

Is Narrow a Bad thing?

Matthew 7:13-23

Authenticity

(Sermon on the Mount, Part 3)

Intro: There's lots of talk today about being Narrow minded.

A) There is definitely a negative CONNOTATION.

B) We live in this culture where the mantra is be sensitive – be open

1) Everyone has rights – be broad MINDED – be TOLERANT!

C) It is almost as if you have **convictions** about something – you actually believe in something

1) and **you are not willing to negotiate** YOU are dubbed as being – NARROW MINDED

Surgery- You want the surgeon to be Narrow – You need your left KNEE replacement you don't want him to do surgery on the right Knee – correct?

Dentist: You need a Root Canal – on a back Right molar – Do you want him to be broad? - - pick the wrong tooth!

Pilot – Booked a Trip to Maui – If that Pilot is off 2 degrees – you will miss Maui by miles
You paid for that trip – You want the Pilot to be Narrow!

So I ask you the question: Is Narrow a Bad thing?

We are in the Sermon on the Mount – We could call it a mount of a Sermon –

A) And Today we – come to the Peak – Choices:

- Two Gates
- Two Paths
- Two Destinations
- Two Groups

B) We all have to make a Choice about which Path to be on - Which group we're going to be in!

C) Life is about Choices – Jesus doesn't want us to be undecided

Choices today – Which Service: 1st or 2nd

(Some you chose 1st – ended up at 2nd late) glad...

A) CHOICE TONIGHT – WATCH GAME or come to Celebrate Jesus! – Tape game – come

B) What To Wear ? – Most of you choose well!

1) My buddy Joe – His choice Friday night

C) Everyday there are lots of Choices

Denise and I were at IN-N-OUT - one night last week – coming back from LA

A) Hungry – Fries and a Drink – for the Drive home.

B) Drive through was long – CHOICE we decided to go in.

C) One register – but the line was relatively short

1) One family ordering and three High School boys in front of us. – RIGHT CHOICE – come inside.

D) **The family ordered – the H/S boys step up – and they are having the hardest time deciding –**

1) Even though they had been in line – starring at the menu for a least 3 minutes

They finally get up there and they are still trying to decide –

A) **And then to make matters worse – all three of them ordered individually** and paid individually

B) Not only that, two of the boys didn't have enough money for their order so they had to borrow from the first guy.

C) AND to top it all off - **My precious bride** has the nerve to say:

1) We should have just went through the Drive-through

Being undecided about what you are going to order at In-N-Out – ANNOYING –

(It is called In-N-Out for a reason) –

Called **Fast food** for a reason

A) Being undecided about – In-N-Out is -

Annoying

B) But BEING UNDECIDED ABOUT ETERNITY – is Dangerous and foolish.

At this point in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus puts a choice before the crowd.

A) Two Paths and you need to choose ONE! –

B) There is a narrow path that leads to life – Broad path that leads to DESTRUCTION.

1) Jesus says: the way to Life – IS NARROW!

C) NOTE: **Jesus who was a Master with Languages:** he could have chosen any words

1) He chose – Wide and Straight

D) He chose Narrow and Broad

1) He chose Many and Few

E) He chose Life and Destruction

He chose these words for a reason, He was painting a contrast

A) AND We get that – we can picture this -

B) **Consider Many** – that is like main street at Disneyland at Closing time

1) That is a Padre game – **Maybe a Dodger game**

C) Few that is a back yard barbecue – Exclusive

D) Why is Christianity so exclusive and so narrow?

THREE IMPORTANT REASONS TODAY

#1 FOR PROTECTION: Narrowness is God's protection of us.

A) NOTE: The warning in the text is not against being NARROW – it is against being BROADMINDED

B) Is that because God is being mean and rigid – NO !

1) It is because He loves us –

C) And he doesn't want there to be any confusion about – how to know HIM – how to go to HEAVEN

D) SO HE MADE IT REALLY CLEAR – ONE WAY!!!- Jesus

“I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the father except through me.” – John 14:6

E) Not many ways – not many paths – Just One – **Absolute statement – Know God? Go to heaven? – Eternal life?**

1) I AM THE DOOR! - Another analogy he used in John 10

So Jesus says: watch out for the broad path!

A) He is warning that a time is coming when the lines are going to get blurred. – NO MORE CLARITY

B) The Wide Gate and the Broad Path ARE welcoming:

1) Open to any and all who **don't want to go** through the Narrow gate.

Bb) The Wide Gate and the Broad Path - Include Human achievement as well as human indulgence.

C) The broad path essentially says you can do whatever you want to

1) You can believe whatever you want to –

D) No restrictions – no rules – no requirements – no regulations – IT IS ALL INCLUSIVE.

1) It is attractive – It is permissive – it is for the promiscuous –

C.H. Spurgeon comments on the non-exclusivity of the broad way...

“The road is so wide that there may be many independent tracks in it, and the drunkard may find his way along it without ever **ruffling the complacency** of the hypocrite.

The mere moralist may pick a clean path all the way, while the **immoral wretch** may wade up to his knees in mire throughout the whole road.”

