

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Way to Heaven

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

Code: 90-87

As we look together to the Word of God in this very special session together in the gospel of Matthew, our attention falls on two very important verses that are the high point of the great Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount is recorded in chapter 5, 6 and 7 and the high point comes in chapter 7 verses 13 and 14. And these are the words with which our Lord brings that sermon to its climax. "Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it, for the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it."

It has been said that all life concentrates on man at a crossroads. In every action of life we are confronted with choice. We can never stand still. We are constantly choosing one path or another. All of life is made up of choices from the time we arise in the morning and decide to get out of bed and what to wear and what to eat and where to go, those mundane routine things, all the way to those great spiritual decisions that effect our eternity. Life is an endless cycle of choices.

And it has always been the task and the duty and the function of God's great preachers to confront men and women with the inevitable choice that effects their eternity. Moses, for example, said to the people of his day, "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. Therefore choose life that you and your seed may live." Joshua who followed Moses made the same choice available, he said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your father served, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." The prophet Jeremiah said, 'Unto this people shalt Thou say, 'Thus saith the Lord, behold I have set before you the way of life and the way of death.'" The prophet Elijah called for the same decision when he said, "How long halt you between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him. If Baal, then follow him." Jesus again and again offered people the choice. In John chapter 6 and verse 66 it says, "As a result of this, many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus therefore said to the Twelve, 'You do not want to go away also, do you?' Simon Peter answered, 'And, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and come to know that You are the holy one of God.'" There was a crossroads in that day in John 6 after Jesus fed the multitude and the crossroad was made very clear by the teaching of Christ and there were some who took the wrong path. and there were some who took the right path.

John Oxenham(?), wrote, "To every man there opens a way and ways and a way and the high soul treads the highway and the low soul gropes the low. And in between on the misty flats the rest drift to and fro. But to every man there openeth a high way and a low and every man decides the way his soul should go."

Well it is make up your mind time on the mountain and in the text that I just read to you from Matthew chapter 7, our Lord is confronting man with a choice and He demands that the choice be made. He didn't want bouquets for the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, He wanted a decision. He wasn't offering to people a once a week experience of religion, He wanted a life of commitment. He demanded and absolute and an ultimate decision that would lead to a permanent commitment that would last for all of time and eternity.

Now this deliberate choice is the high point of the sermon. He's now into the third chapter of this sermon and only now does He draw the crossroads clearly. He came to bring a choice. There was the religion that was existing in Judaism at that time, the religion of the scribes and the Pharisees and there was the truth and the two were not the same. There was the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of light, the Kingdom of heaven, the Kingdom of His dear Son, a Kingdom of peace, a Kingdom of joy. And there was religion which was nothing more than the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of death, the kingdom of Satan. And it was time to take your choice. Which kingdom do you choose? Which road will you walk? That's the issue.

There are many people who through the years have assumed that the Sermon on the Mount was some kind of statement about noble ethics which if a man follows will cause him to earn eternal life. Nothing could be further from the truth. The sermon was an all-out attack on salvation by religious ceremony or by religious effort or by human works. That was the religion He rejected. And He made the choice clear. You have the broad road of religion that leads to hell, you have the narrow road of the gospel that leads to heaven, take your choice.

John Stott wrote about this tremendous high point of the sermon these words, "Jesus cuts across our easy-going syncretism. He will not allow us the comfortable solutions we propose. Instead He insists that ultimately there's only one choice because there are only two possibilities to choose from."

