves and to others.

[ 3 : 07 ] And you will find that in the sermon it's all to do with Christian practice till it comes to chapter 7 with the application in verse 13.

In the concluding verses of this sermon the people were astonished at this doctrine for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

Because the scribes did not preach with authority. They always referred to tradition or to the fathers.

This was different. There was no appeal to tradition or to the fathers. So when we, when we, I made a way that someone speaks with authority especially when it's the son of God.

The concluding portion of chapter 7 it's good for us to recognize that there are only two in the chapter.

[ 4 : 30 ] There is the wise and there is the foolish. One is building a house on a rock.

The other is building a similar house, identical houses on the sand.

When Christ speaks with authority we should give serious consideration when he does speak with authority.

And when he speaks with authority it reminds us that all authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth.

In the EV it says all power. In your translation here it's all authority. It's the same word. It's given to me he says in heaven and on earth.

[ 5 : 35 ] You see the problem with man is he cannot handle authority and he cannot handle power.

That's why the world isn't such a state as it is. The power seeking man in his fallen state can only make things worse.

So here we have one speaking with authority. What is described in the Pharisees that appealed to the tradition of the fathers where he spoke as one who came from God and who was God.

So it's called the Sermon on the Mount and the theme of the whole Sermon is the Gospel of the Kingdom. The doctrine of the Kingdom is sometimes lost to us.

We tend to speak through often of the church. I like the Kingdom. We have it in the Lord's Prayer twice.

[ 6 : 43 ] We have it in the Beatitudes we have it twice. Begins with it. So the Kingdom which he is establishing of which he is himself as head.

It's mentioned in verse 3 here in verse 10 twice, four times in verse 19 and verse 20 the Kingdom. And the open sermon reminding us what is descriptive of the characters of the Kingdom.

And he speaks of what is positive for theirs is theirs is for they shall. There is no question as regards to whether yes or no.

But they shall theirs is everything is positive. And he is descriptive of the character. And in the sermon he says, for the righteousness of the Kingdom.

[ 7 : 50 ] Let it be a day who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. Accept the righteousness, exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

He shall know why he is entered into the Kingdom of God. You see this man speaks with authority and is blunt.

There is no argument but his and he sets forth his argument in the sermon. And what he does in the sermon he sets forth the great standard that is required of those who belong to the Kingdom.

We have that. And the high standard is such that what was recognized in Christ day was described in the Pharisees that outward show was one which the people admired.

They saw then that righteousness as expressive in their daily lives, the legalism of it. But he reminds us that it is a righteousness which exceeds that righteousness.

[ 9 : 10 ] And let it be a day who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. For they shall be filled.

The emphasis there is on the filling, on the filling. And the essence of this righteousness is a summary of the moral law.

This though shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbor as thyself. So you could say that the whole of the sermon is a summary or a commentary on the moral law, in fact the whole of scripture.

When he begins his sermon with the word blessed, we have the preface to the book of Psalms in Psalm 1. Begins with the same word, blessed is the man.

What he said before us here there are two ways. Because one way the broad way, and he calls here the narrow way.

[ 10 : 25 ] Now the broad way is a way of sin, and the narrow way is a way of holiness. There's a great contrast dear friends between these two ways, the broad and the narrow.

Great contrast. Now there are advantages for both ways and there are disadvantages. If we would look briefly at the broad way, it's not our interest this morning, but it's very important.

A Lord speaks of it. There are many on it, many, many on it.

The advantage is that it's easy. That's what the word is used to note from the station here, it's easy. You don't have to do much to gain entry into the broad way. And it's also popular because there are many on it.

[ 11 : 35 ] And it's either in itself it's an attraction where the crowds go, we'll go, because they must be right.

So we follow the crowd. If you ask the crowd, where are you going? No answer.

But we'll follow them anyway, because they don't ask anyway. You see, when the blind lead the blind, no one asks as regards to the way.

And the advantage of this road is that there is freedom. There are no restrictions, there is no censorship whatsoever.

There is freedom. And there are no demands morally. There are no self-sacrifices.

[ 12 : 38 ] You don't have to give anything really up, unless it's for health reasons. You're concerned as regards to your body and your weight.

And there is no denial. Don't have to deny anything. You can continue your moral life as it is, regardless of how immoral you are, or any of us can continue.

And there is an abundance of company. There are no restrictions as regards to the entrance. How much you are, no questions are asked, there is no change in lifestyle.

That's the broad way, friends, that the Lord speaks of here. And He speaks of being a broad way, He says, as a wide gate. That means it's wide.

Many can go in at the same time without any problem, and sin, sin can be enjoyed, sin can be practiced without any conscience bothering you.

