

Communion service.**Matthew Chapter 7: v. 13-29.****Title:** Two Ways, Two fruits & Two Foundations.

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.¹⁴ Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit.¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Introduction

Today we will complete the first of 5 teaching blocks in Matthew’s Gospel.

It is the epilogue or summing up of Jesus’s long sermon, which began in chapter 5: v. 1.

Jesus makes it very clear that people have **a choice** when it comes to His teaching.

You can **choose to believe what Jesus teaches, or you can decide not to believe.**

We are created by the God of the Bible with **the freedom to choose.**

We are not robots, but sometimes we do behave like sheep.

When God created the first man, Adam, He gave him a free will to choose for himself.

Sadly, Adam chose to **believe a lie from Satan and not the truth from God’s word.**

Satan’s lie is like the **bait at the end of a fishing line.**

It seems attractive and that is why fish are caught. However, after the fish take a bite they discover they have also **bitten a hook** and they are **captured by the fisherman.**

It is like this with Satan. He tempts us with attractive things, but later we discover that we become his slaves.

The choices that we make in life have **consequences.**

Sometimes we make a choice to buy something from the 100 yen. shop, like Daiso or similar store. After a short while it breaks, or stops working. It probably wasn’t a good choice to buy a cheap product. We have only lost 100 yen. so it doesn’t matter too much.

However, when it comes to **much more important decisions about eternal life, and eternal death, then we need to make the right choice.**

The consequences are much more significant.

In the closing part of Jesus’s sermon, He points out that there are **two ways to go in life.**

These two ways have **different destinations.**

Jesus also says that you can identify what choice people have made by the **spiritual fruit** that is **evident in their lives.**

In v. 24-27 Jesus gives an illustration to make sure that people understand his teaching.

He illustrates our choices by **comparing them to a house built upon rock and another house built upon sand.**

We will work through the teaching of Jesus in three sections.

1. Two Gates – Matt. 7: v. 13-14 & v. 21-23.

Jesus tells us in these verses that there are **two gates available to us.**

There is a **wide gate** and a **narrow gate.** Jesus tells us that we should enter by the **narrow gate,** but that is the **difficult way** to travel and not many people choose that gate.

The first question we need to ask is **“what is the narrow gate?”**

Basically the narrow gate is **“JESUS”.**

John 10: v. 7-9 in N.K.J.

⁷Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

Jesus describes Himself as the door because He is the only entry point for eternal life.

John 14: v. 6 in N.K.J.

⁶Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Before we move on to the wide gate we must fully understand the cost of entering by the narrow gate.

In v. 21 Jesus makes it clear to us what He means, if we want to enter by the narrow gate.

Jesus tells us that entering by that gate means a 100% willingness to be obedient to our Heavenly Father.

Verse 22 is a wake- up call to professing Christians who have **not entered through that gate.** These people have associated themselves with Jesus by prophesying, casting out demons in the name of Jesus and even doing apparent miracles in the name of Jesus.

However, they never entered through the narrow gate which is **“doing the will of God”.**

These people never actually had a personal relationship with Jesus, because they never entered through the narrow gate.

It is one thing to be a hearer of God’s word and a believer of God’s word, but until we actually do something about it ourselves, our faith is dead.

James 2: v. 14-26 in N.L.T.

¹⁴What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?¹⁵ Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing,¹⁶ and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well!”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

¹⁷So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

¹⁸Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.”

¹⁹You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. ²⁰How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

²¹Don’t you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?²² You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. ²³And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: “Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith.” He was even called the friend of God. ²⁴So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

²⁵Rahab the prostitute is another example. She was shown to be right with God by her actions when she hid those messengers and sent them safely away by a different road. ²⁶Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.

A changed heart is a heart that is willing to obey God's word.
However it is in our obedience to God's word, that gives evidence of a changed heart.

The next question we need to ask is, "**what is the wide gate?**"

The wide gate is the choice people make who **don't want to enter by the narrow gate.**

This is the easy gate. There are no rules or regulations, **except the ones that you make for yourself.**

You make the standards which you want to be judged by.

You choose the way that feels right to you.

Many people choose the wide gate. **It is the most popular way to live your life.**

The only problem with the wide gate is the **destination that you will arrive at.**

Jesus tells us that the **wide gate leads to destruction.** (N.K.J.)

