

Audio Teaching Sermon

Message #26

Narrow Gate vs Superhighway

[ A Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:31 ]

Hey everybody! I hope this audio sermon finds you secure in the arms of our LORD and Savior, **Jesus Christ!** I'd like to welcome you to the **26<sup>th</sup> Message** of the audio teaching series. Pastor Jefferson, here and today we will be continuing our discussion of how the words of the **New Testament** are applicable to us. But before we do that, I'd like to offer a few metrics that have been taken over our past **25 sermons** we've listened to. As I've said previously, when I've conducted audits of assorted pastor's sermons over the years, a trend quickly emerged. First off, the average sermon length was approximately **22 minutes**. When I removed the time spent in prayer, it shrunk down to a tad less than **19 minutes** of the total time spent preaching. Out of those 19 minutes, usually about **90 seconds** of the sermon was actually spent on directly talking about the Bible, Jesus or God Almighty. Even the name of **Jesus** was only mentioned at most a few times, and even then it didn't reveal anything of true value about Him—only using His name in passing. The original languages of the Bible were very rarely ever mentioned—the stats showed less than 1 out of 30 sermons to be more specific. The remainder of the sermon was a discussion of what I call "**humanistic garbage.**"

[ B Motivational Speeches 1:31 thru 2:59 ]

When I say **humanistic garbage**, I mean the same kind of discussion you can hear almost anywhere—in or out of the church sanctuary. I equate the average sermon being delivered today within most sanctuaries as being on par with an excellently rendered **motivational speech**. One which can be defined as "**inspiring or seeking to inspire people to act or behave in a certain way, especially so as to overcome obstacles and achieve success, happiness, etc.**" Sermons today are far more directed towards how a person is supposed to behave, rather than giving them knowledge for what they truly need to know. The problem here is our behavior does not result in us getting to heaven! Practically inside of every church I ever sat, the congregation is told that it is impossible for someone to earn their way into heaven—which is true. Allow me the use of an example. Let's say that a few of your friends have decided to go mountain climbing. You are going to go and do what is called "**free solo climbing.**" That is where "**the assent**

***up rock or ice involves climbing without any ropes or safety gear.*** It is done relying on the climber's hands and feet alone.

[ **C** With Age Comes Wisdom 2:59 thru 4:46 ]

In my younger days, I actually tried that a few times. But with age comes wisdom, and apart from a direct command from God Almighty, you won't ever find me doing that again. The truth is free solo climbing requires great strength and stamina, and more than a touch of courage. So, back to our example. Let's say you find yourself stuck on some part of the mountain where you feel like you can't move in any direction. You have maneuvered into a place where you believe that proceeding any further is impossible. You are beginning to tire and thoughts of falling down the 1,000 feet to the bottom have begun invading your mind. With panic beginning to rise up, you verbally reach out to those in the group, expressing your fear. Instead of extending a hand or a rope down to you, one of your friends begins trying to instruct you on how to fly. They begin discussing the aerodynamic qualities of the human body and how with the help of a flying suit, that it can actually glide. Now, all of this might sound interesting in a classroom somewhere, but at that moment, it's the last thing you want to hear. It's worthless advice to you. First off, you aren't wearing any such suit. And secondly, even if you were, you'd still need to be wearing a parachute in order to survive at the end of the glide. The flying suit cannot be safely landed on its own. This kind of advice is equivalent to the "**humanistic garbage**" I just mentioned, which is being delivered in modern church sanctuaries week after week.

[ **D** Humanistic Garbage 4:46 thru 6:17 ]

By the way, the definition of **garbage** is '**anything that is contemptibly worthless, inferior or vile.**' When all a pastor preaches about is how we all are to behave, they are omitting a few critical items. First off, by not teaching directly from the actual word of God, as delivered to us by Jesus our Savior, they are pretending that all the members of the congregation are wearing flying suits. And by not going back to the original languages in conjunction with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, they are further assuming that everyone has a parachute strapped to their backs. Listen friends, when we begin learning from the words of Jesus, He will instruct us as to how we each are to behave. He will do so in accordance with His word. And apart from that divine teaching, we are just being

hypocrites, actors performing our roles inside the church community, acting out a life that doesn't reflect who we really are. And, when we reach the end of our lives, there will be no flying suit nor parachute. Only empty words to reflect upon, which at this point we will then come to realize just how worthless they really were. Only then we will perfectly understand the term “**Humanistic garbage!**”

