

Enter Through the Narrow Gate

by Stephen Kaung

To live the Christian way of life, we must enter through the narrow gate, which is the Lord Himself, and forsake all inwardly.

Duration: 59:26

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 5:1-2, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 7:21

Topics: "Narrow Gate"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that Jesus, despite being rejected by the world, remained faithful to God until his death on the cross. The preacher then shares a personal experience of being reminded by the Lord to meditate on the concept of entering through the narrow gate. He encourages the audience to understand the meaning of the narrow gate and the wide gate mentioned in Matthew 7:13-14. The sermon concludes with a prayer for the Holy Spirit to open hearts and transform lives through the Word of God.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Matthew. Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 7, verses 13 and 14. Matthew 7, 13, 14.

Enter ye in through the narrow gate, for wide a gate, and broad a way that leads to destruction, and many are they who enter in through it. For narrow the gate, and straighten the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we want to thank Thee for Thy precious Word. Teach us how to honor Thy Word, and even to tremble before Thy Word, because Thy Word is light, Thy Word is life, Thy Word is truth. So Lord, we do come to Thy Word, and ask Thy Holy Spirit to open Thy Word to us, and also to open our hearts, our understanding to Thy Word, that Thy Word may fall into good ground, and bear fruit unto Thyself a hundredfold.

We commit ourselves, we commit this time, and especially commit Thy Word into Thy loving hand. Give it to us, that we may be filled. We ask in Thy precious name.

Amen. Last lost day, our dear brother mentioned that we are expecting a prophetic word this Sunday. Now, it all depends what do you mean by prophetic words.

On Wednesday night, our brother explained it to those who were there, but unfortunately, most of you were not there. Now, sometimes we think of prophetic words in terms of foretelling the future. Now, if that's the case, I do not pretend that I have any.

But, if by prophetic words, you mean foretelling the mind of God, the will of God, then dear brothers and sisters, every ministry should be in that category. Why do we gather to hear the Word of God? Unless we want to know His mind, His will. So, this is something that we all look to the Lord for.

Some time ago, as I was waiting before the Lord, these words in Matthew 7, 13 and 14 came to me. I do confess that in the past, I had never meditated on these words. I just took them for granted.

But, this time, when the Lord reminded me of these words, I began to meditate on them. And, as I meditated on them, the Lord spoke to me. So, this morning, I would like to share what the Lord has spoken to me, because I believe that we all need to hear it.

The Lord said, enter ye through the narrow gate, for wide the gate, and broad the way that leads to destruction. And many are they who enter in through it. For narrow the gate and straighten the way that leads to life.

And there are few who find it. Now, when we hear these words, what is your impression? What is your reaction? What do we mean by entering through the narrow gate? What is the narrow gate? And why is it the Lord said, there is another way, another gate, a wide gate, and a broad way, and many entering through it. But, this narrow gate leads to a straightened way, and few even find it.

However, the wide gate and the broad way leads to destruction, while the narrow gate and the straight way leads to life. Now, what do we mean by destruction? Does it mean eternal destruction? What do we mean by life? I think these are the questions that we should really ask before the Lord. Now, we must remember that these are the words of our Lord Himself.

He is the Word of God, the expression of God. These are the concluding words of our Lord Jesus to the so-called Sermon on the Mount. So, unless we understand the context, probably, ordinarily, we will apply it to something else, instead of applying it to what the Lord is trying to say to us.

One day, the crowds came to our Lord, but our Lord climbed the mountain, and after He went to the mountain, He sat down, and His disciples came to Him. Then, He opened His mouth and spoke to His disciples. So, remember, the Sermon on the Mount is not spoken to the crowds.

The crowds may overhear it, but they are not the people that our Lord directs His Word. The Sermon on the Mount is a message that our Lord speaks to His disciples, people who believe in Him, who have accepted Him as their Savior, and not only that, people who followed Him, want to learn from Him, and the Lord opened His mouth and speak to them. Our Lord Jesus is not giving us a new law to keep.

Moses was used by God to give the children of Israel the law, which is meant to be kept. If they keep it, they will have life. If they break it, they will die.

Now, our Lord Jesus here is not giving us a new law, a higher law, a higher standard of moral, of ethics, for us to keep, because if you really mean business with what the Lord has said, you will find that it is beyond any man to keep. No one can keep such words. So, evidently, the Lord is not trying to give us a new law to keep.

What He is doing, He is trying to tell us what kind of life is His life, and He tries to tell us His way of life, and because He has given us His life, therefore, He expects us to live the same way of life on earth. That is what it is. It is the way to discipleship.

How can we truly follow Him and learn of Him? He has already given us His life, the potentials are all there, and He fully expects us to live it out, and that is the Sermon on the Mount. And in the concluding words, He gives us an exhortation, and that is not the gate to so-called initial salvation. Now, we often apply it to that.