Now keep in mind that the contrast throughout the sermon is between two kinds of religion, not religion and irreligion, but two kinds of religion...the true and the false, between true worship and hypocritical worship, between true salvation and false salvation, between God's standards and man's standards, between divine righteousness and human righteousness. It is not a contrast between religion and paganism. It is not a contrast between righteousness and utter unrighteousness. It is a contrast between two kinds of righteousness, two religions, one that dams and one that saves. Jesus was speaking to extremely religious people, to the Jews and most notably to the scribes and

Pharisees, the most religious of the Jews. It says of the Pharisees, for example, in Luke 18:9 that they trusted in themselves that they were righteous. Jesus is assaulting that self-trust, that trust in one's religious ceremonies, one's religious achievements, sacraments, duties, or supposedly righteous works and the true salvation that comes by grace through faith apart from works. You see, the issue is whether man is good enough on his own to earn salvation, or so bad he can't earn it and has to fall upon the mercy of God to save him through grace. That's the choice. And that is still the dividing line in the world today. There are only two religions in the world.

You say, "Wait a minute, there are thousands of religions." No, there are only two. There are many names, many forms, but only two. That's right, only two. There is on the hand the religion of works, the religion of the flesh that I like to call the religion of human achievement. It says that to one degree or another you earn your salvation by your good deeds, your religious activities. On the other hand, there is the religion of faith and the Spirit which is the religion of divine accomplishment which says it's all done by God and you can't do anything. And the two do not mix. You can't mix them. They are diametrically opposed. The scribes, the Pharisees and the Jews who followed the system of their day were involved in a religion of works, a religion of the flesh, the religion of human achievement and they felt that they could gain salvation and acceptance with God and heaven based on what they did. And along came Jesus and clarified the religion of faith, the religion of the spirit, the religion of divine accomplishment where salvation and acceptance with God and a right relationship with Him and a place in heaven depended on what He did and what He did alone.

And sadly, most of humanity then, most of humanity before and most of humanity since, and certainly most of humanity today is banking on the religion of human achievement, that somehow through our good works and our noble efforts and our religious activities we can reach the highest plane of potential destiny, therefore satisfy God. This religion comes in thousands of names but it's all the same and it's all satanic and it's all damning. And it is that which provides for us the contrast of the broad road and the narrow one. Apart from the Christian faith which says that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, apart from the Christian faith, all other religion is simply one religion, it is the satanic counterfeit and Satan has entitled it with many titles and altered it from place to place with many nuances. The Jews, sad to say, had rejected their great heritage of the religion of divine accomplishment and they had created the religion of human achievement on their own and our Lord had to confront it and He confronted it in this sermon. Basically He said to them, "Your prayers are useless, repetition that goes nowhere. Your prayers are hypocritical." He said to them, "Your alms are rejected by God, they mean nothing. Your self-righteousness falls short of God's standard. You are hypocrites. Everything you do is unacceptable to God. And you must turn to the truth, to the narrow way."

It starts, you'll remember how the sermon started, with a Beatitude attitude, begging in your spirit for something you know you don't have, mourning over your sin, meek and humble as you recognize your condition. Hungering and thirsting for righteousness which you know you don't have and cannot

earn. You see, the Jews thought that they were already filled with righteousness and so our Lord had to attack that system and strip them of that confidence. He's done that and now He's come to the pinnacle of the sermon and He says, "You have to make the choice."

Throughout this whole section of the Sermon on the Mount, there is a stark contrast of the crossroads. Jesus talks about two gates, the wide and the narrow; two ways, the broad and the narrow; two destinations, life and destruction; two groups of travelers, the many and the few; two trees, good and corrupt; two kinds of fruit, good and bad; two builders, wise and foolish; two foundations, rock and sand; two houses. It would be impossible to more graphically demonstrate the solemnity of the decision His hearers are to make. Jesus is preaching for a verdict.

