

# The Cost of Discipleship

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**Bible Text:** Matthew 7

**Preached on:** Friday, September 18, 2009

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Let's open up our Bibles to Matthew chapter seven.

Matthew seven verse 13.

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. "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 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?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 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. 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. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall."

When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.<sup>1</sup>

Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

*Father, I lead in this prayer before your people and I do not know the content of their heart and whether their minds are wandering or whether they truly are seeking you this morning. But I come before you in the name of your Son and I pray that you would set your seal on these meetings, that you would be our helper. And, Lord, if there is any obstacle to your working, if I be that obstacle to your working, remove me as any other obstacle. But, oh God, work here among us for the sake of your own glory, for the sake of your name that it not be blasphemed among the Gentiles on our account. Father, do a work in Christianity. Bless us. Help us and we will be helped. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

Matthew seven starting in verse 13 is a very prominent text, a very powerful text. Some would say even a very dangerous text. But before you can understand the power of this text, you need to see it in its context.

When you go back to Matthew five you see something. I want us to address it just for a moment. Verses one and two present to us something quite amazing that is often overlooked. It says:

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying...<sup>2</sup>

Now I have spent a great deal of time in the Beatitudes, a great deal of time in this chapter five of the book of Matthew and I am constantly, constantly amazed by it, the power of it, what Matthew under the direction of the Holy Spirit is setting up for us here.

He says:

“When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain...”<sup>3</sup>

And I always ask myself: Why is he using this terminology? It appears that he is setting Christ upon this huge mountain. And then it says:

“...after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying...”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 7:13-29.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:1-2.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:1.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 5:1-2.

I believe that what Moses is doing... what Matthew is doing here is defining this moment as possibly one of the most important, if not one of the most excellent moments in history. You see, a long time ago a man when up on a mountain. His name was Moses and he received a law from God and he brought that law on tablets of stone down to a people. It was the law. It was the revealed truth from a God still distant, smoking, fires and burning and trembling and no one was allowed to touch that mountain. But then here in the book of Matthew we understand that now God has come down on that mountain. God has become flesh and his dwelling with men and he is sitting on this mountain and he is opening his mouth and he is going to give them his law.

I don't think that there is any way that Matthew could emphasize this anymore, that this is one of the most important events in history. And the teaching that is going to flow out from this event is the most important teaching in history. It is what being a Christian or a follower of God is all about.

I am amazed among those of us who care a great deal about truth and theology and doctrine and all that is very important, how we so dwell in the book of Romans and how we so dwell in the book of Ephesians and we are so mesmerized with the book of Colossians and rightly so. But it seems to me that we neglect what is going on here to our own detriment, to our own harm. You see, it is so easy, in a sense, to take the great truths of the book of Romans and say, "Yes, I agree with them. I heartily I endorse them. I embrace them," and yet in all our embracing our lives... well, it can remain something of a credalism, something of something in our mind and intellect and belief. But when we come to the Sermon on the Mount this teaching is so dangerous because it is impossible just to embrace it with the intellect. It is something that grabs the entirety of your life.

And Matthew says here in verse two, he says:

"He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying..."<sup>5</sup>

It is almost like a drum roll that begins in the book of Genesis and goes all through the historical literature of the Old Testament and the wisdom literature and the prophets, building momentum and momentum until finally, finally, God comes down and opens his mouth to teach us. Now how can we neglect such teaching?

Now after this he immediately goes into what is known as the Beatitudes and it tells us something, that Christianity is more than a morality. It is more than just a few laws that we embrace. Christianity is about a revolution in our character. It is about an ontological change that when men embrace Christianity—or better said, when Christianity embraces a man, it changes him at the very core of his being and everything that he does is flowing out of what God has recreated him to be.

You see, sometimes I know I myself with the emails I receive and it is probably my own fault, I am accused often times of... and how this happens, I don't know. I mean, how can

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 5:2.

a Calvinist be accused of teaching works as a means of salvation. They say, “You talk so much about the evidences of faith.”

I say, “Yeah, but they are just that. They are evidences.”

You see when we come to the Sermon on the Mount you have to understand as you read:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit...”<sup>6</sup>

“Blessed are those who mourn...”<sup>7</sup>

“Blessed are the gentle...”<sup>8</sup>

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst...”<sup>9</sup>

...that if your doctrine of man and the depravity of man is correct, that all of this is an absolute impossibility. Jesus is not setting this before men saying, “If you do this, you will be my disciples.”

We realize after reading these high standards in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Beatitudes that something miraculous must happen to a man in order for these things to flow out of his life, literally become his life. And what is that? The lost doctrine in American Christianity and I would say the doctrine that is always lost whenever you see dark moments in so-called Christianity and it is the doctrine of regeneration.