[13:57] And there are many on the broad road to engage sin with and commit sin with. It's a way of the many, who says so?

The one who spoke with authority, he says so. But he also reminds us of the disadvantage of this road.

He tells us that it leaves a distraction, and it leads to eternal misery and damnation.

That's what it leads. So it's a way to be avoided. You see, it's eternal distractions from the very presence of God Himself.

Now the Lord is speaking to us with authority, and He's telling us that there is such a way.

[15:01] And at the end of that way is a ruin, the donation of the soul. Now when you consider Christ Himself, when He came into this world, He came into the broad way Himself to deliver us out of it.

He wasn't on the fringe in a narrow way. He came into the, as one called it, He came right into the mess, into the mess.

And He came to deliver us. And that's how we talk about Christ's humiliation, being born as a woman.

B. B. Warshall puts it the most beautiful when he speaks of the person of Christ. And his humiliation, he says that he descended, he says, at an infinite distance to which man's most conceivable exaltation.

That is man in the broad road. In his own estimation he was so exalted. But he was so low that Christ humbled himself and came an infinite distance to reach the highest exaltation of man.

[16:37] He came, friends, to deliver us. Came deliverance from the bondage of sin. So let us look and consider thoughts on the narrow way.

That's what it's called. The narrow way, in the A.D. it says straight is the gate, like a straight. The straight between Algier and Gibraltar, the straights of Gibraltar.

You see, the entrance to this way, the way of the Lord, it calls it through a narrow gate. Now there's a great difference between a broad gate and a narrow gate.

And he who speaks with authority, he said that on the broad way there would be many who will come through that gate.

But he says as regards to the narrow way, he says only a few will find it. Now friends, these are solemn words.

[17:56] They're not just words that we grasp in the passing. And well that's interesting as someone said. That's interesting. As Dr Lloyd-Jones says, when someone says, can you not tell a wee joke now and again, doctor?

No, no, he says it's too serious a business. This is serious business. It's a way in which the multitudes pass by.

They are empty pews. It's only a few. So let us always be a few.

To encourage the church, it seems so small and insignificant in this world. The Lord encouraged and said, fear not, he says, little flock.

For it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom which was prepared for you before the world was. And any broad brings down a congregation to two or three.

[19:04] Doesn't matter, he says. I shall be there in the midst of you. Ready to bless you. I'll be there.

And the disadvantage of this road is that it is narrow. It's narrow, friends. It cannot be broadened. It's narrow. For God has joined together that no man could asunder.

It's narrow. Other, in another way, you see it puts people off.

Puts people off, turns them off. Because you see, in another way, it makes demands. Makes demands.

[20:02] It requires sacrifices. It also has restrictions.

But the great advantage of this road is that it leads to life. I said, I may see in her few that wish to live, that rather die.

And only a few, he says, will seek to find it. Only a few. You know, friends, if this had been reversed, that the multitude was trudging through the narrow gate.

And this few was on the broad road, if that was the evidence we saw today. You know that we could say that Christ was a false prophet.

But if anything that proves him to be a true prophet is the church in our present state, in this world in which we live.

[ 21 : 14 ] How do we get through this gate? Well, I'll read to you verses, in Luke's Gospel chapter 13, verse 24. There's a word there that is used.

It's the word strive. Other translations, and the translation of that word also is agonize.

Agonize. It's the word which means to force.

Because the word agony is not without pain. It's a word which means to contend with the adversary, as if there was something in between you and what you wish to achieve.

And you want to use force. I mean people, lovely people, who are attentive in the means of grace, and in conversation, even last week spoke to a few.

[ 22 : 35 ] They would love to be Christians. They may be Christians. But some are waiting for something to happen, rather than making it happen.

Because the language here is that we have to use force. Strive is to enter in by the narrow gate. It's another word that is used since John the Baptist came. There were people pressing into the kingdom. And the word pressing means that they were taken to the kingdom by violence, like storm in the kingdom.

Now, dear friends, if you wish to enter into this kingdom, and if you're in a heart of hearts this morning, feel that you want to be a member of Christ's church, you will come to that gate.

And you will scream to the man behind the gate, open to me. You will not hang about, because this is life.

[ 23 : 48 ] You see, pressing into the kingdom of heaven, it denotes earnestness on our part.

It denotes also our emergency, for you know not what a day or a night may bring. It's not something that we should be seeking, wavering in fits and starts.

Or I could often know. Well, that's one, that's the evidence, certainly, that you are not in the kingdom.

It's a constant spent of the soul that is eager to obtain. That's what the language means.

And if Christ is the way, I shall come to him and I shall come to him his way. Now, Christ, you in first words, when he began to preach, we have it in Matthew 4.17.

