

Series Series: DIFFERENT/ Sermon on the Mount

Sermon title: 4 Warnings for the Narrow Road

Scripture reading: Matthew 7:13-29

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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The MacLehose Trail makes it's way from East to West across the mountains of Hong Kong for a total of 100km. Near my house, just up the hill....are sections 2 and 3.

Every weekend, this time of year, there are bus-loads of people venturing out to Pak Tam Au to go for a hike. 90% of them are going on Section 2 and only about 10% are going on Section 3.

You know why?

Section 2 is a paved pathway that is wide and easy. It a shaded path that leads downhill (with a section that is uphill) to beaches, restaurants, chicken wings, Dong Lai Cha and you can even take a boat back to Sai Kung. Many, many go that way.

Section 3 is a DIFFERENT path altogether.

It's a narrow path that begins with an immediate straight up climb to over 400 meters. It is hard. It's narrow and rocky. It's exposed to the sun. Not so many people go that way. You feel like your heart is going to jump out of your chest. If you follow it all the way to Section 4 you will be lonely and isolated at times as you climb up mountain after mountain.

Jesus says that following him is like hiking the steep Section 3 and it's swarming with many dangers.

In this final section of The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is going to warn us of 4 dangers to look out for as we follow him.

Let's pray.

Jesus now gets to the application and conclusion of his great Sermon on the Mount.

Are you all gonna follow me...the way of the kingdom of not?

If you're going to follow me, if you're going to be different, let me tell you how it's going to be.

He gives 4 warnings. 4 ways we can be deceived.

1. Beware of being deceived by what's popular.
(v. 13-14)
2. Beware of being deceived by false teachers.
(v. 15-20)
3. Beware of being deceived by your spirituality.
(v. 21-23)
4. Beware of being deceived by your knowledge.
(v. 24-27)

1. Beware of being deceived by what's popular.
(v. 13-14)

13 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. **14** For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

The way to hell is easy.

The way to heaven is hard.

The way to hell is wide open to all kinds of ideas and lifestyles.

The way to heaven is confining, strict & requires effort.

This doesn't mean we must work our way to heaven.

Jesus is saying that if you want to follow him you have to understand that it is DIFFERENT.

It's gonna cost you.

So if you don't want to stand out and stand up and be counter-cultural at times and even have people against you and what you believe, you will have a hard time on the narrow way.

This is the focus of this last section and what comes after it is meant to highlight the choice of 2 gates/2 paths.

Nothing else matters but this.

“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?” **Mark 8:36**

2 roads. One that leads to life and one that leads to destruction. One gate that leads to heaven and one gate that leads to hell.

There is no third way. Beware of false gospel.

Following Jesus will not be easy.

What's popular is the wide path. There are many people there.

The narrow path is hard and unpopular. It's a place where people avoid you. People disown you or try to kill you. They'll call you 'narrow-minded', 'intolerant' and unloving cause you believe and obey the Bible.

Choose your path!

Now, if you choose the narrow way with Jesus, be ready....cause there are some things to watch out for.

So, No. 1- Beware of being deceived by what's popular.

Enter the narrow gate. Follow the narrow path w/ Christ.

2. Beware of being deceived by false teachers.

(v. 15-20)

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

16 You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. **18** A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

False teachers are on the road. They're dressed like everyone else. They look normal and don't seem to really be 'ravenous'. They seem harmless. Nice guys.

What is the primary way that false teachers deceive people and distort the message?

By making the narrow way...wider. By changing Jesus's words to be less offensive. By teaching people that Jesus didn't mean "*that*". He didn't mean that we need to take up our cross.

"Jesus didn't mean we should really go and make disciples". They sell a Jesus that is more palatable.

"Jesus is only about love".

Doctrine is not so important to these guys.

They love teaching only nice messages where you can: 'Be a better wife', 'Be a better parent'.

How do we recognize these wolves, these false teachers? By their fruit. In time...sometimes immediately and sometimes later.....maybe even at the judgment of God.....they will be revealed for what they are.

Jesus says, Beware!

Watch out for false prophets among the sheep who look like sheep but aren't.

But it's not just what's popular that you need to watch out for. You also need to watch out for false teachers.

3. Beware of being deceived by your spirituality.

(v. 21-23)

21 "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. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

Jesus says to Beware of the popular way, the crowds and beware of false teachers. We can be deceived and diverted from the narrow way by them.

He says we can also deceive ourselves.
Maybe this is the greatest deception of all.

We asked Jesus in our hearts when we were little.
We are good to go to heaven.
We've even served the Lord.

But Jesus says it is possible to be spiritual, say the right things, serve in the church and maybe even go on mission trips but something isn't right.

We don't know Jesus. It's all religion. There's no love for Jesus. Just a love for the culture and environment and lifestyle maybe.

This verse, **Matthew 7:21** is part of my own testimony. I accepted Christ as a boy and I thought I could follow Christ and still live like the world.

It hit me like a ton of bricks when I was a teenager.
"Shannon, you have said to me 'Lord, Lord' but you're not doing my will."

Don't be deceived. Beware.
Your confession alone should be backed up with a lifestyle that looks like Christ.

4. Beware of being deceived by your knowledge. (v. 24-27)

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does 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 beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. **26** And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do 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 beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Jesus starts out with a warning about 2 pathways and now finishes with 2 houses.

A path to life and a path to destruction and now a house of security and safety vs a house of ruin.

Notice that the same things happen to both houses.

Life happens to them both.

They both experienced rain, floods and wind but with 2 different outcomes because of 2 different foundations.

A house on the rock vs a house on the sand.

That makes sense enough to us.

But that's just the illustration.

24 "Everyone then who **hears these words of mine and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

26 And everyone who **hears these words of mine and does not do them** will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

What's the real meaning?

Both hear the words of Jesus.

One does them. One does not do them.

Jesus is warning us against thinking that just because we know Jesus's words that we are just fine.

The devil knows the words of Jesus.

Obedience is the fruit of faith, not knowledge.

APPLICATION

1. How do we know if we are on the narrow way?

- Are you walking with Jesus? Do you know him?
- Are you producing any fruit? **Verse 17**
- Are you doing the will of God? **Verse 21**
- Are you obeying the word of God? **Verse 24**

2. You may be struggling because life on the narrow road is hard. Jesus said it would be hard to follow him. It's hard to be Different. It's hard to live like the kingdom of God in the midst of the kingdom of the devil.

Some of you may struggle cause you thought when you came to Christ, he was going to give you everything you wanted.

If the narrow path is hard and few people walk that way...why should I walk that path? What's the benefit?

- #1 **Jesus promises to walk with us** if we choose the narrow road. He won't travel with us along the wide path. **Matthew 28:20**

- #2. **The destination.** It leads to life. Eternal life.

3. Lastly, if you're not a Christian today, Jesus has a message for you....Verse 13....he invites you.

"Enter by the narrow gate".