In the N.L.T. it tells us that the **wide gate leads to Hell.**

The Bible teaches us that **"Hell"** is a place reserved for people who refuse Jesus.

It is separation from God, your creator forever, and punishment eternally.

It is not a nice place to spend eternity.

The first mention of this place in the Bible is in **Numbers 16: v. 28-33 (in N.L.T.)**

²⁸ And Moses said, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things that I have done—for I have not done them on my own. ²⁹ If these men die a natural death, or if nothing unusual happens, then the LORD has not sent me. ³⁰ But if the LORD does something entirely new and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all their belongings, and they go down alive into the grave, then you will know that these men have shown contempt for the LORD."

³¹ He had hardly finished speaking the words when the ground suddenly split open beneath them. ³² The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the men, along with their households and all their followers who were standing with them, and everything they owned. ³³ So they went down alive into the grave, along with all their belongings. The earth closed over them, and they all vanished from among the people of Israel.

The people had **rejected Moses as God's mediator.**

In Luke 16: v. 19-31 we have an insight into Hell. (in N.L.T.)

¹⁹ Jesus said, "There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. ²⁰ At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹ As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man's table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores.

²² "Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side.

²⁴ "The rich man shouted, 'Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.'

²⁵ "But Abraham said to him, 'Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.'

²⁷ "Then the rich man said, 'Please, Father Abraham, at least send him to my father's home. ²⁸ For I have five brothers, and I want him to warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment.'

²⁹ "But Abraham said, 'Moses and the prophets have warned them. Your brothers can read what they wrote.'

³⁰ "The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham! But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will repent of their sins and turn to God.'

³¹ "But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'"

There are other names for Hell in the Bible. They include the lake of fire, (**Rev. 20: .15**) and the bottomless pit. (**Rev. 9: v.1**) (both in N.K.J.)

Rev. 20: .15

¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Rev. 9: v.1

Then the fifth angel sounded: And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to the bottomless pit.

With such a horrible destination, why is it that so many people choose the wide gate?

Chapter 7 gives us three answers.

The first answer is that we are all evil by nature.

(Matt. 7: v. 11 –in N.K.J.)

¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Don't forget that Jesus is talking to His disciples here!

The doctrine of original sin is one of the most important doctrines in the Bible.

You can easily check it out.

You only have to observe children who are growing up.

Two of my grandchildren (twins) are not yet two years old and they are already fighting over the toys they want to play with.

My daughter has not taught them to do wrong things.

She only teaches them to do the right things.

Where did these two boys learn that behaviour?

They didn't learn bad behaviour; they were born with it.

The second reason why many people refuse the narrow gate and choose the wide gate, is that the **wide gate is so much easier.**

It is much easier to live under the authority of our own rules and manage our own lives.

Why should we want somebody else to tell us what we can or can't do?

People usually take the easy options in life.

It is much easier to follow the crowd and what they are doing, than to make your own decision and fully consider the claims of Jesus Christ.

Especially in Japan it is very hard to decide to do something that goes against the culture, or family traditions.

Everybody wants an easy life.

It is much easier to believe in Evolution which is not true than to find out and discover that it is a lie.

That takes investigation.

The third reason why many people choose the wide gate is that there are so many false-teachers enticing you to enter through that gate.

If somebody promises you Heaven and eternal life by an easy way, then you are going to take it.

In v. 21-23, all the false teachers who taught the people that **their way** was the way to Heaven were very disappointed when Jesus said that He never knew them.

These false teachers had deceived themselves, and had deceived other people.

The had believed a lie and taught a lie to others who believed them.

This is **very sad** which is **why Paul is very hard on false teachers.**

This is why **we need to be strict** on **false and wrong teaching in the Church.**

We have today on social media, something called "**fake news**".

Anybody can post a story on social media and it can travel all over the world in seconds.

If it is not posted by a **trusted organisation, or a national T.V. or radio network**, we have to be very careful.

People today are very influenced by social media and the internet, and this is where many false teachers operate today.

Please do not choose the wide gate, offered to you through **wrong teaching about the Bible or Christianity**.

2. **Two fruits – Matt. 7: v.15-23**.

The key to understanding these verses is to notice v. 20.

²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Jesus is drawing a parallel from nature. Jesus is talking about fruit trees and weeds.

Aomori in Japan produces 56% of all the apples grown in Japan.

They are lovely delicious apples.

Would you expect to pick these apples from an apple tree or from the thorns and weeds on the ground?