[ 24 : 58 ] The first word he spoke was repent. Repent. He hasn't changed his language. He began to preach and he says, repent, he says, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

And so the sermon changes here, changes from the character to the application. They speak in here to the Lord's people.

And the marks are a revolution in the part of man, a remarkable change. That's what it means. It means that oppression is a new creation once he enters through that gate. A new creation in Christ Jesus.

And they gave me so much, so narrow that it's only by a miracle of grace that any of us can enter in a miracle of grace.

[ 26 : 11 ] And we have to come by his terms, stripper's cells of every thought and action. Lord, I shall come by your terms.

Tell me, please tell me what I must do to be saved. I'll tell you, he says. I came all the way from the Father down an infinite distance to reach you.

Now tell me. I say I speak of a highway. He says that a highway shall be there.

And away he says. And it shall be called the highway of holiness. That's what the narrow is.

It's a holy word. For without holiness no one shall see the Lord. If we look at some of the fears which sometimes plague the Lord's people, and perhaps more so plague those who are nearly there.

[ 27 : 33 ] Remember the man who was asked what was the best, biggest, the most precious commandment and the Lord told them. And he said, I was answered rightly, he says, well you are not far, he says, from the kingdom.

There are those who are not far from the kingdom. And there are certain things which plague them.

One which is quite common in our own island is our not of the elect.

More or less, if I'm not on the elect, how can I ever believe? Well, that is a question we should never ask ourselves.

If I'm not on the elect, I shall not be saved. As Spurgeon says, do you wish to be of the elect? And if you do, you will be of the elect. Remember, hindrance to people is, I'm too great a sinner. [ 28 : 57 ] And perhaps there is, Ines, I'm so sinful in my own thoughts. I'm so corrupt and so vile that I even hate myself.

How can Christ accept me? A man who is so guilty or woman. And you feel that you've committed the unpardonable sin for which there is no mess.

These are thoughts sometimes that can plague people and cause a hindrance. And another one, perhaps God, why should God kill for me?

Why? Who am I? Who am I that he should care for me? I'm so little in people's estimation.

People pass me by. When George Foothfield was preaching in Hyde Park in the 18th century, at Great Puritan, he had an incredible voice that could stretch across.

[ 30 : 09 ] He had a singing voice which he sang and preached. And he said that even, he says, the devil's own cast-outs are welcomed into the kingdom.

The woman there, she was a loose woman on the fringe. She was so disgusted with herself, she couldn't come near the crowd that she heard him.

She approached him afterwards and spoke to him. She said, this man Jesus you're preaching will accept the devil's own cast-outs, which I am.

Yes, he says, the devil's cast-outs. I was listening to a sermon last Lord's Day on the radio.

It was taken from Longhurst High Security Prison. It was a testimony from a man.

[ 31 : 12 ] He says, I'm six years into a life or murder. The minimum is 23 years. And there were testimonies.

It's high security. They're all lifers and prison fellowship that goes in there with the gospel. No friends.

These are people who have lost everything. Everything. Destroyed their own lives, destroyed their families lives, destroyed lives that they killed.

And here they are locked up, some forever. But there's hope. This man give his testimony.

I'll just give that testimony. Because friends, he came that infinite distance to reach man's highest conceivable exaltation.

[ 32 : 14 ] For all have sinned, Romans 3, and come short of the glory of God. So all these are thoughts that come and hinder some people outside the gate.

Now such thoughts are painful and they're real. And if we entangle ourselves with these thoughts, there shall be no pressing or anganising.

Because these are, as Dr Lloyd Jones calls them, the phantoms. They're not enemies, friends.

But the one who wants to enter through the gate will force his way through these thoughts. It involves violence.

So there's no difficulty whilst driving. There is difficulty. That's why the word is used. There is difficulty.

[ 33 : 18 ] When the rich young ruler came to Christ, he was so eager. He was so full of himself. He was a bright young lad, perhaps the envy of any congregation.

But he asked the Lord, what is it, Lord, yet that I should do in order that I may inherit eternal life?

Said anything I can do, Lord.

The only answer to this entire thing that Jesus said was, for you, son. For your jog of nature. I said to you, you sell all that you have. Give it to those who are backing the roadside.

You come and follow me. You love riches far beyond the riches that you possess, Dov. But it declined, you see, to be much pain and giving up.

accept him I think son you should give up half your wealth and keep the other half. It'll be helpful to us in the ministry because we've got projects going and we need money money money money. He would have been happy to have followed Christ but you see there is a cross to bear and a carry.

