

# Jesus Taught That Few Find Eternal Life

## Matthew

by Tim Conway

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**Scripture:** Matthew 7:13, Matthew 7:21, Luke 6:46, 2 Thessalonians 1:9, Matthew 25:46, Revelation 14:11, Matthew 5:48, Matthew 5:16

**Topics:** "Narrow vs. Broad Path", "Commitment to Righteousness"

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### Description

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### Transcript

Okay, we are in Matthew chapter 7. Now, my brothers and sisters, you don't want to miss this. When something has to do with you, and it has to do with you to the extreme, when it has to do with the most important things about you and the most important questions about your life, we want to pay really close attention. In verse 13 of Matthew 7, this is where I want you.

Matthew chapter 7, Matthew 7, verse 13. Now, if you just go and you read through the Sermon on the Mount, you may not catch this, you may not notice this. Verse 13 is a massive point of change in this sermon.

It is basically where Jesus begins the finale. This is where he applies the sermon. This is where he begins to sum things up.

This is a really critical junction or juncture in this, and I want you to catch it, verse 13. We are going to get a series of contrasting pairs, and you'll see this. Notice this.

Enter by the narrow gate. Well, where's the pair? Well, he's going to get to it. There's a wide gate.

You see the pairs here. Narrow gate, wide gate. Enter by the narrow gate, for the gate is wide, and the way is easy.

So there's an easy way and there's a hard way. There's another pair. The way is easy or it's broad.

In the United States, in a lot of our cities, we have a broad way. Do you have broad ways here? One. I mean, in San Antonio, there's a broad way.

In most cities, in major cities in the United States, you can find a city called broad way, and it comes. I mean, I don't know where else it would come from, but this concept right here. So there's our pair.

You have a narrow way. You have a broad way, easy or hard, and it leads to destruction, this broad way. This easy way.

And see, there's two ends. One is life. One is destruction.

Those who enter it, enter by it, are many. You have two crowds. So you have the great crowd and you have the few.

For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. You see all the pairs, all the contrasting comparisons here. But it continues.

Beware of false prophets. Well, immediately, when you think of false prophets, well, there's true prophets. But notice a false prophet.

They come to you in sheep's clothing. They look like Christians. Inwardly, they're something else.

You'll recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree. So there's your good prophet, the healthy tree.

He's using an analogy here. Every healthy tree bears good fruit. But the diseased tree bears bad fruit.

So you see our pairs, our contrasting pairs again. You have a healthy tree. You have a diseased tree.

You have good fruit. You have bad fruit. Verse 18, a healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit.

Nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. There's our pairs. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Again, we have this in verses 21, 22, and 23. Notice the comparison.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. So you get the people that are going to heaven here.

And you also get the people who are told to depart from Him in verse 23. You see the pair. You've got two types of people here.

You've got the people that enter and the people that don't enter. You've got the people that do the will of the Father. And those who don't do the will of the Father.

He says in verse 22, On that day, many will say to me. You see there's the many. Again, over against the few.

These are the pairs that are being contrasted. On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord. Did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name? And then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Again, the pairing continues. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on a rock.

Rain fell, floods came, winds blew, beat on that house. It did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And this is a comparison over against everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them.

So you've got people that hear and do. You've got people that hear and don't do. And they'll be like a foolish man.

So you've got a wise man, you've got a foolish man who built his house on the sand. So you've got a house on a rock, you've got a house on the sand. The rain fell, floods came, winds blew, beat against that house, and it fell.

So you've got two outcomes. One house stands, one house falls. Great was the fall of it.

Do you recognize what's happening right here? Our Lord has just basically finished his Sermon on the Mount. He's finished telling us about what kingdom people and their righteousness ought to look like. And now what he's basically doing is he's getting done and he's saying, Look, after I preach this sermon to you, you need to recognize there are two sorts of people.

There are the people that hear what I just preached and they do it. And there are people that hear what I just preached and they don't do it. And that's what all these pairs are about.

You're either one or the other. There's only two options. There's only two choices here.

That is precisely what's happened. What's most vital is that we comprehend how this series of contrasting pairs here at the end of this sermon relate back to what has been said previous to this. All the things that he's said up till now.

What's the connection? Well, clearly it's this. He said at the beginning, Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom. And now he's gone through and he's described what kingdom righteousness looks like.

And in the end, he says, Okay, what are you going to do with that? Where are you at? Which side of this are you on? Because here's the thing about these contrasting pairs here. It's one or the other. There's not a third option.

There's not a third choice. There's not many choices. And you know what? Everybody in this room is in one of these two camps.

I would just ask you the question. What do you think? What do you think right now, based on what you know about Scripture, if suddenly Christ came right now, what do you think? What do you think the percentage possibility that you would be told to depart? What do you think? Are you absolutely certain? I don't know. Zero percent.

What do you think? And you see what Jesus is wanting us to do is he's wanting us to basically look at what he's just preached. And he's wanting us to recognize there's a righteousness that is characteristic in his people, true people. That's basically what he's at.

He's saying there's a righteousness that's not optional here. That's what's set forth in this sermon. You recognize Jesus came from glory to get a bride.

And it says that he gave himself for a particular people, a peculiar people of his own possession, zealous of good works. You need to recognize this. Jesus did not come from heaven just to forgive sins, just to save people from hell.

He came to make people righteous. And he says this is the standard. And if your righteousness does not exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, if your righteousness does not resemble this sermon, he's saying there's two options.

You see, I think we all have to stop and say, what is the percentage possibility in your own mind that you would perish if Christ came or you would have life? You see, I don't like to think about that. You know what? It's only a fool that doesn't think about these things. You need to weigh out what you are and where you are at based on the word of God.

You know what Jesus is telling his would-be followers? This is the way to enter the kingdom. Listen to it. I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

What Jesus has done is he's laid it all out on the table here. Here's the standard. And then he looks us square in the face, and he says, this being the standard, enter that narrow way.

