

INTRODUCTION

1. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 7.
2. This morning we are going to look at two verses in Matthew's gospel – verses 13-14.
3. Today we are going to see two ways in which the gospel is presented.
4. But only one will lead to heaven and the other to hell.
5. Just to give you a context I would like to read verses 13-29.
6. “This closing section of the Sermon on the Mount is a gospel application. Here are two gates, two ways, two destinations, and two groups of people (vv. 13, 14); two kinds of trees and two kinds of fruit (vv. 17–20); two groups at the judgment (vv. 21–23); and two kinds of builders, building on two kinds of foundations (vv. 24–28). Christ is drawing the line as clearly as possible between the way that leads to destruction and the way which leads to life” (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible: Matthew 7:13*).
7. So as Lenski says, “Let us judge ourselves according to the gate and the way we enter it” (*The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel: Matthew 7:13-14*).
8. Which gate did you enter? The wide or the narrow?

9. There are only two.
10. One leads to destruction and the other to life.
11. Let's examine these two ways more closely.
12. Notice again in verse 13, Jesus says *there are two gates*.

I. There Are Two Gates (v.13)

“There are two roads marked to heaven. One is the narrow road of divine righteousness; the other is the broad road of human righteousness” (John MacArthur, *The Way to Heaven*, p.11).

A. The Narrow Gate (v.13)

1. You must enter

“Enter” Gr.eiserchomai (verb), “to move into, to come into, to go into, to enter.”

The aorist imperative is used to express the urgency of entering the narrow gate.

- a) The gospel is a call to “enter” the right gate
- b) The Scripture has always called sinners to choose life
 - (1) Deut.30:19 - I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may life.
 - (2) Jos.24:15 - And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the

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gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

- (3) Jer.21:8 - Now you shall say to this people, “Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I set before you the way of life and the way of death.’”
 - (4) 1 Kings 18:21 - And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.
- c) The Scripture has always charged man responsible for his rejection of Christ

John MacArthur says, “Choosing life or death was also emphasized by Jesus. The one who believed in Him had the promise of eternal life; while the one who refused to believe faced eternal death (cf. John 3:1-36). Every person faces this same choice” (The MacArthur Study Bible).

- (1) John 5:39-40 - “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life;

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and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

- (2) John 1:11-12 - He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

2. You must enter the narrow gate

“The narrow gate”

- a) This is a command from Jesus

“He is demanding action right away. This is the time to enter; that is what God is calling for. You must do it. It is not an option; it is a command” (Ibid., MacArthur).

“The gate is narrow it doesn’t leave room for any other view of Salvation!”

“Christ is the only way to salvation. The way is narrow. There are no alternatives. You must enter by an act of the will and an act of faith; you have to enter on God’s terms through God’s prescribed gate” (Ibid., MacArthur, p.14).

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- (1) Peter said in Acts 4:12 - Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.
 - (2) Jesus said in John 6:35 - "I am the bread of life."
 - (3) He said in John 14:6 - "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
 - (4) He said in John 10:7, "I am the door of the sheep" and in verse 1, "he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."
- b) Jesus is challenging the Jews
- (1) Because many of them saw themselves as righteous
 - (a) In Luke 18:9 it states that the Pharisees "trusted in themselves that they were righteous."
 - (b) But Jesus said "inside...(they) are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Mat.23:28).

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(c) Jesus says to the self-righteous:
“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick...for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mat.9:12-13).

(2) Jesus’ teaching here in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat.5-7) is to challenge the self-righteousness of the Jews

“You cannot enter the kingdom unless you come on the terms He described. You must abandon your self-righteousness. You must see yourself as a beggar in spirit (Mat.5:3), mourning over sin (v.4), meek before a holy God (v.5), and hungering and thirsting for righteousness (v.6). You must enter on His terms. Hell will be full of people who admired the Sermon on the Mount. You must enter the gate” (Ibid., MacArthur, p.13).

3. You must enter the narrow gate alone

a) This is implied in the text

(1) The word “narrow” gives the idea that the gate is very narrow.

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- (2) Some Bible commentators compare it to a turnstile – you can only enter it alone

- (3) In Acts 16:31-32 some believe Paul is teaching here “household salvation” but a clear examination of the passage reveals otherwise:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.”

- b) This implies great difficulty

“Salvation is by grace alone, but it is not easy”
(The MacArthur Study Bible).

Verse 14 says, “difficult is the way which leads to life and few there be who find it.”

- (1) Jesus says it is a *difficult* way

“Difficult” Gr.thlibo, “to press (as grapes), press hard upon” (Strong’s), “To press against” (Louw-Nida), “to experience trouble or difficulty” (USB Lexicon).

