

SAVED OR SELF-DECEIVED

Matthew 7:13-27

This text is the last mile, so to speak, of the great “**Sermon on the Mount**,” and what a sermon it is for us all. I see five major categories in the form of contrasts in it as follows: First, I see the “**Narrow Road**” set over against the “**Broad Way**.” Second, I see the “**Few**” finding the way as opposed to the “**Many**” who will not. Third, I see the “**True Teachers**” verses the “**False Teachers**.” Forth, I find the “**Obedient**” compared to the “**Disobedient**.” And finally I look at the “**Wise**” starkly contrasted to the “**Fools**.” This would be an excellent five point sermon in and of itself, but I do not desire to proceed in this direction. The “**Empty Words**” of verses 21-23 and the “**Empty Hearts**” of verses 24-29 will be the two main dividing lines of the text.

EMPTY WORDS (Matthew 7:21-23)

A. Self-Deceived people find difficulty in coming to God on His terms.

Because folks must recognize their total inability to go it alone, some often find it most difficult to surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. A death to self must prevail and that is unthought of by many. The narrow (strait or constrained) gate must be pursued as one constantly realizes that no one simply falls headlong into it. Salvation never sneaks up on anyone. Additionally, this narrow gate is not easily visible because it is the exact opposite way of the majority. **1 John 2:15** says, “Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” **James 4:4** says, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

When we enter the narrow gate it strips us naked of ourselves and we are required to count the cost the whole time. **Luke 9:23** says, “And He was saying to [them] all, ‘If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’”

There is also great deliberation as well as constant agony as we enter through it. **Luke 13:24** says, “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

One must be continually aware of the fact that as we desire to enter, there are several if not many who will be insisting that we don’t make the voyage. As a matter of fact, these false teachers or false prophets will be chasing the searchers of the narrow gate toward and then in through the broad way that leads to destruction. **Matthew 23:13, 15** says, “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from men; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.... 15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.” False professors make unsound hearers who are self-deceived. These false teachers become self-deceivers.

B. Two categories of self-deceivers.

There are those who make a mere *verbal profession* as seen in verses 21-22. Then there are those who have mere *intellectual knowledge* (vss. 24, 26). You see, empty words are a mere camouflage for disobedience (vs. 21). **Titus 1:16** says, “They profess to know God, but by [their] deeds they deny [Him], being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.”

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C. Self-Deceived people really think they are saved.

There five major reasons for this and they all involve the conscience: **One**, the conscience is weak (1 Cor. 8:7). **Two**, the conscience is defiled (Tit. 1:15). **Three**, the conscience is ignorant (Eph. 4:18). **Four**, the conscience is seared (1 Tim. 4:2). **Five**, the conscience is evil (Heb 10.22).

They pray and do all the right things. It is a life of psychological game playing (2 Peter 1:5-11). They fail to self-examine themselves and establish a cheap grace mind-set.

1 Corinthians 11:28 says, “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”

2 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Test yourselves [to see] if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?”

The self-deceived are all rapped up in religious activity. Many take the fair exchange approach, swapping bad for good, and right for wrong. This is why “Christians” continue in sin and argue for it all the while twisting, arguing and forcing scripture to fit their lifestyles.

D. Two categories the self-deceived come in.

These classifications are the superficial and the involved. They have been raised (or razed) in the church but only attend Christmas Eve. services, Easter services, weddings and funerals while living a totally sin filled life.

E. How we can spot the self-deceived.

Look for the gymnasts and enthusiasts of the congregation. Observe those in search of feelings, blessings, experiences, healings, angels, miracles, visions, revelations, ect., the scant by-products of the faith. View those more committed to an organization, movement, denomination, group or cause than to the word of God or Jesus Christ the Savior. Some study theology as an academic interest for intellectual accumulation. Many of these types are STUCK on one over emphasized point of doctrine. An example of this is overindulging in the name of grace or perfection or even baptism.

EMPTY HEARTS (Matthew 7:24-29)

(When the rain, flood and wind comes, the foundation means everything)

A. Similarities of the two builders.

1. The two builders do many things that are alike.

Both of them, for example, hear about the building (vss. 24, 26). They both are actively involved in the building. Both build in the exact location and they are both quite visible. They live side by side are both buildings look so much alike. One of the phenomenon of building is that as the building grows and gets larger, the foundation disappears. One can be on the sand while the other can be on rock and you can't see them (vss. 24, 26). Both builders are immersed, pray, commune, read the Bible, tithe, fellowship, worship and are involved together in spiritual activity. Only the storm manifests the truth. **Mat 13:24-30** *He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. (25) "But while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. (26) "But when the wheat sprang up and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. (27) "And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have*

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tares?' (28) "And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' And the slaves *said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' (29) "But he *said, 'No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you may root up the wheat with them. (30) 'Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'""

2. One builds one huge religious structure on the sand (vs. 26).

They have no regard for the spirituality of the soul, no care for the purity of the heart, no interest for the integrity of behavior and no value for obedience for God. He's just building. They are in fact involved in religious externals: Prayer and giving are for public show. They bring the body to worship but worship with the mouth and not in Spirit and truth. They carry Bibles but pay no attention to the precepts in it. While they would never kill anyone, they assassinate verbally. Ten percent of their wages goes faithfully to the Lord, but "business is business" in the business world. This all results in a high regard for the law of man but no regard for the law of God whatever. There is no fear of God in them.

3. Another builds his life on the rock (vs. 24).

Just what is the rock in this verse? It could possibly be God, of course. **Psalm 18:2** says, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." It could also be the Christ. **1 Corinthians 10:4** says, "...and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ." But in the context of the scripture text, "*these words of mine*" are certainly the rock referred to here. As the rock is not Peter in **Matt. 16:18**, but the "words" he repeated, so are these words the rock in the present verse under consideration. If I am correct, and I think I am, then "*obedience to the word of the Lord*" is the rock as "*disobedience to the word of the Lord*" is the sand or the shifting sands of human philosophy.

John 8:30-31 says, "As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. 31 Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, [then] you are truly disciples of Mine." James 1:22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. (NASB)

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