[ **E** Great Commission Stated Today 6:17 thru 7:34 ]

The job of pastors, and of Christian clergy, and for every true disciple of Jesus, is go out and gather together all those who are willing to become adherents of Jesus Christ. Using a combination of the original Greek coupled with a few modern words and phrases, I have expanded the **Great Commission** which Jesus commanded us to do over in **Matthew 28:20**. Thus, it now says, <sup>1</sup> “Go therefore <sup>2</sup> and assemble eager and enthusiastic disciples, <sup>3</sup> who are willing to put in the effort <sup>4</sup> equivalent to earnest college level students, <sup>5</sup> and utilizing immersion learning techniques and principals, <sup>6</sup> teach them all that can be learned about God the Father, <sup>7</sup> Jesus His Son <sup>8</sup> and the Holy Spirit, <sup>9</sup> and instruct them using My word as given to you in the Bible, <sup>10</sup> to obey everything that I have charged you with.” And based on my analysis of multiple sermons, delivered by many assorted pastors, does this sound to you like what's being conducted inside the halls of the modern church today?

[ **F** Analysis of Teaching Sermons 7:33 thru 9:10 ]

I have mentioned my analysis of pastor's sermons before, and so one of my staff members asked if they could analyze the sermons in like manner which I've delivered within this audio teaching series. Of course, I readily agreed as I wanted to see how what I was doing would stack up against other pastors. You can judge the results for yourself. Not including this one, within this teaching sermon series I have delivered 26 messages in total thus far. The average length is **18:10**, and as there is no prayer time included in these audio teaching sermons, this more-or-less equates well to the length of other sermons I've analyzed. On average, I read and break down **7 verses** from out of Scripture in each message. I include and discuss **9 words** from out of the **Greek** and the **Hebrew** languages. On average **11 words** and **phrases** are defined from out of the dictionary. And so you can see that the majority of each lesson's time is spent directly discussing the Word of God. I

spend on average about 90 seconds on other topics, including the intro and welcome portion. When it comes to mentioning the name of **Jesus**, it is heard on average **34** times in each message. When you include the name of **God** and the **Holy Spirit**, the average these names are spoken climbs to a total of **61** times for the lessons.

[ **G** No Substitute for the Bible 9:10 thru 10:41 ]

Now, while there are going to be times when certain administrative topics need to be discussed within the occasional sermon, just as with this one, they will not occur often enough to significantly skew these results. I want to make it clear that this comparison is not a contest. As I've said before, most pastors do a masterful job delivering their sermons. This analysis is based purely on content. And as you have just heard, the audio teaching sermons I deliver are essentially a flip-flop of the numbers from other pastor's sermons. This is because our time spent here is tightly focused on the word of God. Which is precisely what Jesus commanded for us to do. Now, I had a gentleman recently inform me that he avoids those clergy whose messages are not mainstream. He said he prefers to go with the majority and not with the sole source. And, for other matters, I'd ordinarily agree with him. But in the case of God's Word, I ardently disagree. First off, these messages are coming straight out of the words of Scripture. The only tools being used to augment the message is that of software which allows for the close examination of the original languages and of course, a dictionary, which clarifies the meaning of words.

[ **H** The Gate is Not Straight 10:41 thru 12:17 ]

And if studying God that way is not going along with the crowd of folks calling themselves Christians today, then do you really want to go down that road? Grab your Bible now and open it up to **Matthew 7:13**. Reading from the original Greek, it is Jesus here talking and He says, <sup>1</sup> *“Enter through the narrow gate.”* The word we see for **enter** is [1] *aye-SEL-thah-tay* and it means *‘to bring yourself.’* It is metaphorical word which means to take yourself to a point where you can then enter into the Kingdom of God. This is consistent with the idea of discipleship training. No one can force you to begin the training. You must be the one to decide when to begin, and do so on your own, and for the right reason. The word we see for **narrow** is [2] *sten-NES* and translates to *‘a narrow strait, as in a passageway.’* In both places where it is used, this word brings with it the idea of a constricted pathway, which requires discipline to navigate the difficult corridor.

The path itself is not a straight line, as I was told as a kid in Sunday school. No, it is a strict path to be followed, one with constraints and rules. God isn't of the ilk of the burger chain who allows everyone to have it done their way.