You see when worldly and carnal motives enter into evangelism and mixed with the narrow way it ceases to be the narrow way then it's no longer narrow it's a mixture as he calls it is neither hot nor cold. As one put it he calls it evangelical humanism whereas when we speak of evangelism that is the the bearer of good news evangelism begins in theology. Theology is the doctrine of God doesn't change whereas the other is in anthropology the doctrine of man that's always changing you cannot mix the two and what it does it cancels God out of the redemptive picture the narrow way cannot be anything that belongs to the broad way it remains narrow as narrow as the gate it leads to life it's a

protective way all the way it never ceases to be none. You see the narrow way cannot tolerate evangelistic gimmicks which tends to bother on the emotionalism the manipulation it remains French narrow. If a person just now suffers from bodily pain all of us have experienced pain and there are symptoms which demonstrate to us there is pain and even if those who are near to us and see it the seed in your face there is agony. Well there is also such thing as spiritual pains there is agony and the kingdom of God if we are to enter it is not without its agony and its pains is not without its cries and its tears. When you consider him the Lord himself who made it possible for us when you opened to us a new and living way which he consecrated through the veil of his flesh it wasn't without pain it wasn't without the shedding of blood it wasn't without cries and tears we have that in Hebrews in that he was heard that he feared. You and I think we're going to get in there without pain without cries without tears. I say I

[ 38 : 25 ] speak when you shall see the travel of a soul the word travel is a word which speaks of great pain of giving birth when you shall see the travel of a soul he shall be satisfied I love these words and I always tie them up with the words in Ephesians 1 when you shall gather together the things which are in heaven and earth even in heaven. He anticipates to see the result of his traveling his pain when the church shall be gathered together as one. I've been there for brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance having our bodies washed on pure water. No friends there is no entry without pain and the sermon begins with the word blessed. On the church shall live by faith. If we take one character who's on the road it's always good to have a pattern. The Apostle Paul when they planted churches he reminded them that he was a pattern. It's good to have patterns in a congregation God's fear in holy men and women to which the young will look up to and see that there is a standard. There's always a danger friends that the standard can be lowered. But if we use one particular character of the

Old Testament which we find in Hebrews chapter 11 there they that are of the faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. We have that in Galatians 3.

Now Abraham is a fine example of a pilgrim. One is so gent not known where he was going but knowing that God was with him and he's a real pattern and it says that by faith Abraham was called. He was called. He was called to go out of the place in which he lived. And he was called to go out not knowing where he was going but knowing that God was with him. And Stephen in a sermon in chapter 7 of the book of Acts he uses the most beautiful words that the God of glory he says called our father Abraham. He called him. And from the moment he was separated from his kindred it is good for us to think of

Abraham because he was obedient to the divine call because the call came in Genesis 12 one. Get thee out from thy father's house and from thy kindred. There has to be a separation and I was linking these words with Luke chapter 16 where the Lord speaks about he who hated not father mother as regards to himself.

Take up his cross and follow me. He doesn't mean to say that we should hate our father and mother because the law says we are to love our father and our mother. But what he means is that the lifestyle that Abraham had prior to that was in his father's house and with his kindred. That he was called out of that lifestyle and he was to hate it. Like those of us who had been brought out of the broad way we are to hate everything that belongs to the broad way.

[ 43 : 07 ] In fact the broad way sometimes frightens all of us. He says get out from your country from your kindred and from your father's house. That's what he said to to Abraham. Abraham, John eat on the narrow way.

Countless numbers also Johnny on the narrow way. And the narrow gate leads to the narrow way. It never widens. Never. Thankfully. Thankfully. You see these are not narrow people in a sense. People say oh they're narrow. They're not narrow.

They're walking in the way of holiness which may seem narrow to some but it's the way that leads to life. It is the way of the Lord. Just in conclusion why we may seem that this way lacks joy. That it's a way which is always sacrificing good things. Denying yourself enjoyment. Well I'm sure there are some here this morning. He will say it is the way where there is exceeding great joy. It is a way where they have found true love. A way in which they have found peace and fellowship. A way which makes sense. And there is no joy in a way to damnation is there? Is there? Is there any joy in a way which leads to death? Surely the joy is in the way that leads to life. How the bugle provets put it. His ways and ways of pleasantness and all his paths are peace. It's a way of sweet fellowship.

It's a way of confession. It's a way of forgiveness. It's a way of love. It's a way of peace. It's a way which of obedience. He who does the will of God.

It's a way of holiness. For without holiness no man shall see the Lord. It's the way of sovereign grace. And that friends is how the Lord reminds us in the sermon. As he comes to this end of this great sermon as he calls it the sermon known as the Sermon on the Mount. If I must recommend you a book. I love books. I would recommend it. Dr. Lloyd Jones in his studies on the sermon of the Mount. It's a classic. And it makes for serious reading. It's taken from sermons he preached himself. The doctor's style is different. It's easy to read. And indeed a real treasure to have. Amen. And may God bless you.