

## Roadblocks to Heaven

Matthew 25:1-12

### I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** A roadblock is a barrier or barricade on a road to prevent access.
  - A. Our highways are full of them during construction season.
  - B. Just take a drive to good old Spencer!
2. **\*\*** Roadblocks can be good or bad.
  - A. Good roadblocks keep us from going where there is danger (e.g., bridge out).
  - B. Bad roadblocks are those that are either poorly marked, or we don't notice or choose to ignore; barreling through such a roadblock puts us in great danger of harm!
3. **3** In this lesson we want to look at some spiritual roadblocks.
  - A. By that, I mean, things we tend to allow to block our path as we strive to walk with the Lord.
  - B. It is critical to identify spiritual roadblocks as we seek to serve the Lord.
  - C. We must identify them and overcome them.
3. **4** Let's consider some **Roadblocks to Heaven** that may hinder us from entering the joy of the Lord in heaven.

### II. DISCUSSION:

#### One roadblock to heaven is...

1. **5** Disobedience:
  - A. The Scriptures emphasize the absolute necessity of obeying God.
    - (1) The first couple learned this as God said, "...*thou shalt not eat...*" (Gen. 2:16-17), but they "*did eat*" (3:6), and were banished from the garden with Cherubims and a flaming sword keeping the way of the tree of life (Gen. 3:23-24).
      - (a) If you don't think obedience is absolutely necessary, just ask Adam & Eve after God banished them from the garden of Eden! Death, pain, work, weeds, insects, etc.
      - (b) If you don't think obedience is absolutely necessary, run that thought through your mind the next time you drive past a cemetery!
    - (2) The keynote of Deuteronomy is obedience as Moses exhorted the Israelites:

**Deut. 11:26-28:** "*Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28 and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today...*"; Cf. Deut. 28 & Lev. 26

**Deut. 11:32:** "*And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you today.*"
    - (3) The Israelites pledged to obey in **Ex. 24:3-8** (**Heb. 9:19**: "*For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,*").
    - (4) But, they didn't obey; their disobedience serves as a vivid example of what NOT to do!

**1 Cor. 10:6-11:** “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”

(5) God equates “disobedience” with “unbelief” (**Heb. 3:12-19**; compare v. 18 with v. 19).

B. \*\* Jesus also taught that obedience on the part of a Christian is an absolute requirement:

**Matt. 7:21:** “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven”

**Lk. 6:46:** “But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?”

**Matt. 12:48-50:** “But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

**Jn. 15:15:** “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.”

(1) Our obedience is how we show love to God: **Jn. 14:15**

(2) Obedience is the true test of whether we really “know” God or not: **1 Jn. 2:3-5:** “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

(3) If we are obedient, God and Jesus dwell in us: **Jn. 14:23-24:** “Jesus answered and said unto him, ‘If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.”

(4) Jesus’ true disciples are those that are obedient: **Jn. 8:31-32:** “Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, ‘If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

C. Revelation closes with the beatitude, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (**Rev. 22:14**).

D. Access to heaven will only be granted to the obedient! **Heb. 5:8-9:** “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,”

E. Don’t let disobedience be a roadblock to your pursuit of heaven!

### **Another roadblock to heaven is...**

#### **2. 6 Pride:**

A. Matthew 18 finds the disciples thinking too highly of themselves (**Matt. 18:1:** “At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’”). Pride!

(1) With a child in their midst He said, “...Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom...” (**Matt. 18:1-3**).

- (2) Wisdom literature reveals the Lord hates pride:

**Prov. 6:16-17a:** *“These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look...”*

**Prov. 29:23:** *“A man's pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor.”*

**Prov. 11:2:** *“When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.”*

**Prov. 16:18:** *“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

- B. **Signs of pride:** (adapted from *What the Bible Says about Pride*, by Alfred H. Ells on [bibleresources.org](http://bibleresources.org)): Read **Phil. 2:1-8** We can overcome pride by applying this passage!