You see, you have to understand this. Men are dead in their trespasses and sins. Men are born haters of God. Men cannot come to God because they will not come to God and they will not come to God because they hate him. And therefore in the work of salvation it must be preceded or salvation itself must be preceded by a genuine, recreated, dynamic, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a person that makes that person alive so that they might see properly and might respond properly to the claims of the gospel.

And so what we are seeing here is this. Since repentance and faith are the result of a supernatural, a definite supernatural work of God and since every work of God begins he completes and since salvation is more about than anything else the declaration of God’s power to the universe, you can be assured that if God has saved a person, he has changed that person in the very core of their being and he will continue working in that person to bring about sanctification and conformity to Christ. That is why it is absolutely absurd to believe that a man can be Christian and not be changed and not only not be changed, but have his course set by the hand of God so that throughout all of the days of his life he continues to change.

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<sup>6</sup> Matthew 5:3.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 5:4.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 5:5

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 5:6.

Now albeit, I will give it to you that the Christian life is not necessarily a continual rise. But there is growth and set back and growth and struggle. But throughout the full course of the Christian life, you will see the man being transformed and changed, because the God who began a good work in him will finish it.

And that is why we can go to this Sermon on the Mount and, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,”<sup>10</sup> because these people who have embraced the gospel have been changed by the power of God. And the God who changed them will continue to change them so that more and more these things become marks of their life.

Something very important that I think is set out here in verses three and on in the Beatitudes is these just aren't infrequent things you see in the life of a believer, but they are things that begin more and more to mark the believer. These are the properties, the characteristics of what a true believer in Christ truly is. And they are things that will come about because it is God who will see to it. So the entire Sermon on the Mount must be understood in the context of the supernatural work of God in the heart of every child of God, because if anyone be in Christ he is a new creature and the evidence that he is a new creature is that you begin to see these marks of a new creature in his life.

We have spent I don't know how many years, more than two generations, I would suppose, of taking the doctrine of regeneration and being born again and reducing it down to nothing more than decisionism. Did you make your decision for Christ? And we have literally millions, untold millions of people who have made their decision for Christ, but there is no marks of true Christianity in their life. It is because a mere human decision is not equal to the supernatural regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the true believer. And so we are going to go on now. Having said that we are going to go to Matthew seven.

And after all this teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, first in the Beatitudes, describing for us the character of the true believer and then going to show how that character works itself out in the life of the true believer, the external manifestation of that inward character and then after he goes through all this rigid teaching he comes to chapter seven verse 13 and he gives us a great warning, a great warning.

Now here is one of the problems that I have with modern day evangelism, whether it be personal or from the pulpit. I never hear any warnings after people have made a profession of faith. I find that quite amazing. Even in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* there are warnings, constant warnings. We don't do that anymore.

Now preachers, I will give them this. They will warn the unbeliever about hell. And they will warn the unbeliever to repent or believe in Christ or at least make a decision and pray a prayer, but rarely do I ever hear the evangelist warn those who have made a confession for Christ and yet that is one of our greatest tasks.

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 5:3.

As I shared last night, an evangelist, a well known evangelist wrote me a while back and he was very angry with me and he said, "I just want you to know, Mr. Washer, 22 people, I believe it was are on their way to heaven now because last night they prayed that little prayer that you are always speaking against."

And I wrote him back and I said, "I had no idea you were that charismatic."

And he wrote me back, "Well, I am not charismatic. Why did you say that?"

I said, "Because apart from a supernatural revelation from God explain to me how you know they were converted."

And he said, "Well, that is not my job."

I said, "Then what is your job, sir? Your job is that when you have properly preached the gospel and you have called men to repentance and faith that even though you have surveyed their life for a few hours in counseling, deep counseling, you depart from them with both promises and warnings. Promises that if the God that... if God truly continues this work it is evidence that he began it and warnings that if after this night or after a short period of seeming to walk with Christ they fall away or turn away, it is evidence that nothing happened to them that night."

When was the last time you warned one of your converts regarding that? If you say almost never then you have departed from historical Christianity. More importantly, you have departed from Scripture. When was the last time you warned a wayward member in your church with regard to the state of their soul?

Now I am amazed how the warnings have changed. Nowadays when a believer or someone in the church begins to depart from the faith usually they are just allowed to depart. But if they are warned they are often times warned this way. Do you know that you are a Christian and Christians should act like this and you are going to lose all your rewards in heaven?

That is not warning. A more proper warning would be this. Sir, I was there when you made your confession of faith in Christ. I was there when you publicly identified yourself with him in baptism. I have taught you for a few years. It seemed there was some reality in your walk with Christ and your confession of faith, but now you are departing from the faith and turning back to the world and I fear for your soul. If you continue on this path, it is evidence that everything in the past has been false. Now make your calling and election sure. Examine your life. Test yourself to see if you are in the faith."

There is none of that, is there?