C.H. Spurgeon

E) BUT It is also for **the Religious** – those who profess any religion or no religion

1) If that is your religion

Sad to think that there are many who participate in religious activities who in actuality are on the broad path – Why do I say that? Skip to V.22

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

A) That to me is a scary passage. – PEOPLE in church – every week –

1) But it is just a religious ritual –

NO RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

C) Are you here today: **Religious duty** – but still on the broad path?

1) You live the way you want all week long – give Jesus an hour on Sunday?

D) Still the captain of your boat – Life is not surrendered to Jesus?

Why is Christianity so exclusive and so narrow?

#1 FOR PROTECTION:

#2 FOR DIRECTION:

A) Jesus said: Enter by the NARROW GATE – that is Aorist imperative –

B) DON'T WAIT IS THE IDEA – COMMAND

1) Don't put this off – Today is the day of Salvation!

C) **Narrow = Restricted** – presses you onto the path – it is like – Right lane closed ahead.../pushed 1 lane

NARROW – LIKE A TURN STYLE:

A) You can only go through it alone –

B) Not a family affair – not Salvato family come on down.

C) No, Salvation is an individual thing: You are not saved because your wife is –

1) Not saved because your parents are.

D) God doesn't have grand kids – everyone needs to make a choice

The way that leads to life is NARROW – Personally believe in Jesus!

A) **Not fair** – well I ask the question again – do you want **your surgeon** to be Narrow or Broad – if he operates on the wrong Knee - Flipped coin

B) You are not screaming – NOT FAIR

1) NO YOU ARE SCREAMING **NOT RIGHT**

C) **PILOT** – Goes to Omaha Nebraska instead of Maui – You are screaming – **NOT RIGHT – NOT WHAT I PAID FOR!**

D) **NARROW IS THE WAY AND FEW THERE** are that find it!

1) But Broad is the path that leads to destruction

NARROW LIKE A Turn style: Can't take – Luggage - Baggage

A) **Rich young ruler** - Jesus – What must I do – Eternal life ? Been a good guy – kept all the commands as a boy – been religious

B) **Baggage – Holding on to Pride** – I have kept all these since my youth

C) Holding on to the baggage of Prestige and power Possession:

1) Jesus said – Let go of all that –

D) He Went away sad – ALL HIS Stuff had his heart

E) Is there something **you are holding on to?** – has your heart that is keeping you from coming to Jesus?

1) Let it go!

Hymn – Nothing in my hands I bring, it is only to the cross I cling!

A) Flip side: 2 Peter 1:2 – When we come – **He gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness !**

B) Those are Two things we are most interested in – **Life and Godliness** – they come through the Knowledge of Him !

C) More you get to know Jesus – More **ALIVE YOU ARE!!!!**

In Him you discover - Purpose of Your existence: Know Jesus – live in relationship with Jesus – serve Jesus

A) More you get to know Jesus – more godly you become.

B) 2 Corinthians 3:18 – As we behold Him – look to Him – we are being transformed by the Spirit of God!

C) Work of transformation is happening!

The Road that leads to life is Narrow: And that NARROW PATH CAN BE LONELY!

A) Sometimes – very few friends - - NOT POPULAR

B) Why would someone choose the broad path? Some do it because they simply – Reject Christ –
1) They don't want to hear about Jesus – hearts are hard

C) John said: John 3:19,20 **The Darkness hates the light because it exposes their evil deeds**

1) Darkness rejects the light – because they LOVE THE DARKNESS!

D) Some of you have lost friends – BECAUSE - **You choose the Narrow Path!**

1) You don't want to party any more – indulge in darkness – THEY love their darkness. – said see you later!

Others take the broad path because they like to go with the crowd. – go with the popular opinion

A) They choose the path of least RESISTANCE - They think – there is safety in numbers –

B) How could that many people be wrong! – They study – they have PHD's – they are smart

1) Can anyone say Presidential election – Spend millions on the wrong guy

C) **Sporting events** – half the crowd is picking the wrong team

D) PEOPLE do the same with Jesus – they go with the crowd and gamble with their eternity!

So The NARROW path can BE LONELY! The Narrow Path can also BE FRUSTRATING!

A) Asaph Psalm 73 – Choose the narrow path – but he is watching the wicked Prosper – **wondering – what is up – Why do they Prosper**

B) They get all the breaks – they seem to be having all the fun

1) Ever feel that way? – Cheating – and getting promoted –

C) You are trying to live godly – do things right and you are getting passed over

1) Asaph could relate - He was frustrated –

Until He went into the Sanctuary of the Lord – “I was reminded of their end!”

A) He was reminded: Life is short – Eternity is Long!

He was Reminded – LATER IS LONGER

B) He was reminded – that God is Just – **He rewards those who diligently seek Him!**

C) God says – the way to Eternity is Narrow –
1) Protect us from – being on the wrong Path

D) To Direct us – He wants us to be absolutely sure that we are going to make it!

1) No confusion – no Near misses!

But Christianity is Exclusive and Narrow for a third reason:

A) **For Provision:**

B) Interesting that Matthew uses the term leads – this is the only time he uses it in his gospel –

1) Until he gets to the end !