- (1) Insecurity: Pride provokes us to desire the constant and lavish praise and attention of others too much. If brethren don't notice and give praise, the prideful will be upset even to the point of moving their membership elsewhere. Much of pride is motivated out of one's unmet need for self-worth. Finding one's identity and security in Christ is a must to avoid pride. With Christ it doesn't matter if others praise us, or even notice us, because He always notices us and cares about us!
- (2) The need to be right: A common symptom of pride is the constant need to be “right.” The need to be right prevents one from appropriately evaluating issues as well as themselves (**Rom. 12:3**: *“For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”*). A person who needs to be right has an exalted opinion of him/herself and thinks that he/she knows better than others. Most people detest a “know it all”!
- (3) Argumentative: Individuals always who argue their point of view are allowing pride to get the best of them. At the root of their argument is a belief they are right and others are wrong and their will should prevail. It is appropriate to advocate for the truth, but in matters of indifference we should defer to others. On such matters, we should strive for a mutual understanding and respect for the other's opinion (Rom. 14).
- (4) Poor listener: More interested in being heard than in hearing. When someone develops a pattern of needing others to listen to them rather than first hearing others, pride is motivating that need. Such is often an expression of insecurity and pride (**Jas. 1:19**: *“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;”*).
- (5) Easily angered: Anger is a self-justifying emotion. This means that the nature of anger is to prompt us to justify our position and blame others for our wrongdoing; using rationalization and self-justification often leads to anger when others rightly hold us responsible for our actions and attitudes. The scripture warns that the *“anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God.”* (Jas. 1:20). An individual who is angry a lot is suffering from pride.
- (6) Irritability and impatience: often has its roots in pride. When we are unable to be patient with another and are irritated, it can indicate a haughty view of self. We feel our views, our time, or our needs are more important than those of other people.
- (7) Lack of submissive attitude: Pride balks at submission and is resistant and argumentative of anyone or anything that exercises authority over them. Even if such authority is legitimate (e.g., civil govt. [1 Pet. 2:13], elders [Heb. 13:17], Lord [Jas. 4:7], one another [1 Pet. 5:5]). The test of humility and submission is being able to say ‘yes’ when commanded by authority to do something and to maintain a positive attitude about it. Especially so in

regards to God. This is especially so when the submission to authority goes against our grain or better judgment. e.g., John Maxbauer at Lowes).

- (8) Not easily corrected: Ever work or live with someone who won't receive any negative or corrective feedback? This too is pride. See 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 12:3-12; **v. 12**: *"Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*
- (9) Receiving correction without making change (incorrigible): I worked with a man who often would receive my correction and say thank you for the feedback, but would never change. This too is a form of pride. Many do the same toward God (no true "godly sorrow"; 2 Cor. 7:10). Saul of Tarsus was like this until he changed! 1 Tim. 1:13
- (10) Always giving advice and needing others to take your advice: Advice should always be offered without strings attached. If you find yourself resenting the fact your advice is not followed, look deeper at the motivating issues in your life!
- (11) Always touting your resume: For example, needing to proclaim your title, degrees, or experience. Such actually stems from insecurity; a desperate need to have others recognize your worth (Gainesville mayor candidate). Pride fuels this need. We derive our worth from God; in God's eye, all men truly are equal (Rom. 3:23).
- (12) Stubbornness: Webster's dictionary defines stubbornness as "unduly determined to exert one's own will, not easily persuaded and difficult to handle or work, resistant." The root issue of stubbornness is willfulness, which is 'I want what I want when I want it.' It's just another expression of pride. Once again, it is the opposite of the humility we are supposed to exhibit in our lives (see Phil. 2:5-8).
- (13) Comparison and competition: **2 Cor. 10:12**: *"For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."* This makes it clear that comparing oneself to others is unwise; it is a form of competition. "You did this, well I DID THIS!" This includes "name dropping." "Do you know brother so and so? (e.g., some well-known preacher) As Christians we are not in a competition! Jesus never boasted or felt the need to throw around His deity (Phil. 2:). We have no basis for such a need: **1 Cor. 4:7**: *"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"*

C. Let's be alert for the signs of pride in our life and if we find one...eliminate it! **Jas. 4:6**: *"But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'"*

### **Another roadblock to heaven is...**

#### **3. 7 Earthly/fleshly members:**

A. Jesus taught His disciples to take sins of the flesh very serious:

**Matt. 18:8-9**: *"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire."*

B. He is not teaching literal mutilation, but mortification (i.e., the self-discipline to avoid sin).

**Col. 3:6-9**: *"Mortify ["put to death"; NKJV] therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 In the which ye*

also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;”

- C. Such must be put to death for, “...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. 5:19-21).
- D. Even the apostle Paul struggled with self-discipline (1 Cor. 9:24-27).
- E. But with God’s help we can win the battle: **Matt. 19:26:** “But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”; Phil. 4:13