Isn't amazing that when you read the old books, most of them were written in regard to what is the true gospel. Now I ask you. Go to a modern day bookstore and try to find a book on the gospel, I mean the content of the gospel. Read the old books. I find a lot

written about how to biblically invite men to Christ, to plead with men to repent and believe. Go to a modern day bookstore. If you find anything on invitations it is usually quite gimmicky and it is a manipulation of emotions.

Many, many old books written on how to help a person discern the state of their heart, pastors were referred to as physicians of the soul. They labored to make it sure that it was well with every person in their congregation. They warned that a people regarding the possibility of their confession being false. None of that in bookstores today. None of that in Christian libraries today. And none of that in Christian preaching today.

But we see here with Jesus Christ something quite different. Concluding this great Sermon on the Mount he does so with great warning, warnings. He says, first of all in verse 13:

“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.”<sup>11</sup>

Enter in the narrow gate. You must understand that there is something happening in our day. It is a Neo Liberalism and it is the most dangerous type of Liberalism because it is cloaked in conservative dialog. I have been amazed in the last few months of men that I have seen on video who when asked, I mean, leaders of evangelical world, when asked: Is Jesus Christ the only way? Their response has been, “I am not called to judge anyone.”

I want you to know that the men who have done that have denied the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't care how long they have been used supposedly in the last several generations to evangelize people. I don't care how prominent they are today. If you, sir, are confronted with the question: Do you honestly believe Jesus Christ is the only way and apart from him there is no salvation, if you balk at that question, you are not Christian. You are not Christian. And if you through the wisdom of the flesh or some even more insidious power are able to dodge that question by saying, “Who am I to judge? God has given me just a ministry of preaching the love of God,” I want you to know it is the same. You have denied Christ. You have denied everything the Bible speaks about the Messiah as being a light to his own people the Jews, of being a light to the Gentiles, of being that prophet like Moses, but greater than Moses that would be raised up and that anyone who did not follow him would be cut off, that there is no name under heaven, that there is one God and one mediator between God and man the man Christ Jesus. It is absolutely pitiful that today in the evangelical community for me to stand up and be so bold is a scandal. How could it be that in a few short years in our conservative, supposed, community that it can be a scandal for a believer to stand up and say, “Let me make it really clear. Jesus is the only way. Jesus is absolutely everything. At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, every tongue will confess. Any prophet that does not point directly to Jesus as man's only hope is false and damned”?

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5:13.

And let me make it even more clear for you. Everything outside of Jesus Christ is absolutely absurd. He is before all things. All things were made by him, through him and for him.

Beware. Beware. Know this that in the Roman Empire—as I have said this so often—believers if they had only said Jesus was a way they would have never died. See, Rome was full of gods. They had more gods than we have baseball cards. They swapped them. Everyone was happy with everyone else’s god. They would switch them their different days of the week. It was only when the Christians showed up that it ruined everybody’s party because they said they stood there in front of their culture and they said, “Jesus is the way,” definite article, which logically concludes that every other God is false and vain and everybody else is wrong. It is amazing to me not that liberals would deny this truth, but men who would claim to be evangelical side step it and refuse to make the bold proclamation. They are not of God.

Also know this. That a man who refuses to speak about sin, you can count on the fact that the Holy Spirit has absolutely nothing to do with his ministry, nothing to do with his ministry. You take a man who claims that he is all about the love of God and he never speaks about sin, you write it down, the Holy Spirit is a million miles, if we could use such a statement, from him, because one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit when he comes into the world, the Bible says, is he will convict the world of sin. That will be one of his ministries.

“Enter through the narrow gate.”<sup>12</sup>

Christ.

Not some other way, not multiple choice, not all roads leading to Rome, it is Christ. And it is Christ alone. It is not Christ plus or Christ minus. It is only Christ.

As I study the Scriptures I am absolutely amazed and this is just not New Testament. It is just not the book of Colossians. You go everywhere in the Bible and I want you to know something and this may be offensive to you, but God the Father is all about his Son. Everything is about the Son. And if you have a problem with the Son you have a problem about everything in the economy of God, everything in the heart of God. It is all about the Son. And to side step a crucial question like that proves you have nothing to do with the Son, nothing.

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction.”<sup>13</sup>

Now here is something that has also been lost in the evangelical community. Christianity has become only a gate. What happened to the way?

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



You know, there was a time when it was called the way. Why? Because those who had passed through the gate evidenced their passing through that gate by the way they walked, the direction of their lives, the character of their lives.

If I were to look at modern day Christendom, Churchianity, evangelical community, whatever you want to call it. I would have to say this. The gate is truly narrow, but the way is broad that leads to life, because most people who claim to have passed through the narrow gate they walk in the broad way.

Now to counter that, men with poor theology have developed a works religion which is just as heretical. They say that you are right, brother Paul, you must pass through the narrow gate and you must also walk in the narrow way and you must do things and you must work in order to obtain your salvation.

