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**The Narrow Road**

**Matthew 7:12-14**

**June 29, 2014, Adrian Moskal**

We are continuing on in the Sermon on the Mount series. We are picking up where Pastor Jeff left off last week. So if you were uncomfortable with the tension between your works and God’s grace last week, you can run but you definitely cannot hide from what Jesus has to say about it.

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***12“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.***

***13“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell\* is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. 14But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. Matthew 7:12-14 NLT***

The wide road is appealing because it is easy, I can handle it, and the world says “This is the way”. I can do it myself. I can see where it goes in the short term (maybe). The narrow road: it is hard, lonely, can’t see where it goes necessarily, I fear I can’t handle it by myself.

**[3]**

Story: I owned a restaurant called The Great Canadian Bagel. Steve (staff at GCB) asked me to go rock climbing. Something you should know, is that I am scared of heights. Not planes or roller coasters but Ferris Wheels, Peak to Peak Gondola at whistler, and even ladders are not my friend. He took me to an area called Craigs Cliffs. I know the route we went up was called Powder Puff - what is up with that. Steve talked about the helmet, harness, top roped, his break on. But all I could see was the side of the cliff was entirely rock, the height, and did I mention the height. I said to Steve - “Are you crazy? Look at this helmet. Look how high it is.”

Steve said, “Trust me - I got you. You are top roped”

Started climbing up, went ok. Know this, I am good on first couple of steps on a ladder too. I get 2/3 the way up: lifted my leg up (show it starting to do the funky chicken). You have this harness on and he runs through how to come down - hold it up or down - what if I forgot. So I am so scared of heights. But, it is also hard hauling this up a side of a mountain. Steve kept saying, “Trust me, I got you”

What is the fear. heights, no… falling.. yes. Was it also hard yes. Steve kept saying, trust me. Trust the harness. Trust the rope. All I could see was the distance down and it all was rock. I am getting tired, my legs are shaking.

Life can be hard and scary and a lot of unknown. What are we going to trust? Who are we going to trust.

**[4]**

***12“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.***

Verse 12 sums up what Jesus has been preaching about. Sounds easy. Do unto others what you would like them to do to you. This is what the Old testament is talking about. The law refers to the first 5 books and the prophets refers to the rest of the OT. In Matthew 5:17, Jesus says he did not come to abolish the law but fulfill. It is because that not only does the messianic predictions point to him but also in the sacrificial system. The sacrificial system points to him and only he perfectly obeyed and only he could be sacrificed to fulfill it. It is fulfilled in his life and ministry. He lived this way. We are to become like him, not just learn how he lived but to live that way.

The sermon on the mount has been leading to this verse 12. The meek, merciful, peacemakers - all about others. We have talked about being salt and light. We have talked about anger, lust, divorce, retaliation, loving our enemies, being people of our word, giving, judging, praying. All of these things are about being Other Centred. Jesus is saying Life=other centred. It’s not about you.

**[5]**

***13“You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell\* is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way. 14But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it. Mt 7:12-14***

We know that it says in verse 13 that the highway to hell is broad, the gate is wide and many are on it. We know that path. We choose that path to go our own way. We choose to get angry when I don’t get my way, I choose to divorce when my spouse doesn’t meet my expectations, I choose to retaliate when I am wronged, I choose to hoard the treasure God has entrusted me so I am comfortable, I choose to judge others because it makes me feel better about my sin. I can go on and on. The wide path is easy to choose that way. And…it leads to destruction

(verse) We cannot love our neighbour as ourself without loving the Lord our God with all of our heart soul, mind, and strength and then.. love your neighbour as ourself.

How do we do that: How do we love the Lord our God with all of our heart soul mind and strength - Pastor Jeff talked about this last week. Talk to God. Wait on him. Ask, seek, knock. For us to trust him, means we need to have a relationship with Him. We have to see God for who he is - Perfectly Trustworthy.

