

Matthew. Quality: Very good

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Date: 06 July 1977

Preacher: Woodhouse, J Clifford (1931-2022)

[0 : 00] The word I believe the Lord has directed me to for this evening's service. You will find in the chapter we read, the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, verses 13 and 14.

The seventh chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, verses 13 and 14. Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that kind it.

These words we would remember are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

None other man spake like him. And here is a word of excitation, and a word of wisdom.

[1 : 27] Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

In a consideration of this word, we would remember that there is no third way, there is no middle way.

But each one of us in the Lord's house this night, but each one of us in the Lord's house this night, is either walking in the broad way, or else, by the mercy of God, we are found in that narrow way which leadeth to life.

Many there are which attempt to walk in both ways. They attempt to walk with the church, and also with the world.

But the Lord Jesus Christ in his teaching said, ye cannot serve God and mammon.

[2 : 44] Oh no, we cannot walk in both ways. We are either in the broad way, or else, by mercy and grace, we are found walking in that narrow way.

Now regarding the broad way, that way that leads to destruction, we have that spoken by the Lord Jesus, and many there be which go in thereat.

Many compared with the remnant. And those that walk in the narrow way are spoken of as a remnant.

A remnant. A remnant. A remnant according to the election of grace. They are few in comparison with the many.

Although when we take them collectively through all generations, the word of God tells us that it is a number that no man can number.

[4 : 08] A number that no man can number. And yet, compared with the giddy multitudes, they are indeed few. It is so much easier and satisfying to the flesh to walk in the broad way.

The inclination of our natural heart is to walk in the broad way. We have such a heart within us that is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, and our natural inclination is to go in the way of the world.

You notice that a dead fish will go with the stream. And such are they that walk in this broad way, satisfying the lusts of the flesh, the desires of the mind.

And we would say this, that had the Lord's children been left to themselves, then they would have chosen that way.

They would have gone that way. For their heart was inclined to go that way. And some went far in that way.

[5 : 45] They went far in that way. Oh, they were found walking in that broad way. And would have gone down into hell and to destruction.

For the word of God tells me that the end of that way is destruction. You know, the world don't like us to talk about hell.

They don't like to think that there is such a place. They indeed believe it not. But the Lord Jesus Christ, he knew it.

And he believed it. And he spoke of it. Enter ye in at the straight gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

The biggest danger is, as we spoke in our opening, the deceitfulness of Satan, whereby we think that we walk in the narrow way, and yet we are walking in the broad way.

[7 : 01] Many, says the Lord Jesus Christ, in the day of Jesus Christ, shall say, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works.

There are many that believe they are going to heaven. Many believe that they are doing something for the Lord. Many think that, according to their works, that they should be received.

But the Lord says, And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity. But we wouldn't dwell.

We wouldn't dwell on that broad way. We know too well the inclination of our hearts. We know too well in those times of temptation.

We look at those that walk in the broad way, and we sometimes envy them. Oh, they seem to have such an easy path. Ah, but to remember the end of that way is death, and that eternally.

[8 : 24] He says, Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Enter ye in at the straight gate. We are each building a house as we walk here below.

And unless the foundation is right, then the final stability of it will not be right.

The Lord shows us that in the end of this chapter in his teaching. And here we have the exhortation, enter ye in at the straight gate.

And how important, most important, is this right entering in. In Pilgrim's Progress, as we read it, we read of the way that good Christian fled from the city of destruction through the slough of despond, through many trials and temptations and many discouragements before he entered in at that little wicked gate.

[10 : 01] There were those that came tumbling over the wall. They never met with such opposition. And he saw them as they came over the wall.

Ah, but, and he admonished them for it. And they said, well, we're in the way the same as you. Ah, but they hadn't got their certificate.

Or they were like those, that one who was found not having a wedding garment. If the beginning isn't right, then surely the end will not be right.

What is this straight gate? I say, what is this straight gate through which the righteous shall enter? Well, surely this is the gate of regeneration.

The Lord Jesus Christ in his teaching in that wonderful third chapter of John, he speaks of this straight gate as he speaks to Nicodemus.

[11 : 16] And he sets forth this. He says to Nicodemus, he says, ye must be born again. Ye must be born again.

And he sets forth this blessed truth. And we find that Nicodemus could not understand at that time those things that the Lord spoke.

How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Oh no, there was the natural understanding, trying to understand those things which indeed were spiritual.

And there we have an impossibility. There we are reminded of what the apostle wrote to the church at Corinth.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

[12 : 26] And so the Lord Jesus Christ, he explains to Nicodemus, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.

Ye must be born again. And this is known by experience. Not in the letter of it, but in the tasting of it.

And so the Lord, he says, the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth, so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

And how wonderful is that setting forth of the new birth by the Lord Jesus Christ, the wind blowing.

