

WHEELERSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunday Morning Service

July 16, 2017

“TWO WAYS, TWO ROADS, TWO BUILDERS, TWO MEN”

As human beings, we think in distinctions. Let me demonstrate: Right and Left; Day and Night; Light and Dark; Up and Down, Happy and Sad, Love and Hate, Life and Death, Hot and Cold.

This morning we are going to look at four critical distinctions in the word of God.

- The way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked
- The narrow road and the broad road
- The wise builder and the foolish builder
- The justified man, and the self-righteous man

My prayer is that our kind and gracious God will enlighten our minds to understand these four distinctions as clearly as we understand night and day.

Distinction #1 - TWO WAYS – The way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked.

Psalm 1

¹ Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. ² But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. ³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers. ⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

According to this Psalm, there are only two ways, the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked. At this moment in time, you are either walking, standing, and sitting in the way of the righteous, or walking, standing, and sitting in the way of the wicked. The way of the righteous leads to everlasting joy and safety in the presence of God, and the way of the wicked leads to everlasting destruction, under God’s judgement in outer darkness and torment. Two ways with two endpoints.

Psalm 1 describes the man who is on the way of the righteous. He is the blessed man. He also describes the wicked man, the man who is on the path to destruction.

What is true about the blessed man? First, he doesn’t follow the way of the wicked. He doesn’t walk in their advice and counsel, and he doesn’t stop and stand and become intimate friends with the wicked, and he certainly doesn’t sit down and participate in their scorn and mockery of godliness. The blessed man walks in righteous counsel, stands with righteous people who follow

that righteous counsel, and sits with the people who fear God and live righteous lives as true worshippers of the living God. The blessed man delights in the counsel of the Word of God, and loves His master's voice that he meditates on it day and night. He listens, and carefully considers the counsel of God's Word so that he might walk in the way of righteousness.

It brings him great delight to meditate on God's word, night and day. Through the Scriptures, he beholds the beauty of his God and Savior by carefully and reverently considering His ways, His attributes, His characteristics, His laws, and His beauty and awe. The blessed man finds great pleasure in listening to and obeying the voice of His master. He continually comes to the table to feast on the bread of life and quench his thirst for God with the living water. He is nourished, fortified, and strengthened as he ruminates and meditates on the commands and promises given to him in the Scriptures.

As a result, this man is like a strong, green, fruitful tree that has been planted by flowing streams of water. His life displays prosperity and abundant fruit. He is a source of blessing to others, and lives a productive and useful life.

In stark contrast, wicked men are like chaff. Chaff is loose hulls separated from the edible grains by threshing and winnowing. The wind blows away the useless chaff, leaving the useful grain behind. Chaff. It's useless, unstable husks blown about by the wind. This is a picture of the fruitless lives of wicked people.

Two ways in life, the way of the righteous, the way of the wicked. One way is useful and fruitful, and the other is vain and useless. And when the wind of judgment comes, the wicked, just like chaff, will be removed and destroyed, as it has no value. In contrast, the righteous will be protected from the judgment and ushered into an eternal life of praise and service to their Creator and God.

Proverbs 16:25 *There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*
Are you on the way of the righteous, or the way of the wicked?

Distinction #2: TWO ROADS – The narrow road, and the broad road

Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. ¹⁴ But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Picture a road in your mind's eye. See yourself walking on this road. You can't see where the road leads, though it certainly is leading somewhere.

You might be on the broad road. The broad road is the way of the wicked. It is the easier road to travel. Everyone begins on this road, and most people stay on this road. There are multitudes of people on this road, and they are quite diverse. They each have their own philosophy and view of life, God, right and wrong, and the way to find happiness and fulfillment.

One class of people on the broad road are the moralists. They speak of right and wrong, of standards, of decency, and of self-respect. They compare themselves with others on this road, and see themselves as better than most. They are thankful that they have chosen to live better than most of the others on the road. They despise the immoral and the unsophisticated. They typically band together with other moralists to promote decency and goodness in the world. Some of them consider it a good thing to believe in God. They are sure that if there is a God, He would certainly favor them. He would obviously appreciate and bless good people like themselves. After all, they are hard-working, self-supporting good people who have made a good life for themselves, and they are proud of it. They believe that if there is a future judgment and afterlife, they will likely fair well based on their track record. After all, they are good hearted, and have been responsible citizens, and try to help other people.

The problem that the moralists is that they are still on the broad road that leads to destruction. But because they see themselves as good, they see no reason to seek a different path. The harsh reality is they are not ok. They are proud and satisfied with their own standards of goodness. Outwardly they appear better than most, and inwardly they are unclean and wicked. They do not worship the true God and give Him what He deserves. They are oblivious and blind to their condition because they compare themselves with other people on the road and see themselves as better. They are blind self-righteous people who cannot see their true condition.