**[6]**

Jesus says in Matt 25:

***31“But when the Son of Man\* comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. 32All the nations\* will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33He will place the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left.***

***34“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. 35For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. 36I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.’***

***37“Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? 39When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’***

***40“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,\* you were doing it to me!’***

***[7]***

***41“Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, ‘Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.\* 42For I was hungry, and you didn’t feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn’t give me a drink. 43I was a stranger, and you didn’t invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn’t give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn’t visit me.’***

***44“Then they will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?’***

***45“And he will answer, ‘I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’***

***46“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.” Matthew 25:31-40***

He will separate the sheep on the one side and goats on the other. Phrases - “gave me clothing, cared for me, visited me, fed me, gave a drink, invited me. These actions come from a heart transformed by Jesus. The actions do not lead to salvation, the actions are a result of a repentant heart, trusting in Christ, and a life transformed.

***40“And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters,\* you were doing it to me!’***

These are the people who will inherit the kingdom. The ones who will have LIFE. eternal life - zoe - same as life in Matt 7:13. life vs life destruction vs eternal punishment.

This is not easy. It isn’t clean. It is messy and to risk for Jesus, you need to trust him. Gave, cared, invite, visit, feed, gave. (All action words).

***[8]***

***22But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.***

***26If you claim to be religious but don’t control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. 27Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you. James 1:22-27*** NLT

God in his sovereignty is welcoming us to get in the game. Loving our neighbours doesn’t give us Salvation - God already did that in sending his Son to die on a cross for our sins. We receive that gift through faith in Christ. But as we learn to love God we will ask him to change us, transform us into the likeness of Christ. How will he change us - not the omnis - sorry. You won’t be all powerful, all knowing - but as we partner with God and invite the Holy Spirit to change us - The FRUIT of the spirit is love joy peace patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self control. We will take the harder, narrow road.

**[9]**

The apostle Paul says in Eph 3:20:

***20Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. 21Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. Eph 3:20 NLT***

All the glory to God, because it is his work in us and is way more than we can imagine.

Key is: God wants to do something amazing through you. Will I let him? Will I allow him to change me, to transform me, to use me?

Paul also said in Ephesians:

***8God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. 10For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. Eph 2:8-10 NLT***

This is the tension between works and grace. Our works are a result of the grace that was extended. Are we going to trust him and walk in them. It is by his grace we are saved. And when we truly love him, we follow him. We will do the things he planned (in his sovereignty) for us long ago. He doesn’t make us do things, he allows us to join him in his mission.

We can’t do it alone. We need to partner with God. We need to trust him.

**[10]**

***23And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. Luke 9:23***

If we are going to come after him, it is going to be hard. It is going to be lonely, and it will hurt. But he is saying trust me. The wide road, the road that the world is screaming for you to take - is marked with destruction. The narrow hard road leads to life. Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it - Jesus is saying to trust him.

***18And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Mt 28:18-20 NLT***

Jesus is saying my mission is more than you can handle on your own, But I am in charge and will be with you every step of the way. He won’t let you down.

***15“If you love me, obey\* my commandments. 16And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,\* who will never leave you. 17He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. John 14:15-16 NLT***

“I will go but will send another”. He is saying trust me. I got it. Yes I am going away. But I will be with you forever and I am sending you the Holy Spirit. The same spirit I am filled with. You may be scared along the road, but you can trust me.

What does it look like for us. Where does it start. It starts with me. For you, it starts with you. It is trusting in God, in His sovereignty. Because we can’t do it by ourselves, we have to trust him. We have to rely on him. What does it look like if a group of of people who are so in love with their Eternal Father that they trust him, follow his son’s example, love their neighbours as they would want to be loved.

We know we need to get in the game. Sunday afternoon, we heard 12 testimonies of people being baptized saying they are trusting in their Lord Jesus for their salvation. They are choosing to follow him. We heard testimonies where they said, life has been hard, I am following Christ. I trust in him even though it is hard. That is what we heard at McIvor lake.

