

Lesson 9

Part 1: The Narrow Gate

Read Matthew 7:13-14.

As we come to verse 13, it appears that Jesus has finished this portion of His sermon. Up to this point, He has made it clear that He came to set up the Kingdom of Heaven. He was and is drawing people out of the world and into His kingdom. In the Beatitudes, He painted a portrait of the person who is part of the Kingdom of Heaven, while still on Earth. This person having been called out of the world and into the Kingdom of Heaven will be hated. Nevertheless, they are called to be salt and light, and their righteousness is to exceed the righteousness of the most religious (Scribes and the Pharisees). He has given practical application in the areas of giving, praying, and fasting. He discussed the correct attitudes they are to have toward others, and while living in the world. Now, He looks at those listening and says - this is the way.

1. According to verse 13, how do we enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

2. Jesus details two gates, each with their own destination. The narrow gate leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. Summarize the details given for the second gate and where it leads to.

Let's take a closer look at the ways in which these gates are narrow and broad.

3. Read the following verses and record how each speaks of the narrowness to which Jesus was referring.

John 14:6 _____

John 10:7-9 _____

Jesus is the only way to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. You can not enter by being good, by buying your way in, by association with someone who is already in the Kingdom of Heaven, or by presuming that worshipping any god will gain you access. Narrow is the gate.

4. How is the narrow way described? (v. 14) _____

5. What do you think makes entering the narrow gate difficult?

6. What do you think makes continuing this way difficult?

7. Read the following verses and record how each speaks of the difficultness of the narrow way.

Mark 8:34

Romans 12:1-2

2 Corinthians 5:7

Galatians 5:24

James 1:2-3

Jesus was very honest in His appeal to the people. He did not try to downplay the difficulty in being called out of the world while still being part of the world. The gate is narrow; those who enter it must do it alone leaving the world behind and its ways behind.

8. Using the Sermon on the Mount, contrast the following ways of the world with how Christ followers are called to live. (Matthew 5:31-7:6)

Way of the world: Sometimes two people just grow apart and that's okay.

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: I swear to God.

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: Don't get mad, get even.

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: Boundaries are a part of self-care.

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: Defeat your enemies with success.

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: Next to doing the right thing, the most important thing is to let people know you are doing the right thing. – John D. Rockefeller

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: I want it all and I want it now – Freddie Mercury

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: Sometimes, you have to do what's best for you and your life and not worry about anything else.

Narrow way: _____

Way of the world: Judge me when you're perfect.

Narrow way: _____

The gate is narrow; the way is difficult. How then should we walk?

Read Ephesians 5:15-17 and answer the following questions.

9. How should we walk according to verse 15?

Circumspectly in this verse means exactly, accurately, diligently, to live carefully, deviating in no respect from the law of duty. In other words, walk carefully, watching your step, paying attention, applying the Word, and following the leading of the Spirit.

10. What should we seek to understand? (v. 17) _____

Christ did not come to merely save us from our sins; He came to make us holy. Having laid out the details of this life He came to give, Jesus asks each one of us, "What will you do now?" There are two gates, but narrow is the gate, and difficult is the way that leads to life.

11. Read the following verse and record what you learn about the life to come.

Matthew 19:28-29

Revelation 21:4-7

Revelation 22:3-5

12. Are you choosing the narrow gate? Pray and ask the Lord to show you those things you need to leave behind.

Part 2: Good Fruit and Bad Fruit

Jesus moves from the comparison of the way that leads to destruction versus the way that leads to life to the importance of recognizing false prophets.

Read Matthew 7:15-20.

13. The first word from this passage is *beware*. What does this indicate?

14. In what way will these false prophets come to us? _____

15. What are they really? _____

Strong's Concordance definition of *false* is pretend or an imposter. Therefore, we can say that a false prophet is a liar.

16. If a false prophet is a liar but is wearing sheep's clothing, explain what will be difficult to initially detect.

17. The illustration Jesus uses is quite fitting. Read John 10:7 and 11, then explain why the illustration is fitting.

Jesus has just spoken about the reality of the way for a true believer. The gate is narrow, and the way is difficult, but it leads to everlasting life. The wide and broad way is the easy way, but it leads to destruction and eternal separation from God.

The message of the false prophets is subtle. Dressed in sheep's clothing, they look like believers and appeal to our human desire for comfort and ease. Imagine them standing outside the narrow gate with a false, yet appealing message of "all roads will lead to God."

18. Why is this a dangerous message?

A false prophet in sheep's clothing teaches that we must never say anything critical or severe. In addition, they preach that we must never make anyone feel bad. They tend to focus solely on the love of God and avoid His holiness and His righteous judgment. They discourage self-examination and don't believe there is a way that leads to destruction. Therefore, they don't like to talk about sin or Hell. Their message is alluring and keeps the listener from feeling any conviction. They avoid the utter sinfulness of sin and the necessity of the atonement of the cross.

19. Jesus instructs us to beware of false prophets. This type of warning was not new, nor was the false message of comfort. Read Jeremiah 14:13. What was the message of these false prophets?

20. Read Jeremiah 14:14. What did the Lord say of their message?

A false prophet lures people away with a false hope of peace.

21. Look up the following verses and write down the warnings regarding false prophets/teachers/doctrines.

Matthew 24:24

2 Timothy 4:3-4

2 Corinthians 11:3-4

2 Peter 2:1-3

Read Matthew 15:1-14 and answer the following questions.

22. Who came to Jesus about the disciples not washing their hands?

23. What was the description Jesus used for these men in verse 7?

24. How did Jesus describe them in verse 14?

25. At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of the scribes and Pharisees. What is it He says we must do in Matthew 5:20?

The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites. We read in Matthew 15:6 that they were more concerned with traditions than the commandments. They wanted what was comfortable and required the least from them. They were among the false prophets of that day.

Read Matthew 7:16. While false prophets carefully disguise themselves, there is a way for us to identify them.

26. How will we know them? _____

27. Read on to the end of the passage. Where is this statement repeated? Write out the statement.

28. What do we learn about good and bad trees from verse 17?

Read Matthew 12:33-36.

29. Write the truths repeated in this passage from our passage of study.

30. What will we be accountable for? (v. 36)

31. Therefore, what is one way we can see evidence of good or bad fruit?

Fruit can take a while to become evident, but one's true self will be revealed sooner or later. Jesus is exhorting us to be looking for the fruit. It is to our benefit to know the truth of God's Word, so we can identify the liars. One thing to be on the lookout for – whether there is evidence of the Beatitudes in their lives.

32. In our previous lesson, we studied the importance of asking, seeking, and knocking. Read James 1:5-6. What must we ask for?

Ask the Lord for wisdom so you can discern between good and bad fruit! Read Proverbs 2 for more about the Lord's wisdom.

33. Read Luke 11:13. What else can we ask for?

34. God's Word is clear about the evidence of fruit. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the fruit of the Spirit.

These fruits are evidence of the Holy Spirit dwelling within a believer in Jesus Christ.

35. If a teacher or prophet does not have these qualities, what can you conclude?

36. Now read Galatians 5:19-21 and list the evidence of bad fruit.

37. What is the consequence for those who practice such things?

38. Think about everything you have studied thus far. What are we to watch for?
How are we to recognize them?

In this passage, Jesus' emphasis was on what to look for in false prophets. However, we can take a moment to consider the fruit in our own lives.