That is not at all what this passage is teaching. What this passage is teaching, again, cannot be understood apart from the supernatural work of God in conversion and regeneration. What happens to a man when God saves him?

You see, those who pass... let me ask you a question. How can a dead man pass through a narrow gate? He cannot. The fact that he passes through the narrow gate is because God has done a supernatural work in his life. And that supernatural work in life, regeneration, the doctrine of being born again, not only enables that man to pass through that narrow gate, it also enables that man to walk in the narrow way. And he doesn't walk in the narrow way grudgingly. He doesn't walk in the narrow way as some horrible duty he must fulfill in order to obtain heaven. He walks in the narrow way because his heart has been changed to love the narrow way, because the narrow way is the way defined primarily by the teachings of Jesus Christ. And since he loves Christ, he loves his teaching and since he loves his teaching, he loves walking in the narrow way.

Do you see that? This is so important. Such... because we have such a high view of man we have such a low view of salvation. Where salvation has become a literally just a human decision that may or may not have any earthly results.

But in the New Testament we see something completely different. Do you realize—and I believe I can back this up. I believe it is there. I love the way the book of Genesis begins with “In the beginning...” And I love the way John picks up that language in John chapter one verse one, “In the beginning...” I believe that John is referring to a new creation. And I believe that the conversion of a man, the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a man manifests as much as if not more of the power of the God than the very creation of the universe. And I believe that what happens in the heart of a man is equated in Scripture with the very resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

We are resurrected to walk in newness of life, that we are made new creatures, that we are made children of God. And so this new way of life, this narrow way we walk in, this

following of his commands, it is not, as John tells us in 1 John, it is not burdensome. It is a delight.

Now that is not to say that there is not a struggle with the flesh and a struggle against the devil and a struggle against the world, but the essential part of really who we are delights in the law of God and delights in Christ.

As the bother Charles Lighter, I have often heard him say Christians have it so wrong when they think Christianity is basically trying to be what you are not. It is not. It is simply being what you are, a new creature, a new creature.

It says:

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. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.<sup>14</sup>

Why is it called a narrow way? I believe there could be many reasons for it being called this. But one of them is that God has not left us to ourselves. We are... we have no excuse for being like the people in Judges who did everything according to what was right in their own eyes. God has given us his Scriptures. John tells us he has anointed us and illumined our minds to know the truth. So we have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling with us. We have the holy Scriptures to mark out this way of Christ. We are to be a people supremely dedicated to this book, to finding out everything it says about every manner of life and seeking to submit to it. But it is not a Legalism. We don't want to go beyond what is written, but we don't want to fall below what is written either. We want to realize that this book is not only infallible, this book is sufficient. And therein lies the problem, at least in my own denomination, Southern Baptist. For years they fought the war of whether Scripture is inspired or not. Praise God that they won. It is inspired. They have come to that conclusion. I congratulate them all. But there is a greater battle now to be won. It is inspired. You are only half way there. It is sufficient. That means I do not need godless psychology. I do not need warped social studies and I do not need to be addressed by my own heart. As a matter of fact, one of the greatest healings in my life has come from the fact that I have learned that I should not let my heart preach to me. I should preach the truth to my heart.

So it is a narrow way. Why? Because it is lined out by what he has given us. Do you understand how privileged we are and how accountable we are to this thing that has been given to us?

I was in the jungles a few weeks ago and it was only the fact that my family couldn't go with me that I actually came back. I think I would have stayed there and you would have never seen me again. As a matter of fact, the church down there in Muscle Shoals is

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew 7:13-14.

being kind of like Pharaoh. They won't let me leave with my family because they think I won't come back.

But I was there and as I was teaching, teaching these beautiful mountain people that because of the [?] the drought, thank you, because of the drought had come down and moved into the high jungle and I am teaching and teaching and I see about 35 women off to the side and they are nursing and they are trying to listen and you can't really understand. Most of them have never read. They don't have a Bible. And so I said, "Ok, after this class I am going to do a women's conference."

And so I got together and all these ladies and pulled them in there and I said, "Ok," I said, "Instead of just preaching to you, I know no one has ever talked to you. I just... I have shared the gospel with you now and now I want to hear your questions."

And this was the first question. Is it true that we can't come to church during when we have our period because we are unclean? If only they had what lays on your desk every day untouched, if only they could read. It is a narrow way because it is marked out by this book. I want you to know something.

People come to me all the time and say, "Brother Paul, I have got a new relationship with God."

And I say, "Do you have a new relationship with his Word? Because if you don't have a new relationship with his Word, you don't have a new relationship with him."

It is a narrow way because it is marked out by this book. And it is a lovely book, wonderful word of life given this book.