[13 : 39] Or here he talks of the operation of the Spirit of God in the souls of men, whereby they are quickened into life.

And what a blessed, blessed experience is the new birth. What a mercy if we can look back over our lives and trace the wonder of this, the wonder of this.

Well, we've got to go back right to the first verses, have we not, of the Word of God, this comes into my mind at this time.

And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, let there be light, and there was light. Well, this is known by experience, known by experience.

[14 : 53] Oh, that which was deathly, that which was dead, is quickened into life by the operation of the Holy Spirit.

In the first chapter of John, we read, but as many as received him. To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, but of God.

He will have all the glory. He will have all the glory. Poor sinner, if you know anything of the operation of the Spirit, in his all-powerful operations in your soul, then he will have all the glory.

You'll have to come, you know, with the apostle when he said, but by the grace of God I am what I am. Or, how that will humble you and crumble you in the dust of self-abasement.

Or, how that will prevent you from pointing a finger at the world. Or, you'll say, poor world. Or, you'll pray that the Lord might so send forth his Spirit with his word.

[16 : 16] Even in our day, to quicken others also, quicken them into life. Enter ye in at the straight gate. Enter ye in at the straight gate.

The wind bloweth where it listeth. You know, we can't see the wind. We can't see the wind, but we see movement of the trees. Now, the wind blows through the trees, and so it is in the new birth.

And, you know, we watch for it, especially pastors, especially pastors and the Lord's servants, and we trust the Lord's people in every place.

Or, that we might have more travail before the Lord. For when Zion travailed, then she brought forth children, to watch for the work of the Spirit, the evidence of it.

And what is the evidence of it? Or there is a period known to God, when all his sons, redeemed by blood, shall leave those hateful ways of sin, turn to the fold, and enter in.

[17 : 26] And there's the straight gate, there's the straight gate, the straight gate of regeneration, foundation, and any other foundation is a false foundation, and will land you short of glory.

All right. Blessed word is this, because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

The question is, do you know anything about it? Do you know anything about it? Has there been a change in your life?

Is there a conflict in your heart? Within your heart, is it as the company of two armies?

Do you know anything of the conflict? The world know nothing of it. Maybe I have those in the Lord's house this night who say, well, I really don't know, I hope, I hope, I have a desire to be found amongst the Lord's living family, I do want to walk in that narrow world.

[18 : 51] Oh, ask, and it shall be given you. seek, and you shall find knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Oh, the Lord gives these words of encouragement in this chapter.

Oh, if you know not, if you know not, oh, if you're in a doubt about it, then cry unto the Lord mightily to show you, oh, Lord, reveal thy son in me.

Oh, come and work in my heart by thy Holy Spirit. I'll tell you what, if you have a desire, if you have a desire, then that work has begun, it has begun.

Oh, if the Lord hath so brought you to desire it, oh, that you might come with the church in the canticles, tell me, oh, thou, all my soul, loveth where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon, for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

Oh, that's the language, you know, of a seeking soul, if thou know not, oh, thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside thee, shepherd's tents, walk in the ways of the Lord, walk in the ways of the Lord, go to his house, what are kids, they have fruits, and what are desires their fruits, feed them, besides the shepherd's tents.

[20 : 35] Enter ye in at the straight gate, because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Oh, it's a blessed way, this way of the Lord's living family. And the Lord leads his people into it, into it.

He takes them through the gate by the operation of his Holy Spirit in quickening their souls into life, and he leads them along that narrow way, he goes before them in the way.

Oh, my sheep, hear my voice in regeneration. I know them, and they follow me.

Oh, when he calleth his own sheep, he goeth before them in this narrow way, and narrow is the way, narrow is the way.

[21 : 51] Indeed, it is a narrow way, it is a narrow way. You know there's an Arminian kind of a hymn which speaks of having found the Lord Jesus Christ and now I'm happy all the day.

As though when entering through this stride gate all the troubles are over and there's a clear and straight path to heaven.

But you know that's not the spiritual experience. The Lord leads his people in paths that they have not known, in paths they have not known, in this narrow way.

And this narrow way is the way of separation. It's a way of separation.

Separation from the world which lieth in wickedness. The apostle in writing to the church at Corinth in the second epistle he speaks of the Lord's people walking in this way.