There is another group on the broad road, the partiers. They live for the moment and for the satiation of their desires. Their philosophy is to eat drink and be merry, because one day the road will end. That's why they live to enjoy today, and refuse to be concerned about what's ahead at the end of the road. Life is all about happiness and fun and personal fulfillment. These folks don't like the moralists, with all their stuffiness, restrictions and rules. If it feels good, just do it. The moralists sometimes envy the partiers, and some get tired of being so good and decide to join the party. Occasionally a partier gets tired of his hangovers and lack of purpose in life, and he joins up with the more noble moralists. The problem with the partiers is that they are blinded by the pleasure of their sin, and that keeps them from considering the end of the road. They live like there is no end to the road.

There is yet a third group traveling down the broad road to destruction. These people have deep problems and don't get along with others. They are not nice people, and they're not very happy. They seem bent on harming other people. The moralists and most of the partiers avoid these people. They are offended that these problem people are even on the road with them. The partier and the moralists accuse the bad people of ruining life for everyone else. That's why we must have laws, and courts, and jails. These disturbed, anti-social people are on this same broad road leading to destruction, and don't care. They hate life, hate themselves, and hate everyone else.

And there are many other types of other people on this broad road that leads to destruction. Some are atheists, and some are deeply religious. Some are good people by human standards, and others are despicable. Though they differ in many ways, what they all have in common is that they are on the same road leading to the same destination of destruction. Unless they change

directions, and enter through the narrow gate onto the narrow road, they will continue on this road until they reach the judgment where they will suffer the eternal punishment for their sins.

Not many people leave the broad road and enter the narrow gate so that they can take the narrow road. The narrow road is difficult to find, and once you find it, it is even harder to get through the gate. To get through this narrow gate you have to leave the crowd, and come on your own. You have to admit that you have been on the wrong road, and see the need for a change. You have to see that are not righteous, and that you need to be righteous to stay on this narrow road that leads to eternal life. For a person to leave the easy road, and strive to enter the narrow gate, they must see their spiritual poverty, and mourn, and hunger and thirst for righteousness and a pure heart. Only then will a person leave the broad road, and forsake all that they have so that they can get through the narrow gate.

Proverbs 16:25 *There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*

Distinction #3: TWO BUILDERS – The wise builder, and a foolish builder.

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ *“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

Much like the beginning of Psalm 1, Jesus begins His most famous discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, describing the blessed person. And like Psalm 1, He ends this sermon, warning people to prepare for the coming storm of judgment by building on a firm foundation. He tells a story about two types of people, the wise man and the foolish man. Both men hear His words, but only the wise man obeys his counsel, and builds his house on a solid foundation. In contrast, the foolish man did not obey his counsel, and built his house on sand. And the storm came, and wise man’s house stood, and the foolish man’s house collapsed.

The distinction between the wise man and the foolish man is the difference in their response to the counsel of Jesus words. One man obeys Jesus’ words and builds on the rock. His house stands firm in the storm. The other man ignores Jesus’ counsel and builds his house on the sand, and his house is destroyed.

Are you listening to Jesus and doing what He says, or are you hearing Him and not doing what He says?

Proverbs 16:25 *There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*

There are two Ways; The way of the wicked and the way of the righteous.

There are two Roads; The broad road that leads to destruction, and the narrow road that leads to life.

There are two Builders; The foolish builder that built on the sand, and the wise builder that built on the rock.

The question that hangs in the air is this: How can you become a wise builder that listens and follows what Jesus says? How can you leave the broad road that ends in destruction, find and enter through that small gate that gives you access to the narrow road that ends in eternal life? And how can you find God's favor, and become a blessed person that has a heart that delights in the Word of God, and becomes a righteous, stable, useful person?

These distinctions raise the most profound question that any human being can ask: How can you be saved from the coming judgment and stand justified and accepted by a holy, perfect God? How can you enter that narrow gate, and become like that tree planted by streams of water? How can you be under God's blessing, and not His curse? What must you do to be rescued from the road that ends in destruction? How can you become a person who the Lord watches over, and keeps safe, and will lead home into His presence?

Distinction #4 TWO MEN – The justified man, and the self-righteous man

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ *To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'*

¹³ *"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'*

¹⁴ *"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

We again see two different men, the self-righteous man, and the justified man. The first man, the Pharisee, was an esteemed religious leader. He was respected and considered to be a righteous person by those around him. He was confident that he was accepted by God because he chose to live a good and moral life. He was faithful to his wife, gave his money regularly to God's work, didn't steal from others, and was thankful that he was not like unrighteous sinners. He prayed often, fasted more than required, and often thanked God for who he was. He was moral, he was religious, and he was good. In the end, He was also rejected by God.