The greatest tragedy so many tragedies you young men are going to suffer, terrible tragedies, because you want to jump into the ministry and you have no business there at all and do all sorts of things. My greatest crime, the greatest thing that has hurt me and I say this in sort of a laughing sort of way, but is I became too useful too quick. You want to be useful to God, memorize large portions of this book. Do you want to be useful to God? Read this book from cover to cover over and over. Do you want to be useful to God? Get down on your knees.

I heard one old saint that was so godly he actually read through all of Shakespeare's works on his knees. If he could do that, at least you could read though the book of Leviticus on yours marked out by this book.

One of the things that I love about the Puritans, although I do not agree with them on everything about this, but the one thing I do appreciate is that they honestly desired to make every aspect of their life to bring it into submission to the Word of God. Yes, and sometimes they were rather extravagant and yes, sometimes I think they pushed it too far. But look at us. Your heart, your mind, your eyes, your ears, your feet, everything about you, the direction of your life, your attitudes, your clothing, the way you look on the

inside, outside, everything else. Have you addressed this book to find that you are living in conformity to these things that Christ says?

No, you don't care. That is why you look just like your culture and you act like it, but you are radical because you have got a Christian t-shirt on.

No, no, no, no. Conformity to this book...

Let me share with you something. I have found it very easy at times to preach when people wanted to hurt me. I have found it very easy to be a missionary. I have found it very easy to do many radical things like street preaching and other things. I have found it very difficult to submit to very simple things with my life to this Word. Let me give you the toughest, love. You want to raise the standard on everything? There you go.

You know, I am going to wander a bit, but everyone knows I am not that classical of a preacher anyway, so I will wander. I was... I was over at the Huntsville museum, rocket museum the other day with my boys, absolutely wonderful place. I saw these people and long dresses on and dressed nice and things. I began a conversation with them about children and then found out they were home schoolers. I home school and things like that. Began talking and immediately I recognized there was something going on. They seemed to be very pious people, but then I discovered that they didn't believe they sinned anymore. And I looked at them and I said, "Well, but have you ever loved God even one moment as he ought to be loved? Have you ever glorified God even one moment of your life as he ought to be glorified."

And the guy kind of got a strange look in his eye like never thought of that before.

You see, this narrow way is not just outward principles. It is not just external things, although it will affect outward and external things. It is about regulating your heart, bringing your heart and mind in submission to the Word of God. It is a narrow way. That is another thing that this means. It is a rough difficult way. It is a way of battle. This narrow way is up hill. It is against the world. It is against the flesh. It is against your culture. It is against everything you have ever been taught outside of Scripture. It is a restraining, fighting way to hear, to read in the old books particularly, again, I go back to Bunyan, the idea of Christian making his way to the celestial city and the great battles that he had with Vanity Fair and you have no battle at all.

I can follow you around. I guarantee it and I see you walk through Vanity Fair with your x boxes and your TVs and your text messaging and everything else you do. Vanity Fair. You are so much like your culture. You have no idea how far from Scripture you are.

This is a narrow way. it is fighting against the world. It is realizing with desperation that this is the only way. This is the only hope. Christ is salvation. Heaven is the goal. If I have to lose everything, I will lose it.

But with a violent desperation you advance and you fight.

That is not the type of Christianity that is taught today, is it? Not at all. It is a type of Christianity that I prayed that prayer it is done. I am ok. I go on now. I am radical if I go to church on Sunday when it is raining.

No, my dear friend. Look at what Jesus is teaching.

“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction.”<sup>15</sup>

If your Christian life meets no resistance from the world and worldly people, meets no resistance from your flesh, meets no resistance from the devil, you are on the broad way. Regardless of what comes out of your mouth, you are on the broad way.

If worldly people enjoy you, you are going to have to be careful there because some Christians are so holy they are obnoxious to me to be honest with you. But if worldly people can just... man I really like being... you know, he is such a fine Christian because he is the one guy that I can be around that claims to be a Christian and whenever I am around him I don't feel condemned. I feel free just to keep living like I have always wanted to live. There is a serious problem.

And I have heard Christians actually make that boast. Sinners feel free around me.

Moses built an ark and condemned the world. He didn't have to say a word. Just because he was walking in obedience to God the world hated him.

Let me ask you a question. Would your Christianity be defined as fighting? Would it be defined as conquering, struggling, battling. Now the Lord does give us times of peace and times of rest. That is sure. He gives us times of comfort and by and large it is [?] the narrow way, because there is a broad way and it leads to destruction, the destruction of everything, the destruction of a life here on earth. You see, yes I am going to get to hell and I believe in hell, but I want to tell you something. I have seen such destruction prior to getting there that even those who gain everything the world promises them still inside feel destroyed. And they are not satisfied. They are not happy. They have no peace and I can prove it because they keep trying to get more even after the world has given them everything. They are destroyed inside.