[23 : 25] He says be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers for what fellowship of righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion of light with darkness and what concord of Christ with Belial and what part of he that believeth with an infidel and what agreement of the temple of God with idols for ye are the temple of the living God as God hath said I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God and they shall be my people all these things and shells of thy word what a strength there is therefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be a father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord almighty and so it is a way of separation a way of separation and the

Lord will separate his people from the world which lieth in wickedness the inclination of the heart is to walk with the world is to walk with the world but the Lord will have his people separate will have them separate we'll have them to walk in his ways therefore come out from among them and be separate you know in our day oh there's much worldliness you know in the church we long to see more of that separation separation more of that separation it's only the work of the Holy Spirit that shall separate us you know there'll ever be a conflict in the hearts of the

Lord's living people it's not an easy work the work of separation it's not an easy work oh no what does the apostle say the word comes to mind in writing I think it was to the Galatians the apostle has this to say he says I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me I am crucified with Christ now crucifixion must be terribly painful we cannot comprehend the painfulness of it and yet the apostle says I am crucified with

Christ crucified with Christ he still lived in the flesh but the life he lived in the flesh he lived by the faith of the Son of God who gave himself who loved him and gave himself for him but there was that crucifixion of the flesh and there will be where there is a right beginning there will be a crucifixion of the flesh those lusts of the flesh those inclinations of the flesh must be crucified you know the Lord he teaches his people by the way he does he teaches them by the way and there is a constant teaching as we go through this wilderness below there is a constant separating sanctifying work which goes on in the hearts of the

Lord's people as they walk in that narrow way yes when they turn to the left hand or to the right hand which sometimes they do they hear that still small voice behind them saying this is the way walk ye in it walk ye in it and we're ever being taught as we walk in this narrow way crucifixion of the flesh separation from the world ye cannot serve God and man this is a great truth oh do you know anything of that conflict conflict in your soul oh it's here a little and there a little line upon line precept upon precept as the children of God are taught and brought and separated and sanctified by the work of the Holy

[28 : 49] Spirit in this narrow way this narrow way and why because it is the way of holiness it's the way of holiness the word of God exhorts us be ye holy for I am holy today and if you are walking in this narrow way dear hearer then you will know something of the desires of the newborn soul the desires of the newborn soul it's the way of holiness the way of holiness the word of God tells us soul not as the child of God can ever claim to holiness in the flesh oh no we carry about with us a body of sin and death but yet there will be a breathing after holiness have you ever read psalm 119 you know the natural mind shall never understand that psalm

I believe it was some years from being called by grace that I began to understand that blessed psalm and there we have the dear child of God walking in this way of separation this way of holiness and dear David he sets before us here his very desires his very desires oh I will delight myself in thy statutes and on through this psalm we have those prayers of a living soul incline my heart unto thy testicles there's a constant crying unto the Lord oh it's a way of holiness a way of holiness yes the

Lord will have his people walk in his ways he will have them walk in his ways he is jealous over them with a godly jealousy and if they try in the way then he will bring to bear they rod and he will bring them back into the way oh yes and he'll teach them and he'll make them breathe out before in their desires their desires to him that they might be kept in that narrow way or that they might be upheld upheld thou my goings in thy path that my footsteps slip not it'll be your daily prayer it'll be your daily prayer I will run the way of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart have you such a desire to run in the way of the commandments of the

Lord all we haven't time but wonderful are the cries and the prayers of this blessed psalm but you know great encouragement has been to me how that in coming to the end of it he says I have gone astray I have gone astray like a lost sheep seek thy servant for I do not forget thy commandments oh no no oh sometimes under the power of temptation Lord oh I have gone out of the way in thought my thoughts have been led astray my footsteps have almost been gone I have looked upon the wicked maybe and ended them with Asa ah but I do not forget thy commandments

I do not forget thy commandments there is still that breathing after holiness it's the way of holiness the way of holiness it is the way of dependence the way of dependence you know there was a time when you could choose your own way you could choose your well we could mention many things couldn't we you could choose your friends you could choose your partner in life you could choose your place of employment you could choose the place of your abode yes the world do this they just oh I'll go there and I'll do this and I'll join with this but not the child of God oh no not if you entered in at the straight gate it is the way of dependence dependence commit thy way unto the

[34 : 35] Lord trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass is a good word it's a good word now here is a test here is a test of the way you're walking do you commit it to the Lord do you commit your way to the Lord can you change your job without the Lord's leadings can you change your house can you choose your friends not if you're walking in this narrow way oh no you can't it's it's it's it's it's a way of dependence oh you realize the truth of that word my life minute circumstances subject to thine eye and the child of God will love to have it so love to have it so to see the Lord going before and you know when we say not our signs then it brings us to prayer brings us to prayer we want to see the

Lord's hand we want the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night we want to depend upon the Lord if the narrow way is a way of dependence dependence we shall have to commit our way to the Lord at the throne of grace it's a way of prayer a way of prayer oh yes a way of prayer what a blessed way way what a blessed way it's a way of safety it's a way of safety my mind goes to that beautiful word we have in psalm 107 and he led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation he led them forth by the right way we see it's a right way it's a way of dependence and it's a way of safety it's a way of safety for the