C) At the end of his gospel Matthew describes how Jesus was led before Caiaphas – He was led to the Cross

Beautiful picture: Jesus was led to the Cross – so that you and I didn't have to be led to Destruction –

A) Because Jesus was led to the Cross – there is a narrow path – there is another option.

B) He took our punishment – **“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

2 Corinthians 5:21

C) He who was sinless became sin filled so that those who were sin filled could be made sin free.

D) Listen: **if there were many ways to God – There would be no reason for Jesus to come die.....cross!**

1) BE - No purpose in that – Another way: INFACT Jesus prayed – if another way.....

D) There wasn't so Jesus left heaven – came to this earth – Cross – paid the Price – Rose again – TO GIVE US LIVE

When a man predicts his own death – and predicts his own resurrection – 3 days later – and that is exactly what happens.

A) That man is worth following – that man is worth listening to

B) When that man – makes a NARROW STATEMENT – Like I am the only way –

1) HE says - the path is Narrow –

C) THAT MAN IS WORTH LISTENING TO!

Even if at first you don't like the answer!

The Narrow gate is giving up all that you are – to Receive all that he is. – GREAT EXCHANGE!

Today Haven't embraced Jesus – Haven't given him your heart - Haven't surrendered? Choose:

A) TODAY IS THE DAY

B) JESUS FINISHES UP – WITH A WARNING AGAINST DECEPTION

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 thornbushes 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.

V.15 Jesus says Watch out for Ravenous wolves!

A) Come in Sheep's clothing -

B) How can you detect a wolf? Character/ Creed

1) **Character:** Wolves eat sheep!

C) Pasture: See the sheep – All the Sheep eating grass

1) A couple – eating sheep - WOLVES

D) Paul gave the same warning to the Elders at the Church in Ephesus – Acts 20 Watch out for wolves!

1) **Character:** – Draw people to themselves – Self promoters – Not Jesus promoters

Peter issued a similar warning in 2 Peter 2:3 – **Character - Wolves** – make merchandise of God's people!

A) Extortioners – they just want your money!

B) We see that in the Church today – “Pastors” Message – Give and you will get.

C) Pastor – Church to buy him a 65 million dollar plane –

D) Plane ticket to Africa – Coach = \$1800

1) You know how many trips to Africa you could make for 65 million dollars? – **Over 36K- TRIPS**

E) That doesn't factor in fuel cost – the Pilot Cost and the storage Cost

You are being hard Pastor Rob – Don't Judge!

A) Listen – the people Jesus came down on were the religious leaders – they miss represented God

B) They laid trips on God's people

B) Read - Matthew 23 in your free time

1) Jesus blasts the religious leaders – Scribes and Pharisees

C) Woe to them 8 times – in 20 verses

7 times he calls them hypocrites

2 times says they are blind

3 times fools

D) He calls them a Brood of Vipers – Snakes –

1) And white washed tombs – that is all in 20 verses !

E) Jesus was not afraid to address the Problem!

Listen and consider the context of this warning:

A) This talk of the false teachers and wolves is in connection with the Broad path –

B) Meaning there are going to be teachers on the broad path

C) There are going to be guys who sound good! – Lie laced with a bit of truth.

1) Like pancakes laced with a little pit of poison –

D) It will not kill you right away – but it will kill you eventually

False teachers – How recognize ? -Character

- Wolves eat sheep!
- Wolves draw people to themselves – Acts 20
- Wolves make merchandise of God's people

CREED

- Wolves deny the Deity of Christ
- Wolves add to the Gospel/ Jesus plus something

D)Some false teachers today – clouding the gospel – preparing people for the antichrist

1)He will be a great Charismatic leader

Two Gates

Two Paths

Two Trees

Two Groups

Two Destinations

Narrow way that leads to Life – Eternal

Broad path that leads to Destruction

Destruction here is not Annihilation:

A)Do my thing and then it is done? – Over – I am gone

B)Continually being Destroyed – Continual Agony

1)Everyone lives forever

C)Two Destinies – Eternal life

1)Eternally Dying – Eternity – wanted to die – CAN'T

That is one Destination: Many are on it

A)The other Destination is Life – Abundant Everlasting – Joy unspeakable

B)Narrow path – Few – There is few – not because it is limited

1)It is FOR ANYONE – EVERYONE – Who Chooses it – NO EXCLUSIONS

C)SO HOW DO I GET ON THE NARROW PATH ?

#1 REPENT: Sounds religious – what does it mean?

A)Means to turn around - Have you ever walked through the wrong door! – Don't belong here

B)**Speaking at a retreat with Wife – Lake Tahoe**

1)Conference Center – I accidentally walked into the ladies restroom {wasn't paying attention

C)Walked in and saw the look on the faces of the 6 or so ladies in there

1)**I don't belong here**

D)**I immediately** – Turned around – walked out

1)That is repentance - A CHANGE OF MIND results in a change of direction

E)ADMITTING – I AM ON THE WRONG PATH

#2 Put your faith in Christ – Only way!

#3 Follow Him!

A)Focus on Him