Now as we look at this tremendous climactic point in the sermon and as we examine this crossroad, I want us to notice the four contrasts that are in these two verses...two gates, two ways, two destinations, and two crowds. First of all, two gates...we notice in verse 13 that Jesus speaks about a gate which He calls very clearly a narrow gate, and then a gate which is wide. The contrast is obvious. He's talking about the entrance into the Kingdom. The gate is where you come in. The Kingdom represents the sphere of divine blessing, the sphere of divine relationship. It isn't just heaven, it's salvation, it's glory, it's blessing, it's everything God promises to those who know Him, who walk with Him, who are forgiven of their sin, who possess eternal life. Now note this please, will you? And I've heard this text preached through the years wrongly. Both of these gates are marked heaven. The broad gate does not say hell on it. Nobody is inviting people to go to hell. No religion is doing that. The broad gate says heaven, it just doesn't get there, it's a lie, it's a satanic deception. Both roads point to heaven, they point to the Kingdom, they point to blessing. One is the road of self-righteousness and one is the road of divine righteousness. In one you earn your own salvation, in the other the righteousness of God is given to you. So the gates come first, I mean that's the entrance, isn't it?

Let's look at the narrow gate. "Enter by the narrow gate." Now this suggests several things as we think about the narrow gate, and I want to give them to you. As you think about it a narrow gate, in your mind think about a turnstile. In fact, have you ever walked through one of those turnstiles entering or exiting an outdoor park where it's a series of bars intersecting with another series of bars? It's impossible to get through yourself without getting a little confused, let alone to carry anything with you. That's the kind of gate we're talking about, a very narrow, a very tight gate. That tells us much.

First of all, the indication here is that you must enter because verse 13 begins with a command, "Enter by the narrow gate." This is a command. It calls for immediate action, this is an aorist imperative. And remember this, the gospel is a command. Very often when we talk about communicating the gospel we like to use the word "share." God never shares the gospel. Jesus

never shared the gospel. The apostles never shared the gospel. They always commanded it. It is a command. It is an absolute command without equivocation. And disobedience is damning. It isn't not enough to listen to the preaching about this gate, it's not enough to study the structure of the gate, to measure its size, to admire its wisdom. You must enter it. Believe me, hell will be full of people who admired the Sermon on the Mount. Hell will be full of people who thought there were some noble ethics taught here about going the second mile and giving up your cloak and all of those things that are a part of this sermon. But a gate serves only one purpose and that is to let you in. You must enter...you must. And if you refuse to, you pay eternally by being forever barred from the Kingdom of God. It reminds me of those virgins in Matthew 25 who didn't get the oil in their lamps and the door was shut. You must enter, you must enter. You must enter this gate. You can't pick your gate, it's a very definitive gate. There is a way, the Old Testament says, which seems right to a man but the ends thereof are the ways of death. You can't come along like so many do and say, "Well, it really doesn't matter what gate you go through, they all get to the end sooner or later." There is in the land of Israel and I've seen it on a number of occasions the temple to the Bahai faith and it has nine doors to heaven, nine doors to salvation, nine doors to God and there is the temple there with those nine doors symbolically built and over the top are the names of the nine great world religions that all lead to the same place. Not true, an absolute devilish lie. Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, Acts 4:12 says. "In the name of Jesus Christ, I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father but by Me," Jesus said. Christ and Christ alone is the gate. It is narrow, there is no question. There's only one way and that is through Christ. All other ways are false. You come by faith in Him and faith alone.

You say, "Well it is very narrow." Well God has a right to make it any way He wants and He's chosen to make it narrow. He has determined the basis of salvation and the basis of salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone and that is the way and there is no other way. You must enter. It is a command. You must enter this gate, there is no other way to heaven. I am asked repeatedly and it's amazing how frequently, "Isn't it true that if someone doesn't know about Christ they can still get to heaven?" Answer, no...it is not true. There is only one door. Jesus said, "I am the door." The only way, there is no other way. And God will and God must reveal to any genuinely seeking heart whom the Spirit has prompted the truth about Christ because apart from Christ there is no way in. You must enter. You must enter this narrow gate. Salvation is only through Jesus Christ and Him alone. And then you must enter by yourself, you leave the crowd behind.