Are you destroyed inside? If you are and you notice it, that is good, because let me share with you something. Going back to Genesis chapter three. Understand this that the curse placed upon Adam and Eve was also a great blessing. In what way? Every time, if you are this type of man you work and you work and you work, but nothing just seems to happen. Even if you gain things they are lost and you are working by the sweat of your brow and you go to work every day and you feel it is all vanity and empty. You need to

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew 7:13.

praise God. That is God screaming out at you, “Fallen, fallen, fallen. Turn to me and be saved.”

The woman in child birth... I understand it is one of the greatest pains a human being can experience, child birth. In a sense it comes from the fall. In another sense it is an act of God’s mercy because every ounce of pain with it God’s voice is screaming out at you, “Fallen, fallen, fallen. You need a Savior.”

The way of the wicked is hard, young person. It is hard. The way of Christ in spite of all of the affliction, all of the suffering, all the fighting his yoke is easy, his burden is light, because he carries that for you and he carries us in that narrow.

Let me ask you a question. One time I was getting off of a boat in [?] in the jungles of Peru. It is the headwaters of the Amazon and I was tired. I got left out there. I don’t know if the missionaries left me out there on purpose that is something that is always... I guess I won’t know till heaven. But I was out there and I was sleeping on the ground and I ate a turtle egg and part of a raw fish and I caught water with the little bucket when it rained. I was miserable to say the least. I finally make it back. I am filthy. I am dirty. I have been in my boots for five days without taking them off. It was bad. And I finally make my way back to the square, the plaza and there are the Jehovah Witnesses waiting on me. And I just was like, “Oh, Lord, why? You know, can’t I just say anathema or something and go to a hotel?” And I am thinking, “Oh, Lord, what do I say?”

And then it just dawned on me. They started talking to me and I just said, “Oh, I just love meeting other people who talk about God. Let’s just sit down and talk for a moment.”

And they started in on the trinity and all these different things and I just didn’t go there. I said, “You know, I don’t understand all that complex stuff that you are talking about, but let me just ask you as a question. This is the thing I most like to talk to other believers about. You know those times when you are struggling against sin and the inward reality of the flesh and doing battle with the devil and you just so long to be righteous and holy and you just don’t feel like you are making any progress, but then all of the sudden the presence of God just comes into the room and you are praying and he just comforts you and he just lavishes his pardon upon you and assures you that you are a child of God. Tell me some of the experiences you have had in this area.”

And they were like... and they just walked away.

But let me ask you a question. Tell me some of these experiences you have had in your life of looking in the mirror of God’s Word and feeling so frail, horrid, scared at your battles and losses against sin only to have him come and comfort you and assure you that you belong to him, the inward reality of walking in this narrow way.

You see, this person who walks in this narrow way is promised the presence of Christ, his encouragement, his strength. Is that a reality in your life?

You know, last night I pray and I read the Word and sometimes I just get up and I preach and the moment I open up my mouth I know that I am just kind of up here by myself. Last night was one of those times for me. And I went to my bedroom and I was just laying there in the bed kind of looking up at the ceiling and just praying and then there was just an overwhelming sense of the love of God.

You see, when you walk in that narrow way there is a communion. Is that communion yours? Do you know anything about such communion with the Lord? Have you ever sensed his forgiveness, his love, his faithfulness, not just something that you read about, but it is something that grabs a hold of you. The narrow way.

So many people who claim to be Christians when I begin to discuss with them the inward reality of the Christian life, they do not have a clue what I am talking about, because their Christianity is nothing more than I did that. I prayed that prayer. I walked that aisle. I made my decision. I asked Jesus to come in. But there is no real knowledge of him.

And it is a broad way and it leads to destruction, not only in this life, but it leads to destruction in life eternal. You know, I find it quite amazing, quite amazing that so little is spoken of about hell in the Old Testament and even in the epistles, that we would almost know nothing about hell, even though it is there in those places, but we would almost know nothing about hell if it were not for Jesus Christ. That is why when Robert Schuler and all these other guys are asked about hell and they respond by saying, "I don't preach on hell. That is not my ministry, I just want to preach the words of Jesus, that is why I know that either they haven't read the words of Jesus or they have no integrity in their life, that they are open deceivers, because Jesus is the one who taught us about hell. The man of sorrows, the man who died for his people, the very God becoming man is the one who spoke more about hell than everybody else put together. And I think he was the one who spoke about hell for the same reason I cannot say much about hell. He spoke much about hell because he was the only one who had the authority in any sense of the reality of it.

I have extreme doubt about all these characters that write books after going to hell and going to heaven for that matter. But the reality of hell.