### Another roadblock to heaven is...

#### 4. **8** Riches:

- A. Material possessions often get in the way of people’s following the Lord.
  - (1) Remember the rich, young ruler?
  - (2) The Lord told him, “...sell that thou hast, and give to the poor...and come and follow me,” “But ...he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matt. 19:16-22).
  - (3) Jesus used this occasion to explain, “...That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:23).
- B. Why is this usually the case?
  - (1) In Matthew’s account of the parable of the sower; Jesus described the “thorny” soil: **Matt. 13:22:** “Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”
  - (2) Riches, material things, makes promises it cannot keep.
  - (3) Money promotes itself as the answer to our problems, it makes us think our value lies in how much we can accumulate.
  - (4) It promises to provide comfort, rest, and pleasure, but can’t! (Phil. 4:7)
- C. **9** As we deal with material things we need to constantly ask ourselves five questions so that we don’t allow “things” to serve as a roadblock to heaven (Source: [unlockingthebible.org](http://unlockingthebible.org)):
  - (1) **\*\* Do I think I will be happier with ‘just a little more’?** “Oh, if I just had that new car or new outfit, my life would be better.” “I don’t need a Ferrari, but that new Toyota/Honda would be nice.” (**Phil. 4:11-12:** “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”) Contentment is a learned behavior. It is totally independent of the balance in my bank account, and totally dependent on how much I am remembering and savoring all I have been given in Jesus Christ.
  - (2) **\*\* Do I find it hard to see my own spiritual poverty and the spiritual wealth I have in Christ?** Is how you feel about yourself, your confidence, your joy; dependent on a healthy bank account balance? Remember the church at Laodicea? They said, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17). But, in reality they were “wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked” (i.e., from a spiritual standpoint). Wealth boosts our self-confidence and tends to make us forget our spiritual poverty (Matt. 5:3) and absolute need for God (Matt. 4:4). True riches are in Christ! Eph. 3:8; Matt. 16:26

- (3) **\*\* Do I feel superior (or inferior) to others because of my financial standing?** Some believe God has materially blessed them just because they are “good.” Riches can tempt us to think material blessings are directly tied to good works. This plays right into our culture of capitalism where many still believe “God helps those who help themselves” is a verse in the Bible. In reality, Deuteronomy 8:17-18 says: *“then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ 18 And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth,”*; Jas. 1:17
- (4) **\*\* Am I generous? Have I grown in generosity? Do I derive joy from my generosity?** It is wise to save and prepare for known future expenses, but saving in excess can lead to hoarding. Money can deceive us into thinking we can protect ourselves and our families from future difficulty if we store up as much as we possibly can. It displays unbelief in God’s promised provision and attempts to replace him (Matt. 6:25-33). Hoarding is not unique to the rich. We can hoard one dollar, thousands of dollars, or millions of dollars. If I am unable to see that everything I have belongs to God, I am hoarding what I have. Hoarding displays a lack of faith. To guard my heart in this area, I try to imagine every dollar in my bank account has a place marked “owned by” in the corner. Am I willing to write “God” in that place, or do I insist on writing my own name? Alternately, I know I have been deceived by riches if I have failed to grow in generosity. A fruitful life in Christ will be marked by a desire to participate in the work of the Lord, giving back what he has given to support His work. As Paul encouraged the generous Philippians, *“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.”* (Phil. 4:17) Do I desire the fruitful life of faith-filled generosity, or am I hoarding what rightfully does not belong to me in the first place?
- (5) **\*\* Do I manage well what I have been given?** Regarding budgeting, I have been in both the position of feeling “Why bother? There isn’t enough anyway” and “There’s plenty, so; I don’t need to do this.” Both sentiments reveal a deceived heart with regards to the importance of my role as a steward. We are called to be good managers, regardless of the amount God blesses us with. I find it remarkable that when Jesus fed the crowd of five thousand in the Gospel of Mark, he first asked the disciples to go and count what they had (Mk. 6:38). They may have wondered, “Why bother? We don’t have enough to feed this crowd,” but that would have underestimated what Jesus could do with a small amount. Every dollar is important, and we are called to take good care of all that the Lord has entrusted to us.
- D. The deceitfulness of riches can easily take root in my heart and choke out the fruit that comes from hearing and obeying the Word of God.
- (1) I need to be on guard, and ask myself these questions and give myself honest answers.
- (2) My answers are a helpful gauge of whose voice I’m listening to: the lies of the devil or the “words of eternal life” (Jn. 6:68).