Enter it. He's saying to us, here it is. Here it is.

I gave you the standard that I require. Now, what are you going to do with it? You see, when he says enter, he's saying, no, don't you think you just sit there after hearing this, passive, somehow believing, well, God's sovereign. If God's going to do anything, he's going to have to do anything.

No, no, no, that's not where he's at. When he says enter that, that word right there is an imperative. And he is calling you to make a decision.

He's calling you to make a choice. He's calling you, what are you going to do about this? I told you about the righteousness that must exceed the scribes and the Pharisees. And see, somebody here is going to say, wait a second, I know enough about my Bible to know we're not saved by works.

You need to recognize something. This is not a sermon about winning salvation by works. He starts his sermon off by pouring spirit.

This is a sermon that says you are bankrupt, and you can't do this, but you must do this. How does a person who can't do what they can't do? There's only one way. By faith you lock onto Christ.

That's the only way. You see, that's really what this sermon is all about. What are you going to do about this? He says, I'm looking for doers of my word.

Not just those that hear. Doers. That's what it says.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my father. You see very well what he's driving home here. The one who does.

You know what the question he's asking us? Are there any surrendered to this? You say, yeah, well then enter. Enter. Someone says, but I'm saved.

But Jesus says, there's no point talking that way, unless you're implementing this reality into your life. Listen, what he's basically saying is there's no point of listening to all this explanation of what the kingdom people are like, if in the end all you're going to do is listen. You see that.

In the end he says, you want to know who the foolish man is? A foolish man listens. But he doesn't do. And what he's talking about here, listen, this is not in a vacuum.

All these statements that Jesus says right here at the end have to do with the entire sermon. That's what he's talking about. That's where he's going with this.

There's only two options. All these sets of two from verses 13 to 27 are really the same thing. You are those who do what Jesus says, or those who don't.

And so, you know what happens? Jesus preaches his sermon, and then he looks at each one of us and he says, okay, now it's decision time. We can't avoid this. You don't avoid Christ.

And listen, to say I'm not going to consider this is to make your decision. To say I'm going to consider this later is to make your decision. To say, you know, I don't like this.

That doesn't matter. That really isn't the issue. What we're faced with, I'm faced with this too.

See, you're hearing my voice. I'm the preacher. But what you have to recognize is I'm not getting this from myself.

I'm drawing this right off the pages of scripture. The Lord came from glory. God became flesh.

And he came here to tell us the way. And listen, this is by faith. But you have to recognize that's what this sermon is all about.

This sermon is about living out a righteousness by faith in Christ. Clinging to him. Doing what he calls.

You can't do this in your own strength. This starts with poverty of spirit, by mourning, by meekness. We are lowly before him.

When he calls us to this, yes, he expects us to say, Lord, we can't do this. But you must do this. Well, how must I do what I can't do? Well, brethren, that's what Christianity is all about.

Don't you recognize? We've been called to live an impossible life. But you don't look at it and say, well, because it's impossible, I can't live it. No.

He's saying, get your eyes off yourself and get your eyes on me. And if you're looking at me and you're walking with me, you can live this. If you follow me, I'll never leave you or forsake you.

And I'll grant you ability to do what in yourself naturally you don't have the ability to do. That's what this is all about. So he preaches this sermon.

He says, it's decision time. What are you going to do now? Jesus said, I'll tell you what you ought to do. And that's precisely where verse 13 is.

Enter by the narrow gate. That's what you ought to do. This is the way to eternal life.

I'll tell you this. Jesus means to make us uncomfortable. If there's a shred of contentment in coming here to this church and listening to all these sermons that I've preached from the Sermon on the Mount, and you just, oh, that was interesting.

You know, I enjoyed that. Let me give consideration to that. Hear these sermons.

You know what he's doing? He's drawing this sermon to a close. And he wants to know, what are you going to do with this sermon and with his words? What are you going to do with him? What are you going to do with his requirements, with his standards? Brethren, I'll tell you this. The rains will fall.

They're going to fall. And the floods are going to come. And the winds are going to blow.

That's for certain. And they're going to beat against the house of your life. And you can't escape this.

Brethren, you can't escape this. You say, man, why did I come here today? This makes me feel uncomfortable. Brethren, he means to make us feel uncomfortable.

The only place where you're not uncomfortable is if you hear his words and enter that straight gate, that narrow way. That is the only place of comfort. And he doesn't want to give you any comfort thinking that any other route is a good or safe way.

That's where he's at right now. Jesus says, you can't avoid me. You can't avoid this.

Listen, we know this. He's the judge at the end. And this is his standard.

When we come to stand before him. This demands, you know what all this demands? Repentance. Repentance is a change of thinking.

It's to rethink things. Like you need to really rethink his words. You don't want to just say, well, you know, I went to church today.

I had the Lord's Supper. As though what? As though that seals. Brethren, what we're talking about is we're talking about a faith planted in Christ.

You remember this. Faith without works is dead. What he's talking about here is this is what living faith looks like.

This is what looking to him, walking to him, with him. There's a trust. There's an obedience that comes forth from this.

And not to decide is to decide. So you see the imagery. We're just dealing with verses 13 and 14 today.

You see it. 13, 14. Look at it.

You got gates. You got width of the gates. You got a way.

You've got two crowds. And you've got an end that's there waiting for those that are in either of these places. You see that.

Two gates. Two ways. Two ends.

Two crowds. One gate is narrow. One gate is not so narrow.

It's pretty wide. That's what you have. There's one gate that's narrow.

There's a way that's narrow. There's a way that's broad. The way that's narrow, that word means it's compressed.

It says hard. But it's the idea of being constricted. Even I think that King James says narrow.

Brethren, you recognize this. The gate is narrow. The way is narrow.