We see it in our life groups. We see people coming to Christ, caring for their neighbours, caring and sacrificing for one another. We see it in Freedom Session where people see their own brokenness, reveal it to God and their triad, and ask Jesus to come and change them and transform them. We see it in changed lives.

We see it in our children’s ministry where they are teaming up with other churches to put on a week long Island Adventure Camp to teach kids about God and connect with their parents. This is Leora saying to other churches, do you want to come and help and be a part of this. The BODY of Christ working together to glorify Jesus. It’s not about building an empire, it is all about Christ. We have seen the fruit in kids coming to Christ, baptisms of our young people, CM volunteers who are alive in Christ as they serve, teach and point to Christ.

We saw it yesterday in the 15 people who came out to help our city with cleaning it up and painting over the graffiti. They sacrificed part of their morning to love the city that they live in. To help REDEEM it.

You already know this. It isn’t just formalized programs out of CRBC doing this. We saw it in the lives of Dave and Marlene Scott who are members of CRBC who some years ago that said they were going to go way out of their comfort zone and help another church - Radiant Life church - bring the gospel to the homeless and the needy. Dave Scott said it was so out of his comfort zone to hug a prostitute for the first time but he knew God was calling them to this. And they trusted God and continue to. For years, no one from CRBC followed the Scott’s to help at Radiant Life. The road was lonely (12 people at Radiant Life) but they trusted Christ. They serve so many homeless people each week.

We have seen Ben and Linda Riley and many more (years later), follow the Scott’s lead and minister to the needy out of Radiant Life. They don’t just serve, they pay for the food, prepare it, clean up, meet with the people and listen.

This is the narrow road. The one that leads to life. Where Jesus says, Trust me. I got you.

**[11]**

***Henri J. M. Nouwen “Bread for the Journey”***

***The society in which we live suggests in countless ways that the way to go is up. Making it to the top, entering the limelight, breaking the record - that's what draws attention, gets us on the front page of the newspaper, and offers us the rewards of money and fame.***

***The way of Jesus is radically different. It is the way not of upward mobility but of downward mobility. It is going to the bottom, staying behind the sets, and choosing the last place! Why is the way of Jesus worth choosing? Because it is the way to the Kingdom, the way Jesus took, and the way that brings everlasting life.***

So, what is Jesus calling you to today. What is he asking you to sacrifice for him. Who is he calling you to serve, love, feed, bleed for? Because he is asking you to risk for the kingdom. To invest in the kingdom. The road is narrow and not well travelled.

Where is he asking you to sacrifice. Who is he asking you to love. He continually will call you to risk. God wants you to trust him. He is worthy of your worship. Why should we choose to risk for him, because he is sovereign, holy, perfect, loving, merciful, and trustworthy. He has prepared good works for you. But you have to choose if you are going to live for him or you.

What would it look like if we trusted him? Not just with our relationships with those we know, how about those we haven’t met. How about those we have a rocky relationship with. Have you ever felt left out? People need Jesus. How would that affect all of us, our relationships, our city?

[12]

Jesus says, the narrow road, leads to LIFE. It is hard, few travel it. But trust him. It leads to life - abundant life. It starts with asking Jesus to change my heart. To transform me. I want to see others the way he does. I need to realize how Jesus saw me even though I was filled with sin. Even though I am selfish. I want to serve those that he would. I want to be like Dave Scott hugging the untouchable in our city for Christ. With abandon.

So that you might have life. He doesn’t want you to just get by. He wants you to have life. It may be that you struggle and struggle but he is saying trust him. He know what is best for you. He wants what is best for you. You think it is comfort, but it isn’t. What can you risk for Jesus. Who can you love, give to, invite, feed, this week.

When we went through the church consultation they sat the staff down and asked us a bunch of questions. One of the questions was, when was the last time the CRBC risked something for Jesus? It was hard to answer.

Picture something with me. What would it look like if this family - the family of CRBC - risked big for Jesus. What would it look like? What would that mountaintop risk look like?

Prayer: Trusting God. Jesus is not just saviour but Lord. What does my posture look like in trusting him. Prayer.