[ **I** **The Highway to Perdition** **12:17 thru 14:10** ]

The spiritual journey of following Christ is one that requires intentional effort, tight focus and tough perseverance. And the idea of a tight corridor implies narrow restrictions and rigid limitations. It brings the idea of limited maneuvering and a set way to accomplish something. It is just the opposite of how one can drive on a superhighway, where there are multiple lanes to choose from, no stoplights, and gradual curves and grades. This depicts an easy, almost mindless kind of living. And the word we find for the narrow **gate** is [3] *pie-LES*, and in the 3 places we see it, means '**an entrance or access to a divine locale or an eternal realm.**' Jesus is thus commanding us to, "*Bring yourself to the narrow strait leading to eternal life.*" Continuing on now with **verse 13** we read, <sup>2</sup> "*For wide is the gate* <sup>3</sup> *and broad is the highway—* <sup>4</sup> *leading to destruction.*" The word we see for **wide** is [1] *plat-TAY-ee-ah* and is used just this once. It translates to mean '**wide, spacious or broad.**' Here it is being used metaphorically to symbolize ease and comfort in the context of spiritual choice. The word we find for **broad** is also used just this once and it is [1] *you-ree-KHO-ros* and means '**expansive, spacious or wide.**' It describes a path which is easy to navigate and travel, experiencing comfort and ease on the journey. Jesus calls it a **highway**, telling us it leads to destruction.

[ **J** **Drawn Away from God's Gate** **14:10 thru 15:38** ]

The word for **leading** is [2] *ah-GAP-ooH-sah* and in the 2 places it is used it means '**to be seduced or to be led away.**' The idea here is of one being seduced and led away to another road. It can mean good or bad in the sense of being taken off the path you are traveling, depending on the context. It can mean being taken from the highway leading to destruction over to the path of truth and righteousness. Or it can indicate being seduced away from the road to holiness over to the highway leading to judgment or captivity. In this case, Jesus is speaking of destruction. A broad highway is put in place to move lots of folks down the road to their destination. This is what Jesus is trying to warn us about. The path leading to destruction is a superhighway, where many will travel down it to their doom. The word for **destruction** is *ah-PO-leh-ee-an* and means '**ruin, loss or**

**perdition.**’ The word **perdition** means **‘a state of final spiritual ruin or the loss of the soul.’** The bottom line is Jesus is telling us that the result of reaching the end of this broad and easy highway is **eternal damnation.**

[ **K** **A Wide Gate and Broad Highway** **15:38 thru 16:59** ]

And then Jesus continues on in the verse and says, <sup>5</sup> *“and many are those entering through it.”* The word here for **entering** is [2] **ice-SER-kho-men-oi** and in the 2 places it is used it means **‘to enter knowingly or on purpose.’** It is used in the sense that while entering is done intentionally, the one entering still needs to be watchful and to assess the situation carefully before continuing with their journey. This goes hand-in-glove with a person allowing themselves to be seduced away from the path which follows the truth of God’s Word. It has the sense of one being used by demons or by Satan, for the purpose of taking possession of their soul. And this broad, easy highway, which leads through a wide, spacious gate is where most of the people are heading. Listen friends, just as those on the highway to Hell can be wooed away to join the narrow path leading to eternal life with Jesus, so can those on the road to holiness be seduced by sin to abandon their discipleship training. Only those who have completed building an intimate relationship with Christ are safe.

[ **Z** **Some Final Thoughts** **16:59 thru 18:25** ]

Once gained, a person can never lose their salvation. The problem with the **humanistic garbage** being preached from out of the pulpits of today, where people are told they can be saved by merely walking 100 feet down the aisle of the church, and kneeling at the alter, and saying a 30 second prayer, is that this advice is not entirely true. Salvation requires a significant amount of time spent building an intellectually intimate relationship with Jesus. It takes years on average to do that. That’s why I equate it to completing a college degree. Let’s not confuse the starting point—where we surrender to God in a beginning act of submission, with the graduation ceremony, where Jesus recommends us to be accepted by His heavenly Father. The short walk to salvation is an example of Christian mythology. That’s why Jesus compares the narrow-constricted gate with a wide highway leading to Hell. We will resume this discussion in **message #27.** Stay tuned to this series, as they say. **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God’s Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**