Lord guards the way it's a guarded way is this narrow way to heaven it's a guarded way the Lord guards it and he leads his people in it it's not a way they choose themselves oh no but it's a right way and it leads to a city of habitation oh yes leads to a city of habitation there is safety therein for the Lord upholds his people in the way and it's the way of promise the way of promise as we think of it as a way of safety it's the way of the Lord's promises oh he has said as thy day so shall thy strength be in this way you might meet with many things that shall cast you down cause you grief try you you will if you're walking in the narrow way ah but he says led them forth by the right way it's not the way of your choosing it's the

Lord's way wherein his people shall walk but it's a way of safety oh he says the eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms I have made I will carry I will carry and he carries his people through this way and leads them to heaven you know dear Abraham here we have an example he went forth not knowing whether he went it's the way of faith shall we ever run out of words to describe this narrow way of faith looking unto Jesus the author and finisher men of our faith dear Abraham here he went he knew not where he went but it was a way of faith he followed the Lord his leadings and he walked in that narrow way because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and fill there be that find it do you know anything about it you know that's the important question that's the important question do you know anything about it do you walk in the way of your own heart or do you walk in that narrow way you know you know as you're sat in the

Lord's house this night you know if you depend upon the Lord you know if you look to him you know if you walk with the world you know if you satisfy the loss of the flesh I can't see your heart the Lord can do you oh because straight is the gate how stands the case my soul with thee for heaven are thy credentials clear is Jesus Christ thine only plea is he thy great forerunner there I say how are you walking how are you walking and it's the way of obedience it's the way of obedience the Lord he said if ye love me keep my commandments if ye love me keep my commandments and so we have the way of obedience set before us in this word because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it is the way of obedience oh have you a desire to walk in the

[41 : 04] Lord's way I say is the is that your desire that quoted from Solomon's song tell me tell me oh thou it's a lovely word that is tell me oh thou all my soul loveth where thou feedest where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon I say is that your desire oh the Lord he says if thou know not oh thou farest among women go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock where are the flock walking where are the flock walking they're walking in the narrow way they're walking in the narrow way and it's a way of obedience it's a way of obedience it's a great grief you know I don't preach baptism for baptism sake oh no but it's a great grief in our day that in some places we have large congregations few in the church very few in the church why is it that so many who walk in the

Lord's ways as far as they are separated from the world they love his house they love his word and yet they walk not in the way of obedience they walk not in the way of obedience but this is set before us in the word of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ he walked in that way the way of baptism the way of baptism you know suffer it to be so now says the Lord Jesus Christ as he humbled himself and condescended to walk in that blessed ordinance it's the way of obedience the way of obedience and the blessed way is that way of obedience you know in the early church as is set before us in the Acts of the Apostles we read that when they believed they were baptized oh and they continued with one accord in the

Apostle doctrine in breaking of bread and in prayers now there is that narrow way set before us in the way of obedience the way of obedience oh and he couldn't write he couldn't write to the church at Rome and say how their faith was spread throughout the world if they walked in disobedience could he now it's a way of faith a way of faith and a way of obedience all that a good conscience toward God you know it's a wonderful way wonderful way because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it it leads unto life it leads unto life and that life is in the

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ oh yes I am the way the truth and the life no man cometh unto the father but by me as said the Lord and these who are walking in this narrow way they say if ever my poor soul be saved then Christ must be the way it is precious no merit of our own nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling oh is that is that the way which you walk oh you say I'm such a sinner I'm such a sinner I feel so unworthy oh and yet I would walk in thy ways I would follow on in the footsteps of the flock oh I would fix my old dependence upon thee

Lord Jesus it's a way I say of dependence for salvation through the precious merits of Jesus through the precious merits of Jesus that's their only play for getting to the end of their journey oh yes their only play their only play the Lord and saviour Jesus Christ oh the apostle he says I determine to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified I see our time is fast running out but finally finally as we would ever lift up the precious name of Jesus in this blessed way then he must have the preeminence he must have the preeminence in your life you must have first place you know you may have to leave mother you may have to leave father you may have to leave children near ones to you in walking in this way of separation oh yes it's a way of sacrifice the

[47 : 23] Lord Jesus Christ will have the preeminence in your heart oh yes you'll have a desire to do the will of God Jesus Christ will be precious precious to your soul I say how how is it with you how is it with you does Jesus Christ have first place in your affections does it does he have first place in your affections he will have you know if you're going to heaven the Lord Jesus Christ we find the apostle when writing to a church at Colossae I believe it was when he said that you know and he is the head of the body the church who is the beginning the first born from the dead that in all things he might have the preeminence does he have the preeminent place in your life

I'll leave that question with you amen amen