In a sense, that's true, because if you really want to enter into the salvation of the Lord, if you really want to have your sins forgiven, if you really want to receive a new life, what must you do? You have to repent. Our brother has mentioned that. We have to repent, and what is repentance? Turn around 180 degrees.

You cannot come to the Lord Jesus and ask to be saved by keeping back sin, some sin in your life. You have to confess your sins, all your sins. You have to be stripped off, so to call, all your sins, in order to see that all your sins have been led in the body, on the body of our Lord Jesus on the cross.

That's the way you come to salvation, and that's why we need to be baptized. There was a story. One man, he was going to be baptized, but strangely, when they baptized him, tried to immerse him under the water, he raised up his hand above the water.

Why is it? Because he has something to do. Yet, he couldn't let that thing to go under the water to death. Now, brothers and sisters, if anyone is baptized in that way, he hasn't been baptized.

You cannot keep anything, sinful things, in your life when you come to the gate of salvation. That is very true, but dear brothers and sisters, what is talking here is not the gate to salvation. It is the gate to discipleship.

How can you live the Christian way of life unless you enter this narrow gate? You know, brothers and sisters, in the early church, the name Christian was not there. The name Christian was given by the world to those believers in Antioch. You'll find that in Acts chapter 11.

Before we were called Christians, in the sight of the world, who are we? You'll find in Acts chapter 9, this archenemy of the church saw the Pharisees. He went to the priests to ask for documents that he could go to foreign cities to seize those people of the way. In other words, even before the word Christian was given, those people who believe in the Lord Jesus, who follow the Lord Jesus, they were known as the people of the way.

It's a way of life. Why? Because formerly they were Jews, and they live as Jews. There is a Jewish way of life, but now after the belief in the Lord Jesus, strangely something happened.

They no longer walk in the Jewish way of life. They began to walk in a strange way, a way that has never been seen in the world, a way that only one person has ever walked that way, and that is our Lord Jesus. And strangely these people began to walk in that way.

Then came the Gentiles. Now the Greeks, they have their way of life, their manner of life, but strangely after the belief in the Lord Jesus, this Greek way of life suddenly disappeared. Nobody told them what to do, how to live, but strangely they began to live differently.

And it happened that whether they were Jews before, or Gentiles before, after the belief in the Lord Jesus, and began to follow the Lord Jesus, they all walk in the same way of life. It is a heavenly way, different from anything earthly. It is a spiritual way, different from anything natural.

It was something that the world does not know, and yet changed strangely. Without any outside force, coercion, they all began to walk in this way, the Christian way of life. That's what the people who believe in the Lord Jesus and follow the Lord were doing.

And dear brothers and sisters, this is the way that our Lord Jesus expects every one of us, even in this 21st century, it makes no difference. He calls us to Himself, to walk in this so-called Christian way of life. Now brothers and sisters, after we believe in the Lord Jesus, have we changed our manner of life? Have we changed the way of life? Are we still walking the American way of life, just like the rest of the Americans? Are we still walking in the Chinese way of life, just like the Chinese have walked for 5,000 years? Is there any change? Is the change so drastic that it is altogether different from the world? The world has never seen it before.

Brothers and sisters, where are we? This way of life begins with our Lord Jesus. In John 1.14, the Word became flesh, and tabernacle among man, full of grace and truth. The Son of God, the Word of God, the expression of God, came into this world.

God is a mystery. He is the greatest mystery in the universe. Nobody knows Him.

His ways are higher than man's way. His thoughts are higher than man's thoughts. Nobody can predict.

Nobody really can understand, really know God. He is the greatest mystery in the universe. People may know about Him, but never know Him.

But one day, the Word became flesh. The unknown became known. For the Word to become flesh, it is not an easy way.

Philippians chapter 2 tells us, he who was equal with God, and that is not something to be grasped at, yet he emptied himself. In other words, for God to become man, he had a big price to pay. He had to empty himself.

He was so full, so perfect, so rich, so glorious, so altogether different. And yet, he emptied himself of all the glory, honor, worship that surrounds his deity. Now, he couldn't empty his deity, because that's what he is.

Even after he became man, he is still God. But he emptied everything that is related, surrounding, attached to, belong, his right, he emptied to take up the form of a born slave. That's what man was originally created for.

Man is created to be born slave to God. But how man failed. But he came, took up the form of a born slave.

No right, never asked for his right, giving up everything to his Father to become a man. The world expects for the Son of God to come into this world, to be born in Jerusalem, in the royal palace. That's what it should be, according to the world's opinion.

That's why you find the Magi, they went to Jerusalem, to the palace, to ask for the one who was, who is born, to be the king of the Jews. How mistaken they were. He was born in Bethlehem.