(Apple Tree, weeds and thorns slide.)

Of course you would expect to pick apples from an apple tree.

Apple trees need to be cared for each year and pruned back so that they will produce more fruit. It is like this with our lives too.

If the apple tree doesn't produce apples, then there is something wrong with the tree.

Either the tree is dead, or it is not an apple tree. These are the only two reasons why an apple tree doesn't produce apples.

Jesus is saying that if you really are a disciple of Jesus and you have entered by the narrow gate, **then there will be evidence in your life**.

You will make choices based upon what the Bible teaches and not from your own opinion.

You will also display qualities that relate to the working of God's Holy Spirit in your life.

Jesus is warning His disciples to examine, not the gifts of people who profess to follow Jesus but the fruit of their lives.

You may be able to fake news on the social media, **but you can't fake personal Holiness, through a changed heart**.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are mentioned in Galatians Chapter 5: v. 22.

Galatians 5: v. 22-25 in N.K.J.

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering,

kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And

those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

3. **Two Foundations – Matt. 7: v. 24-27**.

In v. 24-27 Jesus tells us a story to make quite sure that we get the **main point of His teaching**.

The key to these verses is understanding v. 24. (in N.K.J.)

²⁴“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

Obedience to the teaching of Jesus is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock.

Everything that nature could do to attack that house happened.

The wind blew, the rain came and there were even floods.

The house didn't fall down because it was built upon rock.

Jesus is saying here that when you put your faith and trust in Jesus and obey His word, then whatever happens to you in this world will **not affect your eternal destination**.

Paul often gave a testimony to hardship in his ministry, but he never lost sight of his eternal destiny.

(2 Corinthians 11: v. 23-28 in N.L.T.)

²³ Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. ²⁴ Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea. ²⁶ I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not. ²⁷ I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

²⁸ Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.

Q. Where is your house planted today? By this I mean, **who have you put your faith and trust in today?**

Is your faith and trust in yourself and your own ideas, or is it in Jesus and the words of the Bible?

Is your faith and trust in another religion?

Have you trusted in false teaching?

Well if you have trusted in anything else for your eternal salvation, then Jesus said that you are like a man who built his house upon sand.

(v. 26-27 in N.K.J.)

²⁶ "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

What happened to the man who built his house upon the sand?

The rain came, the floods came, the wind came, and the house was destroyed.

Application

The application of the end of Jesus sermon is very clear. **You must enter through the narrow gate to get to the correct destination**, which is eternal life in Heaven after your death.

You might be asking this question. **How do I enter that narrow gate?**

What is the basic information that I need in order to make an informed choice about entering through the narrow gate?

1. You need to understand that there is only one God in this world, and He is the God who reveals Himself in the Bible and through His created world. That is all of nature and this universe. This God is 100% Holy God. He is all powerful, everywhere present. And knows everything.
2. You need to understand that God created you for a personal relationship. He created you to be a friend. He initially created the first man Adam and then the first woman as a helper to Adam. Although they were created equal in the sight of God, they were created for different purposes.
3. You also need to understand that through the disobedience of the first man. Adam, God punished mankind with death. Death was the punishment for disobedience. No longer would mankind live for ever. His life was shortened.
So we are born into this world, we have a difficult life because of the sinful behaviour of man, and then we die. If we are honest, life is quite meaningless. It doesn't seem to have a purpose.
4. **Now for the good news**. Our creator God is a God of LOVE. He had to find a way to rescue his created mankind **without compromising His Holy person**.

The only way that God could do that was by sending His son Jesus Christ into this world to take the punishment for our sins.

God amazingly arranged for this.

He placed a miracle seed inside a virgin. This happened over 2,000 years ago.

The seed grew and became a man.

When the baby was born, they gave Him the name Jesus which means Saviour.

When he was 12 years old, people started to notice that this Jesus was different from all other people.

When He was about 30 years old, He declared Himself to be God's Son and performed many miracles to prove His deity.

He changed water into wine, raised the dead, healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and many more miracles.

Then He willingly allowed Himself to be crucified on a cross. God punished His Son on our behalf. He was a substitutionary sacrifice for us.

5. **Information about the truth of your life and death will do you no good unless you act upon it.**

Perhaps today you would like to talk with somebody about your life and death? Maybe you might like to read or study the Bible for yourself?

We are here today to help you.