This turnstile only takes one at a time. It is exclusive from the start. It is intensely personal. You can't be born into it. You can't join the church and sort of be swept in with the crowd. It is intensely personal, it is intensely individual, it is you and you alone. All our life prior to coming through that gate we ran with the crowd but when we came through the gate we came alone. Many others have come but they came alone. Salvation is an individual miracle. You don't go through a turnstile in groups, you go through by yourself. You have to come to the place where you're willing to take up

your cross, say goodbye to the crowd, turn your back on mother and father, sister and brother and come through the gate. You see, the scribes and the Pharisees believed that they were in as a group because they were born of Abraham, because they were all circumcised, because they all had a racial heritage and a ceremonial heritage they were all in. Not so. Salvation is one by one, not in a group.

You must enter, you're commanded with the severest of eternal consequence if you reject, the command you must enter through this gate and this gate is the only gate, you must come alone, having dealt with your own sin and coming to Christ apart from the crowd. And fourthly, you must come with difficulty. You say, "What do you mean? I thought it was easy to be a Christian." It's not easy. It is not easy. Notice again verse 13, it says the gate is wide, the way is broad that leads to destruction and many are those who enter by it. But verse 14, "The gate is small, the way is narrow that leads to life and few are those who find it. Key word, "find." The implication is it's not just readily available. There is a looking and a searching. It has to be found and that comes when the Spirit of God begins to work on an otherwise utterly indifferent heart to bring the person to the place where they seek. Listen to Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter by the narrow door for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able." What a statement! They will seek to enter and they will not be able to enter. That is a frightening statement. It's not easy, it is difficult. Many seek it, it is difficult. Many seek it, they want it, they don't get through it.

In Acts 14:22, it says, "Through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God." It is not easy, it is difficult. You have to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ. Frankly, I'm convinced that most people think that heaven can be obtained on very easy terms, you pray a prayer, you raise your hand, you sign on the dotted line. It's not so. The Luke passage which I read a moment ago indicates that the carelessness and the shoddiness and the flippancy of so many professors of Christ is unacceptable. Strive to enter in because many will try and not be able. Strive is *agonizomai* and it's used of an athlete striving with every fiber in his being to win. It's used in Colossians 4:12 of laboring fervently and it's used in 1 Timothy 6:12 of fighting. Believe me, it is a battle. Christianity does not come by sticking your hand in the air, signing a card, walking an aisle, praying a prayer. Matthew 11:12 says, "The Kingdom of heaven suffers violence and the violent take it by force." And Luke 16:16 says, "Every man presses into it." Listen, becoming a Christian is a tremendous battle and that's why the Kingdom entry is only for those who seek the Lord with all their heart, who come with passion.

"You don't sleep your way into the Kingdom," William Hendrickson wrote, "on the contrary, entrance into the Kingdom," he says, "requires earnest endeavor, untiring energy, utmost exertion. And this is true because Satan is mighty, has a large army of helpers, the demons. Has learned to use crafty methods and receives aid and support from his fifth column established in man's very heart. Therefore, it takes vigorous, men who are eager to fight and to conquer, to overcome Satan and thus

to take possession of the Kingdom of all the blessings of salvation. The Kingdom..." he writes "...is not for weaklings, waverers, or compromisers, it is not for Balaam or the rich young ruler or Pilate, or Demas, it is not won by means of deferred prayers, unfulfilled promises, broken resolutions, and hesitant testimonies. It is for strong and sturdy men like Joseph and Nathan and Elijah and Daniel and Mordecai and Peter and Stephen and Paul and Deborah and Esther and Lydia among the women."

The conflict is often fierce and it comes down to a willingness to deny myself and give up my life, to count the cost and be willing to pay the price to battle against my own pride, self-will, the battle against Satan and demons. And so, you must enter, you must enter this narrow gate. You must enter alone and you must enter with difficulty. Furthermore, you must enter naked. You can't go through a turnstile with your baggage. It's the gate of self-denial, friends. You have to strip your sin, your self, your self-righteousness. You go through with nothing, "Nothing in my hand I bring...the writer said...simply to the cross I cling." You come through with nothing. The rich young ruler wasn't willing. He wanted to hold on to his self-righteousness in Matthew 19, would not acknowledge his sin. He wanted to hold on to all of his riches and wouldn't give it up. He wanted to run his own life and he never came through the gate. You must come through with that Beatitude spirit, a beggar stripped and naked with nothing, mourning over your sinful condition, meek and humble and hungering for what you don't have. You jettison all your self-righteousness, all your confidence, you receive the truth as a little child who has nothing to commend himself. You bow to the sentence of condemnation and you set your heart against sin. As Luke 14:28 says, "You count the cost."

