



TEEN TREE OF LIFE
THE NARROW
OR
THE WIDE GATE
Part 8
May 5, 2019

Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1JOHN 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."*

We're continuing this week with Jacob and Esau. When their father Isaac was close to death, it was time to give Esau his blessings. As we learned, Esau was born first so he became the legal heir to the family birthright which contained many different things, including heirship to the Covenant between God and Abraham. So Isaac asked Esau to go out to hunt for food so the family could have a special meal, after which Isaac would pass on the blessing to his first-born son.

But Rebekah (Jacob and Esau's mother) came up with another plan! She overheard her husband and decided to help Jacob disguise himself as Esau. Her idea was to have Jacob bring Isaac a different meal instead – while Esau was still out hunting. Because Isaac had poor eyesight, her plan worked!! She successfully tricked her husband into giving the blessing to Jacob. And as you can imagine, Esau was really angry. So angry, in fact, that Jacob had to run away to save his life!! **What a mess!!**

We learn about Esau's demise in the New Testament in **HEB 12:14-17 (The Message Bible): *Work at getting along with each other and with God. Otherwise you'll never get so much as a glimpse of God. Make sure no one gets left out of God's generosity. Keep a sharp eye out for weeds of bitter discontent. A thistle or two gone to seed can ruin a whole garden in no time. Watch out for the Esau syndrome: trading away God's lifelong gift in order to satisfy a short-term appetite. You well know how Esau later regretted that impulsive act and wanted God's blessing—but by then it was too late, tears or no tears.*** Before their births, God knew that Esau's descendants would

become enemies of Israel for generations to come. He also knew that Jacob was a man of great integrity. God had preordained that Jacob would be in the lineage of Our Lord and Savior. Like Esau, many Christian churches in America have, for the most part, traded in their godly heritage for a heap of garbage stinking with Satanic and humanistic viewpoint. Instead of developing the Mind of Christ, these church leaders and those Christians under them, are developing the mind of Satan. And this group of people are hanging out at the Wide Gate's wide path.

Now we're at the most important point in Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount: false teachers. As Christians, we face the danger of making the same kinds of mistakes as those on the wide path so we have to be very careful throughout our Christian Walk. As relatively young followers or seekers of God's Word, you're probably aware of the more obvious false religions which are based on satanic deception. But there are more subtle ones which are equally as dangerous. These are the Christian cults which use the Bible, but twist it according to their own man-made religion.

Then there are the religions which are even more subtle. These religions often proclaim the correct gospel, but because what is being taught is based on personal experience or human ideas, their teaching is in direct opposition to God's Word. This results in Spiritual immaturity among true believers and false faith among those following a perverted gospel. This is a very frightening fact! This warning is extremely import which is why Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ ends His Sermon on the Mount with a warning about false teachers. **MATT 7:13-29 The Message Bible** puts it as plainly as possible: ***"Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires total attention. Be wary of false preachers who smile a lot, dripping with practiced sincerity. Chances are they are out to rip you off some way or other. Don't be impressed with charisma; look for character. Who preachers are is the main thing, not what they say. A genuine leader will never exploit your emotions or your pocketbook. These diseased trees with their bad apples are going to be chopped down and burned. Knowing the correct password—saying 'Master, Master,' for instance— isn't going to get you anywhere with me. What is required is serious obedience—doing what my Father wills. I can see it now—at the Final Judgment thousands strutting up to me and saying, 'Master, we preached the Message, we bashed the demons, our God-sponsored projects had everyone talking.' And do you know what I am going to say? 'You missed the boat. All you did was use me to make yourselves important. You don't impress me one bit. You're out of here.'***

The apostle Paul was the greatest pastor-teacher of the Church-Age. He was highly educated and incredibly intelligent. Look at what he wrote in **1COR 2:4 (The Message Bible)**: *I was unsure of how to go about this, and felt totally inadequate—I was scared to death, if you want the truth of it—and so nothing I said could have impressed you or anyone else. But the Message came through anyway. God's Spirit and God's power did it, which made it clear that your life of faith is a response to God's power, not to some fancy mental or emotional footwork by me or anyone else.* What Paul is teaching us is, it's NOT THE MAN – it's THE MESSAGE! How do we know this? Because he also wrote: *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.* (1TIM 1:15 New International Version) When you compare these two scripture, you have to come to the conclusion that the quality of what your pastor-teacher is teaching is what's important. Not his mistakes or his sins. Our sins were dealt with on The Cross.

(We're going to keep referring to **MATT 7:13-29**, so you may want to open up your Bible or even go to www.biblegateway.com which is a wonderful way to pull up God's Word on your computer, phone or tablet. This website also allows you to look at different translations of the Bible.)

The essential theme of Jesus' sermon is found in **MATT 5:20 (The Message Bible)**: *Unless you do far better than the Pharisees in the matters of right living, you won't know the first thing about entering the kingdom.* When you look at **The New American Standard Bible's** translation of **MATT 5:20**, it reads: *"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven."*

The Message Bible translation is easier to read with this particular verse. It translates "**your righteousness**" as "**the matters of right living...**" **The Message Bible** translation also eliminates "**scribes.**" The scribes were actually expert teachers of the Old Testament. Their work was not copying manuscripts as the word "**scribes**" suggests. The Pharisees were the Jewish leaders of the time who opposed Jesus Christ and the first Christians.

By looking at two Bible translations, this helps us better understand what Our Lord is teaching His disciples (and us)! He is teaching us that as Christians, we have to do better than the scribes and Pharisees did, when it comes to living as He wants us to. And at the time, they thought they were all that and more! The scribes and the Pharisees were arrogant and this led them to believe that they were the MOST righteous and the Best at everything they did. Don't forget that, Jesus Christ was preaching to Jews and the scribes were teachers!

Next, Our Lord contrasts the Pharisees self-righteous practices with true righteousness: *"Be especially careful when you are trying to be good so that you don't make a performance out of it. It might be good theater, but the God who made you won't be applauding."* (**MATT 6:1 The Message Bible**) The Pharisees loved to make a big show of what they were "doing for God." This is obviously applicable today with so

many Christian groups being taught by false Christian "teachers" that by giving to charities, they are pleasing God. This is completely FALSE!

Now, look at what Our Lord says in **MATT 7:6: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."** The "**dogs**" and "**swine**" in this verse stands for people in the cosmic system who are unappreciative and put down the value of what God is offering them! These are the people who are wandering around on the narrow path which you get to by walking through the Wide Gate.

{to be continued}