And the end is life. But there's another way. And that way is broad.

And that way leads to destruction. That's what we see here. Wide, broad, easy.

Problem is there's destruction at the end. Now, listen. As I said before, the Lord Jesus Christ does not speak these words in verses 13 and 14 and even the ones that follow.

He's not speaking it in a vacuum. It ought to be fairly obvious what's meant by the narrow gate and the narrow way. By what he said before this.

Now, just think with me. But what he's saying is this. The dominant characteristic of the true Christian life, the dominant characteristic of the life to which Jesus calls us is narrowness.

It's a narrow gate. It's a narrow way. It's a narrow life.

Brethren, think with me. Think of what he's been saying. He says, look.

I just don't want my people not to murder. I don't want them to hate. I want my people to be a people that resolve problems.

If you've got a brother and he's got something against you, you leave your gift, you go take care of it. I want you to be radical against sexual sin. I want you to literally rip and gouge eyes out of your head if they cause you to sin.

I want you to amputate hands if that thing causes you to sin. I want you to love your enemies. You remember you heard it said eye for an eye? No, none of that anymore.

You love your enemies. You love your neighbor. You love your enemy.

And you do good to them. And you pray for those who persecute you. He said the things that you would have other people do unto you, I want you to do unto them.

He said in teaching us about prayer in this sermon, he said, Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. He wants you to forgive other people. Forgiving others, loving others.

You should tax collectors greet one another. What do you do more than any? You need to be perfect like your Heavenly Father is perfect. Do you recognize that this is the life he calls us to? Do you recognize just being a person that walks through this life and doesn't retaliate, that forgives, that goes and seeks to be a peacemaker and to bring reconciliation, to be a person that is going to seek to love this world, even your enemies, even those people who curse you, you're rather going to bless them.

They strike out against you, but you're going to pray for them. Do you recognize the kind of people that he's calling us to be right here? Brethren, this whole thing starts with a narrow entrance and it stays narrow all the way to the end. I mean, the very note that this sermon begins with, poverty of spirit.

Do you recognize what that, poor in spirit. We are a self-righteous race. We are independent and we don't want to have to need God.

That is us by nature. That's not easy. This is not an easy life that he is calling us to.

You know what he's basically saying? You need to leave your self-righteousness at the door. More than that, you need to leave yourself at the door. I mean, think about it.

That's how straight and narrow it is. How can you bless those who curse you and pray for those who spitefully use you unless you leave yourself at the door? Brethren, leaving self at the door doesn't mean that you make yourself perfect at the door, at this straight gate. It means you come to the Lord and you recognize, I can't fix myself.

I hear what you're calling me to, Lord, take me down this path, this narrow way. Help me to survive it because I can't do this on myself. It's much like Levi when Jesus said, follow me.

He basically looked at all of his tax-collecting stuff and he got up and he walked away from it. He wasn't making himself perfect, but you know what? He was trusting this one that wherever he took him, he was going to follow. It was a very narrow way, very narrow.

Brethren, you do recognize he's calling us to the highest life ever. Be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. That is the highest life of all.

You better believe it's going to be difficult. It's also hard because why? It involves suffering. Did he not say in this sermon, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Did you get that? Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. People that get persecuted, that's a hard road. Blessed are you when others revile you, persecute you, utter all manners of evil against you falsely on my account.

It's also a hard path. Why? Because it's a fight of faith. You remember what he said on prayer.

He said we need to not just ask. We need to keep asking. We need not just ask.

We need to seek. Not just seek, but keep seeking. We need to knock and keep knocking.

He talked about fasting in here. While the world's out there, and they're drinking it up, and they're eating up, and they're enjoying themselves, and it's all about pleasure and all about how they can get, God's people are supposed to be people that are desperately clinging to the Lord and pleading with Him in prayer and crying out to Him and asking Him for help and fasting and praying and giving. And this is the life.

This is it. Listen, I'll say this again. He's not come to simply save you from your sin and from hell.

He has come to make a people who are righteous and who live this reality out. You know what He does? He comes to slay our old man and to make us new creations. Old things passed away.

That's what He's come to do. And the reality is, He's come to lead a people through a very straight gate and down a very narrow path. And you know what He says? He says those on this path are few.

Few. I don't know if you've ever had this mindset that, well, there's many. There's many.

I don't know. You see what He's saying here? This is a lonely path. The narrow road is always a lonely road.

Oh, Bunyan portrayed this perfectly in Pilgrim's Progress. Why? Pilgrim, Christian. He took off running by Himself.

Yeah, He was joined for a moment, but then He was by Himself again. And He found the gate by Himself. And He took off from the gate by Himself.

And He went up the hill of difficulty by Himself. And He went between the two lions by Himself. Did He walk with friends at times? Yeah, but just one.

Both the times He walked with somebody else. Large segments of this. Brethren, this is so perfectly portrayed for us.

I just say this. How can the narrow way appeal to our race? How can it? You know what appeals to people? You know what appeals to people. Most people, what appeals to them this day is eradicate God from their thinking altogether.

Let's just talk about religious people. You see, the many on the broad way are religious people. Do you know what most people want? Most people want heaven.

They don't want hell. But they want to get there. They're doing it their way.

Holding on to their sin and keeping their idols. Well, they won't admit they're really damning idols. They won't admit that they're really that selfish or that independent or that rebellious against God.

They want to convince themselves that's not the case. But that's what people want. People want a way to heaven that's easy.

Only problem, that's not one of the choices. You got two choices. One's easy, destruction's at the end.

One's hard, life is at the end. There are few because it doesn't appeal even to the religious multitudes in this world. They don't want that.

It's just totally unappealing. This can never appeal to those who want to hang on to all their garbage. And that's the vast majority.

Oh yeah, easy believism, we hear it called. Just the easy way. I'll tell you, that way goes to destruction.

Don't think. It's very easy. You recognize.