No place for him, not even a home in Bethlehem, not even an inn in Bethlehem. He was born in a manger, with the animals wrapped up with a cloth. That's the sign of the world becoming flesh.

That's the way he came into this world. For thirty years, he was hidden in the hilly country of Nazareth. There was a proverb at that time, nothing good came out of Nazareth, but he was there.

When he began his ministry, he went down to the river Jordan. He alone, of all man, had nothing to repent of, yet he took the place of mankind. Throughout his ministry, full of grace and truth, and yet, he was not accepted.

Nobody understood him, not even his disciples. The world rejected him. He came to save the world, but the world rejected him.

He was faithful to the Father, even unto death, and death to death. This is the new and living way that he had opened for us. This is the way that his life lived, and he expects us, who have this life, to live the same way.

Brothers and sisters, are we really living in the life of our Lord Jesus? The life that we have received freely? Can we say we do live according to that life? If we do, why are we not different from the world? Why are we still walking the American way of life? Why are we still walking the Chinese way of life? Or any other earthly way of life, manner of life? Why? Are we really following the Lord? What about our discipleship to the Lord? Have we begun? Have we started? Where are we, brothers and sisters? I begin to ask myself, where am I? We profess we are believers. We profess we have his life in us. We even consider ourselves as walking in that life, but see what manner of life we live, what way of life we live.

Does it justify us? So our Lord Jesus said, enter in through the narrow gate. You remember that story in Matthew chapter 19? A rich young ruler, very moral, very religious, very pious, he ran to the Lord, knelt before the Lord, and said, good teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life? And you know what the Lord said to him? If you want to be perfect, sell all you have, give to the poor, come and follow me. The Lord loved that young man, and that rich young ruler was grieved.

Then the Lord said, how difficult it is for the rich to enter into the kingdom. It is easier for a camel to enter into the needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom. Hear it? Now we are told, probably this needle's eye.

Now what is this needle's eye? We are told that in the old days, you know you have walls, city walls, and then there are city gates. Now when I was young, I lived in such wall city, and you have the gates there. The gates are pretty wide, but sometimes the gates, city gates, were closed or closed.

But even if they are closed, within the gates, there is a small gate that is still open, and you are still able to enter in through that small gate. And we are told that this small gate is called the needle's eye. So when the merchant came with all the merchandise on the camel, they couldn't enter into this needle's eye.

They had to strip the camel of all the loads, and then they would pull and push that camel barely to get through that narrow gate. So the lesson is, you have to strip of everything in order to get in. Now when the disciples heard that, they said, well if the rich cannot enter in, then who can enter in? Now in our idea, the

richer you are, the more chance you are to enter in the kingdom of the heavens.

So they were surprised. They were astonished. And hear what the Lord said.

The Lord said, it is impossible with man, but possible. So I think probably, this explanation of the needle's eye is not that correct. Because if a camel is stripped of everything, he still can get through.

But our Lord said, it is humanly impossible. No one can get through the needle's eye. It is impossible with man.

Who do you think you can do it? The young man, the rich young man, he thought he could do it. He couldn't. What does it mean? Who is that gate? John 10, 7. Our Lord said, I am the door of the sheep.

He is the gate. The Lord himself is the gate. And this gate is so narrow, that only one person can get through it.

It is the Lord himself. If, aside from the Lord, you want to bring something else together to get through it, you won't get through. You have to be stripped of everything, even yourself.

Oh, we say we have stripped of our sins. Thank God for that. Oh, we say we have even stripped of some of the world in us.

But what matters if we carry a little with us? You cannot go to death bringing anything with you, not even your own life. And that is just what it means. With man it is impossible.

Who is able to give up himself? You may be able to give up sins. Thank God for that. You may be able to give up the world.

I doubt. You may be able to give up some pleasures, but not all. You may be able to give up something, but to give up even your own life, your natural life, your self life, you, I, who can do it.

The Lord makes it very clear. It is impossible. But don't stop there.

There is hope. The Lord said, with God all things are possible. In other words, there is grace to enable you to do the impossible.

And that is a Christian. Brothers and sisters, how we have lowered the standard. How we consider ourselves as alright, good Christians, even to be admired by people.

But where are we? Have we entered in through the narrow gate yet? Why is it our Lord Jesus said to those who follow Him, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me. If anyone loves his father, mother, wife, children, his own life more than Me, is not worthy to be My disciple. Why is it the Lord said, you must lay down everything to follow Me.

Forsake all and follow Me. Why? Because He is worthy. He is the narrow gate.

You can only enter in by Him. You know, brothers and sisters, I have to confess. If you have ever read Watchman's Basic Lessons, I hope you do.

In the first volume, A Living Sacrifice, there is a chapter called Forsaking All. I often question. I thought forsaking all is too advanced for beginners.