The other man, a tax collector, was not a good man at all. His business was to collect taxes, and he made his profit by using that position to steal from his neighbors. He was ashamed of his

work and his actions, and found it difficult to even pray. He recognized he was on the road to destruction, and felt condemned and ashamed. Knowing that he was an unrighteous sinner, all he could do was pray for mercy. He had nothing good in his life to present to God as a basis for acceptance. He only offered his humble cry for mercy. Jesus said this man went home justified.

Two men. One man presented his own righteousness to God, and was rejected by God, and the other man offered a cry for undeserved mercy, and was accepted and declared righteous by God.

Jesus said the Pharisee remained a wicked man on the road to destruction. He was confident he was on the road of the righteous, and was in fact blind to his need for God's righteousness. In contrast, the wicked tax collector recognized and admitted his true condition, and cried out and begged for mercy, and received it. God heard his cry, forgave his sin, declared him righteous and planted him in his kingdom.

So how can you know if you are walking in the way of the righteous, on the narrow road, building on the rock and not sand, and stand justified before God?

It is through understanding the Gospel, that has the power to bring salvation to you. Paul said this in Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

The gospel addresses the question of how a wicked sinner can be declared righteous and be accepted by a Holy righteous God.

First, you must recognizing your true condition as a wicked sinner.

Romans 3:10-12

¹⁰ As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹ there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. ¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

The Scripture tells us every single person is born into this world with an unrighteous heart. As a result, we all walk in the way of the wicked, on the broad road, and we foolishly build our lives on the sand of self-righteousness. We are all hopelessly on the wrong road headed to destruction, blind to our condition, and dead in our sins. Apart from God's intervention, we will follow that road to destruction.

Second, you must see that you need a righteousness that you don't have and are unable to produce, but that you can receive by faith.

In eternity past, God the Father chose a people for Himself that He is now calling to repentance. These people have been chosen from every nation, kindred, and people group. Because God loves the world, He sent His Son into this world to save sinners and rescue these people from

their helpless state. Christ left the splendor of heaven, and took on human flesh. He was born into this world a perfect human being, without sin. He lived a perfect, righteous life, tempted in all ways, yet without sin. He completely obeyed and fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law. He did this so that He could offer His perfect life as a sacrifice for sinners, and take the just punishment due them, which was death. Jesus died the death of a sinner, not as a penalty for His sins, for he had none, but for the sins of His people. Over 2000 years ago, the perfect God-man was nailed to a wooden Roman cross, was crucified, and died. He freely submitted to that undeserved suffering as a substitute for sinners.

Listen to the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 5:20-21

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This offer is extended to all. It is extended to you. A way has been provided for wicked sinners to be justified, declared righteous, and reconciled to God. There is a cleansing from sin available, and a perfect righteous covering. It is the righteousness of Christ, freely offered to everyone who believes.

Finally, you must obey this gospel by humbly asking for this gift of salvation.

This invitation to be saved is to all who hear this good news! Today, you can be cleansed from your unrighteousness and counted righteous in Christ. It is because Jesus Christ lived a righteous life, died for sinners, and is now alive and risen from the dead. He not only offers forgiveness based on his death, but also His own righteousness to all who repent from their sins and believe this good news. Today, if you hear His voice, and believe that He died for you, and was raised to life three days later, plead for His mercy and confess Him as your Lord and Savior, and you will be saved.

Romans 10: 4-13 Speaks of two sources of righteousness, a righteousness that is by faith, and a righteousness that is by law.

⁴ *Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.* ⁵ *Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them."* ⁶ *But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)* ⁷ *"or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).* ⁸ *But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim:* ⁹ *If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰ *For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.* ¹¹ *As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."* ¹² *For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,* ¹³ *for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

If you will forsake yourself as the source of righteousness, and cry out to God to have mercy on you, a sinner, and give you His righteousness, you will become that blessed person of Psalm 1.

God will plant you next to streams of living water. He will remove your heart of stone, and give you a new heart that delights in the Word of God. You will begin to grow, and become a fruitful and productive person. You will have a new love for righteousness, and hate wickedness. You will seek and enter through the narrow gate, and begin your journey on that narrow road of that leads to eternal life. As a wise man, you will obey the words of Jesus and begin building a life on the solid foundation of hearing and obeying His words. And when you reach the end of this earthly journey, you will be protected from God's judgment, and be ushered into the very presence of Christ. Christ's righteousness will shield you from the wrath of God that will be poured out on all unsaved sinners. You will see the Lord Jesus, your Savior face-to-face, and you will be changed to be like Him, and welcomed home to dwell with Him for eternity.

Two ways, two roads, two builders, two men, and two sources of righteousness