Church going, owning a Bible, taking the Lord's Supper. It's easy. The kinds of things he's talking about, doing unto others what you want them to do unto you.

Loving your enemies, praying for those who spitefully use you. Asking, seeking, knocking, giving yourself to a life of prayer and fasting. Not just for that one desperate need that you feel when your child's sick and you don't want him to die.

I'm talking about constant clinging, constant fighting that fight of faith. Constantly gouging out eyeballs and cutting off hands. Mourning that poverty of spirit.

Brethren, this is what we're talking about. Striving to be salt. Striving to be light.

Striving to do your good works in the sight of the people that are watching. This is the nature of this sermon. And Jesus is saying this.

You listen to this sermon and you just waltz away like, well, that's great. That's nice. Like that church.

Or don't like that church. That was biblical. Jesus is not looking for you to praise this sermon or give some affirmation that, yes, that's biblical.

Well, of course it's biblical. It's him speaking. What he expects you to do is come to a decision and make some choices here.

That's what this is. Brethren, and if you make the right decision, you're going to be among the few. But it's always been that way.

It's always been that way. Brethren, Christians have always found themselves in the despised minority. That's always the way.

Now consider carefully. Many travelers are on the broad way. But perhaps it's not who you might imagine.

You see, it's very easy for us to say, oh, we're in church. We're in the church meeting. And there's lots of people out there.

Masses and multitudes. We're a few compared to them. I recognize we can look at things that way and that's not totally a... I mean, yes, people that don't even identify with God's people, of course we know where they're at.

But the people in these pairs all the way through here are not such as you might think at first notice or at first glance. This is not the godless masses. I mean, just look here.

Verse 15, Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. And basically he breaks all this down into there's two types. There's a healthy tree and there's a diseased tree.

And there's good fruit and there's bad fruit. But do you recognize what he's dealing with here? He's dealing with people that look like sheep. People who look like sheep but are not sheep.

And when you go to verse 21, look at this, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. Isn't that interesting? He could say, Well, not everybody who follows Allah will enter the kingdom of heaven. No, no, no.

You see what he says? Not everybody who uses my name, not everybody who relates to me and talks Jesus Christ talk. You see, that's what he's saying. But you've got people that are using the lingo.

These are people that are in the church. These are people that are among professing Christians. These are would-be followers.

And they're using his name, Lord, Lord. And you see what they did? They say on that day, Verse 22, Many are going to say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not? See, Lord, Lord, not just Lord. It's double.

It's profound. It's emphasized. Did we not prophesy? See, we were doing things.

Lord, we were doing these religious things. We prophesied. We cast out demons in your name.

You notice that? It's always in his name. In your name. This wasn't done in the name of some Hindu God.

This was done in the name of Jesus Christ. In your name. We did mighty works in your name.

And then he says, I don't know who you are. I don't know you. You are a worker of lawlessness.

You say, wait a second. We prophesied. We did mighty works.

We took the Lord's Supper. We came to church meetings. He said, I never knew you.

You see who he's talking about here? And when you go on, and you go on to verse 24, everyone who hears these words of mine and does them over against verse 26, everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them, you recognize who these people are. These people are sitting under the preaching. These are people that have listened to the sermons from the Sermon on the Mount.

You see, he is not interested in whether people come and hear the preached sermon. He's interested in whether you actually have a living faith that clings to the Christ and to the truth that he proclaims. You see, your faith is nothing if it doesn't hear these words and say, yes, Lord.

I believe you are king, and you are Lord, and you are God, and you are the only Savior. I believe you came from heaven. I believe you came with the truth.

I believe these words are from God. I believe this is the way to eternal life, and I am not going anywhere else. I may be weak.

Lord, I see it. Poverty of spirit. But where are we going to go? And you're just like his disciples.

You're just like Pete. Where are we going to go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life. We're not going anywhere.

I mean, we may fall. We may do this. We may do that, but we're clinging to you, and if you tell us to go through this, if you tell us to enter at this point, we're going in there.

Whatever may follow. You see, you follow him no matter what the consequences are. He never guaranteed you you wouldn't die, you wouldn't be persecuted.

In fact, he said you would be persecuted, and it's very likely you could die. That's not guaranteed. But brethren, this is it.

These people, you see. You see who the people are. The many on the broad way.

These are religious folk. Some of you. Brethren, there's no question about it.

I don't doubt that at all. We have people in this very room right now that are proclaiming to be followers of Christ, and on Judgment Day, there are people in this room that will go to the right, and there are people in this room that will go to the left. And there won't be any real mystery about it.

When the facts are laid on the table, if you're on the left, it's going to be because you heard. You might have debated, thought about the truthfulness. You might have said, yeah, that's true.

You might have looked at that and appreciated it. You might have done whatever. But you heard it, and you did not do it.

You were happy with just mechanical religion. And you know, one of the things he said is judge not. There's not to be hypocritical judgment.

You were just happy going on and judging. You were just happy going on with the hypocrisy. See, that's really what went behind the scribes and the Pharisees who had a righteousness that you better have a better one.

It was hypocrisy. They appeared to be something on the outside. They appeared to be sheep on the outside, but inwardly, they were altogether something else.

Brethren, this is easy religion. The way is easy. This is a broad way, and it's easy.

And you know what it says over the top? It says the sign over the top says, come to heaven the easy way. And the vast majority say, yeah, yeah, sign me up. That's what I want.

I don't want to go to that terrible hell place. I don't want to suffer for my sin, but I want it easy. Show me the easy way to heaven.

And you know what? They look at the sign, and they go in with the crowd, and they walk with the crowd, but they never really pay attention to where this road goes. This is why God's way can never be discovered by appealing to the majority opinion. Do you hear what I'm saying? The majority, Jesus says, are on the wrong way.

Don't appeal to the majority. Don't appeal to the crowd. You see, the few, even... My wife says it.