There is one thing that I know that I will never be able to comprehend nor preach as it ought to be preached and that is the cross of Jesus Christ. I mean, so many wrangling today about the Second Coming. I want you to know something about the Second Coming. The day that the Second Coming occurs, you will know everything about the Second Coming. But you will spend an eternity in heaven and you still will not comprehend the glories of God in the face of Christ on the cross of Calvary.

So I know that I will never do justice to the cross neither in this life nor the next. And I know that there is no way that in the tongues of men or angles that I could ever share with you the realities of hell, because I know that with this human mind of mine, I could never, never even begin to grasp it. But I can tell you this. Christ warned us about hell. He warned us about it.

You see, that is why it is an absolute logical absurdity to make Jesus a part of your life or to tell someone they have a wonderful life and they are just missing Jesus. It is an absolute absurdity. Why? Because if heaven is heaven, hell is hell and Christ really did what he said he did. He has to be everything. Logic demands he is either everything to us or he is nothing to us. It can't be any other way. That is why he demands absolute everything whenever he makes a demand, absolute loyalty, absolute confidence, absolute giving away of self for the sake of him, his kingdom, his righteousness.

Now to take all that that I have just said it would be impossible to fit that into the evangelical mold today in America. The things I have said have nothing to do with what is being taught.

Now here is something and I want even... I don't know who the pastors are here today, but here is something I want you to you think about. I have so many pastors who want to sit down in an office with them and I talk to them about truth they say everything I am saying, but when they get in their pulpit they never do. I go to many churches who claim, you know, identification with the reformation and with the Puritans and Spurgeon and everything, but when I walk into their church and I listen to them teach, there is no difference between them and just every other modern day evangelical church. Your theology is meaningless unless it leads to a change in your praxis, unless it changes the way you preach and do church.

Now it says:

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. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.<sup>16</sup>

Now here is where you can lose this passage. Here is where you can make this passage mean nothing if you do not understand this part. Most people have the idea today that what Jesus is talking about is that there are two groups of people on the earth. There is this one group of people who identify themselves with Christ, who confess Christ as Lord and Savior. And even if you take everybody in the world who confesses Christ as Lord and Savior as our brother pointed out, it is still a small portion. And so they think, ok, there is all of us over here who confess Jesus as Lord and that is the small group that has gone through the narrow gate and has rejected the broad way and is in the narrow path. That is us. And then everybody on the broad path, well, those are all the, you know, the Atheists, the Agnostics, the other religions, the cults, Hollywood, so on and so forth who will not confess Jesus as Lord. That is the way many people understand this passage. And that is not at all what Jesus is saying. Jesus is not even talking about this other world out there. He is not saying anything about the Atheists or Hollywood or those of other religions or those of other cults. What he is saying is among those who claim to be my disciples, few will find it.

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew 7:13-14.



Are you hearing me? This is the dreadful, terrible part of what he is saying. He is not saying there is a little group of people on planet earth who confess my name and they are the ones who pass through the narrow gate and they are in the narrow way and they are going to be saved and everyone else out there who doesn't confess my name is going to be lost. That is not what he is saying.

He is looking at his disciples and he is saying, "Among those of you who confess me as Lord, only few of you will find the way to eternal life."

You say, "Brother Paul, prove it."

Ok. I will. Look over in verse 21.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 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?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'<sup>17</sup>

Listen, dear friends. Listen to me. My ministry has greatly changed here in the last year and I just don't know what I am going to do. I think I maybe... I don't know. I am going to go to another country or I am going to get a tent and preach out in the streets or something, because it used to I would preach to large congregations of people who love the world and now it seems I am in conferences where everybody comes and I am preaching to the choir and I wasn't made for preaching to the choir.

But let me tell you something. Even among you and even this is a word from my own heart. Don't think that there are not times I do not sit up in the wee hours of the morning wondering, Lord, am I also one of yours? And that is a healthy thing to think about every once in a while.

But I want to warn you about something. Jesus is teaching that among those people who emphatically declare him to be Lord, many of them would be lost to destruction. Also know this. Those who are truly deceived are always confident that they are not and they are so confident they never study the matter to determine whether or not they truly are or not. Many of you who will possibly be lost, will walk out of here today and actually think, man, that sure does apply. That is truth that the evangelical church needs to hear.

Now I want you to know something. I say with the sincerity of my heart and it is what I practice. It is the truth Paul Washer needs to hear. It is a truth the missionary in Indonesia needs to hear.

All of us at times in our life need to return to that admonition of the apostle Paul to do

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 7:21-23.

what? To examine ourselves, to test ourselves to see if we are in the faith. The admonition of the apostle Peter to make our calling and our election sure.

Now a Christian can have great confidence in his salvation and over the years that confidence can grow, but we should always be open to asking the question: Is it I? Is it I?

And we are going to conclude with just this part and pick up later on another part of this text. But remember this. The gate is small. The way is narrow that leads to life.