### **Another roadblock to heaven is...**

#### **5. 10 Earthly ties:**

- A. Many act as if making the decision to become a Christian is just a “snap your fingers, I’m going to do this thing” sort of decision (like joining the Lions or Rotary).
- (1) That’s certainly not what Jesus tells us; He tells us to *“count the cost”* (Lk. 14:25-33; v. 28).
- (2) His point is that to be a Christian, we must give up a lot of things; even the things dearest to us!



- (3) Discipleship teaching demands, *“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple...likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”* (Lk. 14:26, 33).
- B. Sherry and I don’t have a lot of close family; so, in some respects, this aspect of discipleship has not been a major challenge (i.e., not having relatives opposing our walk with Christ). But, it’s also been hard not having the encouragement of relatives who are faithful Christians.
- (1) However, when I first became a Christian my mother and father did oppose me (explain).
- (2) Thanks be to God that I married well! Sherry has been a great help to me as a Christian and a gospel preacher and for that I am very grateful.
- (3) But, I know with others that is not so; especially when your spouse does not actively support you being a Christian (1 Pet. 3:1ff).
- (4) We all face challenges because it’s hard to put something ahead of family, our closest earthly ties (blood is thicker than water).
- C. However, Jesus unequivocally calls on us to put Him first; nothing (not wife, husband, father, mother, or children) come in even a close second!
- (1) If we’re not careful we can allow our earthly ties to become a roadblock to heaven!
- (2) We must love the Lord more than these (**Matt. 10:37-39**: *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”*).

### **Another roadblock to heaven is...**

#### **6. || Unfaithfulness:**

- A. Who will hear the Lord say, *“Well done...enter thou into the joy of thy lord”*?
- B. The *“...good and faithful servant...”* (Matt. 25:21, 23).
- C. Heaven’s gates are open only to the faithful!
- (1) We are spiritual stewards and *“...it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful”* (1 Cor. 4:2)(explain giving example of a faithful employee).
- (2) The Lord promised, *“...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life”* (Rev. 2:10)(explain that this has at least two aspects).
- D. Did you notice who will be rewarded with a crown of life? Those faithful unto death!
- (1) The Lord expects sinless perfection, but does not demand it (explain): **1 Jn. 2:1**: *“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*
- (2) If we *“walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”* (1 Jn. 1:7)
- (a) Doesn’t mean no sin; but our main direction in life is to *“walk in the light.”* (1 Jn. 1:7)
- (b) Occasionally we stumble, but when we do we *“confess our sins”* (1 Jn. 1:9) and *“repent therefore of [our] wickedness”* (Acts 8:22) and resume our *“walk in the light”* (1 Jn. 1:7).
- (c) When we do that, *“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 Jn. 1:9)

E. Don't let unfaithfulness be a roadblock to your pursuit of heaven!

**Another roadblock to heaven is...**

**7. 12** Being unready:

A. Matthew 25:1-12 records the story of 10 virgins: 5 wise and 5 foolish (read).

- (1) The difference? Ready versus unready! Preparation versus lack thereof! **“Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.”**
- (2) When the foolish virgins went to buy oil for their lamps, “...the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut” (v. 10).
- (3) In verses 8-10 Jesus says, “And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’”
  - (a) Preparation is something that cannot be borrowed!
  - (b) If you and I will be prepared for judgment it is something we will have to do for ourselves. You will have to get yourself ready, and I will have to get myself ready. Nobody else can do it for you, nobody can do it for me!

B. In verses 11 and 12 Jesus tells us the unprepared virgins came and said, “Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’”

- (1) Can you imagine the disappointment they must have felt?
- (2) The application: “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming.” (v. 13).
- (3) I’ve warned the audience many times when preaching about this profound fact.
- (4) I can also tell you (sadly), that for the most part, I think some (too many) take that warning “with a grain of salt” (even those who’ve been a Christian for decades!).

C. If we are unready as an unfaithful Christian we must obey God’s “second law of pardon” (previous point) and return to faithfulness.

D. If we are unready as an alien sinner we need to prepare by:

- ☛ Hear: Matt. 17:5; Rom. 10:17,
- ☛ Believe: Jn. 8:24; Heb. 11:6,
- ☛ Repent: Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30,
- ☛ Confess: Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37,
- ☛ Baptism: Acts 2:38; 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27,
- ☛ Remain faithful: Rev. 2:10; Col. 1:21-22; 1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:22.

**III. CONCLUSION: 12**

1. Is there a roadblock in your path to heaven? 2 Cor. 13:5
2. If so, you need to remove it!
3. And, you need to do it now! (**2 Cor. 6:2**: “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”).

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