When my wife was growing up, she was not a Christian, and she went to a church, and she said, you know what? There were a few people in the church who were oddballs. She said once she got saved, she recognized they were the true Christians. Brethren, that's so often the way.

The majority are always wrong, because the majority are always on the wrong way. That's clearly. To travel the narrow way... You remember what Paul said, that we were dead in our trespasses and sins, and we were following the course of this world.

You see the picture? We were in the stream. We were in the flow of the majority. But what happens? When God saves you, there's a 180 degree turnaround, and you suddenly go against the majority, against the world, against brethren.

You go the other way. The Christian, the Christian. Why is it that people call... You know what I found throughout the years when I meet Christians? You go to different places, and they're like, my family's calling me a fanatic.

That is so common. Brethren, I'll tell you this. You can almost smell the real deal, just because you got the majority calling them a fanatic, or calling them a cult, or calling them this, or calling them that.

The true Christian is always somebody unusual. There's so few. You make a break with the world.

You make a break with the crowd. You make a break with the vast majority of people. And you know what happens? You also have to make a break a lot of times with your closest friends, and your closest family members.

This is it. This is the way. The Christian way of life is not popular.

That's why so few are on it. D.A. Carson has said that the narrow way doesn't win many popularity contests. He's absolutely right.

It's not popular. It's radical. It's fanatical.

It's unusual. It's strange. It's different.

That's it. Brethren, you know what happens? This happened to me. You know what? I ran with the crowd.

But as soon as God saved me, you stop running with the crowd. And I found that I didn't even run with the crowd that was in the first churches that I went to because they were content to have the kind of religion where you could still be a slave to your sin. I looked at these people.

Brethren, I'll tell you, like I said before, Bunyan hit this right. One of the things about getting on this narrow way, it's intensely personal. You go in there by yourself.

You don't go in with the crowd. And you don't go in there with your family. You don't go in there with a whole bunch of others.

You come in there by yourself. Formerly, our identity was with the crowd. There's no question about that.

Brethren, you know what happens? It can feel lonely at times. But you think of Pilgrim. He walked that lonely road.

Sometimes he had faithful at his side. Sometimes he had hopeful at his side. But you think about them.

Oh, you had people going back the other way. You had people going off in different directions. But they kept on the master's road.

And they kept their face towards the celestial city. Brethren, no matter how many doubting castles you have to go through, or those enchanted grounds that wanted to put them to sleep, or hills of difficulty, they had the celestial city in their sights. Brethren, this is the way to glory.

And we don't want to forget that. That is the appeal of this hard path. Brethren, at one time we rushed madly along with the game.

But then what happened? Salvation puts a sudden halt to that. So, here it is, brethren. There's only two choices.

One of the things that you have to take notice of in Jesus' teaching here is this. Christ puts a limitation on what He allows us to believe. What do you mean? Well, you know what? If you go ask the world's opinion, they'd like to just tell you there's all sorts of choices.

Ruby and I evangelizing years ago, we went up to a man, he was a Catholic, and began talking to him. He seemed like the sweetest old man imaginable. We're talking to him about the way to heaven.

He said, well, here's his opinion. I think that getting to heaven is like getting to Austin. There's many ways.

You drive from San Antonio to Austin. You can take that road over there, that highway, or you can take that highway. I said, no, sir.

There's only one way. His fangs came out. This sweet, lovely old man turned into a monster all of a sudden.

Brethren, there aren't a lot of ways. Jesus doesn't allow us that. You know what? We would prefer to be given choices.

The reality is, which one of you would not sign up for an easy way that went to eternal life? That's the choice we all want. And I'll tell you what I think is happening here. The very reason he goes to false prophets right after this, the very reason he would go immediately to those who appear to be Christians but are not, the reason he would go there right away is because of the very reality that he just set forth two choices.

But you know what? Men don't want just two choices. They want a third choice. They want that easy way to heaven.

And you know what? There are all sorts of prophets and preachers who are ready to give men that message and tickle their ears with that. They're everywhere. And I think that's why he goes there just next.

We want an easy path that leads to life. Brethren, there's always only been two ways. And there's only been one way that goes to life.

And you have two choices. You can find this all the way through Scripture. Moses said, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore, choose life that you and your offspring may live. Joshua said it. If it's evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your fathers serve in the region beyond 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. And you remember what it was like on Mount Carmel with Elijah. Elijah came near to all the people and said, How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him.

If Baal, then follow him. You know what? People like to be uncommitted. That's a reality.

They love to be uncommitted. That's one of the reasons why I think it's really good for people to verbally commit to wanting to be one of us as a church. I think that's great because people don't like commitment.

And Jesus doesn't allow us the comfortable solutions that we might propose. Any easy ways? No, not that. So we need to ask ourselves this.

How does a person enter? Because that's what he's really telling us here. Enter by the straight gate or enter the narrow gate. How do we do that? Well, reality is we need to recognize this.

Jesus is clearly emphasizing that a time for a decision has come. He says enter by the narrow gate. We need to recognize the absolute nature of the choice before us.

Do you hear what I'm saying? We need to recognize the nature of what he is calling us to. If you listen to this sermon and you walk away just basically resolved to improve your life a little bit, you've missed it. That's not what he's calling you to enter.

He's not saying read this sermon and now, you know, try to fix one thing in your life. He hasn't preached this so that you resolve to simply improve a little bit. That's not the decision he's calling us.

The choice before us. There's no room for you to set your opinions over against the Lord's in this. He's calling for a radical lifestyle all out.

So we need to ask this. Where's the narrow gate? You know, when evangelists came to Christian and Pilgrim Progress, he said, do you see that gate over there? And he looked over there and he said, no, I don't see that gate. He said, do you see the light over there? He said, yes, I see the light.