All through this sermon, Jesus set the standard, the high and hard standard. And it's still there. If you can bring anything in of your self-righteousness, you can't get through. You have to be like the Publican in Luke 18, beating on his breast and saying, "Lord be merciful to me, a sinner." Not like the Pharisee who paraded before God all his self-righteousness. Jesus said it was the Publican who went home justified. This is the death of cheap grace. This is the end of easy salvation. It's not just come to Jesus. It is narrow, difficult, it involves a radical break and admission that you have nothing.

And so you must enter, you must enter this narrow gate, you must enter it alone with difficulty, naked and repentant. That's the sixth element in this point, you must enter repentant. From the start, Jesus preached repent, repent, repent. Only a recognition of your sin will cause you to strip yourself naked. Spurgeon said, "You and your sins must separate or you and your God will never come together. No one sin may you keep. They must all be given up, they must be brought out like the Canaanitish kings from the cave and be hanged up in the sun. You must forsake them all, abhor them and ask the Lord to overcome them," end quote. We turn from sin to serve the living God. Repentance, turning from sin.

And finally, the narrow gate demands that we enter this gate alone with difficulty, naked, repentant and in full submission to Christ...in full submission to Him. We're coming through realizing we are abandoning everything for Christ. From then on it is for us to live as Christ. He is our all and all. And that's what Paul was saying in Philippians 3, wasn't he? He counted everything in his life dung compared to Christ. Christ became his everything.

Sadly, salvation is marketed today as if it was cheap and easy. It is not. It is a narrow gate. Look then at the wide gate. By contrast this gate can be entered rather easily. No difficulty. The whole crowd can come in and you can bring any baggage you want. It's a very wide gate. Bring in all your baggage, no repentance required, no submission to Jesus Christ, come in with the big crowd. The gate of self-indulgence, you can bring your pride, your self-righteousness, you can bring the sins of all sorts in your life. There's a large crowd coming through, by the way. These religious systems have lots of people. Every time somebody tells me they went to a meeting and somebody talked about salvation and a mass of people came forward, I wonder...I wonder if that isn't in great measure the broad gate they came through. A west Indian who had chosen Islam over Christianity said his reason was that Islam, quote

:: "Is a noble broad path, there is room for a man and his sins on it. The way of Christ is too narrow," end quote. Well he got it right. It's a wide gate. You can have your religion and your sin. You can go to the religious activity to the church or to whatever meeting you go to, you can go through all of the ceremony and then you can go out and live any way you like.

Secondly, there are not only two gates, but two ways. This concept is first introduced in the Scripture in Psalm 1 and here we have it again. Once you're through the gate, it says the way is broad in verse 13. And then in verse 14, "The way is narrow." First there is a broad way, a wide gate and a wide way, plenty of room, no restrictions, room for diverse theologies, room for all kinds of viewpoints, tolerance of sin and iniquity and immorality, no curbs, no fences, no boundaries, all the desires of fallen hearts can be fulfilled, you just come on, you get into the religious activity and you can just basically live any way you want to live. That's the damnable lie of the religion of human achievement. No need for a Beatitude attitude. No need for deep seeded internal moral standards and convictions. No need to believe the Word of God. It's all mechanical, it's all external, it's all hypocritical. No restrictions, you can fulfill your flesh, it takes no character. You can exercise self-gratification, self-will and self-righteousness, you can walk by lust and pride and covetousness. And as long as you check off a few of the religious boxes and check in on the ceremonies occasionally and do your little duties, once in a while do good to somebody, you're all right. That's the broad way. It's a wide, wide road. But Psalm one six says, "The way of the ungodly shall perish."