It shouldn't be among the basic lessons as if it is the foundation. No, it is for those who are advanced in the Lord to forsake all. That was the way I always thought.

But this time, the Lord said to me, this is the beginning. A good beginning is half done. The reason why our walk with the Lord is not absolute is because our beginning is too loose.

You read the Gospels. Every time the Lord calls a person to follow Him, what happens? He left off and followed the Lord. No exception.

Anyone who still lingers to go back, let me bury my father before I come, the Lord said, you won't come. No one can put his hand on a plow and look back. No, no.

Why so absolute? When God called Peter an angel, they left the boat and followed the Lord. When God called John and James, they left their father and followed the Lord. When God called Matthew, he left a custom and followed the Lord.

Does it mean that every one of us who wants to follow the Lord has to leave his family? Some people would like to do that. But that's not what the Lord means. Does it mean that if you follow the Lord, you have to leave your job? Not necessarily.

Sometimes may. Today, Peter still has his boat, he still has his family, even his mother-in-law. But he said, I have forsaken all.

What is it? Not outwardly, inwardly. No one can enter into the narrow gate if he does not forsake all inwardly. In other words, there is a transaction you have to make before you start to follow the Lord.

And that transaction is absolute. The Lord would not accept anything relative. Dear brothers and sisters, we are too relative.

Our family is more important than the Lord. Our children are more important than the Lord. Our work is more important than the Lord.

Any little thing can take us away from the Lord. Dangerous. That's why we are so weak in our testimony.

Brothers and sisters, have we begun? We may have believed the Lord for so many years, but have we begun? In the way of disciples. Is Christ really being formed in us? Are we walking in the way of the cross? If we haven't entered into the narrow gate, how can we say we are walking in the straight way? The straight way is the way of the cross. Our Lord walked the way of the cross throughout his life until he was crucified.

But where are we? The Lord said, enter in through the narrow gate. For why does he exhort us to enter into the narrow gate? Because there is an alternative way. There is a wide gate.

And through that wide gate, there is a broad way. And many are going in. This is not speaking to the people of the world.

This is speaking to Christians. To we, to us, who are believers, so-called disciples of the Lord Jesus. Brothers and sisters, we have an alternative way.

If we want to. If we are not careful. If we give in.

There is a way. There is a wide gate there. There is a broad way there.

In other words, you can bring anything you want with you. Also Christ and many. This is not the world.

This is the religious world. This is Christianity. You can follow the Lord bringing the world with you.

Bringing your own self with you. Self-expression. Self-fulfillment.

Prosperity. Wide, broad, welcomed by the world. And many, but a narrow gate.

Few even find it. No wonder. Because this wide gate, this broad way is ever ready.

Ever available. You don't need to seek for it, to find it. It's natural.

You just go into it. It's everywhere. It's easy.

It's popular. But for this narrow gate, you have to find it. In other words, if you do not seek, you will never find it.

Are we seeking that narrow gate? Are we really seeking the Lord with all our hearts? Do we really mean business with Him? Are we just drifting along? We are. Why does the Lord exhort us to enter in through the narrow gate? And walk in the straight way? Because the wide gate and the broad way leads to destruction. While the narrow gate and the straight way leads to life.

That's the difference. If you live for today, wide gate, broad way, that's the way of life. But if you live for eternity, that means destruction.

Again, you find the destruction and the life here. You have to read it within the context. It has nothing to do with eternal death and eternal life.

We who believe in the Lord Jesus by the grace of God, He has given us life and that life is eternal life. You will never die. So what is the destruction here? What is the life here? If you read the context, you will find it has something to do with the kingdom of heaven.

One day when the Lord shall return, He will set up His kingdom upon this earth. And those who follow the Lamb, wheresoever He goes, they will reign with Him for a thousand years. That's life.

But if you love yourself, if you love anything, all that above, you may live a broad life, at least to destruction. In other words, as the foolish virgins, as the unfaithful servant, they will not be able to enter into the marriage feast of the Lamb. They will be cast out, weeping, with bitter tears, regretting.

Brothers and sisters, it depends on where it leads to. I believe the Lord wants to wake us up. His coming is so imminent.

You look at the world, it cannot be far away. But are we ready? Do we still live for today, or we live for eternity? Do we really live for ourselves, have a good time, or we live for Christ, that He may be glorified? Dear brothers and sisters, that's the way the Lord spoke to my heart. Sometimes I tremble how often we hear the word, but it doesn't register in our heart.

My prayer is that by His grace, we do the impossible. Because that's the only way He knows, the only way He calls. The only way He expects every one of us to be there.

Dear Lord, teach us how to tremble. Really allow Thy Word to sink deep into our heart and transform. Lord, if Thou should come now, can we have mercy upon us? Thank You, Lord, You are waiting for us.

Pray that our response to Thee, You are well-deserved.

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