He said, keep that light in your eyes and you keep going. What does that mean for us? I mean, for one, that's Bunyan's analogy. But where is this? Jesus says to enter this gate.

Where is it? Well, it's not back here somewhere. It's not out those doors. It's where is it? We sit here.

This is a spiritual reality. We need to ask ourselves, where is this that we might enter? I mean, the picture that Jesus paints here is nice and everything. But as I sit here in this place at this time, how do I, how do you practically enter this place? Well, consider it.

When Jesus says, enter by the narrow gate, he's clearly calling us to do something. He's calling us to action. This demands a decision.

It demands commitment. This isn't something to just read about and be interested in. And then to become passive because you've got this idea that God is sovereign.

And you know, because God's sovereign, God saves who he will. And so I can't really do anything. That's not what Jesus is doing.

Jesus does not say, okay, preach the sermon. Now sit over there and wait for God to zap you and bring you through this narrow gate, into this narrow way, so that you might end up at life. That's not what he's saying.

He appeals to his hearers and he says, you need to enter this gate. Don't be passive about this. Jesus demands to control our lives.

You recognize that's what this sermon is about. He said in a parallel to this over in Luke 6, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say? This is really what we're faced with. You can't just look at this from a distance.

You have, every one of us in this room, we have to deal with the Lord Jesus Christ. Your path takes you to him. You have to deal with him.

You have to deal with his words. And if you say, I will not, I'm turning my back. Listen, it's only a matter of time until you come face to face with him.

What you want to do is hear him and recognize this is the one before whom I must stand. I have to die. There is a judgment day.

My life is short. He is Lord. He is King.

He is the only Savior. He came to show us the way. He came to be a voice for God.

He came to be truth to us. He came to be the door. That's key.

Where's the gate? Christ is the gate. When you say that imagery, it doesn't help me a whole lot more. Because I don't see Christ.

Well, listen, you see him by faith in this book and in what he just got done teaching. That's where you see him. The gate is him.

See, it's all got to do with him. It's got to do with surrendering to him. It's got to do with hearing his words.

It's got to do with believing that he is the one who can save me thoroughly to make me capable to live a life like this. He's able to take me all the way through this straight gate and down this narrow way. And because he says, follow me.

He's saying, I'll never leave you or forsake you no matter how narrow it gets. I will be there at your side. I will be with you.

I will walk with you. I will help you. I will strengthen you.

You remember how virtue went out of him to help heal other people? He's got the healing virtue. He's going to be there with us. That's what this is all about.

How do you enter? How can you find this? Well, brethren, the hard way is a way to be walked. It has to do with you purposing, you coming to commitment. You recognize that's what this is all about.

When he says to his disciples, you guys going to leave too? When all the crowds were leaving? See, there's the many. The many got on the boat and they're out of here. And he said, you guys going to go too? Where are we going to go? You see, that's what he's calling for.

He's calling for people that say, no matter how hard this is, where are we going to go? I'm not bailing out on this because you're the Savior. You've got the words of eternal life. I believe you.

I believe you are who you said you are. I believe you came to do what you said you came to do. I believe that you are my only hope.

I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to be just like Levi. You called me to follow you.

I'm leaving that tax table and everything that I knew and all the crowds and all my buddies and all my friends and all the world. I'm leaving them behind and I'm following you. I don't know what the end of this might be.

This might not go well for me for all I know. You're my only hope. I'm going with you all the way to the end.

That's what this is about. That's the faith. And what he's asking here is, does this govern you? See, when he gets to the end, he says, you got these people over here? And what are they doing? They're hearing and not doing.

What he's asking is, when you hear my words, do they govern you? Do they control you? Do you hear my voice? Or is this just some nice religious talk? You heard the sermon? Great. You go on your way. Now you think about cars and food and girlfriends and sex and televisions and life and work and, you know, the stuff you've got to buy.

And you're just going to go on. Success and where you're heading. Or does his word ring in your ear? Do you think about it all the time? Is this what controls you? This involves a very definite act of me, and it's going to be the result of him controlling me and my actual decisions, my practice.

This involves a very definite act of the will. This calls me to recognize that this is God's truth. Christ calls me to conform.

Jesus expects us to say, I'm going to give myself to him and to the life that he directs me to live. Come what may, I'm not going to consider the consequences of following him. I believe in him.

I believe that what he says is true. I believe all that. You know what the psalmist said? The psalmist said, why are you cast down on my soul? You know, Martyn Lloyd-Jones jumped all over that reality about talking to yourself.

You know what? That's very healthy. I had John over the other night, and I came to the front door, and I opened it up, and he's out there talking. I thought his kids were out in the car.

I said, who are you talking to? He said, oh, I talk to myself. Now see, some people could look at that and say that's crazy. No, that's Christian.

That's what the psalmist did. You're supposed to be talking to yourself. My wife will come sometimes.

Are you talking to yourself? That can be a sign that something's wrong. Listen, the reality is we need to be talking to ourselves. Talk to yourself.

You ought to be able to talk to yourself this way. You know what? I do believe that what Jesus said right here is impossible for me to live in my own power. I recognize that.

But see, that's the nature of poverty of spirit. I can't do this myself. And yet, you know what? He says I must live this out.

So I can't, but I must. Well, how do you do? Lord, I believe that if you're calling me to do something that I know in myself I can't do, that I'm trusting you that you're going to make up all that I need here to be able to live this out. And I know that even when I fail to do this, you've told me in your word that if I confess my sins, you're faithful and just to forgive.

And I have an advocate with the Father. So I'm trusting this. You're going to empower me, but you're also going to walk there with me and be my advocate.

I'm following you on this. I know this is going to be a hard road, but you told your disciples that walk this hard road to rejoice and be exceedingly glad. So something about this hard road and as difficult as it might be right now, the Apostle Paul was led to believe momentary light affliction over against what's at the end of this road.