There is nothing easy about coming to Christ and entering the narrow gate. Listen

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to what the Scripture says and ask yourself
“Is this easy?”

- (a) Mat.10:38 - And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.
 - (b) Mat.16:24-25 - Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”
 - (c) Acts 14:21-22 - And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”
- (2) Jesus says you have to search for it
- “Few who find it” (v.14)
- (a) Luke records in Luke 13:22-24: And

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He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to Him, “Lord, are there few who are saved?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.

“Strive” Gr.agonizomai, “to agonize”

This is echoing the Old Testament!

- (b) Jer.29:13 - And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.
 - (c) Deut.4:29 - But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.
 - (d) Isa.55:6 - Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.
4. You must enter the narrow gate unencumbered
- a) You cannot enter the narrow gate with a lot of baggage – you come alone stripped of

everything

- b) The narrow gate is the gate of self-denial (Mat.19:16-22 - the rich-young ruler)

“You need to strip off self-righteousness and sin, or you can’t go through” (Ibid., MacArthur, p.18).

5. You must enter the narrow gate repentantly

- a) You can’t go through the narrow gate unless your heart is repentant over sin

Mat.3:7-8 - But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.

“Repentance” Gr.metanoia, “is the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds” (Joseph Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the NT, p.406).

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Metanoia demands radical conversion, a transformation of nature, a definitive turning from evil, a resolute turning to God in total obedience.

J.C. Ryal says, “A holy man will endeavor to shun every known sin and to keep every known commandment.”

- b) You must turn from sin to serve the living God

1 Thess.1:9 - For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

Charles Spurgeon said, “You and your sins must separate or you and your God will never come together. No one sin you may keep; they must all be given up. They must be brought out like the Canaanish kings from the cave and be hanged up in the sun.”

6. You must enter the narrow gate in utter surrender

- a) You have to come through the narrow gate in total abandonment to Christ

John 8:31 - Then Jesus said to those Jews who

believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are my disciples indeed.”

“Salvation is not an addition to your life; it is a transformation of your life” (Ibid., MacArthur).

- b) You cannot follow Christ in your self-righteousness. You must abandon it to follow Christ - Lk.18:9-14

B. The Wide Gate (v.13)

1. It is broad (v.13)

“Broad” Gr.euruchoros, “spacious, spread out, wide or roomy.”

Vincent quotes the Pinax or Tablet of Cebes, a contemporary of Socrates: "Seest thou not, then, a little door, and a way before the door, which is not much crowded, but very few travel it? This is the way that leadeth unto true culture." "The broad way" (euruchôros) is in every city, town, village, with the glaring white lights that lure to destruction.

- a) Everyone can enter this gate together – you don’t have to enter it alone
- b) There is nothing individualistic about it

- c) There is no self-denial expected
- d) You can bring all the baggage you want: your immorality, lack of repentance, and lack of commitment to Christ
- e) This is the gate of self-indulgence that welcome's all kinds of sins

2. It is deceptive

- a) Since it is mentioned with the narrow way it is presented as the way to heaven but it is the wrong way

Prov.14:12 - There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

- b) It is the way that “leads to destruction”

II. There Are Two Ways

A. The Broad Way

- 1. It is a way with no boundaries
- 2. It is called “the course of this world” (Eph.2:2)
- 3. It's leader is Satan, “the ruler of this world” (Jn.14:30)

B. The Narrow Way

1. It is a difficult or constricted way

“You must walk with your eyes open; the path is narrow, and it is hemmed in on both sides by the chastening hand of God. If you step off either side of the path, you will get rapped on your spiritual knuckles! The requirement is great, strict, and clear-cut; there is no room for deviation. You must desire in your heart to fulfill those requirements, knowing that if you fail, God will chasten you, lovingly forgive you, and set you on your feet again” (Ibid., MacArthur, p.21).

2. It requires you to count the cost before entering it

- a) You must be willing to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Christ (Mat.16:24)
- b) You must be willing to exchange your life for His (Mat.16:26)
- c) You must be willing to turn from your sin (Acts 2:38)
- d) You must be willing to “hate...father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and (your) own life also” (Lk.14:26).

CONCLUSION

1. Which gate did you enter? The narrow or the broad?
2. If you say the narrow, did you count the cost?
3. Have you been stripped of your self-righteousness?
4. If not, you entered the wrong gate.
5. And I call you to repent and surrender your life to Jesus Christ who paid your fine and took your sentence of death on Himself.
6. Because you have broken God's Law, you are subject to the punishment that God has decreed: The second death which is hell.
7. When you surrender your life to Jesus Christ believing and trusting in His atonement for your sin, God's righteousness is applied to you and your fine paid.
8. Turn to Him now as we pray.