Now I want to make one important statement about this. This passage right here requires about seven lectures and I am trying to reduce it all down to one. It leads to life. But I also begins with life. As the book says in Romans chapter one from faith to faith, the Christian life is also from life to life. It is not that there is this morbid idea of the Christian life in which one day I will make it to heaven and when I make it to heaven I will find true spiritual life and the true presence of God and I will be able to enjoy him forever. That is a hope, but that is not the entirety of the Christian life. That is why we are told in John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”<sup>18</sup>

And when does it begin? At the moment of the new birth, at the moment of justification you are given life. And so the Christian life is going from life to life. It is receiving the life of God, birthed out of the seed of God according to 1 Peter.

I work with a lot of guys in the inner city, Chicago and Memphis and guys who do [?] and other things like that. And sometimes I have really come under a lot of people really said, “Why do you do that?”

I mean, I really don't look like a wrap guy. And I will tell you why. Because I see among those young men and women life. There is life. God has done something in their life. They are studying his Word. They are studying good books. They are witnessing. They are loving. They are changing. They are being transformed.

Life. I really don't care a whole lot about the package it comes in. I want to see life. I see so many religious people that have no life of God in them. I mean, isn't this amazing? And so many of you can testify to this. I sit down on a plane. I have done this so many times. I remember when I was first saved about a year after being saved there was going to be a big crusade in Austin, Texas and well I was, you know, part of it, putting up chairs and everything. I was so excited, a new believer. I was getting to help out and I run around the back of the stage, this curtain. I bumped into this guy. He was from Africa. I said, “Oh, excuse me.”

He said, “Excuse me.” He talked the queen's English. I am a Hillbilly, but we were able to communicate.

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<sup>18</sup> John 3:16.

And “What’s your name?”

He told me. I told me his.

It was just like in one second it was like I loved him as much as anybody I ever loved in my life. He was a believer. You just saw life all over him.

I used to know this missionary. I don’t know if he had the gift of discernment or what. We were driving down the road in Peru. He goes, “There goes a live one.”

And I go, “What?”

That was... look at him. You can tell. He is alive.

I have sat down with important religious men and I mean it is frightening, some of them very, very godly, but I have sat down with some of them and literally if I tried, if I talked about some strategy for making their church grow, they were just... but if I started with the book of Colossians and started with the book of Colossians and started talking about... man, God showed me this in the book of Colossians about the glory of Christ, they are just like looking over my shoulder to figure out who else is coming more important they could talk to. They care.

Is there life in you? Is Christianity ... is walking in the narrow way this type of drudgery that you do because it is the right thing to do? Or because you know it is a standard your parents have put or you think it is something that is virtuous, but you actually hate it. That is not Christianity.

I share this illustration with you I use quite often. A pastor goes up, you know, he takes a church and discovers there is a member living out somewhere and he hasn’t been to church in about five years and let’s say it is in Alabama where everybody is a Christian and so he goes out there and knocks on the door. The guy opens up the door. He has got a beer can in his hand.

He said, “I am the new pastor. Can I come in?”

Oh, he hides the beer can. He is so polite. He has been taught to be so polite.

“Oh, pastor, I am sorry about this nasty old thing. Sure, come on in. Let me turn the television set off.”

And the pastor begins to talk to him and says, “You know, you haven’t been in church in a long time.”

“You are right, pastor. I haven’t been in church. I just... it is just that, you know, I love football and, you know, just Saturday night out carousing and, you know, I just love that

Saturday... I just need to put that filthy stuff away and I need to do the right thing. I just need to come back to church.”

“I understand you have been in drunkenness.”

“You are right. This old nasty drink has just got a hold of me. I love it. I just need to put it away and I just need to do the right thing and I just need to stop it.”

“And I hear you have been running around with women all over town.”

“You are right. It is just something that has a hold of me. I just love it, but, I tell you, pastor, I just need to put it away. I need to do the right thing and I need to come back to church.”

And so he comes back to church and everyone praises God because a sheep has come home. No, a goat has just returned to the fold, because do you know what he is saying? I will tell you exactly what he is saying.

“You are right, pastor. I need to stop doing all the wicked things I love and start doing all the righteous things I hate so that I can save my skin.”

There is no change. Are you like that? Or is there a life that has been given to you that causes you to desire the things of God? Is there a reality in your heart at all? Is there? Now that is the question.

Young people, let me ask you a question. When your parents are no longer your guardians will you run wild like a dog in the yard because there is no inward life of Christ in you?

Now as I said this last night and proved it to be true, we are here all day and we will stay here all night. If you are troubled about your soul, we will talk to you till tomorrow. But if it goes that long you are going to have to take me to Cracker Barrel in then morning. But we will talk all as much as is needed about the condition of your soul. We will not manipulate you. We will not douse the lights and play the music. If you are troubled with your soul, then you come and we will deal with it in the Scriptures.

God bless you.