Brethren, I'll tell you, the hard way is the way you want to go. Because what's at the end is an eternal way of glory that you don't want to miss. No matter how hard this way is, it's only momentary.

So you want to talk to yourself. You want to remind yourself of these realities. Think, think, think.

Have I heard His voice in these words? Is this Him? Is this Him speaking? Listen, do you think that the Christ that spoke these words is going to be okay with you hearing them and not really applying them to your life? Just to basically make slight little modifications to your life. Or to say, no, you know what? I've got faith in Him. I don't have faith in myself.

I've got faith in Him. He calls me to live this life. I'm going to strive to live this life.

I'm going to strive to forgive people. I'm going to strive to love people. Not just, I'm going to strive to do to others what they would do to me.

I'm going to strive to be sacrificial. I'm going to strive to lay up my treasure in heaven, not upon this earth. You see, the great masses, you want to follow with the many? Oh, yeah, you've got lots of people that want to amass all their wealth.

Who are the people that give it all away? The few. Brethren, do you really believe Him? Do you really believe that you can lay up treasure in heaven? You say, yeah, I believe what He says in this word. I believe that if you ask, He's going to give to you.

I believe that if you seek, you'll find. I believe. And so you know what it's going to do? It's going to show in your prayer life.

You really believe that if you lay up treasure in heaven, that it's really laid up there for you in eternal weight of glory? Do you really believe that it's wise not to lay up treasure here? Well, then you're going to do

something about that. You're going to live as though you really believe that. You really believe that you ought to be doing unto others what you want them to do to you? Then you know what? You're going to make some calculated decisions in your life by faith in Him.

And say, Lord, I'm going to step out. I'm going to do this. I don't know how this is going to work out.

I found this. You don't always have to know what the end is. But you start striving to live this life by faith in Him, pleading with Him, crying out to Him, help me to do this, help me to make decisions.

You have to ask, do you really believe that He is able to help you to live this life? If you say no, you know what? It's not really what you say. It'll show up in what you do. And see, that's what He says.

You've got doers and you've got people that hear and don't do. And there is a storm coming, folks. And it's going to blow down a lot of houses inside the church.

And what's going to happen is if you sum up the people's lives and you really went back, they played with Scripture. They played with Christ's words. Do you believe Christ died for me? Christ translated me into His own kingdom.

Christ released resurrection power when He died on that cross so that I might live to righteousness and die to sin. Do we really believe these things? I mean, brethren, hear His voice. Don't ever forget that on this road there's someone there with you.

He says what? I mean, He preaches this. He says what? Are some of you really going to continue down that easy road? Are some of you so in love with your sin? So in love with having your own way? So in love with your own interpretations of what religion ought to be or what getting to heaven ought to be? Are you just not amazed by the religious people that you can quote Scripture to? And they're like, well, yeah, I know the Bible says that, but. But what? Now you want to fill it in with your own opinion? Brethren, do you realize what you're doing when you do that? You're basically saying, no, I'm not going to take seriously what's written in this book and what the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you see, that's the problem. People say, Lord, Lord, but they don't do the will of the Father. Are you going to say, Lord, Lord, and then not do His will? You see, that's what He's calling us to do in this sermon.

Brethren, we're not playing around here. True faith. I'm not saying you enter through that gate to save yourself.

I'm saying this. If Christ has so spoken to you that you hear His voice, then you want to go through that gate. You want to walk that straight way.

You want to go down that path. That's not you saving yourself. That's every indication that He's speaking to you and that He's at work there.

But if you're just to slough this off and walk on. Brethren, we show that we've heard the voice of the Son of Man when He says, enter, by the very fact that we say, yes, Lord. And we enter.

You see, the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God. They're folly to Him. He's not able to understand them.

Those are spiritually discerned. Are you decided? This is the question. Are you all decided for the way of life? Have you committed yourself to it? Have you made your choice? You know, there was a day, one of the messages I preached at the fellowship conference there in Denton, Texas.

I preached on the fact that, you know, the church fathers, many of the Christians that we love, we talk about, we read about. You know, there's a day when people made covenants with the Lord. And in one of the messages that I did there at the fellowship conference, I brought out that reality.

Just how good that is to make commitments, to be a committed people, to be determined. God helping you, of course. You can't do this in your own strength.

Is this what you're endeavoring after? Is this life what you're really striving for? Is this the life you're hungering and thirsting after? Will you dare say, this sounds too Arminian? This sounds too much like it involves my own will. Oh brethren, it's no more heresy than Moses saying, choose this day, life or death. There's no more than that.

He says, therefore choose life. Or Joshua says, choose this day whom you're going to serve. Or Elijah saying, stop limping between two opinions.

Brethren, I'm going to say this to you. Stop limping between two opinions. If Jesus Christ is who he said he is, and this is a life he calls us to live, then be done with your mechanical religion, your worldly religion, your shallow religion, and follow him.

And if you follow him, you know what it means to follow him? It means you do the things he did. And he went about doing good. And he went about proclaiming the gospel.

Brethren, if he's truly who he says he is, then give yourself all out to him and be committed to it. If he's not, if he's an imposter, if he's nobody to be taken seriously, well then don't. I mean, if you love your sin, if you love the fleeting pleasures of sin for a season, you want to choose the riches and the treasures of Egypt over Christ, you're free to do that.

Now he commands you not to. He commands all men everywhere to repent, to think right about all this. But you know what? If you will go your own way, you can go your own way.

Just like the rich young ruler, and Jesus let him walk. Just like all those that left in John 6 when the disciples stayed. Jesus let them go.

Listen, if you hear all this, and you know all of Christ's credentials, you hear of all of his miracles, if you know what he has taught, and in the end, you yawn. Ah, the miracles were neat. These words are impressive.

But then you just go your way. And so Jesus never gave you any sort of laws, any sort of instruction. You see what he says? Depart from me, you workers of law-less-ness.