On the other hand, when you come to the narrow gate, in verse 14, the way is also narrow. It literally means pressed together, constricted or confining. You see, that's why you have to count the cost

because once you've gone through the gate, the way is as narrow as the gate is. It depicts a difficult pass between two cliffs hemmed in on both sides, the requirements are stringent. That's why Jesus said, "When you go into the world and make disciples, teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It's a hard way, it's a narrow way. Becoming a Christian demands that you understand the cost.

In Luke chapter 14 and verse 25, Jesus starts to teach and He says, "If any man comes to Me and doesn't hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brother and sisters, yes and even his own life, he can't be My disciple. Whoever doesn't carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you when he wants to build a tower doesn't first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him saying, 'This man began to build and wasn't able to finish.' Or what king when he sets out to meet another king in battle will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks the terms of peace. So therefore, no one of you can become My disciple who doesn't give up all his possessions." Boy, pretty strong words, you better count the cost.

You have to consider the potential loss of family. You have to realize that you're going to be called to live a narrow way and when you deviate from that narrow way and sin, the chastening of the Lord will come against you. You do have to realize that because they persecuted your master, they're going to persecute you. So it's the way of righteousness, it's the way of holiness, it's the way of chastening, and it's the way of persecution. It's the way of self-denial. It's no luxurious meadow, it's a hard way. You are declaring war on all the forces of hell and they're declaring war on you. God expects you to live according to the standard that He has set and if you say you abide in Christ, He expects you to walk the way Christ walked. You need to know that before you make your choice. Jesus didn't say, "Love Me." He didn't say, "Admire Me." He said, "Follow Me."

Two gates and two ways, two destinations...one leads to destruction, verse 13, the other leads to eternal life. There's the way of death and there's the way of life. Destruction...boy, what a sad and tragic word. You know what's so sad about this? He's not talking about irreligious people. He's not talking about them. He's talking about religious people. He's talking about people who stream in and out churches on Sunday. He's talking about Jewish people who stream in and out of synagogues on Saturday. He's talking about Buddhists who stream in and out of their temples on their days of celebration and worship. He's talking about Muslims who go in and out of their mosques. He's talking about Christian Scientists and Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholics who go in and out of their facilities and do their religious duties. The end of it is all destruction. It's a crowded road and there's a lot of people on it who are tripping along the way thinking heaven is at the end only to find out some day that hell is at the end. It said heaven on the gate, it just doesn't go

there. The religions of human achievement whether you're talking about Islam or Judaism, the religion of human achievement whether you're talking about Mormonism or Catholicism all end up in hell. And the entrance to hell, as John Bunyan said, is from the portals of heaven. That's why Jeremiah said, "I've set before you the way of life and the way of death, you better choose life." This destruction, by the way, is talking about everlasting judgment...eternal judgment...hell. And hell will be occupied mostly by very religious people.

But then there is the destination of the narrow way which is life. What is that? That's eternal life. And eternal life is not a duration, it's a kind of life, it's a quality of life, it's the life of God in the soul of man. It's a glorious state of unclouded fellowship with God, eternal satisfaction and unspeakable joy. The choice is yours. Do you want destruction, hell, weeping, wailing gnashing of teeth, cursing? Do you want eternal torment where the worm never dies and the fire is never quenched? Do you want blackness forever? Do you want isolation and loneliness and an accusing conscience that never stops its relentless pounding throughout all eternity? Or do you want heaven? Do you want bliss, joy, peace, comfort, happiness? It's your choice.