He's the lawgiver. He said, you lived like I never spoke these words. Depart from me.

I don't know you. Your house is going to fall. You're a foolish man.

You listened, but you didn't do. Brethren, think hard about this. I'm just about done, but listen.

You know what's at the end of the Broadway? Destruction. The popular path has a destination which is of ultimate significance, and we ought to think about it. You know what? You know what happens? Men and women get so enamored by the easiness of the way, they don't even give time to think about where this way goes.

Because you know what you have? You have people that are walking through life, and they're basically living their life full of sin, full of self, full of their own way, and then somebody comes along, and they bear this message. It may be a true Christian that just simply is giving only part of the message. They hear something about Christ.

They hear something about forgiveness of sin. They get so enamored by an easy way to have their sins dealt with and an easy life after that. I get my sins forgiven, and then I can live however I want.

And you've got all sorts of preachers out there telling people, oh yeah, as long as you believe. Just believe. Just believe.

And it is. But I'll tell you, if you just believe and your faith is just the kind of faith that God gives and it's just the real kind, then you know what? It latches onto these realities and won't let go. But people become so enamored by this, by the popularity of the whole thing.

They're enamored with getting their sins forgiven and living any way they want. They're so taken with it all. They fail to even think.

What a shock. What a shock. People that live just wicked, wild lives.

What a shock for the religious. Lord, Lord, we did all these many mighty works in your name. Can you imagine? I actually spent my whole life.

I wasn't out there partying every weekend. I actually went to church every weekend. And now I've lost my soul.

Brethren, destruction is the word that he used. What a terrible word. Destruction.

Don't think that that means to cease to exist. Listen. Listen to two other verses.

2 Thessalonians 1.9. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord. Matthew 25.46. These will go away into eternal punishment. So you have destruction.

The punishment of eternal destruction. Eternal punishment. You see what this is? It's being punished forever.

And you need to think about it. The rich man from Luke 16 wanted only a drop of water on his tongue. Jesus says there's weeping, there's gnashing of teeth.

It's perpetual punishment. Never, never, never, never any rest. That's what Revelation says.

They have no rest forever and ever. The smoke of their torment going up forever and ever. Do you recognize that everything good, everything pleasant, everything kind and merciful is destroyed in hell? Beauty, love, truth, kindness, gentleness, joy, hope, peace.

It's all gone and it's gone forever. Do you recognize the broad way is a suicidal path? It's the way of suicide. Isn't it amazing? You warn men.

You warn people. You warn them. Well, I'm no worse than the rest of the crowd.

Well, exactly. The majority are on that path. For people to make that observation that I'm no different than the rest of the crowd.

Well, of course that's the case. And then you know where they go next? Well, if so many of us are like this, God certainly would not put all of us in hell. Would he? Could he? What does God's word say? God's word says that the many are told to depart from me.

You workers of lawlessness. I never knew you. Brethren, a man who doesn't consider his destination at the end of the road, he's on as a fool.

As we can stand and consider this straight gate, it's serious. Because you know what? When you consider this gate, what you're really considering, you're considering God. I mean, it brings you face to face with judgment.

It brings you face to face with God, face to face with the most important questions of life. Face to face with who I am, what I'm living for, the value of my soul, my eternal destiny. You know what it brings me face to face with? Who is Jesus Christ really? I mean, when he speaks like this, who is this to talk to me like this? That's what it brings us face to face with.

Jesus has confronted us with a life that is an impossible one. Brethren, let me tell you this. As hard as it is, you know that he says this, My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

So when you get into this place where few walk, don't think, as hard as it is, externally. And yes, there's fighting within, there's fighting without. But he says, the yoke I put over your neck, I'm going to cause you to hunger and thirst for the right things.

You're going to have a desire to go the way that I take you. You know, this isn't like I'm going to hit you with laws on the external that are totally contrary to the heart you have. I'm going to give you a heart that really wants to go this way.

And it's, my yoke is easy, my burden is light. You won't ever regret walking with me. That's what he says.

Brethren, there's a deep joy in coming to know God and coming to know Christ, because that's at the heart of this eternal life. And there's a tremendous release experienced in knowing that your sins are forgiven. And you have the promise.

Do we not have the promise that if we get into this narrow, little, constricted way where we live for Christ and we live for the gospel, he says, whatever sacrifices you made coming through that gate, you recognize, I will restore unto you a hundredfold in this life, and then eternal life. Brethren, he says in this sermon on the mount to those that are persecuted for his namesake, rejoice and be glad for your reward in heaven is great. Brethren, be decided, be committed.

Who are you living for? What are you living for? Who is Christ? Talk to yourself. Reason through this. Don't ignore this.

Don't ignore this to the peril of your own soul. Brethren, this is serious stuff. I feel this.

This is where this is coming from. This is coming at you so strongly for any other reason than this. I feel this strongly.

This is serious. There's two ways. There's not a third.

And you know what I want? I want you to make it to the end. We're running this race. Yes.

Yes. You come in alone. You have to believe alone.

But brethren, there's a reality that we do run the race in the collected body of God's people. And I want to help you, and I want you to help me to make it to the end. I want to get to the end.

And I want you to get to the end. When we cross that last river, I want to be there with you, raising arms victorious. That's what's at the end of this path, the hard one.

There's victory. There's glory. There's eternity.

Father, I pray, help us to feel the full weight and impact of your Word spoken through your Son in this sermon. He has called us undoubtedly to an impossible life. Be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Lord, we feel so imperfect. We feel weak, Lord. Help us to stay our way, to keep on the path, to not deviate, to not wander, to not go to the side, to not be like pliable and simply be blown about by every wind of doctrine and go this way and that way, depending on what the wind is telling us.

Help us, Lord. Help us to press on. Help us.

Give us grace, Lord. Grace us to make it to the end. I ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. You are dismissed.

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