Lastly, there are two crowds...two crowds. "Many enter the broad way and few enter the narrow way." That's pretty clear. Most people end up in destruction. That's how it is. Most people at the crossroads make the wrong choice. Why? "The God of this world has blinded their minds, they love their sin and false teachers are selling tickets to the broad road. There will be an innumerable number who will be redeemed out of the Great Tribulation. There will be millions redeemed out of human history. But when all is said and done, they will still be the few who stood at the crossroads. I think that number may well be enhanced by the grace of God as He saves babies who die before they reach the age of accountability and gathers them to Himself, as I think Scripture indicates that He does. That will swell the ultimate number of those who are redeemed. But children never come to the crossroads. Those who die before the age of accountability don't come to the crossroads. Of those who come to the crossroads, most go the wrong way. We look and wonder some times why it is that there are so few who are true to the word of God, so few who are true to the gospel, so few who are true to the faith even within the scope of Christianity, to say nothing of Islam or Hinduism. The wide gate, many go in there.

And of those many, Jesus speaks in verse 21. "Not everyone who says to Me Lord, Lord will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord.'" Here's the same many, and they're very religious. And when they come to judgment they're going to say, "Lord, remember us? We're the religious ones." And He'll say, "I never knew you, depart from Me, you workers of iniquity." They think they're okay, but they're not. I can't imagine anything more horrible than to think you should be in heaven when you end up in hell.

And there are the few who come through the narrow gate. The redeemed have been a remnant always, the minority. The masses of the world have rejected. The crossroads is there for every man and every woman. The choice is yours and you pay the consequence when you reject the gospel. Don't you for a minute be fooled into believing that millions of people in the great masses of the world are flooding into the narrow gate. It's not so. Luke 12:32, Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock," He used the term *micron*, very small...very small. Few are willing to come on Christ's terms. If you preach a cheap gospel, you'll get a bigger crowd, but it's not the narrow gate.

And so, we give you the choice because the Word gives you the choice because God gives you the choice. Choose you this day, which way will you go? Maybe you think you've already made the choice. Second Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine your hearts." Very important, examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Make sure you really came through the narrow gate. It's so easy to choose the broad road, the way of the crowd, the way of self, the way of sin. But beware, beware, the end is destruction. Your self-righteousness, your religion, your ceremonies, your good deeds will lead you to hell.

That's where Paul was going and he was banking that he wasn't. He was a Jew circumcised of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, faithful to the tradition, zealous for the law to the degree that he was a Pharisee, blameless. And it was all damning. And when he saw Christ, he realized it and left the broad road for the narrow way. You cannot escape the choice, it's there. And you cannot, believe me, escape the consequences. False teachers stand in the entrance to the broad road saying, "Come, come, come, come." And many go that way.

But Revelation 22:17 says, "Before the entrance to the narrow gate, the Spirit and the Bride stand." The Spirit is the Holy Spirit, the Bride is the church, the true church. "And they say, Come. The Spirit and the bride say come. Who will you listen to? The siren calls of the false teachers or the Spirit and the church? Choose life while you can choose. Jesus said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest." Rest from what? The struggle with your sin, rest from the struggle to achieve what you can't achieve...favor with God. Rest from the struggle to understand the truth, rest. And not only rest in time but throughout eternity. The way is narrow but it's just wide enough to take the chief of sinners. Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for the clarity of this invitation, for the words of our Lord Jesus who drew the lines so very clearly. Man is at the crossroads, every man and every woman. It's not a matter of choosing among many options with the same results, it's a matter of choosing life or death, heaven or hell. And the narrow gate and the narrow way leads to life. And the broad gate and the broad way lead to destruction. O, Lord, may every heart understand that and choose life. May they come and enter the right gate alone in Your strength overcoming the difficulty, repentant and obedient to walk the narrow way with joy in the hope of eternal life which You give to all who put their trust in You. And, God, save souls from the deception of those demons and men alike who would tell them the

broad road leads to heaven, when it doesn't. Lord, we pray that You will in Your mercy turn many from the broad road to the narrow way, to life, abundant and eternal in Jesus Christ, for we pray in His name and for His honor. Amen.

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